



# *The Dulwich Society*

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TO FOSTER AND SAFEGUARD THE AMENITIES OF DULWICH

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*Newsletter 598*

October 1982

## THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

### Officers:

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  
Chartered Architect; representative on  
Southwark Conservation Areas Advisory Committee  
Acting Secretary: Mrs. S.M. Low, 88 Alleyn Road SE21  
670 1609

Permanent Secretary: To be elected

Treasurer: H.A. Smith, 56 Townley Road SE22. 693 8150

### Members:

Graham Reid, 15 Allison Grove SE21 7ER. 693 8252  
Chairman of Town Planning Sub-Committee  
R.D. Still, 138 Burbage Road SE21. 274 8002  
Chairman of Trees Sub-Committee  
P. Darby, 54 Wolfington Road SE27 ORQ. 761 5288  
Chairman of Local History Sub-Committee  
Mrs G.D. Howells, 7 College Road SE21. 693 7226  
Chairman of Wild Life Sub-Committee  
J.G. Todd, 21 Lovelace Road SE21. 670 2965  
Chairman of Traffic Roads and Transport Sub-Committee  
J.R. Webb, 107 Woodwarde Road SE22. 693 7297  
Chairman of Membership and Publicity Sub-Committee  
G.R.C. Fairlie, The Grange, Grange Lane SE21. 693 1187  
Representing Horticultural Sub-Committee  
Editor of the Newsletter: Kenneth Till, Old Blew House,  
Dulwich Common, SE21.693 1151

## TOWN PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE

This has been a fairly quiet year so far for the Town Planning Sub-committee, but it may be of interest to members to know the kind of topics with which the Sub-committee deals.

A major focus of every meeting, and of attention between meetings, is the weekly lists of planning applications issued by Southwark Development Department. These lists come to several members of the Sub-committee who scan them for applications within our area which might warrant comment on behalf of the Society.

A member of the Sub-committee looks at such applications in the Development Department, and on the basis of these plans the Sub-committee will decide what, if any, comment should be made. Most applications are for small developments by householders and no comments are necessary. Indeed, we try to avoid becoming involved in individual applications where there may, quite reasonably, be differences of view between householders on the desirability of a proposal. We are more concerned to look at applications from the point of view of general environmental considerations and planning principles. One aspect which we particularly consider is the effect of a planning application on trees, and we keep the Trees Sub-Committee informed of any likely problems.

The most important planning application now pending is for the Hambleton House site. Several schemes have been proposed over the past few years, most of them unsuitable on grounds of excessive density and unsuitable design. All have been rejected or withdrawn. Permission to demolish the existing ruin was granted some time ago, without objection from the Society, and work is now proceeding on this.

The latest planning application is for a development of 21 detached houses (plus two in the old coachhouse). The plans show the houses to be well spaced and laid out, and of quite conventional but appropriate style; the great majority of trees will be retained.

In our view, the application represented a good scheme which would be appropriate to the site, and we told the Development Department this. We have however since heard that the plans were withdrawn, just before consideration, for some amendments and a new application will be made. We shall look at this when it comes in.

In addition to looking at planning applications, the Sub-committee frequently gets involved in other issues which, while often minor, are nevertheless important to some residents and to the area in general. Recent examples include improvements to the West Dulwich shopping centre, a long-standing problem to which no easy solution is in sight; and the provision of adequate rubbish bins in the village and elsewhere. The Sub-committee is also considering two issues where future action may be desirable. First, we are looking at the projects currently being undertaken under the auspices of the Southwark Environment Trust. This was set up by the Borough to carry out environmental improvement schemes within Southwark, and its work may be relevant to parts of our area. Secondly, we are going to look at our area to see which streets or parts of streets should be considered as of particularly good architectural, environmental or historical value. This might lead to suggestions for future listing of buildings, but at the very least it would allow us a better informed consideration of planning applications.

We would welcome any other ideas members might have for our consideration, but as has been said before, our interests lie in the area as a whole rather than in individual questions which are a matter for the Residents Association.

## LOCAL HISTORY

### A RURAL MILE ROUND NORTH DULWICH

Necessity, in the form of the recent rail strike, forcing me to find other means of getting to the City each day, I found myself following, in part, the old route from the Village to Camberwell taken every Sunday by the Dulwich Congregation of St. Giles (before the new Parish of St. Barnabas was formed centered on the new Parish Church erected in 1894 in Calton Road, later Calton Avenue). This pleasant walk over to Camberwell Green and back set me thinking that the following shortened version of about a mile or so might be of interest to many of our members.

