

The Dulwich Society

TO FOSTER AND SAFEGUARD THE AMENITIES OF DULWICH

Newsletter 67
January 1985

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Officers:

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

Vice
Chairman: P F J Lawson,
41 Village Way SE21
733 2646

Treasurer: A J Davis, FCA
38 Stonehills Court SE21
693 1713

Secretary: Mrs R F U Taylor
30 Walkerscroft Mead SE21
670 0890

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

February 7th St. Barnabas Hall 8 pm	Trees Sub- Comm- tee	The Trees Sub- Committee presents a talk: "Sneffield Park Garden, its history and plants" by Mr. Archie Skinner, Head Gardener, of this, the finest of all National Trust Gardens.
March 7th St. Barnabas Hall 8 pm	AGM	
May 2nd	Wildlife Sub- Committee	Mr K Betton of the London Natural History Society will give a talk on "Birds of the London Area".

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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 22nd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the DULWICH SOCIETY will be held at 8.00pm on Thursday 7th March 1985 in St Barnabas Hall Dulwich Village.

AGENDA

1. Minutes of the 21st Annual General Meeting held on 1st March 1984 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 1985-86:-
 - (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 7th 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

OBITUARY

We have to record with very deep regret the deaths of two long-standing members of the Society.

Lady Linda Everson came to live in Dulwich in the late '60s when her husband, Sir Frederick Everson KCMG retired from the Diplomatic Service. Lady Everson became closely involved with the Society's work during its first decade and with the Cheshire Home in Dulwich. Sir Frederick was the Chairman of the Society from 1970-75, and has since remained closely linked with it as one of its longest-serving and most active Vice-Presidents.

In 1975, Lady Everson suffered a stroke. Despite this handicap, her personality was such that she is remembered with affection as a person of great charm and an excellent 'raconteuse' with a remarkable memory.

We offer our deepest sympathy to Sir Frederick and his family on their sad loss.

* * *

Sir Robert Lawrence CBE ERD FCIT FRSA CBIM was an Old Alleynian who, in later years, was elected to the Board of Governors of Dulwich College: he was also a member of the Guild of the Honourable Company of Lorimers - originally, the craftsmen who made the metal parts of horse-harnesses - and he was eventually granted the Freedom of the City of London.

Early in his career he joined the Railways, and during the war saw service with the Royal Engineers: when a 2nd Lieutenant, he was Mentioned in Despatches.

A Memorial Service was held for Sir Robert last November to commemorate, in particular, his work for the British Railways Board: from 1971 until his death Sir Robert was the Chairman of the Board's Properties Board, and had been Vice-Chairman of the Board from 1975-81.

We offer our deep sympathy to Lady Lawrence and her family on their loss of someone of great drive and wide interests.

* * *

HORTICULTURAL SUB-COMMITTEE

Brightening the Winter Months

At this time of year, for most of us, the garden will have been shut out in the cold. Perhaps, wiping the condensation from our windows, we spare a moment to admire the Viburnums and Mahonias that can splash a drab scene with colour, or wonder at the temerity of an Autumn Cherry that in any brief mild spell wreaths itself with delicate, sparkling blossom to gladden the heart.

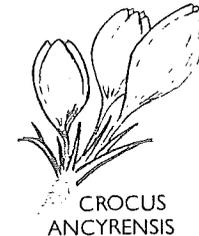
These are not isolated examples of plants that can provide us with interest through the Winter, there are hundreds more, in his book 'Colour in the Winter Garden' Graham Thomas lists well over 500 species, varieties and cultivars! The fact is that it is in summer that we travel to beautiful gardens and see and covet the flamboyant plants of that season. Hibernating around the central heating we miss the treasures of Winter that tend to be shy and retiring, many hanging their heads for shelter from the icy blasts but possessing a special charm that the more colourful plants of Summer cannot match. That is why one of the Society's members is hoping that it may be possible to persuade the authorities to set aside an area in Dulwich Park as a Winter garden, to provide us with an inspiration and example that would be accessible even in the bleakest conditions.

Winter plants in general are not to be admired from a distance, their beauty is restrained and therefore they should be grouped together and sited, perhaps by a path in the front garden, where they will be appreciated from close quarters. If the bed can be raised a foot or so to improve the drainage so much the better, your plants will thank you for it. Give your bed form and substance by planting one or two of the marvellously varied

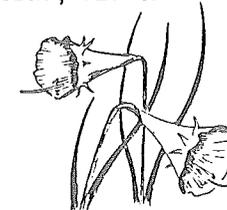
dwarf conifers that are now available. Set aside a corner for heathers, there are a wide range that can be in flower from November to April, but the old favourites Erica carnea Springwood White and Springwood Pink and Erica xdarleyensis Silberschmelze still hold their own, include some for foliage interest too Erica vagans Valerie Proudley is a pristine lemon yellow the year round while the bright red tips of Calluna vulgaris Multicolor, at their best after early spring frost, can vie with any flowering heather in beauty. Now pop in a few compact shrubs, perhaps a Hebe, although in essence an Autumn flowering shrub, can provide bloom in keeping with your theme until Christmas. The Daphnes will be high on your list for they provide perfume as well as beauty. Daphne bholua 'Gurkha', Daphne mezereum, purple or white and especially the evergreen Daphne odora, usually available in the variety 'Aureomarginata' will provide blooms to scent any room in earliest Spring and reward you in compactness for your depredations. The Sarcococcas, attractive shrubs the year round, provide a sweetness of scent in January that more than makes up for their rather insignificant flowers. Do not overlook the Rhododendron. True most of the reliable early flowers may be too big for our plot but two compact varieties worthy of consideration are Rhododendron Lapponicum Parvifolium in the Siberian form (the Japanese form does not bloom until March) to flower in January and a hybrid from Eastern USA - P.J. Mezzit - blooming later, whose small leaves turn an attractive bronzy-purple in Winter.

