

Sydenham Society

NEWS

Winter 2009

Local Rail Services – We’re Almost There!

For years this part of south London has struggled to ensure that its rail services are on par with the rest of the capital. At long last we are within grasp of achieving this goal – if only our local rail operating companies would stop putting their foot in it!

There's plenty of good news. Transport for London (TfL) are already running the stations between East Croydon and London Bridge. This means that all local stations, including Sydenham, are now staffed throughout the day "from first to last train" meaning a far safer and more secure environment for passengers. TfL plan a complete refurbishment of Sydenham station including new indicator boards, increased CCTV and new tannoy system. Lewisham council are currently consulting on a £320,000 renovation of Sydenham Station Approach which will greatly improve access to the station. On January 2 2010, Oystercard PAYG will be introduced on all suburban metropolitan train lines. And before the end of 2010, all platforms along the line will be lengthened so that 10 carriage (rather than 8 carriage) trains to and from London Bridge can be accommodated. In May 2010, the long-anticipated East London Line will start, giving us 8 trains per hour in each direction between Dalston Junction in the north and West Croydon and Crystal Palace in the south. Finally, in 2015, our line will become part of the Thameslink service, so that four trains per hour which currently terminate at London Bridge will instead continue through north London giving direct trains from Sydenham to key destinations such as Blackfriars, Farringdon and St Pancras International (for the Eurostar).

But just as you think you've got your hands on that elusive crock of gold, along come the Department of Transport and Southern to spoil it all! At the end of this year, direct services to and from Charing Cross are to be axed – all trains will start and terminate at London Bridge. And from May 2010, off-peak and evening services to and from London Bridge will be cut by one third – from 6 trains per hour to 4 trains per hour.

The Sydenham Society feels confident that we have widespread community support to ensure that the arrival of the East London Line does not mean downgrading of existing services to and from London Bridge and Charing Cross. Even after the ELL is in operation, 70 per cent of passengers will still want to use London Bridge services as their first preference. The Sydenham and Forest Hill Societies have begun to lobby support to fight these cuts. To date we have received huge support from our local MP, Lewisham Council, Lewisham Mayor and from local councillors in both Sydenham and Forest Hill. Articles have appeared in both the South London Press and the Evening Standard and GLA member Caroline Pidgeon, chair of the GLA Transport Committee, has raised this issue at City Hall.

We need to have your continuing support to make our local rail system as good as anywhere else in London. Please contact your local councillors and Jim Dowd MP and tell them that you expect them to help make this a reality by ensuring that these damaging cuts don't go ahead, and sign the online petition at <http://nototrainscuts.notlong.com>

Barry Milton – Roads & Transport Committee
8778 6914



IN THIS ISSUE

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Your neighbourhood voice

www.sydenhamsociety.com

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Forest Hill Ward

Alex Feakes Philip Peake John Russell

Perry Vale Ward

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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 many local 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.

OTHER CONTACTS

Community Police Teams

Forest Hill **8721 2723**

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 5 February 2010

Enhancing Sydenham High Street

Over the past few weeks there has been a public consultation about proposals for improving the pedestrian environment along Sydenham Road with an exhibition in the empty shop opposite NatWest Bank. The majority of “Feedback” comments from local residents, in excess of 90%, are positive.

The proposals provide for new zebra crossings with gently raised approach ramps at Kirkdale and Westwood Hill close to the roundabout, and two light-controlled pedestrian crossings either side of the railway bridge replace the unloved controversial zebra crossing on the brow of the railway bridge. There is a three-way crossing, controlled by lights, at the Newlands Park junction and a similar one at the Mayow Park junction. The new crossings will allow pedestrians to cross the whole width of the road in one go and the lights between these crossings will be linked in order to keep the traffic flowing.

Rumours that the road would be “humped” along its length have been proven wrong. Wide, gently sloping ramps raised to footway height will be installed at the crossings for the benefit of all, especially for disabled people and those with prams and push chairs. Pavements will be built out slightly at crossing points to help speed up pedestrian movement across the road and the narrow footways over the railway bridge will be widened, but in both cases traffic will continue to flow in single lanes as it does now.

Street clutter will be removed, with traffic lights being mounted, for the most part, on lamp-posts and two pocket

squares are proposed at Venner Road and Queensthorpe Road, to accommodate market stalls or street entertainment. There will be new street trees along the main road and in the pocket squares and a new roundabout, to replace the wobbly roundabout, is also proposed. This will be planted with seasonal bulbs under a layer of greenery.

There will be approximately the same number of car parking spaces as previously. As we go to press we know that the council is discussing important arrangements for loading and unloading with the retailers, and this is likely to be permitted “off peak”.

The £3m Transport for London scheme is intended to improve pedestrian safety and the general environment of Sydenham while at the same time keeping the traffic, particularly buses, moving. In addition the council intends spending £300k upgrading Station Approach and this includes some new short-term car parking, trees and a traffic-free plaza in front of the ticket office.

The Sydenham Society supports both the Sydenham Road and the Station Approach proposals, and is sure that the council will continue to work with the traders to resolve the perceived loading problems. Sydenham Road and Station Approach are tired and shabby and the area has been subjected to roadworks for over four years. A new, clean, uncluttered, greened Sydenham Road is something all the community, residents and retailers alike, should be looking forward to seeing in the next eighteen months.



Exhibition showing the proposals for improving Sydenham Road.



