

The Dulwich Society

TO FOSTER AND SAFEGUARD THE AMENITIES OF DULWICH

Newsletter 32

April 1976

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	670 1609

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM was held in St. Barnabas' Hall on Thursday 4th March 1976, and Mr. Roger Low spoke of events during the year. In remarking that this was his first meeting as Chairman he paid tribute to Sir Frederick Everson who had handed over the Society in such good running order last year that he had found his first year in office both easy and pleasant. He was glad to be able to report that membership was still increasing and that some 112 new members had joined since the general distribution of the Broadsheet last autumn. No doubt the November meeting in Belair, at which new or intending members were asked to come to meet established members of the Society, had also played a part in attracting both new members and helpers and this will be repeated in some form in future years.

The Chairman emphasised the importance to the Society of continuing good relationships with local bodies, notably the GLC, the London Borough of Southwark, and the Estates Governors, and he felt able to say that in all cases the relationships seemed to be in good order. In evidence of this he quoted the fact that the Mayor of Southwark, Councillor Charles Halford, had attended two of our gatherings, two members' meetings had been addressed by Estates Governors, Lord Wolfenden is to be our dinner guest on 2nd April, and the Governors had kindly entertained a number of Society members after the Tree Planting Ceremony in the Village on 7th February last.

Mr. Low welcomed the Chairman and Secretary of the new East Dulwich Society to our meeting and hoped that the two Societies would have a long and fruitful period of co-operation.

Finally, Mr. Low mentioned, for the benefit of those who were not present on 3rd January, the planting of the Fred Everson tree which now stands outside No. 62 Dulwich Village and marks the thanks and respect of all members towards our last Chairman who did so much for the Society.

Reports were then received from Chairmen of the various sub-committees, the main points of which are covered elsewhere in this newsletter, or have been mentioned in previous newsletters.

Officers of the Society were then elected or re-elected and the current office holders are listed on the centre fold of this newsletter. These pages may be detached if necessary and kept for future reference. We draw your attention to the election of two new Vice Presidents, Mr. David Emms, Master of Dulwich College, and Sir Frederick Everson, past Chairman of the Dulwich Society.

Ladies of the Social Sub-committee provided excellent light refreshment and members present were able to study interesting displays of photographs and other exhibits provided by the Trees and Wild Life Sub-committees.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer wishes to remind members who have not yet paid that the £1.00 subscription for 1976 is now overdue.

We publish here an abridged statement of the Society's accounts for 1975 for the information of members who were not able to attend the AGM.

Corporate Members are now as follows:

Dulwich Choral Society
 J. Lyons & Co Ltd (London Steak House in the Village)
 Spencer and Kent
 J. W. Kennedy & Co
 Alexander Pritchett
 R. W. Gray & Co

INCOME

<u>1974</u>		<u>1975</u>
£		£
799	Subscriptions received	869
35	Corporate Members	30
40	Tax recovery on deeds of covenant	56
9	Surplus (deficit) on social events	(28)
83	Interest received	132
966		1059

EXPENDITURE

249	Printing	294
49	Postage, posters, etc.	90
127	Hire of Halls	69
30	Subscriptions and sundries	29
243	Deficit in legal fund	-
-	Presentation of trees	140
698		622
£268	Excess of Income over Expenditure	£ 437

ASSETS

Total Accumulated fund £1748

The Executive Committee, conscious of the fact that the Society currently has a surplus of income over expenditure, is considering ways of spending money to benefit the amenities of Dulwich. One possibility is the purchase of more trees and another is the provision (at £25 a head) of extra swans to mate with the single birds now resident at Belair and on the Dulwich Common pond. Further ideas and developments will be reported as they occur.

SOCIETY MEETINGS

6 May: Wild Life 8 pm Dulwich College Great Hall

Dr Jeffery Harrison, OBE, MA, FZS, Chairman of the Wildfowl Conservation Committee of the Nature Conservancy, and Mrs Harrison will talk on "Thames Transformed", an illustrated account of the return of wildlife to the river.

➡ Please note that this meeting is now in the Great Hall of Dulwich College by kind permission of the Master.

3 June: Trees 8 pm St. Barnabas' Hall

Mr W. E. Storey, Chief Horticultural Adviser to the GLC, will give an illustrated talk on "Trees in Britain" (see fuller details in the Trees section).

1 July: Trees Walk 7.30 pm College Road entrance to the Park

A look at the new Trees Trail in Dulwich Park.

