

Sydenham Society

NEWS

Summer 2009

Investing in Sydenham

With so much general talk of recession, it is good to see that major investments are in line for Sydenham town centre. These include:

- Transport for London funded improvements to both Sydenham Road and Sydenham Station
- Lewisham Council's improvements to Station Approach
- Investment from private developers (assuming that planning permission is granted), for the Greyhound and the Cobbs Corner area.

These are all connected. Behind it all is London Rail's anticipated future total of 5.9 million passengers a year using Sydenham Station – compared with just under 1 million today. This is a forward planning total, and growth will not happen all at once, but the increase in footfall passing through the 'Sydenham Gateway' is going to be massive. It is easy to see why, in spite of the recession, the developers Wealdfrost want to get on with developing not only flats, which will be extremely convenient for the station, but also a pub and ground floor retail space.

The planned improvements to Sydenham Road are also connected. Most of the proposals have been dictated by the need to maintain road capacity while allowing space for all the passengers using the station. The best way of doing this is with light controlled crossings at points where the road has been narrowed – so making it possible for pedestrians to get across with least delay to the traffic.

The increase in capacity for the station comes from having 12 trains per hour of 12-carriage length (in the longer term) stopping at Sydenham, 18 hours a day. Instead of being a suburban commuter station, with most traffic during peak hours, Sydenham will become an all-hours station, with a corresponding impact on the vitality of Sydenham Road and Kirkdale. There will be more people around, and opportunities for retailers to provide reasons for people to spend more time in the area. It is why it makes sense to spend money on removing clutter from Sydenham Road, and creating the 'pocket parks'.

There will be pressure from commuters driving into the area looking to park all day while they go to London. It is therefore essential to make the most efficient use of car parking spaces near the shops and local side roads. These should be for short stay parking, allowing people who are coming to Sydenham to shop.

Meanwhile, some small shops in Sydenham Road are, of course, struggling. However, it is good to note that landlords are finding new tenants.

What the High Street can provide is a comfortable place for pedestrians to use with a range of retail outlets, the best offering personal service to regular loyal customers, as well as cafes and other places to spend time. Attractive new ventures, such as Angie's flower stall outside the Post Office, licensed with the explicit intention of displacing the street drinkers, should also flourish.

With the investment that is coming, Sydenham Road will be a more attractive place to visit, and will give those of us who use it a stronger feeling of community. We will also still be able to pick up good value for money items at the (sometimes scorned) pound shops – let's not forget this is how Marks and Spencers and Tescos started out!

To publicise these changes, the Sydenham Society will be inviting speakers from TfL, local businesses and Lewisham Council to a public meeting this September, where residents will be able to learn more about these developments and ask their own questions.

The proposed development at The Greyhound.



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Sydenham Arts Festival • River Restoration • Profile: Emma Tarling • New Park Play Facilities**

Your neighbourhood voice

www.sydenhamsociety.com

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The Sydenham Society is an independent group representing the interests of local residents. Sydenham Society News is non-partisan, non-political and non-commercial.

ARTICLES PLEASE!

If there is something you would like the society to tell everybody, or a local issue you feel strongly about, please send your article, maximum 300 words, to the editor.

Sydenham Society News is read by Sydenham residents, old and new, so please spell out all acronyms and explain anything that a newcomer might not understand. All articles are subject to editing by the Editorial team.

Email your article to the editorial team at

news@sydenhamsociety.com or send hard copy to
97 Longton Grove SE26 6QQ.

Disclaimer

The views expressed in articles are those of named contributors and should not be regarded as statements of policy of the Sydenham Society.

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Michelle Holford Kim Humphreys Lewis Robinson

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Community Police Teams

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Perry Vale **8284 5287**
Sydenham **8284 5286**
Lewisham Police Control Room **8297 1212**
In an emergency dial 999

For environmental noise nuisance call:
Lewisham Council **8314 6000**
Bromley Council **8464 3333**
Southwark Council **7525 5000**

Next issue copy deadline: Friday 7 August 2009

Forest Hill Pools

In March Lewisham Council advised that there were two options for new pools to replace the Forest Hill Pools which closed in March 2006, over 3 years ago.

These were –

Option 1

New pools on Dartmouth with the new facility built behind and to the side of the retained Superintendent's House. There would be no cross-subsidy and local residents would have to wait for capital funding to support this proposal until at least 2012 with a swimming pool opening in 2014/15 or:

Option 2

New pools built on a vacant council owned industrial site in Willow Way with the facility cross-subsidised by housing on the vacant Dartmouth Road pools site. This could, according to the council, be deliverable by 2011.

Having asked those members attending the Sydenham Society's Annual General Meeting their views, which were overwhelmingly that the council should build a new pool on the Dartmouth Road site, and without delay, the Society's Executive agree that the Society should support Option 1 and that:

- a) **A new pool should be built on the existing pools site as a way of helping regenerate Forest Hill town centre and attract a wider range of shops and services; and**
- b) **The pool should be delivered as soon as possible, and certainly before 2015.**

Lewisham Council is currently consulting on the future of the pools, and by now all households in Sydenham, Forest Hill and Perry Vale should have received the latest questionnaire.

In the questionnaire the council says that the Willow Way site cannot be used to cross subsidise the pools on the Dartmouth Road site because housing is not going to be an acceptable use for this site, given its current designation as an employment site. However it would appear that the council can change the designation of the current pools site to suitable for housing, to allow cross-subsidy to pay for a pool on the Willow Way site.

The Sydenham Society believes the council is wrong in the presumption that a pool in Willow Way will solve the problem of swimming provision in this area. Willow Way is an industrial estate, served by a narrow side street with cars parked on the pavement and with vans and lorries delivering to the already well-used units on the industrial estate. The pools proposed for this site would also be smaller than those proposed for Dartmouth Road.

The Society believes that new pools within the existing site would comply with the council's planning policies that state that Leisure Centres should be built within town centre sites, so that in planning terms, the council admits that this option is

more easily deliverable than the Willow Way site. Rebuilding on the Dartmouth Road site would help to regenerate the Forest Hill town centre. A new facility using the existing frontage would also augment the existing buildings, which form a fine group of Victorian civic buildings and include the Grade II listed Library, Holy Trinity School and Louise House.

The Sydenham Society believes that the options being presented to the local community do not meet the needs of Forest Hill, and we support the Forest Hill Society's Executive who have been working to try and get the Council to reconsider the current options as they stand. This work indicates that it may be possible to redevelop Willow Way for live/work development or mixed uses including employment and that this development could then be used to cross subsidise a new swimming pool on the Dartmouth Road site. It may not meet the whole funding gap that has currently been identified, but it may well go some way towards doing so. In that case, it may be possible to deliver a new pool on the current site much sooner than 2015.

