



The Dulwich Society

TO FOSTER AND SAFEGUARD THE AMENITIES OF DULWICH

Newsletter 35

January 1977

THE DULWICH SOCIETY: NEWSLETTER 35: JANUARY 1977

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

THE NEW YEAR COMES AROUND AGAIN

And, as usual, we wish all our members a very happy New Year and we hope that 1977 will bring the good news that 1976 rather conspicuously failed to do. We have some sympathy for the gentleman who, when asked to see the New Year in and the Old Year out, said that as far as he was concerned 1976 could see itself out.

However we have some interesting events to tempt our members into 1977. We do not yet know all the details of our 1977 meetings but the list is as follows:

- January - No meeting
- 3 February - 8.0pm St. Barnabas' Hall, Dulwich Village
An illustrated historical talk by Bill de Baerdemaecker entitled "Farming in Dulwich" supported by many fascinating new slides of Victorian Dulwich.
- 3 March - 8.0pm St. Barnabas' Hall
The Annual General Meeting
Light Refreshments available
- 25 March - The Society Dinner. This will be at 7.15 for 7.45 pm on Friday 25th March and will be held for the first time in the new Dining Hall of Dulwich College (by kind permission of the Master). The price per head will be £5.00 and dress will be lounge suits for the gentlemen.

Numbers which can be accommodated are limited so please apply for tickets in good time to Mrs. K.M. Evans, using the application slip on the back page of this Newsletter.

Other Meetings proposed

5 May - Wild Life
2 June - Trees
July - Trees Walk
6 October - Details to be announced
3 November - Details to be announced
December - Choral Meeting with the Dulwich Choral Society

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The official notification and agenda are printed in this newsletter in accordance with the rules of the Society. We hope that you will be free to attend this meeting and to hear what the Society has achieved in the past year and hopes to achieve in 1977. Light refreshments will be served to revive you after the business is concluded.

We are sorry to have to announce the resignation of two members of the executive committee. The first is our Secretary, Edgar Brady, who finds that pressures of business make it impossible for him to carry on the duties of Secretary any longer. You will be hearing a proposal that Lt. Colonel Rodney Maude, now Chairman of the Membership and Publicity Sub-Committee, should be elected Secretary in his place. You will also hear a proposal that Mr. John Cran, now Press Officer, should be elected to Chair the Membership and Publicity Sub-Committee while retaining the office of Press Officer.

The second resignation is that of Miss Mary Pye-Smith, Chairman of the Wild Life Sub-Committee. You will be asked to approve the election of Mrs. Gwyneth Howells, biologist, of 7 College Road, SE21 in her place.

We would remind you that other nominations for these vacant positions on the executive committee may be received by the Chairman, Secretary or other committee member up to 14 days before the 3 March, 1977.

THE DULWICH SOCIETY

NOTICE is hereby given that the 14th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the DULWICH SOCIETY will be held at 8.0 p.m. on Thursday 3 March 1977, in ST BARNABAS' HALL, DULWICH VILLAGE.

A G E N D A

1. Minutes of the 13th Annual General Meeting held on 4 March 1976 to be read and approved.
2. Chairman's report, including reports by the Chairmen of Sub-Committees.
3. Treasurer's report.
4. Secretary's report.
5. Election of Officers for 1977/78
 - a. Chairman
 - b. Vice-Chairman
 - c. President
 - d. Vice-Presidents
 - e. Secretary
 - f. Treasurer
 - g. Executive Committee.
6. Appointment of Auditor.
7. Other Business.

Note: Nominations for election as an officer or as a member of the executive committee must be submitted in writing to the Executive Committee by two members not less than fourteen days before the 3 March and must be endorsed in writing by the candidate (Rule 9). Nominations may be sent by post to the Hon. Secretary.

Edgar Brady

Hon. Secretary

15 January 1977

PLANNING

Links with the Governors

In recent issues of the Newsletter we have commented tartly on certain development proposals put forward by the Estates Governors. It was all the more welcome, therefore, when we were recently invited by Mr Russell Vernon, the Architect to the Governors, to meet him and his Partner, Mr Pringle. The object of this meeting was not only to discuss a particular scheme with which we had been concerned - see below - but also to talk about our relations with the Governors generally in order to see whether it would be possible to establish a closer understanding.