7 October: Wild Life 8 pm St. Barnabas' Hall

This programme will consist of contributions by members who are invited to contribute photographs, film, sound recordings, or stories concerning interesting wildlife activity. If you have anything of this nature please contact Miss Pye-Smith (693 8341) or any member of the Wild Life Committee.

4 November: A Joint Meeting with the Arboricultural Association and Dulwich Society Trees Sub Committee 8 pm St. Barnabas' Hall

The meeting will take the form of a panel with representatives from various interested parties. Fuller details later.

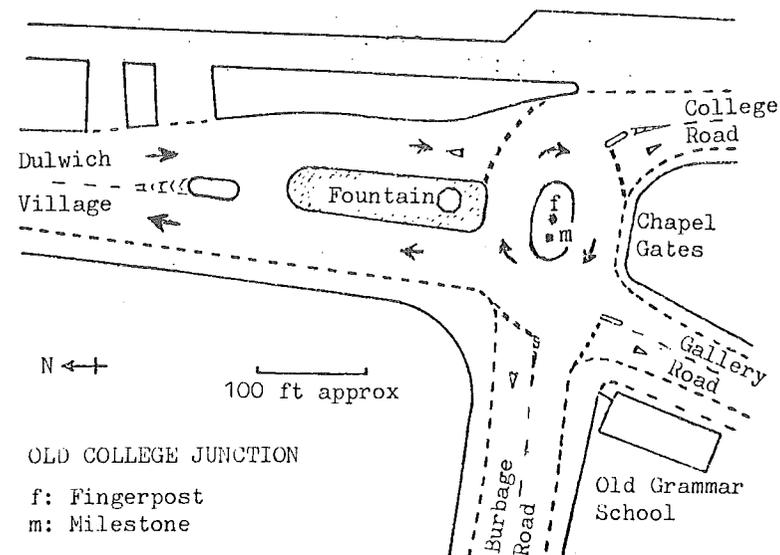
16 December: The combined meeting with the Dulwich Choral Society has been deferred to 16 December to allow the Choral Society to recharge their batteries after their major concert on 27 November. It will be in St. Barnabas' Hall.

PLANNING

Following a report from a member at the AGM that planning permission had been refused for the proposed development of the 87-89 College Road site, we have been in touch with the Estates Governors who assure us that they know nothing of any refusal. You may remember that it was proposed to develop this site with maisonettes and blocks of flats. Owing to current financial restrictions we understand that no development is likely to start in the near future, but we shall naturally watch the situation very closely and will keep our members in touch.

TRAFFIC IN THE HEART OF THE VILLAGE

There has been concern for many years about the dangerous intersection of Dulwich Village, College Road, Gallery Road, and Burbage Road, and an unsightly collection of street furniture now disfigures this junction. Several proposals for improvement have been put forward which, for various reasons, have not been implemented. The Traffic sub committee have prepared a scheme as shown on the adjoining sketch which we hope will commend itself



to members and also the the Borough of Southwark, which is known to be concerned about the traffic problems in Dulwich.

The scheme takes advantage of the latest development in the design of roundabouts by making the central island quite small although larger than a mini-roundabout. The rule of priority to the right (indicated on the sketch by 'give way' triangles and lines which could be painted on the road) ensures that every motorist will have a chance of moving steadily forward so that no prolonged 'tail back' need occur. A primary objective is that of reducing the speed of traffic in approaching the junction.

There should also be a considerable visual improvement since the present warning signs could be removed, the roundabout system ahead being indicated to the motorist if necessary some way back in each road. Small pedestrian refuges would be added at the end of College Road, Gallery Road, and perhaps Burbage Road for the extra safety of those on foot. The Fountain, which forms the central feature of this central part of Dulwich, would be embellished by the surround of another island (shown hatched on the diagram), which, like the roundabout island itself, could be grassed. In these ways some dignity could be restored to the pleasing environment without walker or motorist suffering inconvenience and with positive gain to the safety of all.

WILD LIFE

We have been pleased to receive more reports than usual of sightings, especially of redwings which have shown how widely these birds have been distributed in the area this winter. Reports have also come in of bullfinch, fieldfare, goldcrest, green finch, green and lesser-spotted woodpeckers, lesser redpoll, kestrel, nuthatch, coal tit and long-tailed tit. Reports of the coal tit do not seem to give a true picture of their numbers. Please let us know if you see them: exactly when, where and in what numbers. One fox has been reported.