Now, having established the structure of our bed, we should plant some mat forming

evergreen rock plants. As a bonus, these will extend the season of interest, but their purpose is to protect the flowers of dwarf bulbs growing through them from the spattering of soil thrown up by the Winter storms. You can have Crocus's from December starting with laevigatus fontenayi, soft violet blue, and the



CROCUS
ANCYRENSIS



HOOP PETTICOAT DAFFODIL

diminutive, orange yellow, ancyrensis: Narcissi from January, the hoop-petticoat varieties leading the way: Scilla from February, Scilla tubergeniana and bifolia: and of course Cyclamen, Irises and Snowdrops the Winter through.

Among the herbaceous plants to consider will be the early flowering hepaticas and pulsatillas of the Anemone family, Hellebores, particularly the Christmas Rose Hellebores niger, Potentilla alba, Primulas in variety and Saxifraga kelleriei, the first Saxifrage to flower with tiny pink urn shaped blooms on red stems above the grey rosettes of leaves, sharp drainage essential. Finally for those small sheltered crevices that have been overlooked sow seeds of the annual, Ionopsidium acaule in September to provide myriads of tiny pale lilac stars during mild spells.

This is no more than a flavour of the plants that can provide us with beauty and interest during the Winter months. If you agree than an area in the Park set aside as a Winter garden would add to the amenities of Dulwich why not contact Dr. I. Marks,

Cypress Tree House, Dulwich Common, SE21,
who would welcome interest and support!

The National Gardens Scheme Charitable Trust

In 1985 Mr. Fairlie celebrates the fiftieth year since he first took over responsibility for The Grange, in Grange Lane. In celebration he wants to express his great gratitude for being able to have his home for so long in such a delightful setting.

A large number of people, every year for a long time past, have obtained great pleasure from visiting gardens in various places throughout the country, and at the same time contributing to charities.

The National Gardens Scheme is an organisation no doubt known to many of our members, which has been operating since 1980 as a formally approved charity, to co-ordinate and support these openings and the distribution of the monies collected.

A large booklet, now listing over 1,500 gardens, is published by them each year, and in 1985, there will be a Dulwich garden listed for the first time. The Grange garden will be open at an entrance fee of 50p both on Sunday afternoon April 21st and June 23rd 1985 from 2.30pm to 5.30pm.

It is hoped that these can be gala openings, with sales of plants, teas and refreshments (including a home-made cake stall) and a raffle.

Arrangements have been made that a part of the proceeds from these occasions shall go to the Streatham Home & Hospital for Incurables at Crown Point, who have promised help with the service of teas.

The National Gardens Scheme have promised us a major press release and posters etc. to publicise these events, and hope to draw to Dulwich the maximum possible number of visitors "from all over London". Their

shares of the proceeds are designed to help many deserving causes. The major part of their monies is distributed through the benevolent funds of the Queens Nursing Institute and certain County Nursing Associations.

Any of our members who would like to contribute to these with help or material aid, should get in touch with Mr. Fairlie, who will be very grateful, also the temporary loan of robust garden chairs or tables for setting out on the main lawn for the service of teas, will be very welcome. Phone 693 1187 (preferably between 8.00 am and noon on week-days).

A Request

The Horticultural Sub-Committee were pleased with the reception of their slide show on Dulwich Gardens at the Society's October meeting. We would like to do something similar in 1986. Would members, with slides of local gardens, who would be willing to lend them for this purpose, please let any member of the Sub-Committee know.

TREES SUB-COMMITTEE

Birthday Tree

On Saturday, 3rd November a tree was planted in the Gardens of Dulwich Picture Gallery to commemorate the 21st Anniversary of the Foundation of the Dulwich Society. In choosing the variety of tree we looked for a species which was in itself beautiful and also one not to be found anywhere else in the public spaces in the Dulwich area. We eventually chose an Acer Griseum which has a lovely Autumn colour and whose bark

provides a good year-round alternative; indeed it is known as Paper Bark Maple. The tree was planted with due ceremony in the far corner of the Gallery Garden, in front of the sheds. A small reception was held in the Gallery afterwards, which was attended by members of the Society, a member of the Governors, Friends of the Gallery and other guests. We are most grateful to Giles Waterfield for allowing us to use the garden for the planting and the Gallery itself for the reception which proved a most happy and enjoyable event.

Sydenham Hill Wood

It appears that Southwark Council has decided after all to develop the Lapsewood and Fernbank sites. The London Wildlife Trust is leasing much of the wood from Southwark to develop as a public nature park, but is opposing the development, calculating that up to 200 dwellings may be built on the 12 acres of wood. Its campaign is called "Save the Woods" and if you would like to help please contact Bob Smith, 54 King's Grove, SE15. 01 732 6984. A public enquiry will be held in January, 1985.

WILDLIFE SUB-COMMITTEE

Sightings (up to November)

Not a Red Admiral in sight. Nor, in what has been a good year in the south of England for butterflies has any other immigrant been reported in Dulwich, save one Brimstone. The negative report on bats in the previous newsletter prompted one member to advise that they are still around in numbers. An albino squirrel has been seen.