Lewisham's consultation will go on until 29 May and if you have yet not completed the form, or have lost it, it is available online on Lewisham's website at:

<http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/LeisureAndCulture/SportAndLeisure/SportsFacilities/NewDevelopments/ForestHillPools/>

If the responses to the questionnaire support the idea of a new pool on the current site then it may be possible to persuade the Mayor to reconsider the current options and work to find a solution that delivers pools on Dartmouth Road sooner.



Sydenham Assembly and Community Assets

Sydenham Assembly's top priority is "more activities for children and young people including a youth centre" and I support a centre at Silverdale Hall that will cater for the interests and development of the next generation. As the capital funding for a new centre on the rear playground is a ballpark figure of £800,000 we need to be thinking about smarter investment in Sydenham, given that the Council has limited capital resources.

One route is for the Council to grant a long lease (as in the case of the Queenswood Nature Reserve to Sydenham Garden) and another is to transfer the asset to a community organisation so that capital funds can be raised from different grant giving organisations. The revenue for the youth workers could be provided from existing Lewisham budgets as there is youth activity taking place at the Hillcrest Community Centre.

The Community Sector Unit is currently undertaking an

audit of Sydenham's community facilities to ascertain the demand for and supply of community space. The March meeting of the Assembly voted on £20,000 for community facilities (£10,000 for Silverdale Hall and £10,000 for the Rotary Day Centre). The results of the Audit will be reported to next Assembly meeting on Thursday 11 June starting at 7pm at Sydenham High School, 19 Westwood Hill. We will also be voting on bids for the remaining £17,000 of the Mayor's Fund, with £10,000 for the Sydenham Arts Festival and £3,000 for the Forest Hill and Sydenham Youth Forum having been approved by the Mayor. Please contact me if you would like more information on the Sydenham Assembly or any other Sydenham issues.

Cllr Chris Best, Sydenham Ward and Cabinet Member for Community Services. Tel: 8659 6445

Cllr_Chris.Best@lewisham.gov.uk

Albion Millennium Green

On Bank Holiday Monday, 4 May, members of the Sydenham and Forest Hill Societies met to give the Millennium Green a spring clean, to share a picnic and to have some games on the green. Unfortunately the weather was very grey and overcast and rain threatened.

A working party set about clearing a considerable amount of fly-tipping which has gone on over a number of years. The resultant pile was photographed for posterity and was cleared by Lewisham Council, forewarned of our intentions, the following day. A picnic was enjoyed and a game of football ensued as well as a friendly game of boules. Sadly the hoped for pleasant, relaxed afternoon finished early as the weather really was not as enticing as hoped.

The future of the green and how it could be managed and better used for the wider community is currently part of an ongoing discussion between the council and local residents.



Sydenham Community Radio

Sydenham Community Radio has received a £9,000 grant from Awards For All, the body that distributes National Lottery funds. The award is to help fund a one month project to broadcast on air with a Restricted Service License from OFCOM.

Sydenham Community Radio chair Peter Aleksin said; "this is a huge boost to our project and we hope that it will encourage people to come forward and become involved. We want to provide radio for Sydenham produced by the people of Sydenham and we are offering training so that local people can acquire the skills needed to make radio programs."

In the last issue of the Sydenham Society newsletter, we reported that Sydenham Community Radio was looking for a new base and they have been successful in their quest. Director Simon Banks explained; "members of the St Bartholomew's congregation read the story and Reverend Michael Kingston got in touch to see if they could help. As a result we have moved our equipment into the crypt and will be offering training there as well as using it as a base from which to cover the Sydenham Arts Festival." Simon added; "This shows how local media can help community organisations help each other and we look forward to becoming part of that media mix."

With plans to cover the Arts Festival in July, and offering training from this month, Sydenham Community Radio has come a long way since it arose from a series of public meetings in November 2007. Peter said; "The project has taken time to get this far as it has minimal funding and has relied on part time volunteers. The grant from 'Awards for All' will be a massive help in realising our ultimate goal of broadcasting on air. Until we acquire a licence from OFCOM we shall be broadcasting over the internet and anyone who wants to get involved in the project is invited to contact us through our website at: <http://sydenhamradio.co.uk> ".

Are London's Conservation Areas at Risk?

English Heritage Launches First National Survey of Nation's Most Special Places

England has some 9,300 Conservation Areas – historic parts of cities, towns, suburbs and villages designated by local authorities to protect their special character. But what condition are they in? Are they cherished through a close partnership of council and residents? Or are they at risk from neglect, decay and inappropriate development?

Across England, Conservation Areas vary enormously. The heart of a historic town might be a Conservation Area. So too might be a street of well-preserved 1930s semi-detached houses or an isolated group of farm buildings. In London, which has approximately 955 Conservation Areas, they range from the grandeur and predominately residential Belgravia Conservation Area in Westminster to the Sugar House Lane Conservation Area located on the edge of the Olympic Park – a rare physical reminder of east London's industrial past.

English Heritage has asked every Local Authority in the country to fill in a questionnaire for each of their Conservation Areas as part of the first nationwide census of the condition of this important element of our heritage. The results will be announced and a campaign will be launched on 23rd June to help councils, communities and individual residents care for these special places.

Conservation Areas identified at risk will be added to the Heritage at Risk register, published annually by English Heritage. Each year new categories are added to the register in an attempt to create a Domesday Book of every aspect of England's threatened heritage. The register helps everyone to prioritise action, direct resources to areas of need and focus attention on saving the best of the past for the future. Eventually it will make England the first country in the world to have a comprehensive picture of its heritage at risk and the necessary understanding to save it.

Dr Simon Thurley, Chief Executive of English Heritage, said: "Conservation Areas play a vital role in protecting the most important historic places in England from ill-considered change. Designated by local authorities after widespread local consultation,

millions of us live in or near one, go to work or shop in one or visit them for leisure. Thanks to help from hundreds of Local Authority Conservation Officers all over the country, this survey will give us a true picture of the condition of these important, historic places.

"Are sash windows still gracing house-fronts or are Conservation Areas suffering from a plague of plastic ones? Are front gardens being lost to car parking? Are the hearts of our most historic towns and suburban high streets under threat from the wrong kind of change? Does the existence of an active local amenity society make a difference?"

"We will be analysing the results carefully so that we can help to provide answers to questions like these and propose solutions where Conservation Areas are in decline. This is a strategic, national campaign and English Heritage won't be able to get involved in individual issues at a local level. However, we will be providing residents and local groups with information and advice and explaining how they can help by working constructively with local authorities to manage the places they value most. There is a lot that residents can do themselves and we will support Conservation Officers in their tireless work to halt decay and inappropriate change before it is too late."