Although we have now had the benefit of a discussion with representatives of the Governors at one of our members' meetings some time ago, we have not hitherto had much opportunity to talk to those involved in preparing schemes on behalf of the Governors at the formative stage. Instead, we have tended to see schemes at the point where the Governors have become committed to them, and it is this that tends to create friction. However, as a result of the recent meeting with Mr Vernon and his colleague we hope that we shall be able in future to discuss with them the kind of development we should like to see in a given part of the area sufficiently early for us to be able to influence the proposals that ultimately emerge. The members of the Planning Sub-Committee who attended this meeting were most encouraged by the openness of the discussion, and we very much hope that we are now at the beginning of a period during which early consultation will be the norm rather than the exception in our relations with the Governors.

15 Alleyn Park

The development of this site has been a long saga and offers a splendid test-bed for the sort of consultation discussed above. As members will recall this was originally the site of a large early Victorian house which was demolished a year or more ago and (as described in Newsletter 33 under the (incorrect) heading of "5 Alleyn Park") the most recent plan prepared by the Governors for this site proposed the construction of five 3-storey houses with integral garages, and the Society objected strongly to this scheme. For the discussion with the Planning Sub-Committee Mr Vernon and his colleague had prepared a further scheme, this time comprising three houses in a single block. The architects had made great efforts to present this block as a single unit in an attempt to blend with the large properties on either side. But the proposals nevertheless still suffered from the fact that although the building was a single one there were three separate garages and three separate drives. This seemed to us to perpetuate the piecemeal appearance that we were anxious to avoid in this road, and in a vigorous discussion with Mr Vernon and Mr Pringle we maintained our view that the ideal development for this site would constitute either two detached houses or a

pair of semi-detached houses. We added, bearing in mind that any scheme must offer the prospect of an economic return to the Governors, that there was no reason to suppose that two large houses would be any less viable in economic terms than three smaller ones.

Mr Vernon is now considering all the points we made to him, and we hope that the next stage will be a set of proposals that will bridge what has become, we think, an increasingly narrow gap between us. If so, the new era of consultation between the Governors and the Society will have made an auspicious start.

All Saints' Church, Rosendale Road

We reported in the last Newsletter (No 34) that much-revised proposals for this contentious site had now been submitted to the Lambeth Council. We were informed at the end of November that approval has now been given for the erection of a two-storey block of ten flats and one house for disabled and elderly persons and a terrace of seven two-bedroomed houses with ancillary car parking. This news will not be universally welcome - indeed there are many who are opposed to any development of this site at all - but there can be no doubt that the proposals now approved represent a very great improvement on those presented to a series of rather heated public meetings over the last year or so.

The Queen's Jubilee

The Greater London Council, in collaboration with the Norwood Society and the Jubilee Committee, are proposing to mark the Queen's Jubilee by constructing at the top of the Crystal Palace site a 50 ft viewing tower and exhibition facility. Local amenity societies have thought for a long time that the magnificent views from the top of the Crystal Palace site were lamentably unexploited, and the Norwood Society as well as the GLC are to be congratulated for their enterprise in taking this opportunity to put this omission right. Little is known yet about the details of the scheme - except that it will be constructed in steel and tinted glass - but we shall of course report developments in future newsletters.

2 Dulwich Wood Avenue

We reported in Newsletter 33 that the Secretary of State for the Environment had called in for decision two applications for development of this site. We have now heard that the Secretary of State has rejected both applications, and we await further proposals from prospective developers.

A DULWICH SOCIETY BOOKLET

The executive committee have been considering the possibility of producing a booklet giving information about the Society and about Dulwich and have now decided to go ahead with production. The proposals, as they stand at the moment, are to produce a limited edition (perhaps 2000 copies) of a booklet in the same format and style as the present newsletter but with a slightly thicker cover. We intend that the booklet should have about 32 pages of text and illustration (sketches, maps etc., in black and white) and an illustrated front cover to give it an attractive appearance.

We have not made a final decision on the title but it may well be "A Dulwich Handbook" or "A Pocket Book of Dulwich", since the purpose of the booklet will be to inform people about amenities and activities available in Dulwich. As such it will be of particular interest to newcomers to the area and we intend to make it available in the offices of local Estate Agents (who are all Corporate Members of the Society) and to issue it to all new members when they first join. Copies will, of course, also be given to existing members in the usual way.

