



# *The Dulwich Society*

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TO FOSTER AND SAFEGUARD THE AMENITIES OF DULWICH

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## *Newsletter 48*

April 1980

Chairman:	Captain D.S. Wyatt, OBE, RN, 148 Thurlow Park Road, SE21.	693 2123
Vice Chairman:	Peter F.J. Lawson, 41 Village Way, SE21	733 2646
Secretary:	Lt. Col. R.M.S. Maude, 19 Oakfield Gardens, Dulwich Wood Avenue, SE19	670 7963
Treasurer:	R.C. Low, 88 Alleyn Road, SE21	670 1609

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### A CHANGING SOCIETY?

At the recent AGM at which our Chairman Roger Low handed over to his successor Denys Wyatt it seemed that we were well on the way to reaching agreement with the Dulwich Residents Association concerning the amalgamation which we mentioned in the last newsletter. Since then legal problems have come up which may take some time to resolve so we are not in a position to report definitely yet. However, whatever happens, we do not think our members have any reason to be alarmed. The Dulwich Society will not change greatly and will very definitely continue to have the interests of Dulwich, its residents and its amenities at heart, and will continue to act in their best interests. We give you what news there is later in this newsletter and would remind you that we shall continue to need your active support in the various activities of the Society and we shall always be glad to hear from newer or younger members who are willing to take a part.

### THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This was held in St. Barnabas' Hall on Thursday 6 March 1980. 65 members were present including two of our Vice Presidents, The Rt.Hon. S.C. Silkin, QC, MP. and Sir Frederick Everson, KCMG. The Chairman, Mr. Roger Low, opened the meeting and proceeded to review the events of the past year. He referred to the Society's efforts to influence the Borough's plans to develop the Lapse Wood area on the southern slopes of Sydenham Hill and to prevent Southwark going ahead with plans to build a vast new Town Hall in Peckham without adequate prior consultation with interested bodies. In the event both projects have now fallen by the wayside under the restraining influence of financial cuts. A major event of 1979 had been the formation of a new Horticultural sub-Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr. Frankel which had already become very active and is very well supported. This is certainly going to fill a real need in the future and is proving to be a most successful new way of getting members together to visit each other's gardens and discuss problems, achievements and common interests.

The Chairman also mentioned the continuing excellent work being done by the Trees sub-Committee in fostering interest in this vital amenity, the Wild Life sub-Committee who among other things were stimulating new interest in matters relating to frogs, butterflies and birds, and the Traffic sub-Committee who have been

very active and can claim the new Village Roundabout as proof of their past work. On the Planning front the newest matter of concern is the proposed development of the Hambledon House site. This old building (once the Toxawa Hotel) has now deteriorated hopelessly beyond repair and the Estates Governors had approved an ambitious plan to develop the site with a major new development involving construction of 56 new houses. There are a number of serious objections to this proposal which have been referred forcibly to the Estates Governors both by our Society and by the Residents' Association. We are now waiting to hear what new action is contemplated.

The Chairman completed his review of the year by mentioning that the Estates Governors have recently introduced a new element into their control of the area by making unsolicited offers to many leaseholders to purchase their freehold and the question which is concerning us now is whether, when the majority of properties on the Estate are enfranchised, the Governors will continue to exercise the same care for the amenity of the area as before. This is a matter which will need careful attention in the future and which makes it all the more important that the Society remains strong, both in numbers and in its will to act.

The Chairman then mentioned negotiations with the Residents Association which are leading towards a merger of the two bodies later this year. Further details are given below in this newsletter.

The Treasurer then presented the accounts and balance sheet which were unanimously approved, after which Officers of the Society were elected or re-elected to serve in 1980. The new list of Officers is as follows:

President:	The Rt Hon Lord Shawcross, PC, QC
Vice Presidents:	James Fitton, RA Lord Hinton of Bankside David Emms, MA The Rt Hon S.C. Silkin, QC, BA, MP Sir Frederick Everson, KCMG Charles Pearce, OBE, FCIS, JP
Hon. Auditor:	Ken A.G. Jeffries, FCA, 119 Alleyn Park, SE 21, 693 5270.

Executive Committee:

Chairman:	Capt. D.S. Wyatt, OBE, RN
Vice-Chairman:	Peter F.J. Lawson, FRIBA
Secretary:	Lt. Col. R.M.S. Maude
Treasurer:	R.C. Low
Members:	G. Hall Clark I.H. Lightman W.A.A. Barnard G.C. de Baerdemaecker R.H. Adams Mrs G.D. Howells J. Cran Mrs K.M. Evans

The meeting concluded with some general questions, followed by coffee and biscuits provided by the Ladies of the Social Sub-Committee.

OUR CHAIRMAN

As we reported in the last newsletter, Roger Low who was elected to be our Chairman five years ago in March 1975 had decided that it is time for him to hand over to a younger man. Furthermore he will be moving out of Dulwich later this year (although only as far as Camberwell we are glad to say) so he did not feel able to continue as Chairman any longer. We shall certainly miss his guiding hand in our affairs for not only did he live in one of the most splendid of Dulwich's fine houses, but he also kept us in close and generally harmonious touch with such important local figures as the Estates Governors and the Managing Committee of the Gallery. We are very grateful to him for all that he did and achieved for the Society in the past five years and we wish him well in his new home in Camberwell.