To receive information on the Conservation Areas at Risk campaign, please visit www.english-heritage.org.uk/conservationareas

Heritage at Risk is sponsored by heritage insurer, Ecclesiastical. Ecclesiastical has been working with English Heritage for more than 20 years across various initiatives and will be working to see where shared research and data can give greater depth to the Heritage at Risk project.

Steve Wood, Managing Director of Ecclesiastical's insurance business in the UK and Ireland, said: "As a leading heritage insurer we are very aware of the threats our historic sites face. We are delighted therefore to be helping English Heritage in their campaign to save Conservation Areas, which enrich the lives of so many people who visit or live within them."

Don't Just Sit There – Volunteer!

There are many voluntary groups in this area, and as one of them the Sydenham Society is delighted at the recognition given by 'National Volunteers' Week' (1 – 7 June), this year reaching its 25th anniversary.

In Lewisham, efforts to mark this week are being led by Volunteer Centre Lewisham, which exists to match potential volunteers with roles identified by member organisations.

Organising volunteers is both hard and easy; a grass roots organisation such as the Sydenham Society can contact its members, and similar groups such as the Forest Hill Society, and quite easily can get a working party together, such as recently happened when the local community gave the Albion

Millennium Green a spring clean. This results from the hard, but enjoyable, work done over many years building up the network.

The value added by the Volunteer Centre Lewisham is in handling the legalities and bureaucracy required when doing things a bit more formally. But volunteering done either way will work, in the end, by making those contacts, and getting a sense of achievement from whatever is done.

For more information about Volunteer Centre Lewisham, contact Kay Kelleher, or visit:

<http://www.volunteercentrelewisham.org.uk>

Sydenham Society to lead Green Chain Walk

Sunday 20 September – Crystal Palace Park to Horniman Museum and Gardens

In early March the Sydenham Society was invited to propose a local walk that would showcase a local park or woodland as part of the 2009 Green Chain Walking Festival (12 – 20 September). Only two groups would be chosen from each of the five Green Chain boroughs and the best ten walks would be featured in the Festival programme.

The walk proposed by the Sydenham Society has been one of those chosen, and will take place on Sunday 20 September, starting at 10.30am at Crystal Palace Bus Station.

The route will start at Crystal Palace bus station, and will follow the path through Crystal Palace Park, exiting at Fisherman's Gate. Crossing Crystal Palace Park Road and Westwood Hill the route will enter Sydenham Wells Park at Ormanton Road and leave by way of the top gate at Wells Park Road. The walk will then enter Sydenham Hill Woods opposite the Dulwich Woodhouse and follow the route of the old railway line emerging finally at London Road and Horniman Museum and Gardens.

We are fortunate to be able to start our walk in a Grade II* listed park, cross a Green Flag park to ancient woodlands and finish three miles later in a second Green Flag park! How pleasant it will be to introduce people from well outside our area to our very special green corridors, which have recently become part of a new extension to the existing Green Chain.

Lewisham Healthy Walks

This established group meets regularly every Tuesday at 11am at the seats by the duck pond in Wells Park for our exercise walk. Buses 122, 202, 356 and 450 all stop near the park but, better still, why not WALK!

The park is looking amazingly beautiful in its spring and early summer glory, and is a worthy recipient of the Green Flag.

Regular walking is good for your heart and, if you are convalescing from an operation or an illness, it is one way to speed recovery. So do come and join us. Our Healthy Walks participants walk steadily at the speed that suits them with breath left for a sociable chat – it is a hilly park! It is good fun and it is also good for you.

To find out more ring Iris Humphries on 8693 9525

Improving Lewisham's Natural Environment through River Restoration

Lewisham is fortunate to have three rivers running through it; the Ravensbourne running from Deptford through Lewisham Town Centre to Beckenham Place Park in the south; the linear Pool River which runs through Catford, Lower Sydenham and Bellingham, and the river Quaggy running through Chinbrook Meadows.

Lewisham is also working hard with its partners to improve the section of the Thames that runs through the borough in order to make it, what it should be, an attractive feature in an urban environment. River restoration schemes are based on creating space for flood water storage, as well as designing out crime in housing developments, making the river areas more attractive to residents.

But Lewisham residents also rightly expect local open spaces to provide services such as play and sports facilities, and by managing the surrounding natural world Lewisham can create an opportunity for residents to enjoy the great outdoors on their doorsteps. By improving public open space the council is creating an improved environment for its residents, especially when these are visually diverse and welcoming. Restoring rivers enhances the quality of parks and urban green spaces and opening up the rivers, encased for many years in concrete culverts encourages rich wildlife areas.

Lewisham's successes include the project completed in 2002 at Chinbrook Meadows which has benefited the area by bringing people closer to the natural environment by providing routes designed to mirror the river's new meandering course and providing the chance for residents to appreciate their local river.

In Ladywell Fields, the 2007 QUERCUS project, carried out in partnership with Chester and Den Bosch, together with EU LIFE Funding, opened up a river that encourages greater use and ownership by the local community.

Lewisham has recently received nearly £2m from the London Development Agency's Parkland's fund to transform the central and southern parts of Ladywell Fields. The funding will also provide signage and publicity for the new Waterlink Way, a cycle route that will run alongside the River Ravensbourne.

The river restoration project that has been Lewisham's greatest success so far is the creation of Cornmill Gardens in the Town Centre. This project provides a successful link for people with nature via urban regeneration, and deserves an article dedicated to it alone. Watch this space!

CLlr Susan Wise

Perry Vale Ward and Cabinet Member for Customer Services. Tel: 8699 6520

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Crystal Palace Park

In our last newsletter we reported that the Government Office for London had called in the planning application for Crystal Palace Park for review. The Public Inquiry will start on 7 July and is expected to last up to 20 working days.

Meanwhile the London Development Agency (LDA) will not be taking up the lease on the park until the situation with regard to the planning application has been resolved.

The LDA state that they have no plans to withdraw their planning application and indeed are currently committing extra resources for the public inquiry in July. At a time when

has space for 8 lanes instead of the required 10. However the pool can still be used for international swimming competitions.

The dry side facilities for basketball, badminton and the like have been overhauled. A state of the art gym is the next feature planned for refurbishment. Even the windows have been washed for the first time in 30 years! Although the sports facilities will be used as an Olympic Training Camp in the run-up to the Olympics it will no longer be the National Sports Centre. Instead it will become a Regional Sports Centre.

The Diving Pit is described as top class and a superb facility, with a Grade 1 diving board, which because of its listing cannot be permanently adapted for synchronised swimming. Temporary arrangements will need to be made, if required.