Latest from the Sydenham Assembly – Local Voices, Local Choices

The next Sydenham Assembly will see a change of venue to Our Lady & Philip Neri Church Hall, 208 Sydenham Road next to Sydenham Library, starting at 7pm on Thursday 3 December. The Coordinating Group have agreed ten round table discussion topics that provide the opportunity for you to give your views.

Living and working in an inclusive community is one of my priorities and there will be tables discussing community cohesion, provision for older people and progress on the Youth Assembly. We want people to participate in making Sydenham an exciting place to get involved with and will be discussing community gardens (Lewisham's guide now online at www.lewisham.gov.uk/CommunityGardens/) the mosaic on the Naborhood Centre and the arts programme for next summer.

Of course there are some difficult issues that we have been working on and one of these is street drinking. We have removed the benches outside the post office and moving the flower stall has added colour to that part of the high street. I am aware of the problem of drinkers in the park and drug users around lavatories in Station Approach. As a result of various hot spots around the borough the Mayor is holding a stakeholder summit at the end of November to listen to local views. A number of people have said that we should have a

Drinking Control Zone in Sydenham with enforcement by the police on anyone who is drunk and causing a nuisance. There will be a table to discuss the outcome of the summit and ways to tackle this problem. Other issues include diversity in education and what improvements we can make to attract traders to the vacant shops in the high street.

We have been working on a Sydenham Charter and I will be leading a table to discuss priorities and sharing Council powers. One power is enforcement and I am ensuring that this is exercised on planning activities such as installing UPVC windows in a Conservation Area. I am actively encouraging estate agents to remove their "let by" and "sold" boards within the 14 days of completion and again will be pressing for enforcement if they overstay. Please contact me if you would like more information on the Assembly or any other Sydenham issues.

Cllr Chris Best,
Sydenham Ward and Cabinet Member for
Community Services.
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Cllr_Chris.Best@lewisham.gov.uk

Sydenham Mosaic project

Since our letter to the Editor in the last edition of the newsletter, the Mayor and Cabinet have confirmed the Sydenham Assembly's £10,000 grant towards the project to improve the facade of the Naborhood Centre with a public mosaic and we can announce that we have received matched funding from a most generous private donor.

The Mayor's Fund grant will enable us to begin Part 1 of the project. This will allow, the artist, Oliver Budd, to begin the artwork and to consult with the community. Following a preliminary visit to The Naborhood Centre, he has made an innovative and interesting suggestion.

This involves having signage on the building, the lettering being in cold cast bronze bas relief. He thinks the letters could be morphed into our well known historic people or motifs. The lettering will be raised forward from a background which will be a topographical picture of the area in subtle mosaic.

This raises the question of the Naborhood name. Some people would like to see it changed while others wish to see it retained. Presumably the place for a discussion and decision would be the Sydenham Assembly when it next meets on 3rd December.

We are about to set up a Sydenham Mosaic group to take forward the funding and consultation process. If anyone would like to help, please contact us.

Valerie Kelly, Robert Side
8778 4775



A mosaic by Oliver Budd.

Perry Vale Ward Assembly News

Perry Vale ward assembly has met six times since its inauguration in June 2008, and I am very pleased to report that we have developed a strong co-ordinating group of local volunteers who work with the ward councillors to plan the assembly business and raise items of local concern. The assembly has generated lots of interest and our attendance figures have remained high, with an average of 70 residents per meeting. We have chosen to hold the assembly meetings at the one venue, which I think has helped us to maintain that high attendance.

We have seen a cross section of our local community attend, which includes those who have been involved in local matters for some time, and many new faces who have been persuaded to become involved thanks to a very local agenda. Our meetings have covered a range of issues, and the feedback from them has been both complimentary and positive.

Perry Vale ward assembly's three priorities identified at our meeting in October 2008 are;

- Facilities for young people
- Environment
- Transport and traffic issues

The assembly also drafted a detailed action plan which explained the three priorities and their completed milestones, and this has been followed by the co-ordinating group working closely with council officers on a number of appropriate projects.

Because Perry Vale assembly had recognised a need for additional facilities for our young people in the ward, we identified two youth groups that are active in the ward; Young Lewisham Project based in Kilmorie Road and the Rockbourne Youth Club which operates from Rockbourne Road. Both groups were invited to submit applications for the Localities Fund and the Mayor's Fund, with both groups giving presentations to assembly members in July 2009.

Following the successful presentations, a formal vote was taken with £20,000 awarded from the £50,000 Mayor's Fund to the Young Lewisham Project for their "In Touch" project which aims to provide life skills, team building skills, support and guidance to young people, and £10,000 was awarded to the Rockbourne Youth Club from the Mayor's Fund to refurbish and upgrade their computer suite to provide the most up to date technology for young people and the community.

From discussions at the assemblies, it was very obvious why environment was chosen as a ward assembly priority, and although Perry Vale appears to have a surfeit of trees, a tree mapping exercise performed by Lewisham Council's Green Scene clearly demonstrated that our ward could easily accommodate many more trees, which is why Greening Perry Vale was provided with £14,000 from the Mayor's Fund to plant 45 new saplings as a start to that programme. Lewisham's Green Scene will undertake commissioning the work, and will consult with residents on the species of trees to be planted.

From the £10,000 Localities Fund, Perry Vale assembly was very pleased to fund two exciting local events, with £1,100

awarded to the Stanstead Strip for their end of summer beach party (complete with sand!) at the end of August, and £2,500 to the Sydenham Arts Festival to sponsor the end of festival Picnic in the Park, which was held in the ward's wonderful Mayow Park on Sunday 12 July. Both events were given great reviews by all who attended.