(continued on page 13)

THE DULWICH SOCIETY KALENDAR: 1976

Please keep these four pages carefully for reference.

OFFICERS OF THE DULWICH SOCIETY

President: The Rt Hon Lord Shawcross, PC, QC

Vice Presidents: James Fitton, RA

Lord Hinton of Bankside

S. C. Silkin, QC, BA, MP.

Charles Pearce, OBE, FCIS, JP

D. A. Emms, MA

Sir Frederick Everson, KCMG

Hon. Auditor: Ken A.G. Jeffries, FCA, 119 Alleyn Park, SE21, 693 5270

Press Officer: John Cran, 670 4105

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chairman: Roger V. Low 41 College Road, SE21, 693 2953

Vice Chairman: Peter F.J. Lawson, DA, FRIBA, FI ARB,

41 Village Way SE21, 733 2646, Chartered architect, representative on the Southwark Conservation Areas Advisory Committee.

Secretary: Edgar Brady, 79 Burbage Road SE24, 274 7941.

Treasurer: R. C. Low, FCI, FCIB, 88 Alleyn Road, SE21. 670 1609 company director.

Geoffrey Hall Clark, 23 Gilkes Crescent SE21 7BP, 693 3003, lawyer, Chairman of Legal Sub-Committee.

I. H. Lightman, 22 Walkers Croft Mead SE21, 670 4743, civil servant, Chairman of Town Planning Sub-Committee.

W. A. Alan Barnard, 18 Dovercourt Road SE22, 693 6487, Chairman of Trees Sub-Committee.

G. C. De Baerdemaeker, 110 Woodwarde Road SE22, 693 4017, purchasing officer, Chairman of Local History Sub-Committee.

Miss G. M. Pye-Smith, MA, 9 Breakspeare, 94 College Road SE21, 693 8341, Chairman of Wild Life Sub-Committee.

R. H. Adams, TD, MA, FSA, 108 Dulwich Village SE21, 693 1161,

H. M. Inspector of Schools, Chairman of Traffic Roads and Transport Sub-Committee.

Mrs. K. M. Evans, MA, 22 Dulwich Village SE21, 693 3522, school governor, Chairman of Social Sub-Committee.

Lt-Col. R. M. S. Maude, BA, 19 Oakfield Gardens, Dulwich Wood Avenue, SE19, 670 7963, Chairman of Membership and Publicity Sub-Committee.

John Cran, 28 Dulwich Wood Avenue SE19, 670 4105, Press Officer.

MEMBERS OF SUB-COMMITTEES

LEGAL: Chairman: Geoffrey Hall Clark, 23 Gilkes Crescent, SE21 7BP, 693 3003. Members:
G. C. Grant, LL.B. 134, Burbage Road SE21, 274 8229
P. F. J. Lawson, FRIBA, 41 Village Way SE21. 733 2646
B. St. J. C. Carr, 8 Burbage Road SE24, 733 9055
M. V. Carey, MA, 2 Frank Dixon Way SE21.

TOWN PLANNING: Chairman: Ivor H. Lightman, 22 Walkers-croft Mead SE21 670 4743.
Secretary: J. Rogers, FRICS, 144 Thurlow Park Road SE21. 693 5612
Members:
Mrs. M. Mathewson, 33 Alleyn Park SE21 670 1756
S. Rhodes, OBE, LL.B, 9 Hitherwood Drive SE19, 670 7520
M. Rich, MA, 18 Dulwich Village SE21. 693 1957
P. Rutteman, B.Sc, ACA, 37 Woodhall Drive SE21. 693 7543
B. Smith, 60 Crofton Road SE5
R. N. Burton, 41 Great Brownings SE21. 670 1238
M. F. Flint, 31 Alleyn Park SE21. 670 9696

TRAFFIC, ROADS AND TRANSPORT: Chairman: R. H. Adams, TD, MA, FSA, 108 Dulwich Village SE21. 693 1161
Members:
E. P. Fisher, JP, 20 Gilkes Crescent SE21. 693 2790
Mrs. K. M. Evans, 22 Dulwich Village SE21. 693 3522
C. W. Walker, 121 Burbage Road SE21. 274 3276
R. A. C. Hill, 3 Oakfield Gardens SE19. 670 1005
J. G. Todd, 21 Lovelace Road SE21. 670 2695
Miss G. D. Johnson (Secretary) 75 Stradella Road, Herne Hill SE24 274 5780
B. C. Leach, 97 Court Lane, SE21 693 1076

