

Dulwich Upper Wood.

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# *The Dulwich Society*

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TO FOSTER AND SAFEGUARD THE AMENITIES OF DULWICH

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*Newsletter 69*

*July 1985*

THE DULWICH SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER 69:

JULY 1985

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

July 4th 7.30 pm Crescent Wood Road entrance to Sydenham Hill Woods	Trees Sub-Committee	A Trees walk around Sydenham Hill Woods will be led by a member of the London Wildlife Trust. This is sure to be of interest to members in view of the Public Enquiry on the future of the Woods.
July 20th 2.30 pm Gate across Green Dale at East Dulwich Grove end	History/Wildlife Sub-Committees	A combined History and Wildlife walk across the fields between Green Dale and Champion Hill, East Dulwich, led by Bill de Baerdemaecker. Plenty of parking space - bring your binoculars, and wellies if wet!
August	No Meeting	
September	No Meeting	
October 3rd 8 pm St. Barnabas Hall	Horticulture Sub-Committee	An illustrated lecture on "Old London Gardens". The Speaker will be Mrs. Sally Festing, BSc(Hort), Tutor in Garden History for London and Surrey Universities.
November	To be arranged	
December	To be arranged	

ADVANCE INFORMATION

The Dulwich Group of Friends of the Imperial Cancer Research Fund are preparing for the 4th Annual Exhibition of Art, to be held in the Great Hall, Dulwich College in October.

The Exhibition will be open from Friday, 18th October to Sunday, 20th October.

Times of opening and further information about the Exhibition are due to appear in the October Newsletter.

Anyone who has any enquiry, or any suggestion to offer, may contact Patricia Gaitskell, 155 Alleyn Road, SE21, telephone - 670 0882.

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A PLEA FROM THE TREASURER

Have you paid your subscription for 1985?

Please check, with the Treasurer on 01 - 693 1713, if in doubt - and, if unpaid, send your £2 without delay.

Membership ceases when subscriptions are over 6 months in arrears.

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TRANSPORT AND PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE

South Circular Road

Several members of the joint Transport and Planning Sub-Committee attended a meeting at which Mrs. Lynda Chalker (Minister of State for Transport) spoke informally on the future of the South Circular Road. She was emphatic that the reason for the road being designated as a 'trunk' road is that it serves a number of areas/local authorities and should therefore be funded centrally. The other crucial aspect is that such a designation does not of itself imply any need to widen it into a major traffic artery. Indeed it is doubtful if money could be found for drastic changes.

It was pointed out that the M25 is already removing a lot of traffic (especially heavy lorries) from the South Circular Road, and this transfer will probably increase when the M25 is completed.

She appears to believe that minor improvements, such as better destination signposting, and possibly changed phasing on traffic lights - together with the advent of the M25 - could possibly be all that is required to leave Dulwich Common much as it is. However consultants are examining the situation, and any proposed changes arising from their report would be subject to the usual planning procedures.

The other point she made was that at present there is a lot of scaremongering aimed at suggesting a definite intention to widen the road considerably.

Several residents of Dulwich Common appeared to be reassured by Mrs. Chalker's statements.

On the more general subject of traffic in London, we were pleased that she expressed an intent to improve bus, rail and tube services and facilities.

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62 Dulwich Village

In mid April, members of the Transport and Planning Sub-Committee received anxious phone calls from residents of Dulwich Village about a rumoured development of houses and shops in the gardens of 62 Dulwich Village, fronting both Dulwich Village and Boxall Road. Though no planning application had been submitted to Southwark at that time, the Secretary of the Sub-Committee wrote at once to both the Borough Development Department and to the Secretary to the Estates Governors, emphasising that the Society would have strong objections to any such development.

Events moved quickly. The Secretary to the Estates Governors circulated to residents of the Village the proposals for the site, which did indeed involve shops on the Dulwich Village frontage, and three-storey houses in Boxall Road. At about the same time, a planning application was made to Southwark by Portland Designs in respect of the development. The Society immediately wrote to Southwark, and to the Estates Governors, entering a formal objection to the scheme. We felt that the development would seriously affect the amenity of the Village Conservation Area; it was out of scale with the existing surroundings, especially in Boxall Road; there would be adverse traffic consequences; and it is not clear that additional shopping facilities in the Village are necessary. In addition, many fine mature trees would be lost, and a valuable green space built upon.

In making these objections, the Society was voicing the views of many individuals in Dulwich Village who had made separate objections.