In order to address our assembly's third priority of transport and traffic issues, our October ward assembly was dedicated to specific Perry Vale issues in tandem with a special transport market event at the Civic Suite.

Perry Vale ward assembly is in the process of allocating the remaining £6,400 from the Localities Fund and the remaining £6,000 from the Mayor's Fund from proposals presented at the October meeting.

It is exciting chairing the ward assembly, working with our committed co-ordinating group and listening to the range of projects and proposals which will make a great difference in Perry Vale. This reflects the huge support the local community has for their neighbourhood.

Cllr Susan Wise

Cabinet Member for Customer Services.

Tel: 8699 6520. Cllr_Susan.Wise@lewisham.gov.uk

Britain in Bloom

Dear Editor,

"Britain in Bloom" is celebrating its 45th year. After the bad winter of 1962/3 it was decided to postpone a full-blown launch of Britain in Bloom and instead run a pilot scheme. The borough of Lewisham was included in the pilot scheme and everyone was encouraged to take part: from flats with window boxes to houses with front and back gardens.

My father-in-law, Sydney Shoebridge, who lived in a house in Wynell Road, Forest Hill, took part and won first prize for best front garden.

One year the Queen Mother toured London and visited the winning gardens, taking tea with my in-laws after visiting his garden. Although not a professional gardener, Sydney Shoebridge, enjoyed working in the garden, frequently changing its design. However the main feature was always a thatched well, complete with bucket and chain.

Lewisham has continued to take part in Britain in Bloom and has won many prizes for its parks and open spaces and residents have also been successful in winning awards for beautiful floral displays in their own gardens.

John Ryall

Editor's note: Lewisham earned a Silver Gilt Award in this year's London in Bloom – for the third year running

What is going on here?

Sometimes it is too easy just to blame “the authorities” – but Sydenham residents deserve better explanations about what is happening when they have suffered roadworks and disruption to traffic and bus routes for nearly two years.

A case in point is the on-going works to replace our Victorian gas mains. The organisation primarily responsible for these is Southern Gas Network (SGN), which as a ‘statutory undertaker’ has a legal right to say when they need to dig up a road, leaving the local authority to co-ordinate with all others affected.

At a meeting last December involving local traders and the Sydenham Society, promises were made by SGN about better communications, but a couple of web pages from SGN and Lewisham are hardly a noticeable improvement. Even these say only that the work will be completed by April 2010 – nothing about when traffic and parking restrictions affecting particular stretches of Sydenham Road will be introduced and removed, where and when holes will be dug and filled in, or bus services diverted. At one point SGN claimed that they were having regular meetings with the Sydenham Society – of which we knew nothing. On questioning, they said they were due to attend a meeting with us – of which, again, we knew nothing.

Eventually, working with Sydenham Traders, we did pin them down to a meeting at which SGN explained some of the unexpected technical problems they had encountered

but more to the point, the project manager, Gareth Lewis, promised to send us and the traders fortnightly updates on progress from now on. We must now wait to see if his happens.

There are a number of other cases where there could be better explanations about what is going on, and relevant background. In this newsletter there are updates on several, eg Sydenham Road improvements, the Greyhound planning application, the problem of anti-social behaviour from abusers of alcohol and other drugs, the need for better general awareness of conservation areas and planning requirements. The Sydenham Society also lobbies on these matters, and works with the Council to help improve communications. Two projects are currently ongoing financed by the Localities Fund – the production of an up-to-date community directory and a leaflet explaining the responsibilities of shop owners in conservation areas.

Local residents need a place where all this information can be brought together and can be easily accessed. The web will be at the heart of this, but often only behind the scenes.

Leaflets, e-newsletters, community noticeboards, notices for shop keepers to display to customers are all needed. This is a major challenge in which we will keep working as well as we can with “the authorities” and other community groups.

Tim Lund



Sydenham Arts Festival

Jonathan Kaufman, 2009 Festival Director, writes:

Following the very successful 2009 Festival the Steering Committee has been discussing how to approach future Arts Festivals and has come to the following decision about whether to hold a Sydenham Arts Festival in 2010.

The 2009 Sydenham Arts Festival was a great success although one of the main "criticisms" was that there were too many events happening in too short a time. We still feel that launching the festival in this way was the best way to make a big impact and create a real buzz of excitement in Sydenham. We may go back to the same format in 2011, but for various reasons, we have decided to do things differently in 2010.

We envisage Sydenham Arts Festival (SAF) 2010 evolving to become an umbrella organisation for a whole season of the arts throughout the summer. This fulfils the original aim of the festival of promoting the arts in Sydenham. The committee would not organise any event during 2010, but would co-ordinate, advise, promote and facilitate events put on by independent individuals and groups.

For example, the Visual Arts Trail could still take place. It would be organised as a separate event and could take place in a week when there were no other events. This would give lots more people a chance to see local studios, artists' homes etc. Likewise the Independent Booksellers' Week would come under the Arts umbrella as well as the annual play in | the Dolphin garden. Events in local schools i.e. Forest Fest could be included and we would encourage people to organise drama, dance, comedy, film and music events, as well as events for children, workshops etc throughout the summer. The Sydenham International Music Festival will still be happen during May and June 2010.

A significant change from how the festival was organised in 2009 would be that the individual organisers would now be entirely responsible for their own events. Although SAF would be able to advise on such issues as performance licences, insurance, health and safety, ticketing and venues etc, ultimately the event organisers will need to take care of these themselves.