The walk commences in Green Dale. For those coming from the more affluent parts of the Estate by car there is plenty of parking space alongside Alleyn School playing fields in Calton Avenue or Townley Road. Note Alleyn's School Memorial Garden with the wrought iron gate topped by Edward Alleyn's crest at the junction of these two roads. A few yards ahead of this Townley Road meets East Dulwich Grove and Green Dale starts opposite. This is a gated road, the gate being across the railway bridge which spans the line from North Dulwich to East Dulwich Station. Although a good open view through the paling fence on your left is obtained across James Allen's Girls' School playing fields, the extensive fields to the right, stretching across to Dulwich Hamlet Football Club and Dog Kennel Hill are hidden by the tall closeboard fence. However, a series of humped banks, beloved of local boy cyclists, afford excellent views and across the fields to the right can be seen the cupolas of Dulwich Hospital, its Foundation Stone being laid by the Chairman of St. Saviours Union, Surrey in 1885 when it was known as St. Saviours Infirmary until taken over by the LCC in 1930. More in front of you can be seen St. Francis Hospital, originally a Workhouse, whose Foundation Stone was laid in 1892 by the Chairman of the Board of Guardians of the Poor of the Parish of St. Giles, Camberwell. The large block still in the course of erection is the new Sisters' quarters for the hospital.

When the made-up path finishes half-way up the rough lane follow it round alongside Bessemer Primary School. This area was the site of the large lake Sir Henry Bessemer had constructed in the lower corner of his Estate. Fronting onto the lane just beyond this was his observatory with its large domed roof. Follow the footpath along the lower edge of the Bessemer Council Estate until it enters the Casino Estate. The change can be noted by the difference in the buildings, the Casino Estate being built in 1922 in the rural cottage style. When you reach the crossing cul-de-sac turn left for a yard or two and look through the paling fence crossing the road. The large JAG'S playing field with its line of tall poplars and the two magnificent weeping willows on the left usually has a variety of birds on it which were

much disturbed by a hovering, swooping kestrel when I was last there. This field was part of Bessemer's model farm noted in its day for the cleanliness and hygienic conditions of its dairy herd. The new school pavilion across the field is on the site of the original farm house.

Turn back along the road until it comes out into the curving, tree-lined, Sunray Avenue. Turn left here and follow the road until it meets Red Post Hill coming down from the right. The last Council cottage on your left bears a large plaque commemorating the building of the Estate. Across the road you will see Sunray Gardens, the entrance to which is a few yards up Red Post Hill. This will enable you to walk round the large lake which is the sole remaining relic of the once-beautiful Casino Estate with its mansion on the crest of Herne Hill and its grounds running parallel with the ancient lane of Red Post Hill down the southern slopes. At the corner of the Gardens, beyond the lake, another entrance brings you out into Red Post Hill again. Cross the road to the St. Faiths Church side, turn right and continue over the brow of the hill dropping down the other side to enter Dulwich Village ahead of you. Note the 18th century 4½ milestone on your left and further on, the 1866 North Dulwich Station.

At the cross roads note Clarke's Green with its wooden finger post and to the right, the 18th century "Lydenhurst" and, beyond it in Village Way, Pond House, also 18th century. Turn left up East Dulwich Grove to return to the beginning of your walk passing James Allen's Girls' School on your left which moved to this site from the village in 1887.

As I am unable to include illustrations here for obvious reasons, I intend to illustrate this walk with slides in my slide show at St. Barnabas Hall (built 1910!) in the Village and hope to see you all there on 7th October.

G.C. De B.  
(Local History Sub-committee)

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"Apologies from the Chairman of the History Sub-Committee for a couple of errors in his report in Newsletter 57. The family of Mr J.W. Le Tall (now of Bexhill, not Brighton) were on the paying, not receiving, end of things during their time at the Toksowa and Bessemer Grange Hotels between the Wars".