From woodland and park area come encouraging reports of woodland birds including Great and Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers. The usual post breeding dispersal away from these areas has scarcely been noted; almost the only example of a Nuthatch on the ironwork of Barclays Bank. The last date for House martens was 3rd October. Redwings and Fieldfares, wintering thrushes, have yet to be seen. The birches lining our streets carry seeds that are an attraction to small birds, some of which on close inspection may prove to be Redpolls. Reports to Mr. Freshwater: 693 1666).

Bats at Sydenham Hill Wood

Bats are a difficult group of mammals to identify, usually flying at night, and when seen, they are fluttering too fast for us to get a clear view. Reliable identification is normally only possible if details of fur colour, ear, nose and wing shape can be seen closely, when bats are found roosting, or when they are caught in especially fine "mist nets", for study in the hand. A special bat sound detector device is also available, which can record the ultrasonic emissions used by bats to echolocate their insect prey, reproducing this as traces on a sonagram, and as a buzzing sound, characteristic of each bat species. Also, although of limited use in identification, people with normal good hearing, retained to at least middle age, can listen to the very sharp squeaking contact calls of bats, often the best way of discovering that they are flying overhead.

There has long been speculation about the bats occurring in Sydenham Hill Wood Nature Reserve, particularly because it has been thought that the old railway tunnel could provide a bat roost. To try and identify what bats were in the wood, I have spent several evenings there during the summer. Of the fifteen species of bats occurring

in Britain, only the comparatively large noctule and serotine bats, medium sized Daubenton's, Mitterer's and whiskered bats, and small pipistrelle and long-eared bats, are widespread in suitable habitats in the London area. Therefore, by considering the size, shape, habits and habitats of these seven likely species, it is possible to have a good idea of the identity of those bats in Sydenham Hill Wood.

Knowing that the larger bats normally fly high in the sky, I chose a vantage on the top floor of the flats that overlook the wood. Listening intently above the sounds of distant traffic, I heard the subtle chirp of bats, and after searching the twilight sky, I found two flying up with the squeling swifts. The bats fluttered rapidly, circling high above the wood, swooping erratically to catch moths and flying beetles, probably scooping the prey up in their wings, like a net. The bats were about the same size as the swifts, making them large compared to most other likely species, and this and their habit of flying high and fast, shows that they are noctule bats. Noctule bats are more widespread in London than the similar serotine, occurring in wooded areas, including the Royal Parks. Although noctule bats fly elsewhere in the area, I never saw more than two over Sydenham Hill Wood. These bats are often out flying in daylight, during the afternoon. Noctule bats normally roost in tree holes, such as old woodpecker nests, and therefore there are many suitable homes for them in the old trees in the wood.

Unlike the noctule bats, the other species found in Sydenham Hill Wood flies low. This is the small pipistrelle bat, the most widespread species in Britain. I have seen three individual pipistrelle bats fluttering to and fro along regular

beats under the trees along the old railway, and about the street lamps at the edges of the wood, where they can catch the insects swarming to the light.

So far I have only seen the noctule and pipistrelle bats in Sydenham Hill Wood, though more regular observations may find one or two more species. Although no roosts have yet been found, and the old railway tunnel is probably too large and drafty for them, the many old trees in the wood should provide suitable homes for bats. However, I expect that it would help if some special bat boxes were also provided.

SYDENHAM HILL WOOD

The Minutes of the Dulwich Society Town Planning Sub-Committee show that the Society's interest in and concern for Sydenham Hill Wood and its environs date back at least 15 years. The Society's policy has been consistently one of conservation, not only of this last remaining part of ancient woodlands, but also of the fine Victorian houses on Sydenham Hill itself.

The general area has gone under several names. One part of the site is named Lapsewood after one of the Victorian houses: another is generally called Fernbank, and again this was previously occupied by large houses.

The map shows the land owned by the London Borough of Southwark. It was bought from the Estates Governors in 1978, and it is under the control of two different committees of the Borough, the Libraries and Amenities Committee and the Housing Committee. Both Committees have at different times leased land to the London Wildlife Trust.