We are naturally anxious to ensure that the information it contains (none of which has been written yet) should be accurate and as complete as possible and we therefore include below a list of the headings and sub-headings which we intend to include:

THE DULWICH SOCIETY

Aims

The Leasehold Reform Act

Other Achievements

Current Activities

Society Organisation

The Society and other local organisations

Rules of the Society

DULWICH AS A PLACE TO LIVE IN

A brief history

Map of Dulwich in 1870

Bibliography

Libraries

Art Galleries and Museums

Churches

Shopping

Schools

Rail connections and buses

Parks and woodland

Restaurants

Estate Agents

Recreation

Conservation Areas

Some walks in Dulwich

Map of Dulwich today

RENEWAL OF SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions for 1977 are now due. The centre pages of this Newsletter are designed to be pulled out and returned with your instructions to the Treasurer.

It would be of great assistance to our overloaded administration if you could deal with this small matter straight away so that we do not have to worry you with reminders later. You can pay in one of three ways which are - in order of preference -

1. A straight subscription, in which case please complete only Parts 'A' and 'D' of the enclosed form.
2. By Banker's Order. This, of course, saves both you and the Treasurer a lot of trouble. If you do not already pay by this method please complete Parts 'B' and 'D' of the enclosed form.
3. By Deed of Covenant. A bit more difficult for you, but best for us since, as a registered charity, the Society is able to recover income tax on subscriptions covenanted for seven years. If you do this we will guarantee no increase in your subscriptions during the period of the covenant. To effect a Deed you must complete all Parts 'B', 'C' and 'D'.

Please select the system that suits you best, fill the form in now, and return it by the next post.

WILD LIFE

The October meeting in St. Barnabas' Hall was a little different as a lecturer was not invited to speak, but members of the Wild Life Sub-Committee, helped by audio and visual aids, spoke on various aspects of local wild life - bird song, foxes, and hedgehogs. Miss Jill Slaney contributed some beautiful slides illustrating a short description of a walk in Dulwich. There was also a display of recently gathered fungi.

Those who attended the Wild Life Meeting on 6 May will remember Dr. Jefferey Harrison's fascinating talk, illustrated by some 400 slides, on the transformation of the Thames in the past few years. Dr. Harrison and Mr. Grant have now published a book on the subject and the following extract from the Daily Telegraph is of interest:

'THAMES SUCCESS STORY

The manner in which the once-polluted River Thames has been purified, possibly bringing the return of salmon in substantial numbers, is "one of Britain's biggest success stories," according to a book published yesterday.

Prince Philip, who has written the foreword to "The Thames Transformed" (Andre Deutsch, £5.95), said:

"Here at last is a success story on such a major scale that it is worth publishing even at the risk that it may encourage some people to assume that the problems of conservation are not really as bad as they were led to believe."

The authors, Dr. Jeffery Harrison, and Mr. Peter Grant, point out that the clean-up of the Thames has been so successful that the passage of salmon on a regular basis is now in sight.

Dr. Harrison, a Sevenoaks general practitioner, said last night: "The Thames has now got back to its condition before World War I. It is the first polluted industrial river in the world that has been retained for wild life."

Birds in Dulwich

The Society recently offered to provide the Parks Department of the GLC with a pair of birds to supplement the feathered livestock in Dulwich Park. The Parks Department chose to receive a pair of ruddy Shelduck which were duly introduced to the lake in Dulwich Park a few weeks ago. They have now made themselves at home and look very handsome in their light tan plumage. They were released on to the lake on 13 November from the box in which they had travelled from Battersea in the presence of the Society's Chairman, most of the Wild Life Sub-Committee, the Parks Superintendent, the Chief Keeper and a press photographer.

We hear that swans will no longer be seen on the lake in Dulwich Park because of the damage they do to smaller birds (and even geese) in defending their territories. However the Society is going ahead with its plan to provide a mate for the cob at Belair and we expect the new arrival in the early part of 1977.