## THE TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT SUB-COMMITTEE

The working of the Traffic and transport sub-committee is one of the less visible of the Society's activities, but the amount, weight and speed of road traffic is arguably one of the major factors damaging the amenities of Dulwich. The sub-committee directs its attention primarily to road traffic and regards its role as being to ensure, so far as possible, that any changes bring overall benefit to the community and that possible alternatives (often suggested by local residents) are adequately explored. It also presses for improvements to be made for the benefit of the local community and has a particular interest in attempting to discourage heavy goods vehicles from passing through the conservation area. Proposals for the prohibition of heavy goods vehicles have been discussed from time to time, and total prohibition (except for access) would undoubtedly be the sub-committee's solution of choice if only some way could be found of dealing with the well-grounded objection that lorries prohibited from using one residential street will find their way through another. Shifting the nuisance from one street to another is not, in most instances, a satisfactory course of action. Ideas from members, on this or any other traffic-related topic, will always be welcomed by members of the sub-committee (see Newsletter no 56 April 1982 for names and addresses).

The sub-committee also tries to ensure that services - such as road surfaces, street lighting, and drains - are properly maintained, and to do this effectively it depends for help on all members of the Society. Only if it is informed of inadequacies by local members can the Society, or its sub-committee, take action or bring influence to bear.

The point must be made, though, that the Society can properly comment only on matters affecting the community in general, and is precluded, by its charitable status, from becoming involved in matters affecting individual members. (The Residents Association exists to give assistance in such cases.) It has also been found that frequently-repeated complaints, such as potholes or blocked drains, may be dealt with more rapidly if the complaints are made directly by the individual to the Borough. In Southwark, write to the Borough Engineer, Larcom Street, SE17. In Lambeth, write to the Director of Civil Engineering and Public Services, George West House, Clapham Common North Side, SW4.

The sub-committee keeps careful watch on developments in the public transport serving Dulwich, although its role is necessarily more restricted since the decisions with a major effect on BR or LT are frequently taken at a national level. The Society does bring pressure to bear when appropriate, as recently when West Dulwich and Sydenham Hill stations were threatened with evening and weekend closure. It has been demonstrably effective in influencing local decisions, as in the case of the P4 bus. This was originally planned to operate via Gallery Road and Dulwich Common, and the route was changed to Court Lane at the suggestion of the Society. To support its proposal, the Society surveyed all households in the area and was able to demonstrate a majority of replies in favour of the Court Lane route, which is now greatly appreciated.

Other rewarding activities of the sub-committee in recent years include the installation of the roundabout at the intersection of College Road and Gallery Road (although this has its critics, most seem to agree it is an improvement, and it undoubtedly has reduced the number of accidents); the zebra crossing in the Village (which, until the Society demonstrated otherwise, had been dismissed as being not feasible); and pram/wheelchair ramps in several places.

The sub-committee is made up of eight to ten (there is no fixed number) members of the Society who meet for an evening five or six times a year to discuss topics of current interest. The sub-committee would be strengthened by the recruitment of one or two further members with some knowledge of and interest in traffic engineering or transport, and would welcome an approach from any interested member. Please contact the Chairman (J G Todd, 21 Lovelace Road; 670 2965) or any member of the sub-committee. By chance, all the current members of the sub-committee live north of the South Circular Road, so any member living in the southern part of the Society's area of interest would be doubly welcome, and would help to ensure that his area got its fair share of attention!

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#### POND SURVEY

Large scale maps of Dulwich have been produced and a number of public ponds and those in private gardens have been marked. It is hoped that eventually all the ponds in Dulwich will be located. So far frogs, toads, common newts, leeches, water boatmen and pond skaters have been found.

We appeal again to all members who have a pond to notify John Gaughan, 325A Upland Road, SE22 0D4 (telephone 693 5938) and if possible give details of size, depth, material of construction, how long the pond has been in existence and what vegetation and fauna are present.

#### HORTICULTURAL SUB-COMMITTEE

In the July Newsletter we were able to announce that the lecturer for the Society's meeting on November 4th is to be Mr Christopher Brickell, Director of The Royal Horticultural Society's Garden at Wisley. The title of Mr Brickell's illustrated talk is ..... PLANTS IN PERIL

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Since the 1940's commercial pressures and modern marketing methods have remorselessly eroded the range of plants, both economic and ornamental, offered by the nursery trade. At the same time financial constraints have borne heavily in our great gardens.

In a powerful article in the R.H.S. Journal in 1977 Mr Brickell drew attention to the problem and to the urgent necessity that something should be done to conserve both species and mutants that were in danger of being lost to cultivation, to industry and to science; and to the vital need to preserve, for future generations, genetic material whose potential we do not comprehend.