The LDA plan to spend a further £5m over the next five years and the life expectancy for this refurbished Grade II* building is at least 10 years. They say that the Masterplan for a new swimming pool as part of a leisure centre built into a new West Stand is still on the table, but this will not happen until after the Olympics.

Elsewhere in the park there is the good news that English Heritage and Bromley are to start work to stop further deterioration of the Grade II Subway; the project of replanting the Maze to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the formation of Girlguiding, is proceeding to plan; and an

art commission is due to be installed in the Maze during July, ready for the centenary rally in early September.



The pool

planning permission has effectively been withdrawn, they have concluded that ownership isn't necessary for the planned park regeneration. They confirm they are certainly not walking away from this project. They state they have already spent £30m in and around the park, including £17.5m on the National Sports Centre (NSC), and their commitment to Crystal Palace Park remains strong.

Pat Trembath, representing the Sydenham Society, was invited to inspect the refurbished NSC, which had a "soft" opening on 30 April and will only be open from 2pm until late May as the Stage One work is still being completed. The pool is now filled and ready and the changing rooms have been refurbished. The building has been rewired, re-cabled and has new heating and lighting. Although the dry/wet conflict in the atmosphere is better, it has not been resolved. Swimming produces warm, damp conditions whilst the dry sports require a cooler, drier environment.

The pool is now of full international length with electronic timers at both ends – the first pool thus equipped in the UK but it is not up to Olympic standard as the swimming lanes are 1.8m wide instead of the required 2.5m, and the pool only

The Maze



The Chained Mail

All Hail
The Royal Mail
For whom the Last Post Knell calls.
The 'left' and the 'right'
Queer politics fight
To cut off its Head, tail and balls.

Just You, and Me,
The Staff (that's three)
Will suffer from arbitrary cuts.
When they sell off the 'best'
Demolish the rest
Ignoring the 'ifs' and the 'buts'.

Biased reports
Cutting retorts
Will be ruined by MPs who seek
To 'help their Budget'
But really F.F.Fudge it
And lose a Function unique.

To sell off, again,
The twin Parties explain,
Is really the best thing to do!
It's cheap and it's quick
Their salesmen are slick
I've heard this before – haven't you?

If the P.O. could be
Politically free
With Managers who know the bounds.
If the Royal Mail were Bankers
Instead of other rankers
They'd be given trillions of pounds.

It's the Politicians who
Form a large queue
To asset strip our Nation
Don't stamp out the old,
Be brave and be bold –
And restore our Royal Mail Creation.

Peter Somers, 5 May 2009

Sydenham International Music Festival

24 May – 21 June

The Programme includes:

Sunday 24 May – 7.30pm at St Bart's Church, Westwood Hill

The St Bartholomew Festival Orchestra opens this year's festival playing Rossini, Shostakovich and Hadyn, with cello soloist Maja Bogdanovic.



Maja Bogdanovic

Thursday 28 May – 2.30pm at St Bart's Church

An afternoon tea concert featuring the Festival String Quartet playing "miniatures" by favourite composers. This concert will be relayed to all wards at St Christopher's Hospice.

Wednesday 3 June – 7.30pm at the Dolphin PH

Florilegium – a baroque ensemble, back in Sydenham after an absence of four years, with a programme of music including works by Handel and Purcell.

Sunday 7 June – 7.30pm at St Bart's Church

The Endellion String Quartet celebrating its 30th anniversary will play, Haydn, Janacek and Mendelsohn.

Saturday 13 June – 11am at St Bart's Church

A Children's Concert features Peter and the Wolf, with a fancy dress competition and prizes sponsored by Antoinette Costume Hire, Kirkdale.

Tuesday 16 June – 7.30pm at the Dolphin PH

The Fidelio Piano Quartet, back by popular demand to play Mozart, Faure and Brahms.

Sunday 21 June – 7.30pm at St Bart's Church

The St Bartholomew Festival Orchestra brings to an end this year's International Music Festival with music by Mendelsohn and Beethoven with soloist Sergei Dogadin, Paganini prize winner, who makes a welcome return to Sydenham.



Sergei Dogadin

**For further details see:
www.sydenhammusic.org**

Box Office: Kirkdale Bookshop.

An Arts Festival? In Sydenham? Whatever were they thinking of?

But this tiny corner of South East London has a great heritage of art, music & literature. French Impressionist Camille Pissarro lived and worked here, as did Sir George Grove, compiler of the famous musical dictionary, and Booker Prize winner Kazuo Ishiguro also lived in Sydenham.



More recently, the area has been home to the prestigious Sydenham International Music Festival, which for over ten years has showcased performances by renowned and upcoming classical musicians from the UK and abroad.

In July 2008, as part of Independent Booksellers' Week, Kirkdale Bookshop hosted a successful mini-festival with seven events over eight days: readings, an absinthe evening, special storytimes, an open art exhibition and a fabulous beach party complete with palm trees and barbecue just to name a few. In August, Jonathan Kaufman also set his stall out and produced nine sell-out performances of A Midsummer Night's Dream in the garden of the Dolphin.

These two highly successful events prompted ideas for a

large-scale arts festival in Sydenham. The idea was formally floated at last September's Sydenham Assembly and with a grant of £5,000 from the Localities Fund, the Sydenham Arts Festival was born.



Jonathan Kaufman

Since then the entirely voluntary organising team has been working tirelessly. They have been inundated with ideas for events and volunteers have offered their services to help out in any way they can. Under the guidance of the steering committee, local arts groups, organisations and individual practitioners have put together a fantastic programme, while the skills and experience of professional artists and performers have been brought together to create what promises to be one of the most significant new arts festivals in South East London. Ten exciting days in July (3rd to 12th) with more than forty events staged in many diverse and unusual venues and will include drama, dance, music, cabaret, visual arts, poetry, comedy, film, talks, children's events, workshops and more.

The Festival brochure will be available at the end of May together with details of how to book tickets. The Box Office (at Kirkdale Bookshop) is also scheduled to open in late May.

Sydenham Arts Festival, 3 – 12 July

The Festival's ten-day programme features more than forty events including drama, dance, music and poetry performances, visual arts, film screenings, celebrity book-signings, workshops & family-friendly activities. In keeping with the festival's aim to allow maximum access to all, tickets will be reasonably priced, and many events are free. So come and sample what's on offer – maybe try something new – and discover the arts just on your doorstep!

Street Festival

Saturday 4 July

Street Celebration along the high street – an all-day event including an urban outdoor beach, urban dance, a barbershop quartet, launderette theatre performances and buskers.

