



# *The Dulwich Society*

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TO FOSTER AND SAFEGUARD THE AMENITIES OF DULWICH

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## *Newsletter 63*

January 1984

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Officers: Captain D.S. Wyatt, OBE, RN,  
Chairman: 148 Thurlow Park Road, SE21  
693 2123

Vice Chairman: Peter F.J. Lawson,  
41 Village Way SE21  
733 2646  
Chartered Architect:  
representative on Southwark  
Conservation Areas Advisory  
Committee.

Acting Secretary: Mrs Robin Taylor,  
30 Walkerscroft Mead SE21  
670 0890

Permanent Secretary: To be elected

Treasurer: A.J. Davis,  
38 Stonehills Court,  
College Road SE21  
693 1713

Members:

Chairman of Town Planning  
Sub-Committee To be elected

Chairman of Trees  
Sub-Committee R.D. Still,  
138 Burbage Road SE21  
274 8002

Chairman of Local  
History Sub-  
Committee Brian Green,  
133 Burbage Road SE21  
693 5938

Chairman of Wild  
Life Sub-  
Committee Mrs G.D. Howells,  
7 College Road SE21  
693 7226

Chairman of  
Traffic Roads &  
Transport Sub-  
Committee J.G. Todd,  
21 Lovelace Road SE21  
670 2965

Chairman of Member-  
ship & Publicity  
Sub-Committee J.R. Webb,  
107 Woodwarde Road SE22  
693 7297

Representing  
Horticultural  
Sub-Committee G.R.C. Fairlie  
The Grange, Grange Lane SE21  
693 1187

Editor of the  
Newsletter Imogen Lock,  
c/o 115 Dulwich Village SE21  
693 6317

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The official notification and Agenda are printed in accordance with the Society's Rules and we hope very much that you will be able to be present.

THE DULWICH SOCIETY: Notice is hereby given that the 21st ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the DULWICH SOCIETY will be held at 8.00 pm on Thursday, 1st March 1984 in St. Barnabas Hall, Dulwich Village.

AGENDA

1. Minutes of the 20th Annual General Meeting held on 3rd March 1983 to be read and approved.
2. Chairman's Report, including reports by the Chairmen of the Sub-Committees.
3. Treasurer's Report.
4. Secretary's Report.
5. Election of Officers for 1984-85:-
  - (a) President
  - (b) Vice-Presidents
  - (c) Chairman
  - (d) Vice-Chairman
  - (e) Secretary
  - (f) Treasurer
  - (g) Executive Committee
6. Appointment of Auditor
7. Any Other Business

Note: Nominations for election as an Officer or member of the Executive Committee must be submitted in writing to the Executive Committee by two members not less than fourteen days before 1st March and must be endorsed in writing, by the candidate (Rule 9). Nominations may be sent by post to the Hon. Secretary.

Robin Taylor  
Hon. Secretary.

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The following events have so far been arranged. All meetings are held at St. Barnabas Hall, unless otherwise stated.

February 2nd 8 pm Dulwich Trees Quiz.  
The Trees Sub-Committee invite you to view slides of some of the many fine and interesting trees in the Dulwich area. The presentation will be designed to test your knowledge of Dulwich and its trees, but will be enjoyable, we hope, for all members interested in our neighbourhood.

March 1st 8 pm Annual General Meeting  
(see page 3 for Agenda)

April 5th 8 pm Wildlife meeting with a Speaker from the London Zoo.

May 3rd Traffic

June 7th Wildlife - Nature Walk.  
Time and place to be arranged.

July 5th 7.30 pm Dulwich Trees Walk.  
Please make a note of this date. The route for our walk has not yet been decided.

October 4th	Horticulture
November 1st	History
December	To be arranged

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#### WILDLIFE SUB-COMMITTEE

##### Winter Feeding of Birds

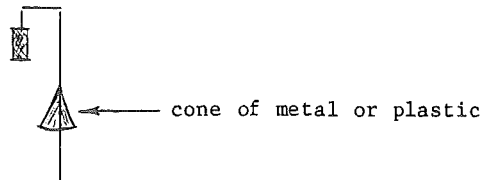
During the cold winter months many species of birds depend upon food, provided by humans, to survive. During the winter many unusual species will readily come, or be forced, into gardens where food 'of the correct type' is provided. This article is to suggest various types of food and what kinds of birds are likely to be attracted.