There are a number of reasons why we feel that the festival needs a different structure in 2010; foremost is the fact that planning for a similar SAF 2009-sized event would need to begin NOW and at present the accounts for this year will not be finalised until 31 October and will not be ready for auditing until mid-November.

We were extremely lucky to receive the funding we did for this year's festival. Public funds will be much harder to come by next year and grant applications would need to be sent off and confirmed by the end of 2009 in order to guarantee a full-scale festival in 2010. As yet no volunteers have volunteered to help with grant and funding applications and at present the current festival steering committee do not have the time to undertake this task. The steering committee and the various sub-



committees need new members, who would organise marketing, publicity, fund-raising, technical issues and general admin, as well as volunteer staff to run a box office should it be required.

The gas and water works in the high street were disruptive this year, but the "Pedestrian Improvements to Sydenham Road", scheduled to take place next year, are likely to be even more problematic and therefore we cannot plan any events in the High Street as part of a 2010 festival.

The picnic in the park and the high street events were organised by one member of the steering committee who is travelling around the world for six months. Her input was invaluable and, as yet, no-one has come forward to replace her.

One other factor to consider is the 10-day period in 2010 around the beginning of July, an ideal time to hold the festival, will clash with the Football World Cup (!) Wimbledon and Lewisham People's Day.

Early next year the Inaugural General Meeting of Sydenham Arts Festival will be held. It is hoped that by then people will have come forward to fill the vacancies that the Steering Group have identified.

Please let us know what you think about our ideas – come to the AGM, call into the bookshop, or phone us 8778 4701 (daytime).

Amaretti Angels

A sell-out during Sydenham Arts Festival, even with an extra performance laid on, Amaretti Angels returns to Trattoria Raffaele for two nights only on 3 and 4 December at 7.30pm. Tickets £35 including a three-course meal.

The play, a comedy, takes place in an Italian restaurant where Mike and Jenny meet for a life changing meal. It's as if we, the audience, sitting at our separate tables are eavesdropping. Who are they? What is their relationship?

Hurry! Bookings are being taken now – Trattoria Raffaele, 94 Sydenham Road (8778 6262)

Design Team appointed for Forest Hill Pools

Lewisham has now completed the tender process and appointed the design team for the redevelopment of Forest Hill Pools. The Architect is Roberts Limbrick Ltd, the Structural Engineer is WYG Engineering Ltd and the Building Services Engineer is Building Services Partnership Ltd.

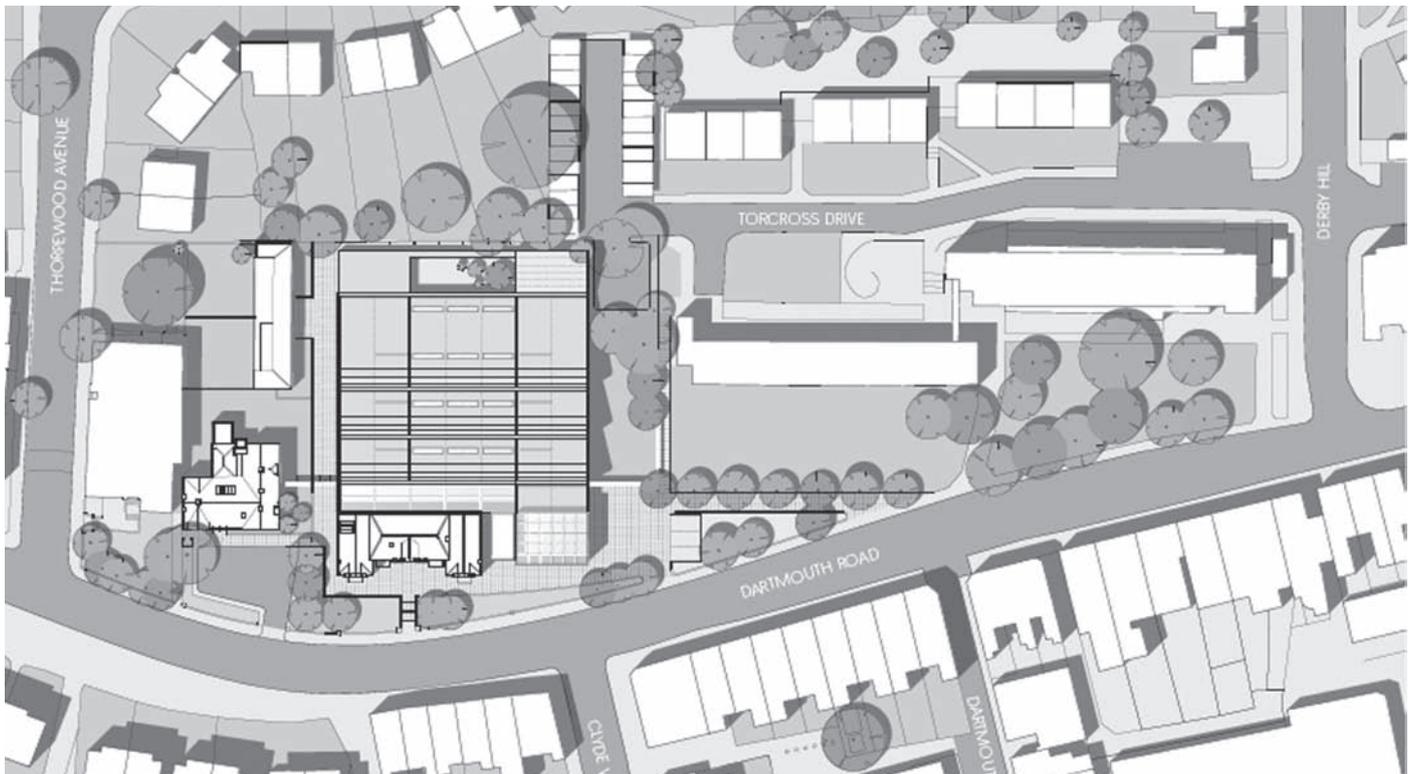
The procurement process for these appointments was an accelerated two stage OJEU competition to ensure that leisure facilities can be re-provided at the earliest opportunity. Roberts Limbrick provided a thorough response to the specification and demonstrated an excellent level of relevant experience of similar projects both from conservation and leisure perspectives. They are leading the redevelopment of Kentish Town Sports Centre, an existing Grade II Listed Victorian Baths, into a modern leisure facility including detailed liaison with English Heritage and the Victorian Society.