John Hegley and Friends

Saturday 4 July at Sydenham Girls School

Renowned performance poet and comedian John Hegley headlines a family friendly evening of comic poetry, stand-up, storytelling & song, with special guests Chrissie Gittins and Ronnie McGrath.

“Sydenham's Got Talent”

Sunday 5 July at Champion Hall. This exciting X-Factor style event showcases the cream of local youth music & dance, judged by professionals, with an audience vote and a cash prize.

London Bubble's Mystery Show

6 – 7 & 9 – 12 July in Sydenham Wells Park

London Bubble Theatre's mystery play. The first in a new season of open-air Fan Made Theatre, where the public have been able to vote on which show they'd like to see.

Free Film Show

Tuesday 7 July in Home Park

Free Film show – an open-air showing of short films by local film-makers followed by a rare screening of the black & white classic “The Bride of Frankenstein”.

Visual Arts Trail

3 – 12 July

A Visual Arts Trail in Sydenham and Forest Hill – more than sixty local artists and photographers open their homes and studios to the public. Venues also include cafes, shops, pubs, church halls, libraries, schools & arts centres.

Picnic in the Park

Sunday 12 July in Mayow Park

A fun-packed family event, including dance, theatre, live music, poetry and the visual arts.

For further details see:

www.sydenhamartsfestival.com

The World of Herbert Brush

In 1937 two men, a journalist and a film-maker, wrote to the *New Statesman* outlining their plans for a scientific survey of the everyday lives of ordinary people. They proposed that volunteers should keep diaries, recording their daily lives. The project, which became known as “Mass Observation”, was based at Grotes Building, Blackheath. By 1939 some 500 volunteers countrywide had agreed to keep diaries which were sent each month to Mass Observation. Although some wondered whether anybody was bothering to read them most continued writing their diaries throughout the war, and a few continued until the early 1960s.

The diaries offer a unique insight into the lives of ordinary people during this turbulent period. A few years ago a selection of post-war extracts from these diaries was published*. One of the diarists was “Herbert Brush” from Sydenham, a “retired electricity board inspector”. He began writing his diary in September 1940 and continued until March 1951.

“Herbert Brush” was a pseudonym, but the writer left sufficient clues in the diary to identify him. He was, in fact, Reginald Charles Harpur, aged 73 in 1945. He lived at 25 Kirkdale, on the junction with Thorpewood Avenue, from 1939 until his death in 1959. He shared the house with Winifred Gunton (“W” in the diaries and owner of the house), Dorothy Woods (“D”), and a cat. The relationship between the three members of the household is not clear.

Reginald spent much time tending his allotment, round the corner in Baxter Field. He was not averse to experimenting: “I have planted out a row of ‘celeriac’ this afternoon. This is the first time I have attempted ‘celeriac’, and I don’t even know what it looks like”. He was disappointed with the results.

Reginald regularly entered a borough-wide competition for the best kept allotment. In 1946 he was dismayed that he was not even given a certificate. The following year he writes: “I have again put my name down as an entrant to the allotment competition though I nearly made up my mind to give it a miss this year, as I was not at all satisfied with the judging last year and suspect that the Labour Council... was responsible.” Reginald was, in his own words, “a Conservative Nationalist” and distrusted both the Labour council and government.

Gerald was regularly stopped by “Old Ing” on his way to the allotment. William Ing was a retired policeman who lived in Lynton Cottage, Mount Gardens. He liked to pass on gossip, which Gerald would record:

“...met Ing on the road... he always has the latest bit of news. Apparently the postman who delivered our letters and parcels has been caught pinching things and when the police visited his house they found about a ton of things which he had stolen...”

“According to Ing, the landlord of the Woodman went to the Derby... he telephoned and told his family to put their

shirts on Airborne... which won. Ing was of the opinion that there was a wangle...”

Another person he chatted with in Kirkdale was Miss Hudson “the ninety-three-year-old nurse... with a voice like a foghorn” who, Ing claimed “can drink beer by the pint.”

Sometimes Reginald was inspired to write poetry:

**“Is now too hot
To go to the plot
So I’ll sit indoors awhile
And drink barley water
As everyone ought’er
Who suffers a little from bile...”**

And sometimes he would think about numbers: “I have been playing with no.37 today, a very remarkable number. A prime number, multiplied by 3 the product is 111, by 6 it is 222, by 9 it is 333 and so on by multiples of 3 up to 27”.



View down Kirkdale. Reginald’s house is on the far side of Thorpewood Avenue.

The diary records frequent visits with Winifred to the Capitol Cinema in London Road, or the State in Sydenham Road. In January 1948 he and Winifred went to the Capitol to see “Gone with the Wind”. Reginald writes that “...there was a queue about 100 yards long when we arrived, but we got in.”

During the summer Reginald creosoted the long fence that still surrounds the garden: “...it is rather a slow job, many people stop to talk about the weather and the iniquity of small boys who like to damage garden fences.”

Once, he records, a woman stopped him in Thorpewood Avenue: “... a large hedgehog was lying near the steps which led up to her house. She was afraid to touch it so I put it in her front garden, saying that it would be a useful pet... the animal had evidently tired itself out trying to escape from the pavement, but the only way was up the steps and I don’t think that hedgehogs can climb steps.”

In 1945 Churchill passed through Forest Hill “... so W, D and I went to London Road near Horniman’s Museum to see him go by. We got there about 6pm but it was 7:10pm before he went past in an open car... making his usual V sign and I only caught a glimpse of him...”

continued on next page...

Going to his allotment one evening he saw the postman emptying the pillar box in Kirkdale (it is still there) when a man in a car drove up and tried to hand a large envelope to the postman: "the postman would not touch it and said that the man must put it through the slot... the man had to get out of his car and walk round to reach the slot and then had some difficulty getting it through... the postman then picked the letter out of the pillar box and put it in his bag. The man began to curse him and gave him a few unpleasant names. I looked round several times as I walked down the road with my bucket and hoe, and they were still at it when I turned into Charlecote Grove."

Reginald experienced two exciting examples of modern technology. Someone lent him a Biro pen: "I am trying it out, just to find whether it would do for my diary writing". He was impressed, saying that "the 'Biro' pen runs so easily it is a pleasure to write with it".

Reginald was not so easily impressed with television. In 1948 Reginald and Winifred "went into the Sparks, next door

[Seymour Lodge, on the site of Hassocks Close], to wish them a Happy New Year and to look at their television picture of the Cinderella pantomime. My eyes are not good enough to see such a small picture well".

Reginald also gives his views on the younger generation (for him, those born after 1914): "My own opinion is that they are very much worse in every way. Judging by the ones I come across they have no manners at all... London children are absolutely crafty little liars and clever thieves..."