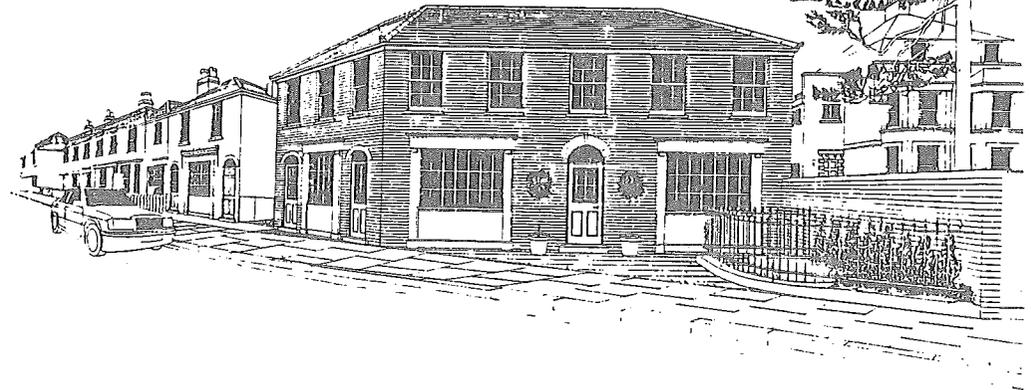
The issue now goes to the Southwark Planning Committee, as well as to the Estates Governors' Committee which deals with the Conservation Area, and we hope for a favourable outcome.

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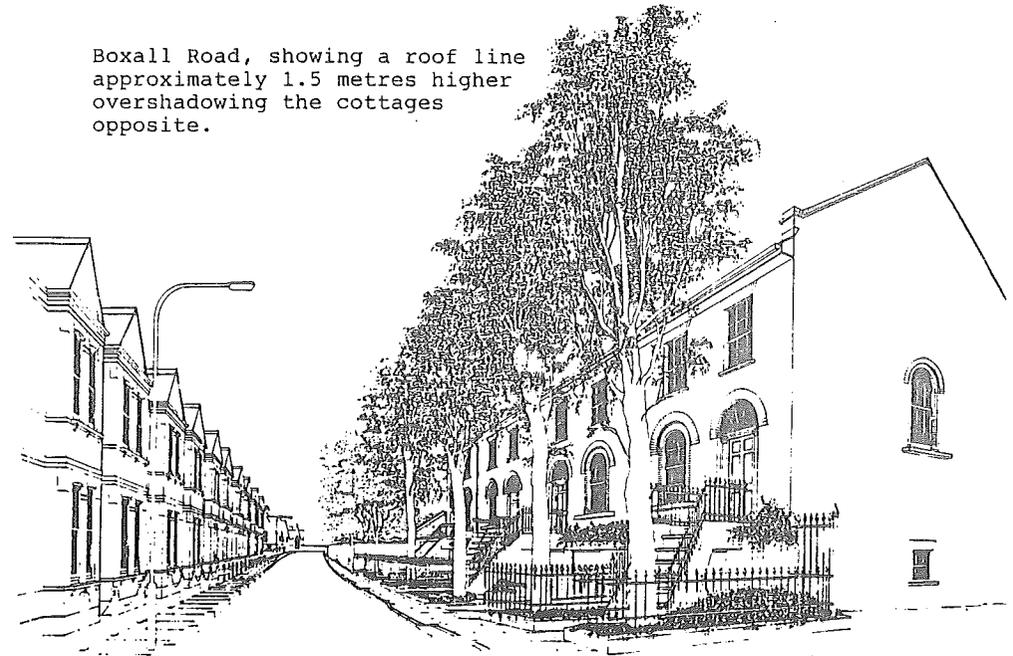
Opposite:

An artist's impression of the proposed development in Dulwich Village and Boxall Road.

The Dulwich Village frontage, showing the loss of half the "open space frame" for Nos. 60 & 62, built as a pair in the 18th century.



Boxall Road, showing a roof line approximately 1.5 metres higher overshadowing the cottages opposite.



## LOCAL HISTORY Sub-Committee

### THE 'GLENLEA' EVENING

120 members and friends attended a unique event arranged by the Local History Group on 6th June. The demand for tickets far exceeded the space available and, unfortunately, a number of late applicants could not be accommodated.

Through the generosity of the owners of 'Glenlea', Mr and Mrs Costa, the audience was able to view the garden and hear of the changes which had taken place since their hosts acquired the house in 1939. After this, Mr Michael Lee, a Dulwich resident and member of the South London Society of Architects, gave an outline of the development of Georgian architecture, and of special features of 'Glenlea' which was built in 1804. He compared certain similarities with two other houses on Dulwich Common ('Northcroft' and 'The Willows') both by the same architect, George Tappen. The audience was commended to look at a number of original features inside the house, notably the fire-places and the architraves on doors and windows which all bore the same design of parallel lines and rosettes. Unfortunately, a heavy shower drew this part of the evening to a rapid conclusion, and the delightful interior of 'Glenlea' was reached as soon as possible!

After viewing the ground floor rooms, the audience made their way along Dulwich Common to the Old Library of Dulwich College, which had kindly been placed at the Society's disposal by the Master. After a welcome glass of wine, a series of talks on the previous owners of the house was given by members of the Local History Group. A full account of this will be published later in the 'Glenlea' volume of the series on Dulwich houses being prepared by the group.