Although some bids from other architectural practices were also of a high quality, Roberts Limbrick's bid was considered to represent the best value for money, with a proposed fee close to the median of the bids and lower than the most expensive by a significant margin.

The architects will be invited to the next stakeholders meeting so that the emerging design proposals can be discussed and as well as future consultation. The final design will be fully DDA compliant.

Cllr Chris Best
Cabinet member for Communities

Editor's note: As a note of historical interest Thomas Aldwinkle was the architect who designed not only the Forest Hill Pools building but also the Kentish Town baths.



Possible layout for the new Forest Hill Leisure Centre.

The Greyhound

As we go to press a new planning application has been submitted to Lewisham for the redevelopment of the Greyhound site (ref: DC/09/72790). The Sydenham Society is grateful to the developer's planning consultants and the architect for allowing us to reproduce the graphic opposite. A model and the planning documents are available in the Gallery of Kirkdale Bookshop for anyone interested in commenting on this application.

The Sydenham Society welcomes the fact that the apartment block to the rear of the Greyhound has been reduced by one storey in this revised proposal and that the Spring Hill elevation has been retained and raised by one storey to partly compensate. The Society is considering the proposals in detail and will be submitting our comments to Lewisham in due course

Plans for Louise House progress

The Friends of Louise House (FLH) held their second formal meeting on 11 October. The group exists to find a new publicly beneficial use for this Grade II listed building, located between Forest Hill Library and the Pools. Lewisham Council is seeking expressions of interest for a new use for the building (which it owns) by 2 November, with firm plans by 31 March.

In the period since the first meeting on 2 August, the "Friends" have been busy holding exploratory meetings with councillors, council officials and many others. Ideas ranging from an extension to the library, through serviced offices and an arts centre to nurseries and museums have been explored. The Council is keen to transfer the building, but is currently without either capital or revenue funds. In the current economic climate, and the atmosphere of financial caution in the museums and arts sectors, this has made finding a new use, viable in the long term, quite challenging.

There is widespread interest in the idea of transferring the building to the Crystal Palace Community Development Trust (CPCDT), a local body charged with providing regeneration in the area surrounding Crystal Palace Park. The trustees, who include local people and councillors from the five local wards (including Sydenham), have agreed that the project can be explored in principle. CPCDT already runs an analogous project at Anerley Town Hall, which consists primarily of serviced office spaces for local start up businesses and rentable public halls which are heavily used. The Trust has full-time staff experienced and successful in grant applications and fundraising and has recently started on site on a project to convert two disused shops into a community centre on the Kingswood Estate, in Southwark. If this approach were to progress, the likely outcome is that the main building at Louise House would become serviced office space, with the Laundry block reverting to its previous use as a nursery.

Local playwright and actress, Teresa Howard, worked up a scheme for Louise House to become a centre for the performing arts. These ideas continue to be explored by Bruno Roubicek, a FLH member, and discussions are being held with a range of interested groups and bodies, with the



likely outcome being a combination of artists' workshops, gallery space, rehearsal rooms and studios with a small performance space. There is an expressed need in Forest Hill for this kind of cultural activity, but funding will be a big challenge for these proposals.

More recently, the National Trust have been approached. It is at least a possibility that they could assume ownership of the building and renovate it. A new use would still need to be found and that use would need to support the ongoing maintenance of Louise House. Volunteers are working with the NT to further this proposal.

Either way, the Council's challenge to seek a new use is being met with energy and commitment by local people. Despite the many challenges, Louise House provides an opportunity for people in Forest Hill and Sydenham to create a new space which can provide jobs locally in a new local amenity and thereby increase footfall in Dartmouth Road. For further information email: friendsoflouisehouse@googlemail.com

Tim Walder



The proposed building at The Greyhound.

Barbara Downing

Many of us were saddened by the news of the death of Mick Downing in June this year. Mick and Barbara have been synonymous with the Sydenham Society almost since its inception 37 years ago. They moved to Sydenham in 1976 from an old house with dry rot in Dulwich. Barbara said they were attracted to the idea of living in a modern town house with no maintenance problems. Mick was then doing shift work on one of the national newspapers, and Barbara, being a 'joiner', said the Society appealed to her for "doing some good for the community". Barbara and Mick at this time were active in left-wing politics, and this was a continuing interest for them both.