TREES: Chairman: W. A. Alan Barnard, 18 Dovercourt Rd SE22 693 6487
Members:
Secretary: Mrs. S. M. Low, 88 Alleyn Road, SE21 670 1609
D. G. Clarke, 35 Pymers Mead SE21 670 2680
R. T. Reed, 2 Court Lane Gardens SE21 693 5512
Mrs. M. Westwood, 13 Tarleton Gardens SE23. 699 0820
G. C. De Baerdemaecker, 110 Woodwarde Rd. SE21. 693 4017
Miss R. W. Davis, 188 College Road SE21. 670 3011
Mrs. E. Blackburn, 14 Woodsyre SE26. 670 5212
A. C. Welwig, RFS Cert Arb, 14 Frank Dixon Way SE21. 693 2787
Mrs. S. Benwell, 36 Calton Avenue SE21 693 3171

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Members:
Mrs. E. Todd, 15 Eastlands Crescent SE21. 693 6239
Miss T. I. Leiper, 39 Stonehills Court, College Rd SE21
Mrs. Lindsey Barker, 38 Village Way SE21. 693 4803
Mrs. Happell, 37 Pond Mead, Village Way SE21. 693 1902
Mrs. Taylor, 26 Village Way SE21.

LOCAL HISTORY: Chairman: (Bill) G. C. De Baerdemaecker, 110 Woodwarde Rd. SE22 693 4017.

Members:
Miss M. J. Boast, 188 Peckham Rye SE22. 693 3802
Dr. A. Cox, 4 Court Lane Gardens SE21. 693 5950
Mr & Mrs R. C. Low, 88 Alleyn Road, SE21. 670 1609
Miss J. Webster, 6 Carters Croft, Red Post Hill SE24. 274 1430
Miss P. Hackett, 14 Gilkes Crescent SE21. 693 6843
Mrs. W. Darby and Mr. P. Darby, 91 South Croxted Rd SE21. 670 2838
Mrs. G. C. De Baerdemaecker, 110 Woodwarde Road SE22

WILD LIFE: Chairman: Miss G. M. Pye-Smith, 9 Breakspeare SE21. 693 8341
Secretary: G. C. De Baerdemaecker, 110 Woodwarde Rd. SE22 693 4017.

Members:
Dr B. H. Pentney, 88 College Road SE 21 . 693 1441
Mrs. L. Martin, 122 Woodwarde Road SE22. 693 2907
Miss J. Webster, 6 Carters Croft, Red Post Hill SE24. 274 1430
B. Jones, 16 Mount Adon Park SE22. 693 3698
Miss R. W. Davis, 118 College Road SE21. 670 3011
G. R. C. Fairlie, The Grange, Grange Lane SE21. 693 1187
D. V. Freshwater, 24 Dulwich Village SE21. 693 1666
Mrs. G. C. De Baerdemaecker, 110 Woodwarde Road SE22
Mrs. Helen Herring c/o Kings College Dept. of Plant Sciences, 64-68 Half Moon Lane SE24.
J. W. Toler, 127 Sydenham Hill SE26. 693 6854

MEMBERSHIP AND PUBLICITY: Chairman: R. M. S. Maude, 19 Oakfield Gardens, Dulwich Wood Avenue SE19. 670 7963

Members:
John Westwood, MSIA, 13 Tarleton Gardens SE23. 699 0820
Mrs. S. M. Low, 88 Alleyn Road, SE21. 670 1609
John Cran, Press Officer, 28 Dulwich Wood Avenue SE19. 670 4105
J. R. Webb, 107 Woodwarde Road, SE21. 693 7297

DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM: For distribution of Newsletters and other material the area is divided into eight zones, each controlled by a zone organiser.

Zone A: Mrs. Peter Lawson, 41 Village Way SE21. 733 2646
Aysgarth Rd, Burbage Rd, Carver Rd, Dulwich Village, Half Moon Lane, Pickwick Rd. Roseway, Turney Rd, Village Way, Stradella Rd, Ruskin Walk, Winterbrook Rd.

Zone B: Mrs. J.E. Taylor, 51 Townley Rd SE22. 693 3674
Calton Avenue, Dekker Rd, Desenfans Rd, Dovercourt Rd, Druce Rd, Gilkes Crescent, Great Spilmans, Red Post Hill, Townley Rd, Woodward Rd, Denmark Hill.