Almost anything can be used to attract birds into the garden though success depends on the type of garden and where it is situated. A friend of mine in Warwickshire places dead, day-old chicks on a high board each day for a Kestrel. If the Kestrel does not take it by nightfall, then a Tawny Owl does. Unfortunately this kind of feeding is hard to achieve in London, but many other types are.

The commonest food given to birds is undoubtedly bread; wholemeal is better, but plain sliced bread will do. Brown bread provides a better attractant when there is snow on the ground, white when there is not. During the winter a large number of birds benefit from bread, including seed eaters and insect eaters. Unfortunately bread does not provide sufficient nutrients to enable a bird to live on, but because of the large numbers of birds involved, few birds eat only bread. During the summer when the garden belongs to individuals more than flocks, bread should not be given. Many nestlings die as a result of bread swelling in

their digestive system and blocking it.

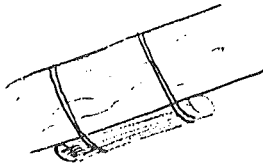
Peanuts have a high fat and protein content, making them very nutritious. The majority of people hang them in baskets but a small handful thrown on the ground helps many species unable to support themselves on such baskets. In order to protect them from squirrels a large cone can be placed on the supporting pole (see diagram). Alternatively hanging the basket from a long wire, as opposed to string, also discourages squirrels.



Any cone must be placed so that the squirrel cannot jump over it; this method also stops cats.

Preventing sparrows from taking over a nutbag is not easy. A smooth, plastic tube, painted red, and only accessible through a mesh at the bottom of the basket will discourage most sparrows without disturbing blue, great and coal tits, but will prevent greenfinches and siskins from feeding. I believe this may also stop Nuthatches and Woodpeckers.

A good way of attracting the last two mentioned species is to fill a cardboard tube with fat containing nuts and a little seed. Then tie it to the underside of an angled branch, a favourite feeding site anyway. If the tube is over six inches long, then small birds cannot reach the food in the middle until a Woodpecker or Nuthatch drills through the side.



Various brands of bird seed are available in the shops. All contain a mixture of millets (grass), rape (a cabbage), sunflower seed and corn. Sunflower seed can only be eaten effectively by greenfinches and sparrows, although the ever increasing wild population of ring-necked parakeets also eat them. Corn is again eaten by larger finches and sparrows but also pigeons, starlings, crows and some thrushes. Millets and rape will be eaten by most small birds and are particularly favoured by collared doves, small finches (goldfinch, siskin) and members of the tit family.

The most useful food for all birds is a fat cake. A mixture of seed, nuts and household scraps are placed in a bowl which is then filled with hot fat. The mixture is then stirred and allowed to cool. The solidified cake is then placed on a bird table or hung on a string.

Household scraps are a good source of nourishment and variety, but be careful. Some things, such as vegetable peelings, are best boiled first. All foods should be washed if salty or spicy, and some cereals, such as porridge and rice, swell enormously if not soaked first. Potato, if not cooked, is virtually indigestible and of no use to the bird if it only takes up space without providing nourishment.

Bones and fats, such as bacon rinds, are very good because the meat and fat provides a high level of carbohydrate, essentials for winter survival. To survive a winter a bird has to build up a layer of fat under the skin during the abundant periods at the end of the summer and the autumn. The birds do not use this fat to live off, but as insulation against the cold. Under severe conditions when the fat is consumed the bird has then little chance without it of surviving through the rest of the winter. In the harsh winter environment the bird that survives is the one that finds enough food without having to rely upon its fat stores.

In the shortened daylight hours this is not easy. For some bird species, for example pigeons, if they do not go to roost with a full crop, then they may not survive to the next morning!

Two very important aspects of winter feeding are water and continuation. Water is essential; a bird must drink, especially as most artificial foods contain some salt, and feathers need to be kept clean for perfect flight. Continuation of regular feeds must be maintained. If you feed regularly then many more birds will inhabit your garden relying upon it for food. If this food supply stops suddenly, then they will be without food and will die. If you intend to go away for several days, arrange for a friend to feed them for you, or gradually reduce the food over a period of two weeks so birds gradually drift away to other locations.