Barbara was immediately 'taken up' by the Society's Executive and joined the Amenities Committee, helping to organize garden parties and Christmas parties over many years. She remembers one particular occasion in the mid 1980s when Norman McCann was alive, and the Christmas party was held in his stable block, with readings from Dickens, and carol singing. At this event Lucille McCann, known as Lucille Graham, then a well-known soprano sang to everyone's delight. At all the social events over the years, Mick was there to fetch and dispense the wine, and he was a popular and genial host. Barbara, currently a Vice-President of the Society, is a former President of the Sydenham Society.

Barbara thinks it a sign of the times that in those days there was little to campaign about. She says that Sydenham residents were satisfied with their shops, and train services. She notes sadly the loss of many small businesses in the High Street, the butchers, greengrocers, clothes and electrical shops, and of course the famous Cobb's Department store, not to mention our own cinema, the Granada, demolished in 1971.

Over the years Barbara has had many jobs, retiring in 1992, and for 23 years she was a school secretary. She loved the role as she felt it put her in a unique position with the pupils especially as she was not responsible for their discipline. She



particularly enjoyed her time at Woodstock School, described in those days as a school for maladjusted pupils, with a dedicated teaching staff.

Mick and Barbara were married for 59 years, complementing each other in every aspect of their lives. They had many shared interests; politics, walking, music, the theatre and cinema, and not least their many holidays in France, the New Forest and the Lake District. When Mick became ill, Barbara took a back seat within the Society, but hopes to resume her role as secretary to the Events Committee where her skills will be employed once again. For now Barbara is going to a computer class, catching up with friends and family, and presently house sitting with two teenagers, two of her five grandchildren.

Barbara would like to thank the many friends who contributed to a collection for the New Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford-on-Avon in memory of Mick. £700 was raised, and a seat will be dedicated in his memory.

This is the fourth in a series of articles on members of the Sydenham Society. 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

Green news – good news

Garden Waste – the Girton Road Car Park collection of garden waste on Saturday and Sunday mornings between 9 - 10 am has been extended to 30 November; equally good news is that it will be resumed in April next year.

Energy saving light bulbs and portable batteries – a pilot recycling scheme has just been rolled out at Sainsbury's, Sydenham to offer energy-saving light bulb and portable battery recycling facilities.

In partnership with recycling specialist Recolight, Sainsbury's, Sydenham is one of the first stores in the country to offer this service. A specially designed collection container where shoppers can take their old energy-saving light bulbs and batteries is now available at the recycling area of the store. All energy-saving light bulbs and batteries collected will be sent for recycling at approved treatment facilities.

New legislation means all retailers are required to provide portable battery recycling by the beginning of next year, but Sainsbury's is the only supermarket currently offering the co-collection of batteries and energy-saving light bulbs, which need to be recycled under the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Regulations.

In addition recycling bins for spent batteries have been introduced into all libraries across the borough. Batteries contain hazardous materials such as lead, mercury, cadmium and zinc – all materials which can be recovered from the batteries. The materials recovered are the same as those being mined in other parts of the world and recycling batteries helps to conserve natural resources.

Should we laugh or should we cry?

Dear Editor,

Lewisham Council has fly-posted lots of lamp posts around Sydenham with A5 size notices reminding dog owners to “bin it” and that 4 dogs only is the maximum allowed per person when taking dogs for a walk. Fixed penalties of £75 and £1000 are quoted. Lewisham’s logo is proudly displayed as is their address. The phone number listed is 8314 7171 which is that of Envirocall. Also quoted is the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005, part 4 of which refers to fixed penalties for fly-posting.

Has anyone any idea what we, as residents should do? Should Envirocall get away with this? Here we are trying to improve our streets and discourage graffiti and fly-posting and here is a council department fly-posting (not very well at that either) willy-nilly? Whose brainchild is this idea? Lewisham is not only fly-posting but it is doing so without taking action to remove the existing illegal fly-posting.

Dogs-gusted of Sydenham

Editor’s note: complaints have been made to the council about this borough-wide campaign. The leaflets are still there several weeks on looking extremely tatty due to exposure to the elements.



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Sydenham Word Search

See if you can find the 36 Sydenham road names hidden in the grid. Words can be horizontal, vertical or diagonal and in either direction. One has been highlighted to start you off.

Answers in the next issue.

Friends of Mayow Park

Consultation with the 10-14 age group to decide preferred equipment for their space in the Park is now complete, and the choices narrowed down. We are grateful to the schools who gave us time and space with pupils from this age group. The results are now with Green Scene, who in consultation with FOMP, will make the final decisions, depending on suitability, affordability, and preferably from the same supplier. The funds become available from April 2010.

Work to prepare the site for the new Bowls Club accommodation starts in the week beginning 2 November. Detailed information is already displayed on the Park notice boards. The overall plans by Groundwork for the Park will be unveiled on 17 November, but no details are available at the time of going to press.

Lewisham launched its strategy for the encouragement of Community Gardens at the Parks Conference on the 31 October. To support this, Envirowork plans to utilise the rest of the old depot site in Mayow Park to install raised beds to demonstrate various types of planting: e.g. drought tolerant, herbs, sensory, low maintenance, budget, root and leaf vegetables, along with dwarf fruit trees, a new native hedge, and a woodland area with bulb underplanting.

At long last, we hope to see the "Seaside Garden" (from Chelsea Flower Show) installed. Along with the refurbishment of the old pavilion, this should transform the appearance of the

Park. Admiring all this activity will help to while away the time when awaiting the arrival of the next 75 bus!