### Coincidences.

An amazing number of coincidences were found during the 'Glenlea' evening. It had been no part of the arrangements that the occasion should fall in the 40th year of the Anniversary of VE Day; it was purely by chance that June 6th, D-Day, fell on the first Thursday of the month, which is the Society's normal meeting date. Both dates were singularly appropriate in view of the last speaker of the evening - Braham Grisnigt. As is now known, contact had been made with two of the Dutch agents who lived at 'Glenlea' between January 1943 and April 1945. One of these,

Braham Grisnigt, was invited with his wife Ann from Holland, to be the Society's guests for the visit to the house.

Braham's story, which follows this item in the Newsletter, left the audience with a deep feeling of appreciation and admiration.

During the evening, Ann Grisnigt (nee Stone) was reunited with a great school-friend she had not seen for over 40 years, Ann Ralfe, and also with one of JAGS' retired headmistresses, Jean Leiper. It was later revealed that Braham Grisnigt's code-name whilst at 'Glenlea' was "Coster", amazingly similar to the owner of the house's name.

Thirty-five years after the war ended, Braham received a package from the German Red Cross: in it was his mother's wedding-ring which he had been wearing when he was captured - the date of its arrival was the same day and month engraved on the ring.

There was one last coincidence on this very special evening. The grand-daughter of Walter Savage, one of the former owners of 'Glenlea' on whom one of the speakers touched, was in the audience.

At the end of the evening, two pleasant ceremonies took place. Braham Grisnigt presented a plaque of the Dutch agents' association to the Dulwich Society, and another to Mr AG Costa to be hung in 'Glenlea'. Denys Wyatt, Chairman of the Dulwich Society, then presented Braham and Ann Grisnigt with a painting of 'Glenlea' by Dulwich artist Audrey MacLeod.

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### THE STORY of 'GLENLEA' DURING the WAR YEARS

1943 - 1945.

#### Mr Grisnigt's Address.

My wife and I are extremely honoured to be your guests.

When I received your invitation, my thoughts flew back to the time, more than 40 years ago, when I was among the first group of Dutchmen who took possession of 'Glenlea' and Dulwich!!

It is winter 1942 - 1943.

The war situation is still very bleak. The older ones among us may still remember that.

The battle for merchant shipping in the North Atlantic is at a critical point: too many ships are being lost to the German U-boats.

On the east front the Germans are attacking Stalingrad. The only bright spot on the horizon is the successes of the 8th Army in North Africa in breaking through the German lines at El Alamein, and in occupying Tobroek and Benghazi on its way to Tripoli.

It is during this period of the war that the Dutch Government in exile reaches a decision to establish a new Dutch Intelligence Service, called Bureau Inlichtingen (BI for short). This new Intelligence Service is to become responsible for all information between England and Holland and vice versa. The Dutch Intelligence Service (BI) is to work in close contact with the British SIS (Secret Intelligence Service, Section North-West Europe): the Head of this Section of the SIS is Col. JK Cardeaux. Head of the Dutch BI is Dr Col. JM Somer, while the first liaison officer between SIS and BI is the English Capt. Charles Seymour. However, it stands to reason, that in order to operate an Intelligence Service, one needs to recruit agents, ones who are not only willing to return to occupied territory but also equipped with certain physical and mental qualities.

Since the occupation of Holland in May 1940 a number of men and a few women escaped from Holland and made their way to England.

To escape from occupied Holland was a hazardous and dangerous undertaking. Many of those who tried to escape were arrested by the Germans and perished in concentration camps.

During the period 1940-1945 a total of approx. 1800 men and women succeeded in fleeing from occupied Holland and to reach the UK to join the allied forces.

These men and women who reached England and joined the allied forces are called "Engelandvaarders", which translated means "England Pilgrims", and it was from among these "Engelandvaarders" ("England Pilgrims") that volunteers were sought for the Dutch Intelligence Service.

The "Engelandvaarders" had their own club in London, in the Bayswater Road, called "Oranje Haven", which means "Orange Harbour".

Queen Wilhelmina, who was living at this time in exile in England, personally entertained to tea at her home, Stebbing House, Maidstone, every single Eng-

landvaarder on his or her arrival.

The Queen would ask them many questions about their home and family and about the conditions in Holland.

The British SIS was fully responsible for the technical training of the Dutch agents: it also had the responsibility for providing this training for those in the French, Belgian, Norwegian and Danish services. In order to safeguard maximum security the ideal situation would have been for every agent to be trained and housed individually.

Any contact with fellow-agents was a security risk. However, individual training of all those agents would require an impossible number of instructors, facilities, digs. etc. etc., so there was no other choice but to train and house many of the agents together.