We are fortunate that Denys Wyatt was available and willing to stand for election as Chairman in Roger Low's place. Captain D.S. Wyatt, OBE, RN to give him his full title has lived in Dulwich for 17 years and was Secretary of the Society in 1973-74. He was born in Upper Norwood in 1923 so he knows this area well. He retired from the Navy in 1979 and is currently serving as Secretary to the Athenaeum Club, an appointment which fills us with respectful awe and which, if it doesn't keep him too busy with club administration, should allow him access to some pretty distinguished contacts.

AMALGAMATION WITH THE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

A working party of the Officers of both the Dulwich Society and the Residents' Association has been meeting at regular intervals since last November to discuss the question of amalgamation and they have now passed the stage where full agreement has been reached and final details are being worked out. This part of the newsletter gives you the latest situation and our proposals for the implementation of the merger.

The Background: the Dulwich Society has existed since 1968 with the object of fostering and safeguarding the amenities of Dulwich. This we have done through the medium of our Executive Committee which has kept in close touch with local authorities such as the Estates Governors and the London Borough of Southwark, and our Sub-Committees which look after matters such as Planning, Traffic, Trees, Wild Life, Local History and more recently Horticulture or Gardening. The Dulwich Residents Association has a rather different history, having been formed as the Leaseholders Association specifically to negotiate terms for potential freeholders under the terms of the 1967 Leasehold Reform Act. After the Scheme of Management was achieved their name was changed to the Dulwich Residents Association and it has continued to assist local residents with various difficulties and to help local groups when problems of amenity or rights come up.

Both sides now feel that there is a strong case for a merger into a single body which should be a Society to serve the interests of the community in Dulwich and to preserve and safeguard the amenities of the area. We certainly have a common aim and it will strengthen our hand in local negotiations if we can speak with one voice and with the backing of a larger membership. There is certainly no doubt that the Estates Governors, with whom we naturally have close links, welcome strongly the idea of a merger.

Timing: We had hoped that it would be possible to call Special General Meetings of the Dulwich Society and the Residents Association in May in order to amalgamate into the new Society, but legal problems concerning the merger of the two organisations have come up and it now looks as though there will be some delay. The trouble is based on the fact that the Dulwich Society is registered as a Charity whereas the Residents Association is not, and this makes it very difficult to merge the assets of the two bodies. This problem is being examined now and we shall report progress as soon as we can.

#### FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Please note the following dates in your diaries. Fuller details of the events are given elsewhere in this newsletter.

- 1 May: A wildlife talk. 8.0 pm in the Great Hall of Dulwich College (by kind permission of the Master). Mr W.S. Teagle will talk on 'Wildlife in Towns'.
- 6 June: Wildlife Field Walk: meet at the Dulwich Woodhouse Pub on Sydenham Hill at 7.0 pm.
- 8-15 June: The St. Barnabas Arts and Crafts Festival.
- 3 July: Trees Walk in Belair. Meet at 7.30 pm in the Belair Car Park (corner of Gallery and Thurlow Park Roads).
- 2 August: Wildlife visit to Banstead to search for butterflies. Meet in Belair Car Park at 10.0 am.

#### ST BARNABAS ARTS AND CRAFTS FESTIVAL

This is a festival within the church for people within the Parish and will take place from 8th to 15th June 1980 centred on the Parish Church in Calton Avenue. The three schools of the Alleyn foundation will be taking part as well as the two Village schools

and the Village branch of the Adult Education Institute. In addition everyone who lives or works on the Parish is invited to take part, so if you paint, sketch, carve, fabric-print, embroider or if you make toys, lace, baskets, tapestry (or have any other rare craft as a hobby) you are invited to start working now.

Full details of the Festival will appear regularly in the Villager and the festival organiser is Arthur R. Chandler on 693 0383.

In order to help with financing publicity etc. Patron's Tickets are on sale now for £1.00 each which will entitle the named bearer to attend all the Festival functions for which an entrance fee is charged.

Applications for tickets may be made to one of the Churchwardens, the Arts Stationers in the Village, Mrs K.M. Evans at 22 Dulwich Village, or by post to the Box Office Manager, 26 Desenfans Road, SE21 7DN.

#### WILDLIFE

##### Future Wildlife Events

The wildlife Sub-committee has arranged several activities for the coming months. First, our annual lecture will be given by Mr W.S. Teagle, author of 'The Endless Village' and an authority on urban natural history. He will talk on 'Wildlife in Towns' on 1st May - 8 pm at the Dulwich College Great Hall.

A field walk, similar to last year's successful occasion, is planned for Friday 6th June - meet at Dulwich Woodhouse Pub, Sydenham Hill at 7 pm. A longer visit, on August 2nd, will be made to Banstead to search and identify butterflies - meet in Belair car park at 10 am, bring packed lunch, and plan to share cars as convenient.