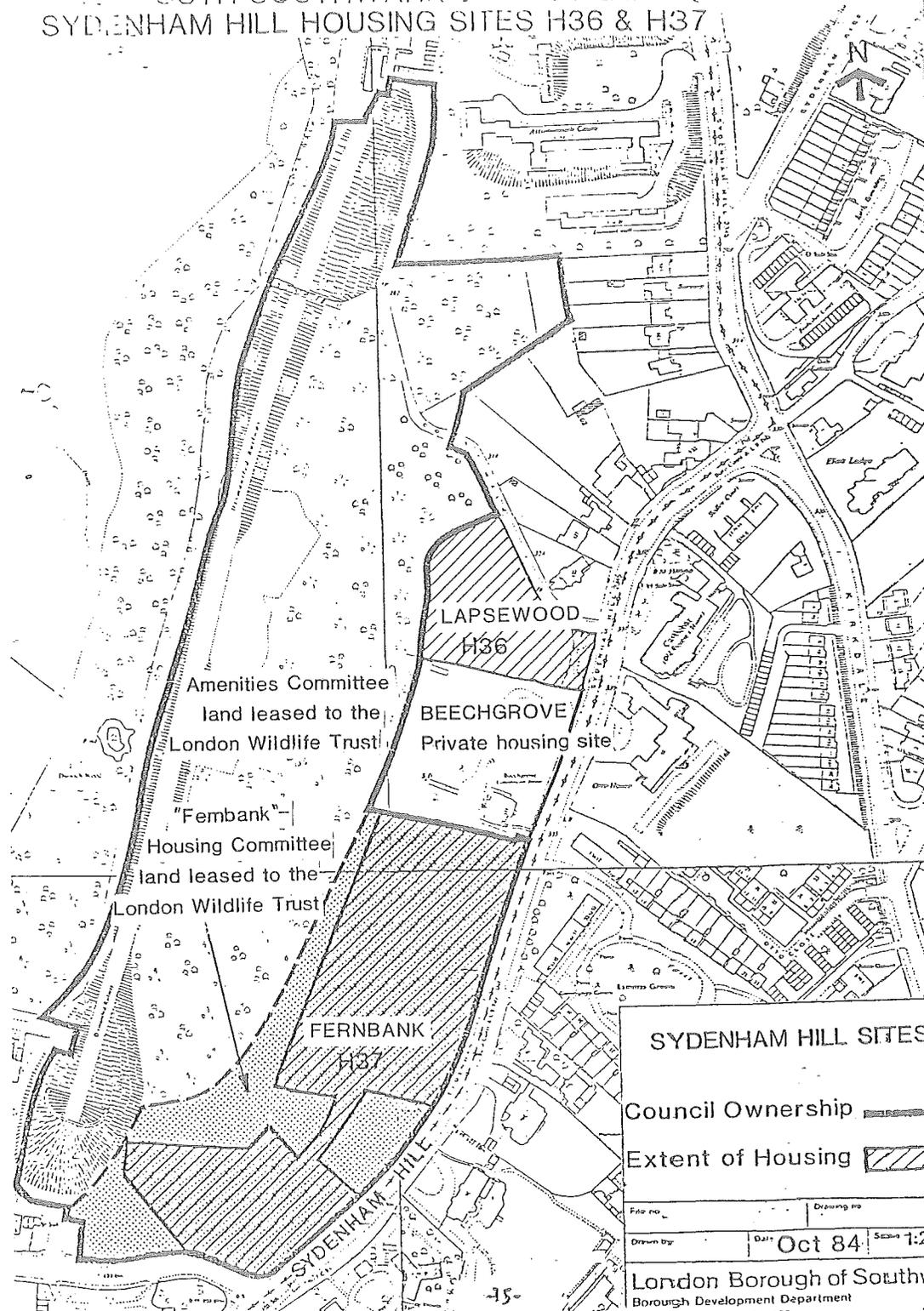
SYDENHAM HILL HOUSING SITES H36 & H37

There have been several proposals for using parts of the site for housing. Because of its steeply-sloping nature, it could not all be developed. Indeed, the Fernbank site was offered for sale for private housing development in 1980, but little interest was shown by developers because of the likely high building costs. Similarly, tentative plans for Local Authority housing have run up against the same problem.

The Society has opposed all such housing proposals, and the latest proposal is that the Lapsewood and Fernbank parts of the site should remain in the Mid-South Southwark Local Plan as zoned for housing.

The inclusion of the two sites in the Local Plan stems from the necessity for the Borough Council to fulfill the provisions of the revised Greater London Development Plan. Under the Plan, the Council is required not only to replace some 4000 existing houses, but also to find sufficient land suitable for building 5400 new houses over the next ten-year period. - There is not only a long waiting list: the Council's aim is to be able to build houses with gardens in pleasant surroundings. - The North Southwark and Mid-South Southwark Plans have, between them, mustered sufficient potential building acreage, but more than half that acreage is controlled by the London Dockland Development Corporation. The LDDC may not agree to its use for housing development.

The Mid-South Southwark Local Plan Steering Committee is not only aware of the development difficulties presented by the sites and the large number of mature trees there: it has been thoroughly briefed by the London Wildlife Trust, the Nature Conservancy Council, and others including this Society, on the need to preserve and conserve for the future this (pitifully) small remnant of ancient woodlands and the wildlife they support.



TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT SUB-COMMITTEE

The Traffic and Transport Sub-Committee of the Society is in grave danger of collapsing. After several years of stable membership, a number of its members have resigned either for reasons of ill-health or because they were leaving the area and appeals in previous issues of the Newsletter for volunteers to replace them have been totally without result.

The variety and interest of the Sub-Committee's work may be judged by the occasional reports in the Newsletter; in this issue, topics are the South Circular Road and the pedestrian crossings at Herne Hill. It will also be apparent that the Sub-Committee looks at things from the users point of view - pedestrians, cyclist, motorist - so what it needs are interested users of the roads and public transport - and that must comprise virtually the entire membership of the Society!

If you have found the articles on transport topics of any interest or concern, please will you consider whether you could offer a small amount of time to helping your Society by serving on this Sub-Committee? It is vitally important that the Society should make its views known on matters to do with traffic and transport, which affect the life and environment of every member, but it cannot do this without a strong Sub-Committee to discuss the facts and agree on a view. The demands on your time will not be great; the Sub-Committee meets five or six times a year on a weekday evening in the home of one of its members, and the Chairman sets a target of one hour for business. (He confesses that he does not always achieve his target and takes no responsibility for time spent on social chat!).