Gerald finds shrapnel on his allotment, sees people sifting through rubble in the grounds of Sydenham School and long queues to buy a loaf of bread. These glimpses of life in Sydenham in the immediate post-war years give a fascinating insight into the issues of the time and especially the mundane preoccupations of ordinary people.

* "Our Hidden Lives", Simon Garfield (Ebury Press, 2004)

Steve Grindlay

Emma Tarling

Emma is a new member of the Executive Committee and has a particular interest in parks and open spaces.

Emma, her partner Bruce and young children, Lavinia and Louis, moved to Sydenham in June 2002. Late last year at the Sydenham Assembly she was introduced to members of the Friends of Mayow Park, and also the Sydenham Society. Since that time she has been instrumental in helping to set up the Friends of Home Park Group, and has advised the parks department on new play equipment for Mayow Park.

Emma grew up in a small Sussex village and spent many childhood hours in the local recreation ground that was the focus for all the community's activities. Emma would like to replicate this in Sydenham, not through any misplaced sense of nostalgia, but for a genuine wish to involve everyone in the community. She loves the diversity in Sydenham, the different mix of people and businesses, and describes it as "a friendly place".

Emma is impressed with the Society's track record of achievements. She looks forward to the improvements in Sydenham Road, and believes the new crossings will make life easier for pedestrians and cyclists. From a personal angle, with a small child in a buggy, she was grateful for the success of the campaign to keep the gate open at Sydenham Station.

No stranger to campaigns and community action, having been involved in local issues in her previous neighbourhood at Surrey Quays, and having chosen to settle in Sydenham because of its schools, parks and shops, Emma now feels able to commit to the task, and the regeneration of Mayow Park has become her passion. Emma leafleted tirelessly for Mayow Park in 'The Big Vote' for money from the Mayor's Fund and, though disappointed that the park only came third in the competition, says it has served to raise the profile of the park for local people. She is confident that the park can and



will be improved further. One result is that earlier this year the council funded new equipment for very young children, and this has recently been installed in the playground. Money has also been forthcoming from the Playbuilder Fund, and work is now going on consulting with older children over the design of a proposed area for them to meet. Emma uses the park most days. She would like to see the Pavilion restored, and hopes to see drinking fountain and toilet facilities back in Mayow Park in the near future.

Emma says that when she came to Sydenham she wanted to meet local people and, in her words, to "make a difference". Her forthright approach, determination and emphasis on inclusivity will certainly ensure that people of all ages and backgrounds reap the benefits of the 'difference' Emma makes to life in Sydenham.

This is the second in a series of articles on members of the Sydenham Society, both old and new. If you would like to be featured in this series, or know someone whose views would be of interest to other members, please contact Sue Grindlay on 020 8699 6398 or sue.grindlay@gmail.com

Friends of Home Park Launch

Local residents and park users met on 16th April to launch Friends of Home Park (FOHP). Four key priorities were discussed as to how to spend the £20,000 awarded to the park by the London Borough of Lewisham Regeneration Team. Short listed were:

1. A large build MUGA (Multi Use Games Area) with surround fencing for providing football, basketball, tennis, etc.
2. Outdoor gym equipment or Trim Trail, concrete table tennis table and general improvements to the current play area.
3. Replacement perimeter fencing, railings and benches. Currently corrugated metal panels are used throughout the park – it was generally agreed that this is unsuitable, unattractive and suggests that this is a third rate park. However, there was talk whether FOHP should use the £20K for replacing this, or LBL should initiate this.
4. Reconfiguring the entrance area with seating and/or tables by way of linking the park to the library. There was talk of including a cafe franchise used in other Lewisham parks.

It was decided that FOHP should meet again and include as many local residents and park users as possible to decide which option to spend the money on.

Other issues discussed within the meeting were the slow planning permission progress for the work on the Adventure Playground. It is unlikely to be in use this summer and its state has prompted people to use it as a rubbish tip, which Glendale have promised to clear.

Also mentioned was the future screening of "The Bride of Frankenstein" during the Sydenham Arts Festival in July. Two enjoyable community social events in Home Park were very successful – a bulb planting event in November and a tree planting event in February. It is hoped that there will be many more of these occasions in the near future.

Invitation to a Carers' Week event

As part of National Carers' Week (8 – 14 June) Lewisham Council invites carers to drop into the Civic Suite in Catford Town Hall at any time between 10am and 3pm on 10 June.

Every year Lewisham Council arranges an information and wellbeing day for carers with the aim of enabling carers to find out about services available, to look at their health needs and to give feedback on services and the progress of the Lewisham Carers Strategy.

On offer are relaxation sessions, together with singing and laughter therapy. The event is very popular with, in the past, around 140 carers attending.

For further information call the Lewisham Carers' Officer on 8314 3863

Wells Park

A regular stream of activities continues in Sydenham's only fully staffed Green Flag Park – for just some of them see the **Healthy Walks** article on page 6 and details of the **Bubble Theatre's** stay in Wells Park on page 9, which starts with a preview and discussion on Saturday 4th July and is closely linked with Sydenham Arts Festival.

Lewisham Green Scene is currently tendering its Green Space Management and Maintenance Contract (2010-2020) (see article below) and as there will be no Investment Programme in the new contract, Park's User Groups such as ours will have to look elsewhere for major funding.

The development of our Nature/Wildlife Corridor will be unaffected by this, but it will be necessary to procure funding in order to provide the long awaited refreshment area and also a replacement outdoor drinking fountain.

Further details from Alma Hunt, Wells Park Improvement Group, Tel: 8291 7027 or Glendale, Tel: 8318 3986.

Lewisham Parks – the next ten years.

Lewisham Green Scene is currently tendering its Green Space Management and Maintenance Contract (2010-2020). This has attracted thirteen 'Expressions of Interest' and nine Business Questionnaires were returned.

After evaluation seven bidders were short listed and, starting in July, two or three of these will be interviewed and visitors to their sites will include community representatives. By September the preferred bidder will be awarded the contract due to start in March 2010.

Lewisham is planning to have electronic mapping on a facilities database of over six thousand sites including, for

example, rose beds but not mature trees.

As there will be no Investment Programme in the new contract, effective User Groups will look elsewhere for major funding. Recent opening-up of parts of the previously hidden river Ravensbourne in Ladywell Fields and the linked Cornmill Gardens, a new open space near Lewisham Town Centre, were part-funded by the European Union's LIFE Environment Programme. The London Development Agency has now pledged another £2 million for further improvements there. Both sites are worth visiting and have been entered for Green Flag awards.