Now, the location of their living quarters was of the utmost importance. It should not be too far from the centre of London, where a lot of their training would take place. Its location should be sufficiently isolated to avoid unnecessary contact with their countrymen, and the surroundings should contain sufficient opportunities for relaxation.

Yes! And the house and location that met these requirements was... can you guess? Of course 'Glenlea', West Dulwich, London SE21. 'Glenlea' was to become our base, from which we would travel to the various training centres in and outside London.

Our training was directed towards acquiring proficiency in wireless operating, coding and decoding techniques, close combat, small fire-arm drill etc.etc. Parachute training was carried out at Ringway airport, now Manchester airport.

I remember this training period as a most exhilarating time. All our instructors were British. They were dedicated, competent and understanding men who did their utmost to prepare us for the job of secret agent.

In January 1943 the first Dutchmen arrived at 'Glenlea'. I was among the first group of 10 agents to take up residence there.

During the coming months the train journey between West Dulwich and Victoria station would become very familiar indeed.

Because of security reasons, we all had undercover names, even while in training. It was also for this reason that we never referred to the name of 'Glenlea' but to its code name "Huize Anna". "Huize Anna" is still the name used by ex-agents when they meet and

talk about old times.

The officer in charge of our group at 'Glenlea' was Commander Child, an English Naval Reserve Officer, who had been badly wounded by enemy operations near The Hague in May 1940. He had lost a leg and had returned to England as part of an exchange of wounded prisoners-of-war between England and Germany. Commander Child was our overseer and guardian. The household of 'Glenlea' was run, at the time I stayed there, from January - September 1943, by a Mrs Green and her daughter Kitty; and later on, I have been told, by a Mrs Willar and a Mrs Pendry. The job of housekeeper was a very demanding post. Agents, by their very nature, tend to be independent. The housekeepers must have had a hard job to feed us and to keep the house in order. I remember Mrs Green as a very helpful woman. Whenever we arrived home late at night, there was always a plate of sandwiches, sausage rolls or pork-pies awaiting us.

In accordance with military rule, we had to be in before midnight, when Mrs Green had orders to lock the door. But, before locking the door, she was thoughtful enough to place a spare key under the outside doormat, so that any late-comer could just creep in.

After the war I was told that this job of housekeeper was so demanding that it became a regular occurrence for the housekeepers to offer their resignation, pending a nervous breakdown! At that time, I never realised that a handful of young Dutchmen could cause so much domestic trouble!

During the evenings, when we stayed at home, which was not often, we enjoyed ourselves playing snooker in the biljard room, playing table-tennis, or reading and talking in the comfortable lounge. Although in principle, no training was to take place in "Huize Anna", the room opposite the main entrance was equipped with some wireless equipment in order to enable us to practice and improve our skill as wireless operators.

Another downstairs room must be mentioned. The kitchen, very spacious, farmhousy and cosy. In the middle of the kitchen stood a large oblong table, surrounded, I think, by 10 or 12 chairs. Here, we had our breakfast and evening meal. In this room many plans were made and confidences exchanged. Upstairs, were several comfortable bedrooms.

The Commander had the bedroom which was situated over the kitchen wing. We, the agents, used to share bedrooms, usually two or more agents to one room.

The gardens of 'Glenlea' were something special - certain'y during the period I stayed there. In the gardens stood a large greenhouse, with a flourishing grapevine. I remember, one summer evening, on our return from a day's training in London, we were astonished to see, on looking into the greenhouse, that all the grapes had been stripped from the vine. We rushed inside to ask Commander Child about this sudden disappearance of our grapes: he told us that he had them all picked during the day and had them sent from us to Queen Wilhelmina. We have never been able to verify his story, but to this day we have our doubts!

Our favourite spots in Dulwich were - as you may guess - "The Grove", where a blind pianist called Frank used to play the popular songs of those days, and "The Crown and Greyhound". Dulwich Park, beautifully kept, was also one of our favourite spots. To keep fit, we used to go for an early-morning pre-breakfast run in the Park; what we now call jogging! I can still feel and taste the clean fresh air, unpolluted by traffic; the smell of the trees, leaves, flowers of Dulwich Park, and of Dulwich itself. In those far-off days 'Glenlea', "Huize Anna", was really a second home from home.

It was during this beautiful Spring of 1943 that I met the girl who is now my wife of almost 40 years. She was an old JAGS girl, living in South Croxted Rd, who often travelled by the same train from London to Dulwich in the evening.

During the period that the Dutch Intelligence Service (BI) operated from London, that is from Spring 1943 until Spring 1945, a total of 43 BI agents were dropped over Holland. Of these 43 agents, 34 agents stayed at 'Glenlea', "Huize Anna". We were all in our twenties: I was 20 years old when parachuted over Holland.