The Chairman (tel: 670 2965) or any member of the Sub-Committee (list in the April 1984 Newsletter) will be delighted to tell you more and arrange for you to attend one or two meetings of the Sub-Committee before deciding whether you would like to join. But above all, please do not pass this appeal by without thinking about it. Your Society has an influential voice, expressed through its Sub-Committees, but it is not reasonable to ask the handful of remaining members of the Traffic and Transport Sub-Committee to carry out this task indefinitely on your behalf.

Pedestrian Crossings at Herne Hill

The new traffic signals and pedestrian crossings at the Herne Hill junction have now been at work for more than six months and pedestrians, especially the handicapped and those encumbered by prams or shopping trolleys, find the "green men" a real boon. Motorists are less happy, since they are prohibited from turning left into Half Moon Lane from either Railton Road or Milkwood Road and this inconvenience has been exaggerated by the totally inadequate signposts, of the temporary RAC type, warning drivers to divert before reaching Herne Hill junction. The Traffic Sub-Committee enquired of Lambeth Borough why better signs could not be provided and was told that signs were ordered as soon as the plans were finalised, but all the traffic signs for the Borough are made by one man in a workshop in Kennington (this sounds like the outline for a TV sketch but is no joke) and delays of six months or more are endemic. With any luck, the permanent signs should have been erected by the time this appears in print.

Your Sub-Committee and the Borough engineer had both observed that the Milkwood Road pedestrian crossing was comparatively little used, and pedestrians were crossing the road diagonally at the corner, at risk of being run down by a car appearing suddenly from under the railway bridge. A guard rail has recently been erected on the footway edge to encourage pedestrians to make use of the crossing where, at the expense of a few yards walk, visibility is much better and the "green man" enables the crossing to be made in complete safety.

It does seem, though, that not everyone appreciates that to cross Milkwood Road it is necessary to press the button on the traffic signal pole. When this has been done, the illuminated WAIT sign lights up to indicate that the apparatus has registered that a pedestrian is waiting and the "green man" will appear at the next safe opportunity.

The confusion arises because, on all the other pedestrian crossings at Herne Hill junction, the "green man" appears automatically with each cycle of the traffic signals without the need to press the button. For example, the crossing under the bridge, or across Half Moon Lane, shows the "green man" while vehicles from Railton Road and from Milkwood Road have a green signal (and it is, of course, to protect pedestrians using these crossings that the left turns are prohibited from those roads). Hence the need for that phase of the traffic signals is indicated to the control apparatus either by waiting traffic (which is detected by magnetic loops buried in the road surface) or by waiting pedestrians (who press the button). At

most time of day, there will be at least one vehicle waiting at a red signal. This is registered by the signal controller which will provide a green "proceed" signal as the appropriate point in its timed programme is reached. Any further waiting vehicles, or pedestrians pressing the button, are superfluous so far as the controller is concerned; for all practical purposes, the green signal will be the minimum necessary for pedestrians to cross the road in safety. (This necessarily simplified explanation will not be adequate at time of exceedingly light traffic, e.g. at 2.0am.).

Milkwood Road, though, is different. The pedestrian crossing here is not linked to a vehicle "green" phase; instead, the traffic turning into Milkwood Road from under the railway bridge is specially stopped to enable pedestrians to cross, and the cycle time of the entire junction is slightly extended to reduce the risk of this creating congestion. So the Milkwood Road crossing will only function if a pedestrian presses the button, the idea being to avoid stopping the traffic except when there is someone actually waiting to cross.

As the Milkwood Road crossing was installed as an after-thought, after comments on the original plans had been considered by the Borough, your Sub-Committee hopes members passing that way on foot will find they do so more safely. Remember the basic rule, which applies to all pedestrian signals including Pelicans; look for the illuminated "WAIT" on the signal pole which indicates a "green man" will eventually (!) appear. If "WAIT" is not illuminated, press the button to ask for the signal to appear.

South Circular Road

There has been a good deal of publicity about Government plans for the South Circular Road, and as some of the scare-mongering has been decidedly wild - headlines of the "Motorway across Dulwich Common" type - members may wish to know the attitude of the Society and of its Traffic Sub-Committee.

First, it cannot be too strongly emphasised that the Society is entirely outside party politics. Even if this were not our choice - which it is - it would be enforced by virtue of our status as a registered charity. Hence we have no opinion on the merits or otherwise of the proposal to abolish the Greater London Council, and place control of a number of strategic roads, one of which is the South Circular, with the Department of Transport rather than with the Borough Councils. This is what is meant by "trunking"; a trunk road is one which is the responsibility of central rather than local government, no more than that. "Trunk road" does not mean dual carriageway, expressway, or any of the other "definitions" being circulated, often at the ratepayers' expense, from a variety of sources.

The Minister of State for Transport, Mrs. Lynda Chalker, in a speech in Dulwich last October, assured her audience that she was well aware of the unpleasant and dangerous traffic conditions on the South Circular and that it was the intention of her Department to examine the problems and make an effort "to find sensible and sensitive solutions. Whatever is done must be carried out with sensitivity and care for the residents and the environment". The Dulwich Society would not dissent from that as a statement of intentions.

It remains to be seen, of course, what proposals eventually emerge from the Department of Transport, and it is at that point that your Society will take a close interest, pressing for the proposals to take account of the best interests of local residents. In the meanwhile, we can get some idea of what might be proposed from a report published in 1983 by the British Roads Federation (BRF) and Movement for London. This examines the South Circular Road and proposes for the most part, minor traffic engineering measures to make it safer and to try to reduce congestion. The report has, of course, no official status whatsoever, but as the most recent publication of the "roads lobby", is the only factual indication which we have of intentions for the road. The conclusion which your Traffic Sub-Committee draws from the report is that proposals must be carefully scrutinised as they emerge but that, taken overall, there seems no justification as yet for the sometimes hysterical opposition to any change of any sort.