The Museum of London

The new Museum of London, London Wall, EC2 opened in the Barbican in December. The Museum shop hopes to offer a comprehensive selection of publications dealing with London, including those produced by Libraries, Institutions, Amenity Societies, Historical and Archaeological Societies within Greater London.

DULWICH COLLEGE PICTURE GALLERY

An Exhibition of Drawings, Water Colours and Prints

In the last issue of the Newsletter Members were told about this Exhibition which duly took place in the Gallery from 27 November to 11 December.

About 250 people were present at the Private View on 26 November when the Exhibition was officially opened by Sir Hugh Casson, President of the Royal Academy. Sir Hugh was introduced by his fellow Academician, James Fitton, Chairman of the Selection Committee, who spoke in his usual felicitous style and urged everyone to buy pictures both as a hedge against inflation and as very acceptable Christmas presents. In his address the President amply demonstrated his reputation as a speaker and 'raconteur', and gave every encouragement to the Governors of Dulwich College for their enterprise in holding the Exhibition in their Gallery, especially when he pointed out that such an Exhibition could well become an annual event, a suggestion that was warmly welcomed by the Society's Chairman when he proposed a vote of thanks to Sir Hugh.

The Foreword to the Catalogue gave as the first objective of the Exhibition that of getting the Gallery better known and more fully used, and here the Exhibition did appear to have made some progress. During those two weeks and especially at the weekends there were many more visitors to the Gallery, both to the Exhibition and the permanent collection, than would normally be expected at this time of the year.

The number of red 'sold' stickers that appeared on pictures by the closing day could not really have been described as particularly remarkable; but the lack of interest shown by the national Press, except for a photograph in The Times and a paragraph in the Evening Standard, did nothing to stimulate interest much beyond the immediate neighbourhood in what was a significant step forward in the Gallery's history since it was first opened in 1814.

The experience gained will have emphasised the importance of getting such an Exhibition recognised by a wider and also more selective public, and so attracting more well known artists to exhibit, who in turn would bring buyers prepared to invest, even in these difficult times, even larger sums in pictures.

The financial results of the Exhibition have not yet been announced but it seems probable that the modest contribution to the Gallery funds envisaged in the Foreword will have been achieved. It is to be hoped that when the money is eventually handed over to the Governors it will prove sufficient to encourage them to try such a venture once again, provided of course that it can be fitted in with whatever other plans they may have in mind for the Gallery in the future.

ESTATES GOVERNORS

We are indebted to Mr. G.V. White, Secretary and General Manager of the Estate Governors, for the following notes:

In April the Estates Governors asked Mr. F.W. Lindsay, M.A. (OXON) Forestry, to let them have a report on the Dulwich Woods. Mr. Lindsay gave the Estates Governors much valuable advice and concluded his report by confirming that this unusual and attractive wood was generally in good order and with a little thinning and felling, followed by re-planting, it could be further improved as an amenity.

Since obtaining this report the Estates Governors have put in hand his recommendations but quite clearly all of these cannot be dealt with in a short period of time and are in the main medium term. I am sure that members of the public who have been through the woods in recent weeks have noted a number of improvements but these will not be fully apparent until the spring and early summer. In the meantime the Governors are arranging for benches of simple and rustic design to be erected in different parts of the woods so that those who wish can take their ease.

Recently it was necessary to circularise all key-holders of the need to ensure that when they entered or left the woods the gates were firmly closed behind them, and I am glad to confirm that though co-operation could still be improved the response has been extremely gratifying. It is in the interests of those who use the woods to co-operate with the Estates Governors to ensure that this particular amenity is preserved and enhanced.

It will be of interest for residents on the Estate to know that as at the 1st December 1,263 applications to enfranchise under the Leasehold Reform Act 1967 had been received and 1,221 applications dealt with, excluding approximately 200 extensions of lease. It is believed that some 2,900 lessees are covered by the provisions of that Act but until an application is received its validity cannot be determined and therefore it is not possible to give an accurate figure as to the eventual numbers entitled to take advantage of the provisions of the Act.

TAILPIECE

We are assured that the following cutting from the Peterborough column of the Daily Telegraph does not refer to the Dulwich Society!

'That figures?

From a local society's minutes:

"Since the former secretary had left the area and the former minutes could not be found, it was moved and seconded and carried that the minutes of the last meeting be adopted as they would have been read had they been found."