Zone C: Mr. J.D. Thomson, 122 Thurlow Park Rd SE21. 670 3412
Allison Grove, Court Lane, Court Lane Gardens, Dulwich Common, Eastlands Crescent, Frank Dixon Close and Way, Rycotes Mead, Thurlow Park Rd, Eynella Rd, Lordship Lane.

Zone D: Mrs. S.M. Low, 88 Alleyn Road, SE21. 670 1609
Acacia Grove, Croxted Rd, Lings Coppice, Lovelace Rd, Pymers Mead, Rosendale Rd, Walkerscroft Mead, Carson Rd, Ildersley Grove, Park Hall Rd.

Zone E1: Mrs Charles Pearce, 6 Pond Cottages, College Rd SE21, 693 3141. College Rd, Breakspeare, College Gardens, Constable Walk, Ferrings, Gainsborough Court, Hitherwood Drive & Court, Stonehills Court, Pond Cottages, Tollgate Drive, Woodhall Avenue, & Drive, Fountain Drive, Hogarth Court, Great Brownings.

Zone E2: Mr. C.C. Phillips, 6 Crescent Wood Rd, SE26. 693 5023
Crescent Wood Rd, Peckarmans Wood, Sydenham Hill (1-110), Rock Hill, Crouchmans Close, Woodsyre.

Zone F: Mrs. R.M.S. Maude, 19 Oakfield Gardens, Dulwich Wood Avenue SE19. 670 7963. Alleyn Crescent, Alleyn Park, Alleyn Road, Baird Gardens, Farquhar Rd, Knoll, Lowood & Glenhurst Courts, Little Bornes, Lymer Avenue, Grenville, Raleigh, Marlowe Courts, Oakfield Gardens, Rouse Gardens, Linley & Whitfield Courts, South Croxted Rd, Tynney Avenue, Drake Court, Dulwich Wood Park, Giles Coppice, Kingswood Drive, Rockwell Gardens.

Zone G: Mr. J. Westwood, 13 Tarleton Gardens SE23. 699 0820
Little Brownings, Sydenham Hill (111 upwards), Sydenham Rise, Frobisher Court, Tarleton Gardens, London Rd, Thorpewood Avenue.

Postal: Mrs. E.T. Nash, 30 Dekker Rd. SE21.

Has anyone ever come across a dormouse in Dulwich? If so, we should be interested to know. The Mammal Society is conducting a survey of this attractive little animal. Furthermore, precise information about the density of squirrels and hedgehogs is being sought by the London Natural History Society and the Biological Records Centre at Monks Wood compiles distribution maps of wild species at the national level, so there is plenty of scope for keen observers who would like to enquire further.

So far, we have excluded wildfowl from the index of birds recently compiled for the committee but it would be interesting to have information about their numbers, fluctuations in these, and their nesting habits on the lakes in Belair, Dulwich Park, Sunray Gardens, and the Millpond. If you would like to help with a survey, especially of coots and moorhens to begin with, please observe them regularly on one stretch of water and keep your records on a sheet of paper headed and ruled with columns like this:

SURVEY OF COOTS AND MOORHENS

From: NAME
POND OR LAKE ADDRESS

Bird	Date	Time	No.	No. of	No. of	Observations on Activity,
				Nests	Young	positions of Nests, etc.

Miss Rosa Davis, of 118 College Road, telephone 670 3011, an active member of the Wild Life Committee, tells us that she will be glad to help with problems concerning swarms of bees, so if you should be visited by a swarm please get in touch with her.

TREES

Dulwich Park - 'Trees Trail'

It will be recalled that a very successful 'Trees Walk' was arranged by the Society last June, at which some 180 members and friends were shown a variety of different trees in Dulwich Park.

The leaders of the walk - Mr W. E. Storey, Chief Horticultural Adviser to the GLC, and his colleague, Mr E. Canneaux - were, like the Park Superintendent, Mr Wood, so impressed by the enthusiasm and interest shown that they decided to organise a permanent Tree Trail in the Park.

Some 30-40 trees have now been labelled and a special pamphlet listing these trees and describing the Trail is in the course of preparation. There will be a token charge of a penny or two for the pamphlet which, we hope, will be available in April to visitors to the Park.

Members are invited to see this Trail for themselves on 1 July (see Society Meetings).