The South Circular Road is unpleasant and dangerous. The Society considers that changes to improve traffic flow by reducing congestion will not necessarily be to the detriment of the local environment, and that each proposal must be considered on its merits.

Letter to Mrs. Lynda Chalker

I understand that the Government is proposing to turn the South Circular Road A205 into a trunk road on the lines apparently suggested in the consultation paper on the Reallocation of Transport Responsibilities. I do not find it encouraging that the first thing I knew

about this was from a leaflet pushed through my door from a pressure group. This house is less than 200 yards from the South Circular Road and we are bound to be affected.

Generally, I oppose the proposal to make the A205, or a substantial part of it, into a trunk road for long distance through traffic, particularly as there would apparently be no public enquiry into the change of status which will inevitably result in road "improvements", increase of traffic, disruption and danger in the neighbourhood etc. The place for such through roads is well out of London, and I would have thought it would have been much more sensible for the Government to get on with completing the M25 so as to take traffic away from the Inner London area. The concept of carving inner London into mini-motorways is outdated and has been shown to be so.

My particular point is that this part of Dulwich is quite a pleasant place in which to live. There is already some noise, dirt and disruption from the existing South Circular which would only be made substantially worse by these proposals. As the parent of two growing boys, I am particularly concerned at the danger to children from the existence of this road and the capricious traffic light phasing at the junction between Rosendale Road and the South Circular which my children use to get to school each day. There are so many accidents and near accidents, many involving pedestrians and cyclists. This is something which we have attempted to communicate to the existing highway authorities about, with - of course - total lack of success.

There are other arguments which no doubt others will very reasonably pray in aid eg distribution of perfectly adequate houses, effect on prices of neighbouring properties, and I will leave them to develop this. My particular concern is the safety angle. London's inner suburban roads are no place for heavy lorries and through traffic.

I therefore trust that you will instruct your officials not to proceed with this particular piece of outdated planning and I look forward to your comments or those of your department.

HELPING TO DRY OUT SOUTH EAST LONDON

During September and October last year, Burbage Road was closed to traffic at the junction with Half Moon Lane. Massive timber baulks held traffic at bay and a very large pit was excavated close to the junction. Residents in those roads had been advised by the Thames Water Authority of the reasons for this closure and why closure would again be necessary early in 1985. Other residents in the Dulwich area might welcome information on the whys and wherefores of this operation, and why other parts of Dulwich are due to be affected throughout 1985.

Last autumn, television crews splashed through stretches of London's sewer system, on the orders of various programme directors, to highlight the system's present condition and the problems this condition now poses. - Film editors, and later, viewers, found themselves looking at scenes strongly reminiscent of those scenes, brilliantly shot in black-and-white, to be seen in Carol Reed's 1949 film "The Third Man"! - The root problem lies in the age of London's sewers. Most of the major systems were laid down in the latter part of the 19th century, and, in particular, in the context of this article, the brick-built Effra sewer was laid in 1860. Like many other sewers in recent years, this one has been unable to cope with ever-increasing volumes of sewerage and frequent flooding has resulted in Herne Hill and other nearby localities. Shopkeepers and residents in Herne Hill have worked hard to convince the Thames Water Authority of their own plight, and their efforts have been supported by members of the Herne Hill Society to whom we are indebted for much of the following technical information.

To eliminate 'flash flooding', caused by the inability of the Effra sewer to absorb excess surface water following heavy rainfall, the Thames Water Authority has been engaged in the laying of a new Effra Storm Relief Sewer which, when completed, will run from Clapham to Gipsy Hill. The excavating of a tunnel 3km. long from Clapham to Burbage Road, the laying of the concrete sections of the sewer and the constructing of 3 overflow chambers within this stretch have constituted the first phase of the operation, and will have been carried out at a cost of £3m. The first section of the sewer running from Clapham to Brixton Water Lane, the main construction site, is 100ins. in diameter: the second section running from there to Burbage Road is 72ins. in diameter. The sewer has been laid at depths from 35ft. to 60ft. below the surface, and where it crosses the Northern Line it lies within 2 metres of the train tunnel. The full stretch of 3km. was due to be completed by Christmas 1984, and by that time 40 lorry runs a day will have accomplished the removal of 16,000 cubic metres of earth from the site at Brixton Water Lane, which is also the site at which all sections of the concrete sewer lining will have been lowered into the newly-dug

shaft. Digging has been carried out by machines tunnelling at a rate of 50 metres a day, 24 hours a day, 5 days a week. At any one time only 10 or 12 members of a total work force of about 50 will have been working underground.

The 3 overflow chambers are sited at Norwood Road, inside the perimeter railings of Brockwell Park, Brixton Water Lane and Burbage Road. They will act as weirs where excess storm water will flow over into the chambers, to be stored there until pumped north to Clapham and on into the Thames. Construction of the chamber at Burbage Road is due to be completed by February or by the beginning of March, and it will therefore be necessary for the road to be closed for a further period of about 8 weeks. It is expected that the traffic flow in Half Moon Lane will either be single lane or controlled by lights.