New Play Facilities

Mayow Park

After an early 8am start on the morning of 23rd April, construction work was started in the smaller children's area of the playground. The long-awaited replacement of the popular toddlers' climbing frame was finally erected and extra cushionfall (soft wood chips) was added to meet European safety guidelines. This exciting new equipment consists of a new climbing frame/slide for 3-6yr olds, a smaller climbing dome with short slide for 9m-4yr olds and a spinner. We hope that now the playground within Mayow Park will appeal to a wider age range of children.

Horniman Triangle

Local children are enjoying improved play facilities in Forest Hill with the completion of changes at the Horniman Triangle Play Park in time for the Easter holidays. Two new features which



Mayow Park

are proving particularly popular are the Spider's Web climbing frame and the giant sand pit which replaces the old paddling pool. The investment in new play equipment, coupled with re-opening of the café, has revitalised this green open space, complementing the Horniman Museum opposite.

Play Areas need Toilets!

Both Mayow Park and Horniman Triangle Play Park are continuing to press for adequate toilet provision in order to make visiting the parks a longer and more pleasurable experience for the whole family. This is also an important factor when organising social events in parks, especially for Health and Safety reasons. Of course this would mean regular maintenance, ideally from a permanent member of staff on site which is also on our wish list!

Emma Tarling, Friends of Mayow Park.

See our new blog at <http://mayowpark.wordpress.com/>

Marion Wood, Friends of Horniman Triangle.



Horniman Triangle

Mayow Park Report

'Playbuilder' funds for older children's space in Mayow Park

The Friends of Mayow Park (FOMP) put in a bid to Lewisham for 'Playbuilder' funds to create a new space where older children could socialise and exercise. This idea had been discussed over the years and the time seemed right to take the idea one stage further.

Before FOMP knew whether the bid would be successful, talks started with some of the Lewisham Young Advisers to the Young Mayor. These young people are keen to lead on the planning and development of the proposed new area, and a committee has been formed with some Young Advisers, the Council Officers who support them, Green Scene officers, Councillors and FOMP members.

In the event our bid was successful, perfect timing for planning the development of the proposed site in time for the funds to be available in 2010. The new space is intended for young people of around 10 to 14 years old.

Young people are very aware that when they meet

together in groups in Mayow Park, particularly near the younger children's play space, parents feel uncomfortable. So an area was selected, away from the smaller children's area, but which is visible and safe for the older ones.

Now, the Young Advisers, in partnership with FOMP and Green Scene, are preparing a 'Planning for Real' event to take place in Mayow Park, on 27 May 2009 (during half term), aimed at those aged 10 to 14 who visit the park. It will focus on ideas to develop a specific area towards the north-east of the park. The outcome of the consultation will help inform decisions on resource provision.

Bowls Club Accommodation

A revised version of the plan for the Bowls Club accommodation has been submitted to Lewisham Planning Department. If the Bowls Club can vacate the present pavilion, it would be available for refurbishment and potential use, when cricket re-starts in the Park, we hope in Summer 2010.

Alona Sheridan & Hilary Jarrett

Events nearby

Crystal Palace Park Sporting Calendar

SUNDAY 31 MAY – Triathlon event

SUNDAY 7 JUNE – Fun Run

SUNDAY 14 JUNE – Race for Life I

JULY 2-5 – London Youth Games

JULY 24 AND 25 – Aviva Athletics Grand Prix

AUGUST 13-18 – International Pentathlon

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 13 – Race for Life 2

General information available from the National Sports Centre: 8778 0131

Dulwich Picture Gallery

UNTIL 14 JUNE 2009 – Neapolitan Paintings.

This display focuses on *The Locksmith* and *The Return of the Prodigal Son*. Both paintings have been conserved through the "Adopt an Old Master" scheme and will be presented in their newly restored state for the first time.

16 JUNE – 27 SEPTEMBER – The Polish Connection

The story of how the collection of paintings, which should have been Poland's national collection, came to the Dulwich Picture Gallery

8 JULY – 27 SEPTEMBER – Best of British

The story of the British Collection at the Gallery.

Beckenham Place Park

SATURDAY 20 JUNE – Old Boundary Post and Trees walk.

Meet at 2 pm on the Mansion steps. This walk will roughly follow the old boundary posts that cross the park (some are on the golf course and may be a bit inaccessible).

Friends of the Horniman

WEDNESDAY 24 JUNE

Friends' AGM in the Conservatory

7.30pm

SATURDAY 4 AND SUNDAY 5 JULY

Friends' 18th Annual Art Exhibition in the Conservatory.

Dulwich Garden Safari

In aid of Dulwich Helpline.

SATURDAY 7 JUNE.

Explore six wonderful private gardens around Dulwich Village including those attached to two beautiful Huf houses. Also featured are an unusual cottage garden, delightful ponds, vegetable and herb plots, colourful borders and lots more. A real treat for all the senses and includes home made refreshments and plant stall. Programmes available on the day from 4 Woodyard Lane (off Dulwich Village) SE21. Adults £5, children (under 16 free). Sorry no dogs.

Events in Sydenham

Sydenham Garden

SUNDAY 5TH JULY – Sydenham Garden opening for the National Garden Scheme.

2 – 5pm Entrance in Holland Drive, off Queenswood Road, SE23 (no parking).

Garden entrance signed. Admission £3, children free.

Garden and nature reserve managed by community-based charity, offering gardening and art and craft activities to local people coping with serious illness and mental ill health.

Art and craft exhibition by co-workers. Buses 75 and 356

LAST TUESDAY OF EVERY MONTH at 8pm

Live Jazz at the Golden Lion.

EVERY FRIDAY NIGHT is 'Blues Night' at the Golden Lion.

St Christopher's Hospice

SATURDAY 31 MAY

Fun Walk in and around Keston Common.

Take part in one of four sponsored walks on a fun-packed day with music, entertainment and refreshments.

Individual walkers, or teams of walkers, can obtain entry forms from any of the St Christopher's shops or by phoning 8768 4577.

Sydenham Music Festival

To be held this year from 24 May – June 21

See details on page 8.

Sydenham Arts Festival

To be held between 3 and 12 July

See details on page 9.

LOCAL WARD ASSEMBLY MEETINGS

Open to all local residents interested in the future of their neighbourhood.

Sydenham Ward

THURSDAY 11 JUNE – 7.00pm at Sydenham High School, 19 Westwood Hill SE26

Forest Hill Ward

THURSDAY 25 JUNE – 7.30pm venue to be confirmed

Perry Vale Ward

THURSDAY 2 JULY – 7.30 pm at venue to be confirmed.

Syd Soc events

Events organised by the Sydenham Society, open to all unless stated. If you have a suggestion for a Syd Soc event please call Jackie Aldridge on 8778 5455.