I would also like to include a few 'tricks of the trade' for anyone suddenly landed with a sick, or starved, bird and do not know what to give it. Seed eaters do well on corn or millet and are not hard to deal with. If starved, a 'soup' of whole-meal flour, sugar and water, with a dash of cod liver oil, can be fed with a dropper. Simply open the beak, push the dropper down the bird's throat and squeeze out the liquid. Do not give warmed up foods. Any insect eater, including Thrushes, will be fine on a diet of cat food mixed with an equal amount of bran, not flour; again, if starved, mix in a little sugar. Keep the birds warm and they should recover if found in time.

Most of all, please remember that during the summer a natural diet is essential. No food except seeds should be given after March because the early feeders will have young nestlings in April. Many readers will be familiar with the Canada Geese in Dulwich Park whose wings are deformed. This is believed to be caused by a vitamin deficiency, most certainly due to the large amount of bread being eaten. The wing bones grow too quickly and the weight

of the feathers twists the bones round as they form. Thus, when the bones solidify, they are grossly distorted and cannot be straightened. The geese, being flightless, are then easy prey to foxes.

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#### Dulwich Sightings

Local House Martins last date seen, 17th October. At about this time we might have been expecting Redwings but reports are still awaited. The current invasion by jays from the continent, flocks of up to one thousand in Kent, has yet to be noted in our area. Among birds now in song are Robin, Wren, Dunnock and, mutedly, Blackbird. Song and Mistle Thrush should soon be in good voice, the latter already guarding the laden Hawthorns and Yews.

Few breeding records ever reach this Society. However, in addition to House Marten, Spotted Flycatcher and Nuthatch which have been reported, the indications are that the past season was satisfactory for our breeding birds. The regular daily garden visitors are in good shape and the spasmodic appearances of Woodpeckers, Goldcrests, Coal and Longtail Tits are encouraging signs. But where are our Chaffinches and Tawny Owls? Just clinging to Dulwich by the tips of their tarsi, apparently.

Stag Beetles emerging next June are already below ground.

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A LETTER FROM THE TREASURER 38 Stonehills Court,  
College Road, SE21 7LZ.

7th November, 1983

01-693 1713

Dear Members,

It is first my pleasure to thank all those who responded, so promptly by letter and telephone, to my letter in July about subscriptions and bringing bankers orders up-to-date.

After one weekend break Joan, my wife, and I came back to 117 letters! I am sorry not to be able to reply to each one individually, but hope that you will accept this letter to you all in the 'Newsletter' as an acknowledgement.

Your replies, quite apart from the subscriptions, show your appreciation for the Society's meetings and events, but above all the affection for our Village, and your concern about many aspects of its life, for example -

maintaining its character,  
the effects of pollution - noise as well as litter,  
the upkeep of the area and how to counter the effects of vandalism,  
traffic and pedestrian problems

Requests for a 'broader base' for the Newsletter and shortcomings on our delivery arrangements are amongst the many other points you raise, all reflecting the interest of members and the problems of the community which the Society was formed to help - never forgetting our objects - to foster and safeguard the amenities of Dulwich.

Perhaps the most moving letters came from those older residents no longer able to come to Society meetings and events because of disability, or fear of venturing out at night, or leaving a house empty.

Membership List: We have now brought up-to-date the alphabetical subscription and road list of members. If there are any past members who feel they have been overlooked, please telephone or write to me.

Subscriptions 1984: May I ask those who do not pay by bankers order - to please send your £2 subscription for 1984 as early in the New Year

#### YOUR 1984 SUBSCRIPTION

These centre pages are designed to be pulled out and returned to the Treasurer, once you have completed the form in accordance with your individual preference.

You can pay your subscription either:

- (1) By CHEQUE OR CASH in which case, please complete Part 'A'; or
- (2) By BANKERS ORDER. If you wish to change to this method, please complete Part 'B'.