The second phase of the operation will be the construction of the final section of the Storm Relief Sewer which will be laid from Rosendale Road to Gipsy Hill, at a cost of £1.5m; this sewer will also be 100ins. in diameter. Tunnelling for this stretch is due to start in March or April, and will begin from a new site to the South of the junction of Rosendale Road and the South Circular Road, that is Thurlow Park Road. The traffic flow in Rosendale Road is bound to be disrupted, if not subject to diversion, but the hope is that traffic on the South Circular Road will only experience minimal disruption during the 12-month period needed to lay down the sewer! It is not quite clear why this phase will take so long to complete, though it is possible the considerable up-hill gradient may dictate the rate of the tunnelling, and motorists who use the South Circular regularly will not relish the prospect of even 'minimal disruption' for such a long time. But, certainly all residents in the immediate area will be informed by the Thames Water Authority, nearer the time, of the arrangements they have made in consultation with the Police for any necessary road closures or traffic diversions. Any resident with a particular problem will be able to consult the Site Manager.

Laymen who may be curious about how engineers are able to convert a line produced on a drawing-board into an underground tunnel running from point A to a point B, in this case miles away, and guarantee it will end exactly at that point, may like to know that the highly-complicated survey systems which have achieved this in the past have now been reinforced by the amazing potential of lasers.

There could possibly be a bonus 'spin-off' when the sewer finally reaches Gipsy Hill, though it cannot be guaranteed. During heavy rainfalls, excess surface water can collect to a depth of 6ins. or more at the junction of Croxted Road and the South Circular Road, near West Dulwich station. Pedestrians frequently find themselves taking unexpected, unwanted, cold and very dirty showers as traffic wades through at speed. If a link between the sewer and Council drainage systems can be

made at Gipsy Hill then...commuters, travellers generally, mums heading for school or the shops and others out for a walk or airing their dogs can offer silent thanks to the Thames Water Authority that they don't have to face the prospect of actually having to buy a wet-suit!

LOCAL HISTORY SUB-COMMITTEE

Villages of Dulwich and Sydenham

This is the seventh in a series of courses which have explored the villages of South-East London, and started in 1978. The inspiration for the series came from the Sunday Observer colour magazine which ran that year a supplement on Village London.

The idea and the way of presenting the course seemed to be liked by many evening students and it has continued since then, encompassing the boroughs of Greenwich, Lewisham and now Southwark. It has changed format in the last few years to include suggestions made by the class and to allow class members to contribute. Visiting speakers are sometimes familiar faces in the locality, and sometimes unknown, but all have a specialist interest in and knowledge of their chosen topic.

Talks are nearly always illustrated with slides and/or visual material. In addition a roundup of the work and current activities of local history societies is a weekly addition to this material. Class members are also encouraged to visit the local history centre involved in conjunction with the course and to read relevant books.

The first seven weeks, of the eight week term, deal with specialist aspects of Dulwich (and Sydenham), which it is hoped give an architectural and historical picture of a village, past and present. The final evening is a reminiscence time, when class members record on tape their own memories of the area. The tapes are subsequently used by local history groups and for research.

Dulwich speakers include Mr Brian Green, Mr Bill de Baerdemaecker and Mr Patrick Darby. It is hoped that Mr Giles Waterfield will give a talk on Dulwich Picture Gallery, and that there will be a complimentary talk on the Horniman Museum.

The full syllabus will be available in the early spring term from Room 204, School of Adult and Community Studies, University of London Goldsmiths' College, New Cross, SE14 6NW - Telephone No. 692 7171. The course is organised by Diana Rimel BA and runs from April-June 1985 for 8 weeks. The fee is £8.50 (£1 for retired and unwaged).

DULWICH AMENITIES AT RISK BY ELEPHANT!

Elephants Run Amok.

SENSATION AT THE CRYSTAL
PALACE

ONE OF THE KEEPERS CRUSHED
TO DEATH

"CHARLIE" IS SHOT

"H.R.H." TRAMPS TO DULWICH

AND VISITS THE HORNIMAN
MUSEUM

These were the headlines to a report covering 61 column inches of a page in the 'South London Press' on Saturday February 24 1900.

We owe our first knowledge of this alarming danger to "the amenities of Dulwich" to Lt. Col. Rodney Maude, whom many of you will remember was the Secretary of the Society for a number of years before retiring to Wiltshire in 1981.

Lt. Col. Maude's next-door neighbour had found a very old and fragile newspaper under some floorboards during renovations to her house. Parts of the pages and the paper's heading had crumbled away, but Lt. Col. Maude was able to copy one report which he thought might interest the denizens of Dulwich. The year of publication was established from other still-legible reports. Here is that report in full, with dots for the missing bits.

Serious Damage by Elephants at the Crystal Palace.

Two elephants belonging to Sanger's menagerie broke loose in the Crystal Palace on Saturday afternoon: one killed his keeper in escaping and was afterwards shot: the other escaped altogether and was not re-captured until Monday. The trouble began about 4 o'clock in the afternoon when Charlie, the bigger of the two beasts began savaging the camels. The men in charge tried to stop him and he turned upon them. One man slipped away in time; the other poor fellow, a man named 'Chips' Wood, was knocked down by Charlie, who a moment later stamped the life out of him, mangling him in a shocking manner. Then Charlie, followed by the other animal, Archie, burst the barrier and broke into the

main hall, scattering the Police and a number of people who were quietly walking about. Here they parted company. Archie walked to the concert room, thrust his head through the glass doors, broke them down and walked in. The concert was about to commence and a number of people were sitting about. Instantly panic seized them and they rushed through the emergency exits. Archie..... attention to them, but walked calmly..... thrust the swing doors open on the..... and passed out into that portion of the..... where the circus is now held. He st.....round behind the scenes and then moved.....to the north nave where everybody fled before him. He investigated a couple of refreshment bars, but finding nothing there, he passed out through the end door into the balloon ground. Here he made a bee-line for the place in which Lockhart's elephants were quartered all the summer. Then finding his progress barred, he calmly trampled down a brick wall and marched into the garden of a private residence named Fairfield. He ultimately gained the road..... smashing down some iron gates. A couple..... elephants were sent in pursuit to de..... back, but his mind being set..... -ture, he ignored them and..... He made his way to Penge and the..... -ham, pulling up trees and wreck..... route. He was last heard of in..... but up to a late hour..... sent out from Sangers..... failed to capture him.....