And what happened to these 34 agents? There were no James Bond figures among us. We all had our fears of what could happen to us, but we all shared the same determination to do our bit, routing the Germans out of Holland. By tragic coincidence, the first agent who left 'Glenlea' and England, on the 23rd of March, was killed

when the plane taking him to the dropping zone was shot down over the Zuiderzee. The last agent who left 'Glenlea' and England, on the 12th of April 1945, drowned when he parachuted off course and landed in the middle of a large lake. That leaves us with 32 agents from 'Glenlea'. 13 agents completed whole or part of their mission and were not captured by the Germans. 19 agents were arrested, during or after completion of their mission. Of these 19 agents, 14 were killed or died in prison or concentration camps. 5 agents were lucky to survive this ordeal and were liberated by the allies. I was one of these lucky ones. In short: of the 34 boys who stayed at 'Glenlea', "Huize Anna", 16 did not return.

My experience as an agent can be seen as typical for many agents of BI who stayed in 'Glenlea'. With another agent I was dropped on the night of 20th September 1943 near the small village of Grave in the province Noord-Brabant, in the South of Holland.

When flying to our dropping zone, my friend and I drew lots of who was to jump first. The jumping procedure being:- first one agent would jump, followed by a parachute carrying a pack containing two small cases with our radio transmitter. Then the second agent would jump. On landing, we would walk towards each other and automatically find our luggage. Then we would dig a hole in the ground in which we would bury our parachutes. However, the reality was quite different. After my friend had jumped first, the crew of the plane were late in releasing our pack, so I jumped as quickly as I could. In the bright moonlight we saw the parachute with our suitcases dropping near a farmhouse. At the same time we heard mens' voices, and they were approaching in our direction. Another problem was that the terrain in which we had landed consisted of heavy clay, and it would take ages to dig a hole and dispose of our parachutes. We had our first crisis. How were we going to retrieve our luggage? What kind of men were approaching us: Germans, good, or bad, willing Dutchmen?

We decided to make a stand. We drew our guns and waited behind a hedge for the men to come close enough to surprise them. When we confronted them, I don't know who was more scared, they or us! To make a long story short, they proved to be good

willing Dutch airwardens. They returned our pack and we gave them our parachutes, which, in this time of textile shortage, was very welcome! After that, we got away as quickly as we could.

Via a contact address near-by, my friend went to the Hague and I went to Amsterdam. There I established excellent working contacts with an underground organisation, and SIS and BI in England. My radio contact with England was very good and I was able to transmit and receive a large number of messages. Coding and decoding of many of these messages was another part of my job. At the end of 1943 my friend and I ran into bad luck. Quite by coincidence we got involved in the arrival of two new agents. The Germans had become aware of their arrival. We ran into a trap. My friend was killed. I got away and was able to rescue his radio transmitter, which I left with relatives near Utrecht. Until the day of my arrest, I had frequent contact with SIS/BI through my two radio transmitters: 40m-5000-9000 k-cycles/80m- 3000-5000 k-cycles. By means of D/F (Direction Finding), the Germans tracked me down in Amsterdam, where I was arrested on the 2nd of February 1944. After some rather unpleasant experiences in various prisons and concentration camps, I was liberated by the Russians when they entered Ravensbrück concentration camp, which was situated near Berlin, on the 29th April 1945.

Of the agents who resided at 'Glenlea', one agent received, posthumously, the highest Dutch military decoration, i.e. the Militaire Willemsorde, which is the equivalent of the British Victoria Cross.

I would also like to mention the valiant RAF crews of the Special Duty Squadrons nos. 138 and 161 who were stationed at Tempsford, who flew the agents to their dropping zones. These crews flew without escort, under the most difficult of circumstances, evading anti-aircraft gunfire while trying to pinpoint the dropping zone of the agent. Many of these planes were shot down and their crews killed when returning from these night operations. We the agents, had the utmost admiration and respect for the bravery and skill of these men.

After my liberation by the Russians, I returned to Dulwich to marry my fiancée. We were married in the old Emmanuel Church, by the Rev. Davis.

And now here we are, forty years later, on the sixth of June, D-Day, the forty-first anniversary of the Allied landing in Normandy, guests of the Dulwich Society.

Dulwich has changed a lot since the time agents lived there, but I think Dulwich has kept much of its charming character, such as Dulwich Village, Dulwich College, the Art Gallery, most of Dulwich Park, "The Grove" and "The Crown and Greyhound". The road system, although much more crowded, is practically the same. And 'Glenlea', our "Huize Anna" looks just as beautiful as it was in 1943.

At the beginning of my talk I told you that all the agents who stayed at 'Glenlea' were recruited from the "Engelandvaarders" (Pilgrims to England). That is the group of men and women who escaped from occupied Holland in order to join the allied forces. The surviving Engelandvaarders are now united in "Genootschap van Engelandvaarders", that is the Society of Engelandvaarders. Apart from the local 'get-togethers' we have annual a reunion, which is always attended by Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands.