In addition, whether you choose 1 or 2, you can benefit the Society, at no extra cost to yourself, by completing -

- (3) A DEED OF COVENANT, which enables the Society, as a Registered Charity, to recover income tax on subscriptions covenanted for a minimum period of four years. To effect a Deed of Covenant, please complete in addition Part 'C'.

Will those members who already have a Deed of Covenant for £1 per annum (the pre 1983 subscription), please consider starting a new covenant for £2 per annum by completing Part 'C' only and returning it to the Treasurer, A.J. Davis, FCA., 38 Stonehills Court, Dulwich, SE21 7LZ.

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#### PART 'A' - Renewal of Subscription or Resignation

- \* Please renew my/our membership of The Dulwich Society for which I enclose £2 (Two pounds) for the year 1984.
- \* I do not wish to continue my membership.
- (\* Delete as necessary).

Signature ..... Date .....

Name (BLOCK capitals) .....

Address .....

PART 'C'

DEED OF COVENANT  
THE DULWICH SOCIETY

I, (full name BLOCK capitals) .....  
of .....

HEREBY COVENANT with THE DULWICH SOCIETY that I will  
during the term of ..... YEARS from .....  
or during my life (whichever period shall be the shorter)  
pay to the said Society each year such a sum as will after  
deduction of Income Tax at the current rate amount to the  
sum of TWO POUNDS (£2.00) from my general fund of taxed  
income so that I shall receive no personal or private  
benefit from the said annual payments.

IN WITNESS whereof I have hereunto set my hand  
and seal this ..... day of .....  
One thousand nine hundred and eighty .....

SIGNED SEALED AND DELIVERED  
by the above-named. ....

In the presence of  
Witness's Signature .....

Occupation .....

Address .....

.....

PART 'B' - Bankers Order

TO: ..... BANK

ADDRESS: .....

Please pay

BARCLAYS BANK PLC, DULWICH BRANCH, 20 - 27 - 19  
117 Dulwich Village, SE21 7BL.

For the credit of

THE DULWICH SOCIETY, Account Number 40339156

The sum of £2.00 (Two pounds) annually

On 1st JANUARY

Quoting my/our name(s) given below, until you receive  
further notice from me/us in writing and debit my/our  
account accordingly.

This instruction cancels any previous order in favour  
of The Dulwich Society.

.....  
Signature(s)

Name (BLOCK capitals) .....

Address .....

My/our Account No. .... Date .....

as you can; reminder letters are very costly.  
All the necessary forms are in the centre pages  
of this Newsletter.

Thank you again for all your letters and with  
every good wish for 1984.

Yours sincerely,

A.J. DAVIS  
Hon. Treasurer.

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HORTICULTURAL SUB-COMMITTEE

Horticultural Trading Cards

New cards will be ready early in 1984 and will  
be delivered to those on our Horticultural  
list with their first Open Gardens invitations.

Anyone not on the list who would like a card,  
please write to Mrs. Pat Rich, 63 Court Lane,  
SE21 7EF enclosing a s.a.e. and a card will  
promptly be despatched.

For the benefit of new members who may not know  
of these cards, let it be explained that through  
our affiliation to Lambeth Horticultural Society  
we are enabled to use their trading hut to buy  
garden requisites - fertilizers - peat - pots -  
pesticides etc., etc. all at advantageous  
prices - very useful to those with large gardens  
needing large quantities.

Address of the hut is Cedar Tree Close (first on  
right off Lakeview Road), Knights Hill, SE27.  
Times of opening - Saturday 2pm - 4.30pm.  
Sunday 10 am - 12.30pm. April, May, June -  
Thursday 6pm - 8pm. Trading cards must be shown  
always.

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### The Inscrutable Bamboo?

The threat to the panda in the Wolong Reserve in China caused by the flowering of the bamboo and the simultaneous flowering of the same species in this country raises again the mysterious habits of this tribe of plants.

Bamboos are true grasses differing only from the herbaceous varieties in producing woody stems. These immensely tough stems or culms stiffened with high concentrations of silica emerge closely sheathed and usually reach full height in their first season, in the second year they form leaves and branches, ripening to maturity in their third summer.