Members' Meeting - 3 June

Reference was made in a recent newsletter to the photographic record of trees affected by Dutch Elm Disease in Dulwich which is being made by our member, Mr Christopher Benwell. There will be an opportunity to see a selection of these slides at the Members' Meeting on 3 June.

The main part of this meeting will be addressed by Mr W. E. Story, of the GLC, who will be providing some interesting details of some of the trees of Britain.

Mr Storey will be showing some of his excellent slides illustrating a variety of aspects of British trees. This should be an entertaining and interesting evening.

THE HORNIMAN NATURE TRAILS

We are indebted to Mr A. E. Janaway, Park Manager, for the following notes on the Trails.

At Horniman Gardens, adjoining the Horniman Museum, there have been developed over the past six years three nature trails: two within the Garden and one along the disused railway line.

The two trails in the gardens, the Coachhouse and Dutch Barn trails, were the first to be documented and laid out with teaching stage markers in the early 1970s. They are of necessity cultivated areas comprising shrub borders, grass areas, flower beds, and trees. In the trees, nesting boxes have been placed. When they were cleaned out this winter all but two had been inhabited out of a total of twenty-five. One has been adapted by a woodpecker and he has enlarged the hole (Stage 6, Dutch Barn trail). There is evidence of the woodpecker's activity in two nearby trees.

The tawny owl is frequently heard in the Gardens at night. This year an owl nest box has been fixed in an oak tree on the Dutch Barn trail, hoping they will become residents rather than visitors. The oak tree was chosen because the grey squirrel rarely builds a drey in the oak, thus leaving the box vacant for the owl. It is hoped to add bat boxes to the collection in the near future.

The Railway Nature trail was opened in June 1974, being documented and laid out with teaching stage markers. This track of land is part of the disused Nunhead to Crystal Palace (High Level) Railway running from London Road to the north-east corner of Horniman Gardens, at the rear of the houses in Wood Vale. This trail is wild and as little cultivation as possible is done. Some planting of trees, shrubs, plants and bulbs has taken place to increase the already abundant wealth of plant material for teaching purposes. There is over twenty years' natural recolonisation of plants as the last trains ran on 20 September 1954. Trees such as Goat Willow, Silver Birch, Oak, Lime, Ash and, of course Sycamore, grow naturally after the restrictions of the railway.

The bed of the track is just visible under a carpet of plants, which are normally destroyed with cultivation on the trails in the Gardens; here they are allowed to flourish and to compete with one another. One of the additions is a rare Marsh Orchid.

The disused railway line continues from the north-east corner of Horniman Gardens to Langton Rise, running between the back gardens of the houses in Wood Vale and Westwood Park. This part has been set aside as a Nature Reserve, and is the latest addition to the Horniman Nature Trails.

The Nature Reserve is being developed for use by schools for ecological studies. Whereas the Railway Nature trail is open to schools and the general public from 9 am to 4 pm, 9 am to 6 pm Saturdays and Sundays, during the summer, the Nature Reserve is only available on request to schools, and the general public in organised parties.

A pond has been made for water dipping, dug in the clay beneath the bed of the railway track; it is supplied by natural surface drainage water. Water remained in the pond even through last year's unusually dry summer and is now developing into a natural pond. A recent survey showed a wide variety of pond life has already developed, including two goldfish anonymously donated last year which are proving very difficult to catch.

Ornithology has been catered for by building a hide unobtrusively in a wooded area, with a feeding station placed nearby to attract as wide a range of birds as possible. It is hoped this can be used, not only by schools, but by the Young Ornithological Society, and other interested groups in the locality.

A caravan is on site, as a fully equipped laboratory, for field studies by schools. After the specimens of pond life, small mammals, plants and insects have been studied, they are returned to their natural habitat, thereby providing good conservation training.

Residents of the properties in Wood Vale and Westwood Park, bounding these natural areas, view them with mixed feelings. Some enjoy "the effect of the countryside at the bottom of the garden", others want "this mess cleaned up". In the past some have crossed the boundary to cut down the undergrowth and seedling trees across the width of their gardens in an attempt to stop the "weeds" encroaching on their cultivated gardens. All but a few use the land as a compost heap for their garden refuse, as well as a dump for sundry household utensils of no further use.

Planners have suggested part of the Railway Nature trail as a site for a car park; but for other sites being considered more suitable for financial reasons, I feel it would have been difficult to justify the priority of nature over our lord and master, the motor car.