Where had Archie been between Saturday afternoon and Monday morning? What had happened to him afterwards?

This was a challenge! Investigations finally unearthed the report in the 'South London Press' with its startling headlines, and a second even lengthier report in the 'Beckenham Journal, Penge and Sydenham Advertiser'. It seems that Lt. Col. Maude's report must have appeared in a Salisbury paper.

Archie and "H.R.H." were the same elephant. He had earned the soubriquet "H.R.H." after accompanying the Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII, during a tour of India, and had been ridden by him: he had also had two 'audiences' with Queen Victoria who, after the escape, expressed her concern in a letter to Lord George Sanger about the elephants' future and "the poor man who was killed". But more of him later!

The accounts of Archie's journeyings fall into two parts, following the local interests of the reporters. The 'Press' reports he left the Crystal Palace grounds and ambled down Sydenham Hill and along Cox's Walk - surely the only elephant ever to do so - and at the end of the Walk, with a fine sense of 'history', he did not turn left towards Dulwich but headed via Lordship Lane station for the Horniman Museum gardens. Here the reporter warmed to his task when Archie came to a turnstile:-

'There is really no saying how an elephant ordinarily views a turnstile. To the human being such a structure sometimes presents features of mechanical and geometrical interest. Apparently Mr. Horniman's turnstile was on the present interesting occasion viewed by H.R.H. as either a hard nut to crack or a difficult problem to solve. Anyway he fought shy of it, and preferred to tackle a section of the adjacent iron railing. This was broken and uprooted with a methodical violence that stamped H.R.H. as quite a competent craftsman in metallurgy. The road was now clear into the museum grounds, and the question now naturally arose: What would H.R.H. do with the opportunity he had created for his own particular diversion?..... Would he make for the treasure house, and forthwith translate the interesting contents into an unadmired disorder? There was the mummy. It had walked perchance in Thebes streets three thousand years ago when the Memnonian was in all its glory. Would H.R.H. smell it out, witch-like, as something against which one of his ancestors had a grudge, and demolish it without benefit of clergy? It seemed the eyes of H.R.H. gleamed with growing mischief.....'

But no! Archie turned aside, passed a stable, eyeing it as though he might have seen it on earlier travels, and passed through a shrubbery into Westwood Park..He went from the Park through 'Beyer's Ground' to Devonshire Road, and made his way through Honor Oak Park "to Beckenham".

Neither reporter appears to have found sources to detail Archie's progress from Honor Oak Park, because the 'Journal' now picks him up in Newlands Park near Penge, and recounts his killing of "a valuable Airdale terrier" in Laurie Park. To Archie, the barking of a fair-sized dog would present a threat!

On what must have been Sunday evening, he arrived in Coper's Cope Road, Beckenham, around 10pm. He apparently made a detour into Brackley Road because he "skated" on the playground of the Abbey School and tramped about the football ground and cricket pitch before "leaving like a gentleman"! He spent the night in the garden of an unoccupied house in Coper's Cope Road.

After an early start, Archie reached Shortlands via Albemarle Road and crossed the tracks of the South East and London, Chatham and Dover lines to 'St Martin's'. Then he back-tracked from 'St Martin's' through the gardens of 'Parkhurst', the Albemarle Tennis Club and the grounds of the 'Grange' to Bromley Road. We don't know his route from this point, but he reached Hayes Common, where a haystack provided him with breakfast, and at last came to a halt in Barnet Wood. It was there that the trumpeting of one male and four female elephants brought down from the menagerie enticed him out to be taken back to the Crystal Palace. "Directly he got back home, 'H.R.H.' picked up a trunkful of hay and began eating it with an air of indifference, as though he had just been out for a stroll and come in to tea as usual." At about this time, Charlie, who had been shot on Saturday, was being skinned, to be stuffed and placed not in the British Museum, where Museum officials had asked to have him placed, but in the Natural History Section of the Crystal Palace.

And "the poor man who was killed"? This was one Emmanuel Cook Baker, alias 'Chips' or 'Chippy' Wood: a man not known for his kindness to dumb animals! It was established during the Coroner's Inquest that, after Charlie had given Wood a push, he had taken a lance to him to punish him. After hearing evidence from witnesses, including Lord George Sanger who gave Charlie an excellent character reference, the Jury agreed with the Coroner's summing-up and returned a verdict of "Death from injuries inflicted by the elephant Charlie, who was provoked by the deceased". Wood's conduct had been "most idiotic and reckless."

A classic example of natural justice? And where is Charlie now?

Endpiece.

Lt. Col. Maude was equally concerned as to Archie's fate, and we have sent copies of both reports of Saturday February 24 1900 to him with thanks and seasonal greetings from the Society.