As a direct result of that article the R.H.S. Conservation Conference was convened, which in turn led to the establishment of the National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens.

In his lecture Mr Brickell will enlarge on the danger, report progress so far and outline what yet remains to be accomplished and in particular what we, the foot soldiers of the gardening community, can do to help. Questions will be welcomed.

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#### SOLOMON'S SEAL (Polygonatum) AND THE GRUBS OF THE SAWFLY

Solomon's Seal is a hardy herbaceous perennial, which flowers in May and which is found wild, chiefly in various parts of Europe and North America. This plant is comprised of a single flower stem with leaves and white bells, about  $\frac{1}{2}$ " long, with green tips, hanging from the main stem. It is a very attractive plant and useful for flower arrangements. It has the great advantage of no work being required and of growing anywhere, in shade or in the sun, facing north or south. It is as well to mark the spot where the plant is because, early in the summer it disappears and, if one puts a spade through the stem, one might ruin it. The simplest way of propagating this plant is to dig up the root in October, cut it in half and plant the halves. It is astonishing that such a graceful flower has a robust root which looks like a turnip. An argument concerning the name took place as early as the Middle Ages. It is not certain whether it has a medical or a religious meaning. In the middle ages the root was used to heal wounds.

In June the leaves are frequently attacked by the grubs of the sawfly, of which there are a large number of varieties.

Each variety specialises, the grubs eating, for preference, one kind of plant. It is as well to remember that grubs, or to give them their correct name, larvae, have only one object in life, which is to eat. Larvae are the second stage in the life of an insect. The mature insect lays eggs where the grubs can expect to find food, in this case as near to a Solomon's Seal plant as possible. The larvae grow to about  $\frac{1}{2}$ " in length and they appear in large numbers on the leaf of the plant and completely eat the green leaf between the veins. When they have reached their full size, they turn into puppae. We do not know what this type of sawfly does when there are no Solomon's Seal plants. We are not quite sure what harm the larvae do, as the same root seems to flower regularly every year. However, if one wants seeds, it is necessary to know that this plant will not make seeds if the leaves have been eaten by the grubs. Thus, if seeds are wanted, the leaves must be sprayed by a systemic insecticide after flowering and, hopefully, the grubs will not then eat the leaves.

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#### ROSE RUST

A member of the sub-committee noticed little yellow spots on the stem of a rose. Asking Brian Jones for advice, Brian, knowledgeable and helpful as always, identified the yellow spots, in horror, as rose rust. Until recently, there was no known cure and, in despair, and in tears, the owner burned seven of his plants. Meanwhile, a further sample was sent to the National Rose Society at St. Albans, which confirmed the bad attack and informed us that there is now a fungicide. With further tears and a £10 cheque, the sad owner acquired this. It is recommended that everybody should look at the underside of the leaves of their roses, particularly those near to the ground and, if yellow or orange spots are seen, he should contact a member of the horticultural sub-committee for advice. In handling the affected leaves or stems, great care is necessary. Every bit which has been affected should be burned, otherwise the fungus will spread to neighbouring roses and perhaps to a neighbouring garden. There is only one consolation we can think of, which is that this rose rust does not spread to any plant other than roses. Rust is a fungus, attacking many plants, but there are also many kinds of rust.

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The "Exchange of Plants Scheme" as mentioned in the last Newsletter is being repeated and copies of the form for this will be available at the members evening in St. Barnabas Hall on November 4th or alternatively may be obtained from Mr Gerald Fairlie or Mrs Sylvia Daniel.

#### YOUR 1983 SUBSCRIPTIONS - CHANGE OF BANKERS ORDERS

The 1983 subscription was increased from £1 p.a. to £2 p.a. by resolution at the A.G.M. held on 4th March 1982 and therefore it is necessary for those members paying by Bankers Order (who are in the majority) to amend their instructions to their respective bankers.

A suitable form is on the other side of this page which should be completed, made out to your Bank, and forwarded to the Treasurer at 56 Townley Road, Dulwich SE22 8SX. As you will see the form changes not only the amount and destination of the payment but will operate to cancel your existing instructions.

To those members who do not yet pay under bankers orders the Society strongly recommends that they also take this opportunity of completing the order overleaf and forwarding it to the Treasurer. If all members were to pay by this method it would avoid the embarrassment of finding that your membership has been inadvertently allowed to lapse.