The flowering of bamboos is idiosyncratic and not fully understood. Some species which are able to flower almost every year produce a small number of flowering shoots along with the predominant leafy stems. Other varieties produce leaf culms year after year, perhaps for half a century or more, before suddenly producing flowering stems to the exclusion of leaf shoots and this phase again may last for a number of years. It was once thought that bamboos always flowered simultaneously worldwide; this is now known to be untrue. The beautiful chusquea culeou flowers in its native Chile but has never been known to flower outside South America. The little *arundinaria aristata* flowers annually in its Himalayan homeland but has flowered in Britain only twice this century. On the other hand the arrow bamboo, *arundinaria japonica*, now flowering in China is also flowering in Britain and Europe, and this wide geographical coincidence of flowering seems to happen with some species more often than chance would predict. It has been suggested that, since only a very limited number of specimens have been introduced from the wild and have been subsequently propagated by division, the plants in cultivation are in effect all of the same age and, if the flowering of these species is governed by maturity, it would not be surprising if large numbers were to flower simultaneously. To test the flowering habits more systematically, it would

be necessary to propagate over a number of years from seed, but this is not a method generally available to the nurseryman, since the production of seed is so spasmodic and unpredictable.

A healthy well established bamboo of periodic flowering habit should survive its flowering phase; the difficulty is that during this period it is no longer a garden amenity, rather it is an unsightly jungle of brown withered stems, ragged leaves, and undistinguished seed heads, and, since it is believed that in some species flowering can continue annually for nearly a quarter of a century, it is not surprising that the gardener tends to lose patience and root the poor thing out. Generally flowering lasts for only four or five years and the owner might profitably curb his impetuosity.

A further burden that the infrequent flowering of bamboos has imposed on the conscientious gardener is that, since the Linnaean system of classification relies heavily on the similarities in sex organs of plants, the unavailability of flowers has meant that species have been shunted from genus to genus and in and out of subgenera with even more regularity than most garden plants. Many species have six or seven synonyms and it is a nimble nurseryman indeed who will have his plants correctly named at any one time.

Some bamboos are extremely vigorous spreading with alarming rapidity and these should be shunned at all costs. Generally speaking species in the genus *sasa* tend to be the most invasive, the genus *arundinaria* contains some species that run rather too vigorously, while the genus *phyllostachys* contains mainly species that are clump forming.

That having been said, bamboos are amongst the most graceful and elegant garden plants, providing a calm beauty in summer and a bright splash

of interest in winter. They are at their best when they can be viewed in the round, making fine lawn specimens, and this method of culture means that any mild propensity to wander can be nipped in the bud, since emerging shoots will be regularly beheaded. Bamboos are also amenable to being grown in tubs, and may even be grown indoors. Bamboos are best planted when growth is just beginning in spring, April is the usual month. They will tolerate most soils, but they appreciate a sheltered situation, and they resent stagnant water at the roots.

Species that can be recommended for garden use include arundinaria murielae and arundinaria nitida, both with slender canes growing to ten feet or so. Arundinaria viridistriata grows to five feet, the leaves generously stripped with gold, and is best in full sun. Chusques breviglumis growing to four feet or less is ideal for small gardens. Phyllostachys nigra grows to ten feet with shining black third year canes which colour best in full sun. Sasa tessellata has large leaves and arching six foot stems creating a marvellous tropical effect and its tendency to run can be controlled in our cool conditions.

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#### TREES SUB-COMMITTEE

##### Progress report on Dulwich Upper Wood.

For new members of the Society Dulwich Upper Wood is a five acre relic mixed deciduous wood owned by the London Borough of Southwark and bounded by Farquhar Road and the Abbey National Housing project (on the site of the old Crystal Palace High Level railway station). The Ecological Parks Trust have been given a lease to this site with a view to develop it into a small nature park suitable in particular for infant, primary and secondary needs in the ecological/conservation areas, but also for use by the public in general.

After a period of little activity work has at last started in earnest. Several local groups are

becoming involved with the work including Dulwich College, Richmond Scouts, Crystal Palace Triangle Community Association and the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers. Work carried out so far includes step-building and general path work, the clearance of an area for a tree nursery, the establishment of two hazel coppice areas plus general rubbish, rubble and sycamore clearance.