On behalf of the Society of Engelandvaarders, I would like to present you, Mr Chairman and Mr Costa with a shield of our Society, as a humble token of our heartfelt thanks for the friendship and warmth shown to the agents during their stay in Dulwich.

To preserve the flavour and originality of Mr Braham Grisnigt's address there has been minimal editing.

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#### THE ANNUAL DINNER

In May, the Annual Dinner at the 'Crown and Greyhound' Hotel in the heart of the Village was a quietly cheerful and satisfying occasion. A small nucleus of old and new members, their Guest Speaker, Max Nicholson, Chairman of the Ecological Parks Trust, and his guest Miss Gina Douglas, Secretary of the EPT, sat down in the Dulwich Suite in a setting worthy of many rendezvous of greater repute - with the added attraction of flowers fresh from Gillian Wyatt's garden.

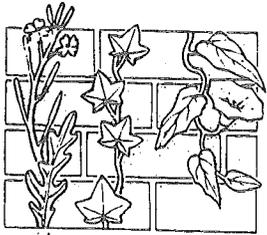
The food and wines were good, and the service efficient, cheerful and resourceful. The new young management team was to be congratulated for its efforts on our behalf. 48 hours earlier, the small team and its staff had successfully steered the refurbished "Dog" through its official opening in 'Olde English' style.

The theme of Max Nicholson's after-dinner thoughts was the urgent need for people to develop a mental attitude which accepted that there should be a balance in our environment between human and commercial demands. In this context, he conferred a welcome accolade upon this Society. In his opinion, the Society had used its expertise and influence in the area in a number of ways which had already helped to improve the local environment. He believed wholeheartedly that ecology - "the study of the relations of living organisms to their surroundings, their habits and their mode of life": OED - should be an integral part of all future town-planning, and that people should be on their guard to preserve that link.

This is a lengthier-than-usual account of a comparatively small occasion in the Society's calendar. However, in recent months a number of very real threats to the balance of our own environment have triggered some very spontaneous reactions from members. Those who were there, thought that a Dinner, at which it was possible to discuss such threats - which highlight the very reason for the Society's existence - was a very useful occasion.

Some members may feel the 'hardy annual' of a Dinner is no longer appropriate, and that it could be replaced by some other social event. If this is so, please would they let the Executive Committee know what alternatives they would like considered for the future.

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## THE ECOLOGICAL PARKS TRUST

### Progress Report on Dulwich Upper Wood

For new members of the Society, Dulwich Upper Wood is a 5-acre mixed deciduous wood owned by the Dulwich College Estates Governors.

It is bounded by Farquhar Road and the Abbey Housing project (on the site of the old Crystal Palace High Level railway station). The Ecological Parks Trust is managing the site with a view to developing it into a small nature reserve suitable in particular for infant, primary and secondary educational needs in the ecological/conservation areas, and also for use by the public in general.

Over the last year, several important events have occurred at the wood which are worth reporting. Firstly, members of the Society, living in the immediate vicinity of Farquhar Road, will be pleased to see the completion of work to replace the rusty expanse of corrugated iron fencing with smart iron railings. Much of the rubbish, 12 skip loads (72 cubic yards) dumped behind the old fence, has been removed, though some still remains.

Another important event has been the completion of work on the Abbey Housing project which means the wood is again a quiet place. This has been reflected in the return of both the Lesser Spotted Woodpecker and the Woodcock, neither of which has been seen since the work started. There are also now regular sightings of the Great Spotted Woodpecker, Nuthatches and Treecreepers.

The most important event of the year, however, was the granting of a lease for the site to the Trust by the London Borough of Southwark. After 3 years of negotiations, we have obtained a 7-year lease and are hopeful this will be extended to 25 years. Acquisition of the lease means the development of the wood can go ahead apace, with the main priority being its development as a teaching resource, with the appointment of a teacher and proper teaching facilities.

Management work in the wood has concentrated on the establishment of another hazel coppice area, and the construction of a tree nursery. The nursery was thought necessary because the shade cast by the wood's many sycamores prevents reliable regeneration of native trees.

Trees will be kept in the nursery for 3 years before being planted out in the wood, or being given to local schools and groups interested in setting up their own low cost nature areas.

On Saturday, 11th May, we had the official opening of Dulwich Upper Wood Nature Reserve by the Deputy Mayor of Southwark, Mr. Sam King. Considering the rather dull and chilly weather, the turnout of 160+ interested people was very satisfactory indeed. The day consisted of guided tours round the wood, followed by speeches from Sam King and Max Nicholson, Chairman of the Ecological Parks Trust. Afterwards there was a buffet, followed by more guided tours.