SATURDAY 13 JUNE

Visit to the Museum of Garden History's Lavender Festival (south side of Lambeth Bridge) with optional lunch at the café. There will be demonstrations, plants and products on sale as well as lavender themed food. The Museum is taking part in the Open Garden Squares Weekend (13/14 June) event. Tickets £6.75 in advance (includes guide) and £8 at the door entitles ticket holder to visit Lambeth Palace and Westminster Abbey Gardens nearby as well as other garden squares across London over the weekend. See www.opensquares.org. Meet at bus stop by the Capitol PH, Forest Hill at 9.45 to catch 185 bus, alternatively meet at the Museum at 10.30. For further details contact Jackie on 8778 5455.

SATURDAY 20 JUNE

(postponed from 9 May due to Network Rail engineering work).

Two guided walks of about 3 miles each around Edenbridge (one in the morning, the second after a pub lunch) led by Sydenham Society member, Ian Falkner. Meet at Sydenham Station at 8.45am to catch the 8.50am train. Return trains leave Edenbridge Town station at .08 minutes past the hour. For more details phone Pat on 8659 4903.

SATURDAY 18 JULY

Walk around the Regency Squares and Terraces of Kennington and discover many hidden surprises. Meet at 10.15 at the Bus stop outside the Capitol pub in London Road, Forest Hill to catch the 185 bus to the Oval. Walk ends at the Imperial War Museum at approximately 12.30. Return by 176 bus. For more details contact Iris on 8693 9525.

TUESDAY 8 SEPTEMBER

Quiz Nite at the Golden Lion

7.45 pm. Teams of four to six. Phone Jackie (8778 5455) or Pat (8659 4903) to reserve places.

12 – 20 SEPTEMBER

The Sydenham Society's Green Chain Walking Festival event. See details on page 6.

Club 26

Club 26 was set up to encourage our members to meet socially and also to try out our local restaurants in SE26 – all within easy walking distance and on local bus routes.

Upcoming Club 26 events are listed below, please call the venue to book your place and don't forget to say you are part of Club 26 so that members can be seated together.

TUESDAY 26 MAY – we apologise this evening's Club 26 has been postponed until September 26.

FRIDAY 26 JUNE – Sugahill, Kirkdale plays host to Club 26 with a buffet of Turkish and Mediterranean food (all home made) at £15 a head. Soft drinks, tea and coffee available. If you prefer to drink alcohol please bring your own bottle (no corkage). Tel: 8659 5828. Numbers limited to 20 so please book early to save disappointment.

SUNDAY 26 JULY – 6.30pm Club 26 at the Dolphin. Join fellow Club 26 members for a Sunday evening meal. To reserve your place Tel: 8778 8101.

WEDNESDAY 26 AUGUST

Join us on a day trip to Worthing to the Fish Factory www.protorestaurantgroup.com/the-fish-factory for fish n' chips by the sea. Meet at Sydenham Station at 10.15am to catch the 10.20am train. Please let either Jackie (8778 5455) or Pat (8659 4903) know if you are joining us no later than 19 August and we will reserve tables.

SYDENHAM SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM

Yearly cost of membership

Individual (includes partner)	£6.00 per annum
Senior Citizen (includes partner)	£5.00 per annum
Postal Member (includes partner)	£7.00 per annum

Name _____

Address _____

Post code _____

Tel day _____ Tel eve _____

Email _____

Renewal is due in January. Postal members are those resident outside SE23 and SE26 postal areas. Subscriptions can be paid by cheque or Standing Order. Please make cheques payable to The Sydenham Society.

The Sydenham Society STANDING ORDER

Bank details for standing order

Name of your bank/building society _____

Address of you bank/building society _____

Account Number _____ Sort Code _____

Signed _____

Your Name (please print) _____

Please pay the Sydenham Society (Lloyds Bank plc, Sydenham Branch, Sort Code 30-98-42, Account no. 0524410) the sum of £7/£6/£5 (please delete as appropriate) on 5 January each year until further notice. This replaces any Standing Order in favour of the 'Sydenham Society'.

Sydenham Society News

The Greyhound

At long last the proposals for the redevelopment of the Greyhound and surrounding area have gone out for public consultation. The model of the proposed development and supporting documents can be seen in the Gallery of Kirkdale Bookshop, during shop hours, saving concerned local residents the necessity of traipsing to the Town Hall.

The Sydenham Society is generally supportive of the proposals to develop the land around the Greyhound, by building apartment blocks and providing retail outlets at ground level, and by restoring, and bringing back into use, the core of The Greyhound public house.

However, the Society is aware that some local residents have made strong representations to Lewisham that the proposals constitute over-development and that the existing properties in Peak Hill Gardens would be adversely affected as a result of the loss of direct sunlight from gardens and lower floor windows, particularly in winter, as a consequence of the proposed development. The Sydenham Society has also expressed concern about the height of the buildings and their possible effect in terms of loss of sunlight on neighbouring properties. The arrival of two cherry pickers on site at the end of April is part of the council's deliberations about these concerns.

On the other hand, there is a widely held view within the Society that the scheme proposed, whilst not beyond criticism, is markedly superior in both its architectural ambition and the quality of its design to any of the development proposals previously submitted. What is more, the Sydenham Society's concerns at the loss of one of Sydenham's historic public houses have been allayed because the retention and intended restoration of the core of the pub is an integral feature of the scheme currently proposed.

A public meeting is being planned for mid to late May at which local residents will be able to discuss the proposals with the architects.

Greyhound Mural

As part of the run-up to the Sydenham Arts Festival, William Stacey, a local art student, designed a mural entitled "The Grey Hounds". William and a team of friends spent the May Bank Holiday weekend painting the mural on the tired paintwork of the hoardings around the Greyhound pub, providing publicity for the Arts Festival and brightening up the area generally. Well done, and thank you, William!



WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome to the following new members:

Edward Cook	Barbara & Gordon Morse
Nigel Desborough	Bruno Roubicek
Gymophobics	Gill Stephens
John & Jean McAuliffe	& Jon Dorrell

Members are reminded that subscriptions for 2009 are now overdue. If you are not sure whether you have paid for this year please let me know. **Roger Feather Tel: 8778 4318 Email: membership@sydenhamsociety.com**

E-NEWSLETTERS

These are emails sent roughly weekly to all members who want them, containing brief details of forthcoming events, news and consultation exercises.

Email: chair@sydenhamsociety.com if you would like to be put on our email list.

The use of your email address will be limited to Sydenham Society business only and it will not be passed on for third party use.

www.sydenhamsociety.com

Covering all aspects of local community matters ■ Member of the London Forum