Members living in the immediate vicinity of Farquhar Road will be pleased to hear that the ugly expanse of corrugated iron fence should soon be going (Southwark reckon the work will start in January) and be replaced by a high iron railing fence. A mobile wardens' hut has now been installed at the junction of Farquhar Road and the new access road, so tool storage, once a considerable problem, should no longer prove a difficulty. The installation of a hut means that a contact telephone number is now available (01-761 6230) for the warden (Andrew Loan) based at the wood.

Volunteer helpers are still very much needed at the wood whether this be physical help (you don't have to be young or particularly fit), or if you have some expert knowledge or special interest such as bird, moth, beetle or plant/tree identification experience. If you can help please phone or call round and let the warden know how and when you are willing to help.

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#### LOCAL HISTORY SUB-COMMITTEE

Following the resignation of Patrick Darby from the office of Chairman of the History Sub-Committee, due to removal to Norbury, Brian Green has been elected to take his place. The sub-committee also welcomes Mrs Hilary Rosser and Dr Douglas Inman as members, who fill the vacancies created by the resignations of Mr and Mrs Low.

It is particularly pleasing to report that Patrick Darby will continue to be a member of the sub-committee and will edit further editions of the local history supplement. The committee regrets the loss of Mr and Mrs Low from its number, but wishes them every happiness in their new home at Salisbury.

In November, Bill de Baerdemaeker presented another one of his very popular evenings of slides of old Dulwich. As his theme he chose a number of locations where the aspect has considerably improved with the passing years, noticeably Pond Cottages, Green Dale and parts of Dulwich Wood.

Bill's collection of some five hundred slides is unique, but he always welcomes new additions. He is particularly interested in old photographs taken in the gardens of Dulwich houses. These and any other memorabilia may be sent to him at 110 Woodwarde Road SE22, and will be most gratefully received.

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#### A Brief Historical Geology of Dulwich

by M. J. Salmon. Alleyn's School

The last few centuries of life in Dulwich provide a fascinating area of study to the Historian. To the geologist Dulwich also provides clues to the past, but a much more remote past, the Dulwich of several million years ago.

As in so many fields, the real systematic study of the area began in the Victorian era. In 1860 a Mr Charles Rickman visited the excavations for the Effra Branch of the Great South High Level sewer at Dulwich. A tunnel was being constructed through the eminence now surmounted by St. Barnabas Church. This tunnel runs under what is now Alleyn's School playing fields. Three shafts were sunk and galleries driven from the foot of these were joined into a tunnel. This excavation under what was called The Five Fields is accurately

described in the engineer's preserved diagrams. Mr. Rickman was able to investigate the spoil produced by these excavations and was invited to descend the shafts. The spoil heaps yielded many interesting fossils including shells, leaves, fruits, seeds and reptile and mammal bones. At least two new species of shells were identified one named after Mr Rickman and another after Dulwich (*Cyrena dulwichensis*). Many of these specimens are now in the British Museum (Natural History) but the location of others is currently unknown. The layers revealed in the shaft under the St. Barnabas area are given as 12 feet of London clay and at least 53 feet of Woolwich and Reading beds, the latter being highly fossiliferous.

In 1887 a well was sunk at St. Saviour's Infirmary, Champion Hill, but a more recent map marks the site as that of Dulwich Hospital in East Dulwich Grove. In this well were 15' of sand, 26' of Woolwich and Reading beds, followed by Thanet sands, then at a depth of 92' chalk, which extends for at least another 200' in depth.

Work in the last decade by the Tertiary Research Group; based at the British Museum (Natural History) has provided a more detailed knowledge of the upper layers.

Putting this and other information together it is possible to relate in broad outline the geological history of the Dulwich area over the last one hundred million years.