Volunteer helpers are still needed at the wood; help can be physical (you don't have to be young or particularly fit), or some expert knowledge or special interest such as bird, moth, beetle or plant identification experience. One particular area in which you may be able to help is if you know the whereabouts of any of the last occupants of the 8 large Victorian houses once on the site, or if you have photographs or information connected with the houses, and most importantly the gardens. If you can help in any way, please contact the Warden (Andrew Loan) based at the wood on 761 6230, or call round and have a chat at the site-hut just off Farquhar Road.

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## HORTICULTURE SUB-COMMITTEE

### The Planting of a Water Garden (continued)

Having constructed a Wildlife Water Garden, the interest of planting it begins.

Many species of plants are entirely special and therefore are a new experience for a gardener previously confined to dry land. Specialists will supply catalogues giving a wide range of these, but there are also many old friends among our plants, which will do much better in a more or less boggy situation at the pond bank, with its humid microclimate.

The suppliers of Water Gardens usually divide their catalogues into sections such as:-

1. Waterlilies  
These vary in the depth of water that they require above the crown of the plant. "Large" ones need 2'0" to 3'0", "Medium" 1'6" to 2'0", "Small" 1'0" to 1'6" and "Miniature" 6" to 12".
2. Deep Water Aquatics  
Other forms of plant, similarly graded for depth.
3. Aquatic Marginal Plants
  - (a) those requiring 3" to 5" of water, with foliage and flowers standing above the surface
  - (b) those requiring 3" to 18" of water
  - (c) those preferring wet soil but which can accept 2" to 4" of water.
4. Oxygenating Plants  
These are necessary for sustaining oxygen in the water, needed for the health of plants and wildlife and to ensure that ultimately a proper natural balance can be obtained to give clear and clean water.
5. Floating Aquatics

### 6. Pool-side Plants

These should not have a fully wet soil, but benefit from the adjacent moisture, and a certain amount of capillary action from the water edge. (In general *Iris Kaempferi* will not accept bog, but most *Iris Laevigata* will.)

Plenty of enjoyment can be obtained by designing the layout of the whole scene, using the sharp contrast of the clean vertical lines of rushes and iris to dramatise the pure flatness of the sheet of water and of some of the lily pads and other floating foliage that lie on it. Fern and Astilbe foliage and such-like can soften the picture, and a mixture of candelabra primulas, in season, are always a joy. Do not overcrowd the surface of the pond. Lily pads and other aquatics have beauties of their own, but the great asset of the pond is essentially a large placid area of flat water, very restful in a garden and always surprising, with its reflections changing with the changing light. Try to keep 75% clear of growth at the outset at least.

Marginals that will grow in bog, or the water itself, are best set near the banks. If desired, small promontories can be created by planting in baskets which can be masked by pieces of inverted turf which, also, with stones, help to retain the otherwise loose soil of the promontory. Generally, islands should only be made in large ponds.

For aquatics, line the planting baskets with squares of hessian to hold the soil, until the developing root system binds it together. Compost, leafmould and normal general fertilizers must be avoided as these are unacceptable to aquatics, disturbing the proper balance for clear water, and encouraging the clogging of the pond with blanket weed, etc. Special fertilizers are available for aquatic plants.

By planting creeping plants, where suitable, on the turf edge of the pond, the top of the butyl can be finally masked. There are probably many such plants already in your garden that can be set out and persuaded to do this work, where the marginals leave sections exposed.

When the pond has had time to settle in and the contact between butyl and soil is entire, it is permissible to wear wellingtons and step into the water, if it is certain that there are no sharp stones in the soil on the bottom.

If however the floor is sloping, as suggested for a Wildlife Pond, and of differing depths to suit a range of plants, a ladder bridge across the pond will still be useful, to be held if the feet slip down into the depths, which could otherwise have unfortunate results.

It is essential to take great care not to put any load on the actual water-level top of the butyl-covered walls.

It is recommended that waterlilies should not be planted at their final depth until they have commenced to grow their leaves. Brick columns (3 bricks to a course) should be built up from the bottom to within 18" of water-level and the lily baskets stood on these - the courses being removed, by degrees, as the lilies grow longer stems.

I have thought more about the attraction that water has for so many gardeners. Many of my friends are definitely "water-people" and in my family we certainly were. I remember that, when I was barely waist-high and my father took us younger ones on a walk to Dulwich Park, Brockwell Park or Streatham Common, the key target was always the pond, well or stream, to be examined closely. Later when we went for long country walks at weekends, the high spot was always some village pond, or farm or mill pond, brook, river or lakeside.

Perhaps we hark back instinctively to the original form of primitive life, which authorities now suggest was created by means of the sun's rays on water and certain minerals or chemicals. From that, they claim fish were first developed, then amphibians, and finally land dwellers from which came the vertebrates - the form of life from which homo sapiens developed.

Certainly water takes its important place in all famous gardens with which I am acquainted, throughout the world, and has done since very early times.

Still water has so much an effect of peace, running water a restful sound and falling water a joyful sight. How much those unfortunate purblind-to-water people miss. It is to be hoped that they have unusually highly developed senses elsewhere to compensate them for their loss.