An event coming up for everyone to note in their diary is Sunday 13 December. Come to the Mayow Park Christmas Fair (11 am – 4 pm) and Tree Dressing (11 – 12 noon) jointly organised by Envirowork and the Friends of Mayow Park. Nearest entrance is in Mayow Road, opposite Burghill Road

Hilary Jarrett, Alona Sheridan.
Friends of Mayow Park 8778 9560



Friends of Home Park

Following concerns about anti-social behaviour in the area of Fairlawn Park; the Sydenham Safer Neighbourhoods Team together with local residents set up the Fairlawn Park Neighbourhood Watch which evolved into Fairlawn Park Residents Association (FPRA). Partly in response to concerns about anti-social behaviour mainly by a group of young people the FPRA looked at what leisure/activities provision there was locally particularly for young people.

It was felt that Home Park, which borders Fairlawn Park, was a run down park but had the potential for development for the provision of activities for all members of the community.

In the absence of a Friends of Home Park group, in September 2008 FPRA organised a Home Park strategy group meeting. Representatives of Lewisham Parks, Glendale, the adventure playground manager, local Bellingham councillors and the Safer Neighbourhoods Team met with local residents to talk about the future of the park and the need to make it more user friendly.

Following this initial meeting, earlier this year Lewisham Regeneration allocated £20,000 for new equipment and improvements to the park for the financial year 2009/10 and the Friends of Home Park came into being in April 2009 to discuss and decide how best to spend this £20k

A Consultation event was held at Haseltine School in July

2009 School. Safety and security within the park was identified as a cause for concern, as was the need to maintain and repair play equipment, in particular that in the Adventure Playground. Additional activities such as football coaching and a café were also on the wish-list. Concern was expressed about dog-fouling, the general state of the park described as generally neglected, poor boundary fencing.

In a very short period the Friends of Home Park have achieved a number of improvements to the park including a commitment to increase park security, organised play activities during the summer holidays, improvements to the adventure playground.

A community vote is being taken by the end of October about what to spend the £20k on and it is hoped that by next summer the Friends will see the Adventure Playground refurbished and updated, a community garden installed and Sydenham Library, already a community resource, being integrated with the park.

The Friends of Home Park would welcome new members keen to see park improvements. For further information please go to www.homepark.wordpress.com

Anthony Scully, Acting Chair, Friends of Home Park
anthony.scully@ukonline.co.uk

Croydon Canal

The celebration of the bi-centenary of the opening of the Croydon Canal was marked by a walk along the canal route led by local historian, Steve Grindlay, from Sydenham Station to Forest Hill Station on 24 October 2009. One hundred and thirty local residents from the Sydenham and Forest Hill Societies retraced the route, stopping at in Dacres Wood Nature Reserve (the only stretch of the canal still in existence) to listen to some old barge songs sung Alex King.

Arriving in Forest Hill Steve gave an illustrated talk about the history of the canal in the Hob PH before a large number of the walkers sat down to enjoy Bargeman's Beef Stew (or a vegetarian goulash) at the Dartmouth Arms accompanied by further barge songs.



The group by the canal.



Alex King, singing barge songs.



Steve Grindlay giving an illustrated talk.

Crystal Palace Pictures

With no cinema in the local area Crystal Palace Pictures has started a "film night" at the Gypsy Hill Tavern, next door to Gypsy Hill Station. Twice a month, on a Thursday at 7.30, a film is screened on a 17 ft screen with surround sound, comfy chairs, and free food in the fabulous function room and, as it is in a pub, you can enjoy a drink too. Tickets are £5 payable at the door.

On 10 December "In the Loop" is due to be screened and on 17 December there will be a Christmas movie voted on by the patrons. Future screenings will be on 7 and 21 January and 4 and 18 February.

For further information about Crystal Palace Pictures and a programme of films to be screened go to www.crystalpalacepictures.com



Chrissie Gittins

Local resident and author Chrissie Gittins, advises that the reprint of her first children's poetry collection 'Now You See Me, Now You ...' is now available from bookshops, from libraries, and from Amazon – ISBN 9780954328801

The book was shortlisted for the CLPE Poetry Award and includes two Belmont Poetry Prize winning poems, and 25 credits for poems which have

been anthologised. If you'd like signed and dedicated copies for yourself, or as presents, please contact her. Sample poems and illustrations from the book can be found on the children's poetry page of her website www.chrissiegittins.co.uk

Critics' comments include "**Chrissie Gittins has a McGough-like flair for idiomatic surrealism,**" Michael Thorn, *Times Education Supplement*.

"**I like the warmth and immediacy of the poems. But I think The Shortest Days is my favourite – limpid and deceptively simple.**" Helen Dunmore, author and Orange Prize winner.



Sydenham Road Christmas celebrations

Celebrate Christmas in the comfort of your very own High Street on Friday 4 December! Between 4pm and 5pm revel in the children's excitement as they hunt for the Christmas Trees around the local businesses in Sydenham Road and Kirkdale. At 5 o'clock be serenaded by the 'Blossom Street Singers' (as featured on the BBC) and by the Hand Bell Ringers. At 5.30 Councillor Chris Best will switch on the Christmas Lights on the tree outside the Naborhood Centre marking the beginning of Sydenham's Christmas festivities. Let's all have a very jolly Christmas!