There are two information folders available for purchase from either the Horniman Gardens or the Museum, produced by the Horniman Nature Trail Development Group, and published by the ILEA Media Resources Centre. Pack No. 1 deals with the two trails in the Gardens, the Coach-house trail and the Dutch Barn trail. (Included is a guide for a Wet Weather trail in the Museum.) Pack No. 2 is for the Railway Nature trail, in which there is an interesting short history of the railway line.

NUNHEAD CEMETERY

We mentioned under the Wild Life heading in the last newsletter (page 10) that the Borough of Southwark has bought Nunhead Cemetery and intends to keep part of it as a nature reserve. We are now indebted to Mr R. Palmer of the Borough Public Relations Department for permission to reproduce the following extracts from an article on the Cemetery published in October 1974 in Southwark's Civic News.

"The idea of a 52 acre open space in Inner London, the size of Green Park, completely overgrown with dense, barely penetrable forest, seems incredible. But that is what we have in Southwark, at Nunhead Cemetery.

"The cemetery was originally constituted by a special Act of Parliament in 1836. As privately owned and consecrated space, its status has always been, and still is, firmly protected. Generations of Southwark families have been buried there, and that might have continued, but for a change of ownership in 1963. Under the 1836 Act, the Cemetery may not be sold, but the company owning the cemetery at that time was taken over, with the cemetery included among the company's assets.

"All maintenance work at the cemetery was ended, and in 1969 the cemetery was closed, and left to run wild. Great distress was caused to relatives of people buried there, as the grass and weeds grew higher, and finally many could no longer find the graves they sought.

"Attempts were made to persuade the cemetery owners to maintain the cemetery. Southwark Council issued summonses for the felling of dangerous trees at the cemetery's edges, by the roadways, which the owners complied with. Soon the deterioration led to more sinister developments. Occult ceremonies, the opening of graves, and the sheer brute vandalism of monuments and catacombs caused an outcry. Tramps and meth-drinkers congregated there, and a flood of complaints began.

"After months of intensive legal research, a solution was found, and the Cemetery is now Southwark's property.

"In the cemetery as a whole there are some 45,000 graves, going back to 1840. But the graves used in the last fifty years for burial are mostly grouped together in the southern part of the area. This 22 acre area still has room for 22,000 new graves, enough to meet the Borough's needs for at least 36 years, perhaps longer.

"The joint committees agreed to retain this 22 acre area as a cemetery. The majority of it will be converted over a five year period to a lawn type cemetery. This means that all existing memorials, except those of exceptional character, will be laid flat and covered over. Marker stones will be inserted if requested by existing grave owners.

"Parts of this cemetery area contain mature trees, and these few acres are to be fenced off with a six foot iron railing, with locked access points.

"For the remaining twenty-nine acres, the Council has decided on a dual role, although the precise proportions for each use are still to be determined.

"Something between 6 and 11 acres is the likely figure for open space. In the north-west area a large flower garden with seats is likely, where people could plant memorial rose trees. Grass and paths running uphill from this point contain no graves, and could be used as an informal picnic area, but no ball games or similar active pursuits could be permitted.

"Towards the top of the hill, midway along the south-west wall, there are some unique examples of Victorian family monuments, with massive granite monoliths over them. These will be retained as a point of interest.

"At the top of the hill, the highest point of the cemetery we reach 200 feet above sea level, with a magnificent view. The countryside of Surrey and Kent rolls away towards the south-east, while north and westwards lies an unobstructed view of London. Here an embankment is to be made to further raise the level, or alternatively a stone viewing platform will be laid.

"The third area is to be used as a nature reserve, to take full advantage of the abundant plant, bird and insect life in the cemetery. This will amount to something in the region of 16 to 21 acres.

"Several schools and Nature Societies have expressed a keen desire to use part of the cemetery for educational use in this way. They hope it may be possible to create a marshy pond among this dense woodland, so that a full range of pond life and marsh plants can also be studied.

"The nature reserve area will also provide a thick screen of trees between neighbouring houses and the cemetery, and will reduce noise from passing traffic.

"Apart from attending to unsafe graves, monuments or catacombs, and dangerous trees, this large area will remain untouched. The natural balance of tree and wild life that has built up in the last ten to twenty years will continue.

"For children born and bred in the city, the new Nature Reserve could be a country paradise. There will have to be controlled access to the area, to avoid repetitions of the unpleasant abuses of the recent past, but all bona-fide nature lovers will be welcome."