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#### WILDLIFE SUB-COMMITTEE

The Dulwich pond survey is continuing and we now have details of 42 ponds. We should like to hear of many more (however small), so if you have one yourself, or know of one in a neighbour's or friend's garden, even though they may not be a member of the Dulwich Society, please ring 670 3011 before 9am.

The Wildlife and Trees Sub-Committees are considering a proposal put forward by Keith Corbett of the London Wildlife Trust regarding Belair. He suggests that the water of the stream could be improved if a filter could be placed at the south end, and some of the overhanging trees there lopped; also some of the smaller closely growing overhanging ones could be removed.

This would reduce the number of leaves falling in and fouling the water and would allow more sunlight through. He also recommends raking of the stream and the planting of native plants along the edge - iris, marsh marigolds, etc. No decisions have yet been made.

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THE NATIONAL GARDENS SCHEME CHARITABLE TRUST

The opening of the Grange garden, under the auspices of the Trust was arranged by Mr. Fairlie as a personal thanksgiving for the completion of 50 years stewardship of that property and he wants to record his deep gratitude to all those who helped with supplies of flowerpots, trays and plants for the Plant Sale, and for so many excellent home made cakes for the Cake Stall and prizes for the Raffle; also to all who lent tables, chairs and benches.

The British Home for Incurables, at Crown Point, was nominated to receive 25% of the gross takings and they, through members of their staff and of their League of Friends, supplied and served the teas and gave generously of their help and loan of equipment, and arranged the sale of all the cakes donated.

That the whole afternoon was declared by so many visitors to be an outstandingly enjoyable success, was due mostly to the fact that Dulwich took it over as its own, through so many members of the Dulwich Society. This degree of success could not possibly have been achieved by a sole individual.

Practically the whole display of plants was sold by Horticulture members, raising over £200. All cakes were sold, and the very large number of tickets from the Raffle cleared all the prizes.

It is interesting to record that the highest attendance suggested, at 400, was in fact slightly exceeded and brought to these Charities the sum of £603.41, which has now been paid over.

In the end, the most important achievement was that so very many people claimed to have derived genuine happiness from their visit and their work.

The preceding day had been very cold and nearly continuously wet; but The Good Lord gave us a beautiful mild afternoon until nearly the end, when the sun got lower and the cold returned, but not a drop of rain fell.

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NEWS

from

DULWICH PICTURE GALLERY

The past few months have proved to be an eventful period for the Gallery. The major exhibition, 'Collection for a King - Old Masters from Dulwich Picture Gallery' opened on 14th April in America at the National Gallery of Washington. After five months there, the exhibition travels to Los Angeles and finally New York before returning to London at the end of January 1986.

The exhibition, which is attracting 3000 visitors a day, should be seen by ½million people in Washington alone. Thirty-six pictures are on show, including works by Rembrandt, Poussin and Van Dyck.

There have been some rapturous reviews in the American Press, and particular interest has been shown in the audio-visual programme which accompanies the exhibition. It is hoped that an 'American Friends of the Picture Gallery' will be established as the interest in Dulwich and the Gallery is enormous. Over £25,000 worth of Exhibition Catalogues have been sold (these can also be purchased at the Gallery for £8, or £6.50 to Friends). Already, American tourists over here are beginning to find their way out of Central London to Dulwich to view the other 95% of the collection.

While these paintings are touring the States, a series of temporary exhibitions have been planned to fill the two small galleries either side of the Mausoleum. These will open on the following dates:-

5th June-28th June	<u>Dulwich Picture Gallery</u> <u>Reinterpreted:</u> works from the Fine Art Department of the Kingston School of Art. Art in the ILEA School - 120 works.
July-September (dates to be confirmed)	<u>Late De Chirico:</u> a touring exhibition organised by the Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol, including paintings, sculp- ture, drawings and prints.
September-October	<u>Views of Dulwich:</u> The Archi- tecture of Sir John Soane and Charles Barry Jnr.

October-November

Ceramics '85: an exhibition of works for sale by leading British potters, including Janice Tchalenko.

November-January 1986

Sam Rabin: the life and work of Britain's finest draughtsman, whose pupils have included Mary Quant and Bridget Riley. Fifty works from museum and private collections, including the artist's own.

The painting "Le Bal Champêtre", by Antoine Watteau returned to the Gallery after an absence of almost a year. In that time, it was seen by over a million people in Washington, Paris and Berlin, when it was shown in the travelling Watteau exhibition. The picture is regarded by many as the greatest example of Watteau's work in this country. It is currently on show in Room 12.

Finally, the Gallery's Summer Fête will take place on the afternoon of Sunday 14th July. It will be opened by Angela Thorne; will include a Police Dog Display and, it is hoped, will attract over 2000 people from the local area.

John Sheeran.