Up until 65 million years ago, the area was covered by a warm shallow sea in which the remains of minute marine organisms were deposited as chalk. Then 65 million years ago earth movements lifted the chalk and it was exposed as land, followed by a short period of erosion. The top layers of chalk being removed but the more resistant flints they contained being left behind. As a result there is a distinct flinty layer on top

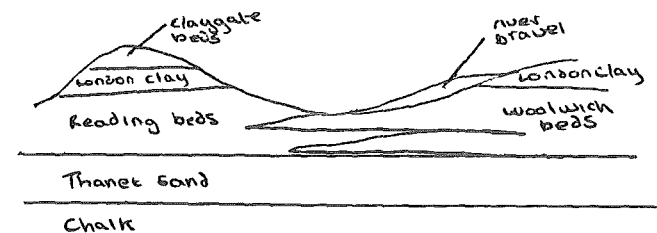
of the chalk which remains. After about four million years the sea returned laying down the Thanet Sands on top of the chalk. The Dulwich area was then very near the coast and indeed seems to have been at the mouth of a river system. The next layers, consisting of Woolwich and Reading beds, provide evidence of this. The first layer is of the Woolwich type and contains a marine fauna while the next consists of the Reading type and contains an estuarine form. It would seem that, with subtle changes in sea level, Dulwich alternated between being in shallow sea and in a river estuary leading to inter-digitation of the Woolwich beds with the Reading beds. This occurs over a limited area but is the type of situation which produces a rich fossil assemblage. About 55 million years ago the sediments changed to reflect a slightly deeper marine environment. This was a subtropical muddy sea in which the London clay was deposited. Fossils from other sites indicate a sea rich in warm water creatures, sharks, crocodiles and even a few stunted carols. Land derived species washed in to the sea show a multitude of plants and birds.

After this there was again a period of earth movements in which Italy collided with Southern Europe, throwing up the Alps. The ripples of this slow motion collision reached across Europe folding the Weald of Kent into a gentle arch and down warping the London area. As this whole structure was uplifted, at about the same time, the sea shore once again passed over the Dulwich area, laying down the sandy claygate beds. With the area now exposed as land a period of erosion followed. For over 50 million years Europe drifted Northwards from warmer into more temperate latitudes. Any beds that may have been above the claygate beds were removed and most of the claygate beds as well were also removed. In the last two million years the ice ages have come and gone. Although the glaciers never reached south of the Thames, this area was subjected to repeated freezing and thawing and erosion by meltwater streams. The dome of rocks over the Weald has

been removed by erosion and the North and South chalk downs now remain as the stumps of a once complete arch. The London basin has been adopted by the Thames and during the ice ages a much enlarged river deposited river gravels in a series of terraces in the London basin, some of which are found in the Dulwich area. In the last few centuries man has arrived and the first couple of feet of topsoil in most areas of Dulwich has been disturbed but the sediments below are intact.

Today this leaves us with several interesting exposures. The oldest of the rocks mentioned, the chalk is buried far below our feet as are the Thanet Sands, but the top layers of the Woolwich and Reading beds are exposed in Dulwich Village. Indeed, any hole dug in this area usually reveals a multitude of fossil "oysters" a few feet from the surface.

Most of the area surrounding the village is London clay which reaches a tremendous thickness. Indeed, it is only at the top of the Crystal Palace ridge that a small capping of claygate beds remains then there is a gap of the sequence of many millions of years before the Thames was formed and along with its tributaries laid down the patches of river gravel to be found in the area.



A generalised sketch section of the area, not to scale. The details of the geology are available on Sheet 270 of 1" survey obtainable from the Geological Museum, South Kensington.

Research continues into rich fossil fauna of the interdigitation of the Woolwich and Reading beds. The author would be very pleased to hear from anyone who could help in the following areas:-

1. The present location of specimens collected in the Dulwich area so that important finds could be photographed and drawn or at least their current owner advised of any significance they may have.

2. Current research being carried out in conjunction with the Tertiary Research Group and with help from the Alleyn's School Fossil Collecting Society involves drilling, by hand, holes of about 2½" in diameter in sites in the Dulwich area. This yields cores which can then be examined for fossils and to establish the sediments present at various levels. Several Dulwich residents have already co-operated by allowing drillings in their own gardens and found the process and the results fascinating. Other offers of locations for drilling would be welcome. It causes very little disturbance and virtually no mess.

3. It would be most helpful to know of any excavations on private property going down as least 10 feet to which access might be granted to a research team to allow measurement of the depth of the various layers and, in some cases, to remove small quantities of spoil for examination.

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