Society members may also like to know of courses at the Horniman Museum - "Bird Life in Spring" on Saturdays 2-4 pm from 26th April to 7th June and "Biological Records" on Thursdays 7-9 pm starting 18th September. Ask at the Museum for further information.

#### Water Fowl in Dulwich Park

The lake in Dulwich Park is a valuable and interesting refuge for water fowl, both natural and introduced species. A recent count of birds there totalled 36 different species, including five geese (snow, Canada, barnacle, bar-headed, emperor) and nineteen ducks (3 kinds of shelduck, 3 of widgeon, mallard, pintail, shoveller, red-crested pochard, tufted duck, whistling tree duck, Aylesbury, Muscovy, and Khaki Campbell) (3 'domestic' ducks), as well as coot and moorhen. On occasions more exotic and unusual visitors can be seen. Many of these species breed on the island in the lake and pairing, nesting and, in time, family life can be observed. Our Park Keepers are well informed about their resident water fowl and will be glad to help you recognise them.

#### Frogs and Toads in Dulwich

Several readers kindly sent records of frogs, tadpoles or toads in their gardens last spring. Please continue to send or telephone your records to Mrs G. Howells, 7 College Road (693-7226). We also would like to know if you have ponds or a stream in your garden - is the pond small/large, is it natural or man-made, is there natural vegetation in it? We would like to draw up a map of available water for aquatic wildlife in Dulwich and to compare the present day with the past by reference to old maps.

#### Bird Sighting Report for 1979 from Mr Toler

We are still rather disappointed at the small number of sightings we are receiving from members. The few we do receive are regular and most useful. I have been told frequently at meetings, while displaying the Bird Map, that certain birds have been seen, but the person telling me could not remember when or where. If we are to continue with a viable record of birds seen in Dulwich, it is essential that more sightings are reported. For those interested, may I suggest that a sheet of paper be hung or pinned up in the kitchen or by the telephone, ruled with headings: - Bird, No., Date, Time, Location and remarks. Any sightings can easily be jotted on this, and posted to me say once monthly. My address is J.W. Toler, Ambrook House, 127 Sydenham Hill, Dulwich, SE26.

During the year a total of 62 species seen have been reported. This total which includes the 13 common species which are not specially recorded (viz. Blackbird, Dunnock, House Sparrow, Songthrush, Starling, Robin, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Wren, Domestic and Wood Pigeons, Jay and Magpie) is listed below: -

Blackcap, Brambling, Bullfinch, Chaffinch, Chiffchaff, Carrion Crow, Coot, Cuckoo, Mallard, Shoveller, Tufted Duck, Fieldfare, Pied Flycatcher, Spotted Flycatcher, Goldfinch, Goldcrest, Greenfinch, Canada Goose, Common Gull, Black Headed Gull, Lesser Black Back Gull, Herring Gull, Heron, Jackdaw, Kestrel, Lapwing, Linnet, House Martin, Moorhen, Nuthatch, Tawny Owl, Partridge, Redpoll, Redwing, Siskin, Jack Snipe, Swift, Missel Thrush, Coal Tit, Long-Tailed Tit, Tree Creeper, Pied Wagtail, Grey Wagtail, Willow Warbler, Whinchat, Woodcock, Greater Spotted Woodpecker, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker and Green Woodpecker.

These sightings are an increase of 3 over 1978, but still a decrease of 30 compared with 1977.

It is interesting to note that of the 62 species reported 40 species were observed in Lapsewood (or as the Council now call

it "the Fernbank building site"). Lapsewood continues to be our most important breeding site and staging post for birds, without which, there would be many fewer species observed in the Dulwich area.

#### HORTICULTURAL NEWS

We are grateful to Mr Eric Fisher for inviting members to visit his exceptional small garden in Gilkes Crescent during the coming summer. Unfortunately the size of his garden must limit members to thirty and we will therefore have to make it by invitation only. Similar visits to other members' gardens are being arranged and, if you are very interested and would like to be on the invitation list, please make yourself known to one of the members of the Sub-committee.

#### A TREES WALK IN JULY

Some two years ago the Trees Sub-Committee discussed with the Parks Department of the London Borough of Southwark the possibility of a joint project, the purpose of which was to publish a printed 'Trees Walk' of 'Belair', the former home of Sir Evan Spicer, and which had been purchased by the Borough shortly after the second world war for use as a recreation centre.

Since the discussion took place with Mr Bradbury, the Superintendent of Southwark Parks, much work has been done in surveying, identifying and plotting over one hundred and forty trees representing over forty different species.

In addition, 'histories' have been prepared of each species in order to provide details of original source, peculiarities of leaf, bark and seeds, and a variety of other information likely to be of interest to visitors and local residents alike.

The preparation of this publication is now nearing completion and it is hoped that it will be ready for use by members of the Society at the annual Trees Walk on Thursday 3rd July, 1980 which, of course, will be held at 'Belair'.

We propose to meet at the Belair car park at 7.30 pm, and a warm invitation is extended to all members and their friends to attend what we believe will be a most interesting and pleasant evening.