Julie Sutch
Town Centre Manager

Sydenham Society Events Review 2009

The Sydenham Society has continued to work tirelessly to ensure that, as well as providing a forum for campaigning on local issues, there are opportunities to meet and socialise on a regular basis. And, with this in mind, the Events Committee organises a variety of local, regional, daytime and evening events throughout the year. Evening events include Club 26, when we enjoy a meal in a local restaurant on the 26th of each month and the quarterly local charity Quiz Nite at the Golden Lion. Daytime events include a combination of walks and visits.

We had a short but very interesting walk around the Regency Squares of Kennington in July and two longer walks, along part of the Regents Canal in March and round Edenbridge in May. In June we visited the Museum of Garden History and in October we went to the Bethlem Royal Hospital Museum where we were able to study some of the archives of Victorian inmates.

The visits and walks all attract a good number of our members, but two events need a particular mention. On 20 September the Sydenham Society hosted a walk from Crystal Palace to Horniman Gardens as part of the Green Chain Walking Festival attracting approximately 80 people from all over London and, on 24 October, with the Forest Hill Society we jointly organised the Croydon Canal bi-centennial celebrations. Despite the threat of rain, over 130 people joined in the fun. On both occasions we were lucky enough to have informative talks given by our local historian Steve Grindlay and, for the Canal celebrations, we were also treated to folk singing in Dacres Wood Nature reserve, and at the Dartmouth Arms in Forest Hill.

We have an interesting programme of events for 2010 so make sure you put them in your diary and subscribe to our e-newsletter for regular email reminders.

Jackie Aldridge (8778 5455)
Chair, Events Committee

Around and About

Dulwich Picture Gallery

21 October – 17 January

Drawing Attention: Rembrandt, Tiepolo, Van Gogh, Picasso and more. A lavish feat of drawings of the hundred best works ranging from Renaissance Italy to 20th century masterpieces featuring work by some of the greatest draughtsmen from around the world.

Beckenham Place Park

Tuesday 1 December

Short winter walk. Meet at the Mansion at 1.30pm for a friendly walk around the park – a social stroll.

Throughout December there will be mince pies and light refreshments to mark the festive season in the Visitor Centre for everyone who comes along

Horniman Annual Christmas Market and Carol Concert

Sunday 13 December 2009

3.00pm in the Conservatory
Christmas Market and Father Christmas will be in his grotto.

5.00pm round the Bandstand
Carols led by the Crystal Palace Band with the English Baroque Choir.



Peckham Society

Sunday 21 February

3.00pm. Talk on Recent Archaeology in Southwark by Christopher Constable, Southwark's archaeologist, at Goose Green Centre, St John's Church, East Dulwich Road, London SE22

Brockley Jack Theatre

Tuesday 24 November – Saturday 28 November 7.45pm

A Day in the Death of Joe Egg, by Peter Nichols, presented by In Company. This dark, but very funny comedy about a young couple's attempts at coping with their daughter's disabilities. sees the couple using fantasy and humour to try to bring joy into their daughter's and their own lives, despite the prejudices of both friends and family. Tickets: £12.00 full, £9.00 conc. Box office: 0844 847 2454 Online booking www.ticketweb.co.uk

LOCAL WARD ASSEMBLY MEETINGS

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

Forest Hill Ward

MONDAY 1 FEBRUARY – 7.30pm. Venue to be confirmed

Perry Vale Ward

THURSDAY 11 FEBRUARY – 7.30pm. Venue to be confirmed

Sydenham Ward

THURSDAY 3 DECEMBER – 7.00pm at Our Lady and St Philip Neri Catholic Church

Dates for your Diary

If you have a suggestion for a Syd Soc event please call Jackie Aldridge on 8778 5455.

Thursday 26 November – Club 26 will meet to eat at “That’s Amore” in Kirkdale (phone: 8291 2901) to reserve your place, mentioning Club 26 so we can all sit together.

Friday 4 December – Christmas celebrations in Sydenham Road between 4 – 5.30pm (see p14 for details)

Sunday 13 December. Mayow Park Christmas Fair 11- 4pm and Tree Dressing 11-12 pm in Mayow Park, entrance opposite Burghill Road



Sunday 27 December – the Society’s Annual post-Christmas stroll – (see back page).

Wednesday 13 January – Pool River walk. Meet at 11.00am at the end of the Spine Road next to Sainsbury’s, Bell Green for an easy stroll to Catford by way of the Pool River for lunch at the Broadway Theatre café – for further details phone Peggy on 8699 0018.

Tuesday 26 January – Club 26 returns to Trattoria Raffaele, 94 Sydenham Road to enjoy its fresh cooked pasta and pizza. Phone 8778 6262 to book your place.

Friday 5 February – visit to Handel House in Brook Street – see back page.

Tuesday 9 February at 7.45 – Quiz Nite at the Golden Lion with all proceeds this time to St Christopher’s Hospice. Teams of between 4 and 6 wishing to take part should contact Jackie (8778 5455) or Pat (8659 4903) to book their place. Individuals welcome as scratch teams can be formed on the night.

Friday 26 February – Club 26 returns to our Nepalese restaurant Gurkhas at 67 Sydenham Road, Phone 8778 3222 to reserve your place.

Tuesday 9 March 7.45 at the Golden Lion– “Local Artists and Musicians” – talk by local historian Steve Grindlay (see back page) Admission £2.

Friday 26 March – Club 26 day out in Brighton (see back page).

Tuesday 26 March 7.45 pm – The Sydenham Society’s Annual General Meeting – full details in next newsletter

Kirkdale Bookshop Special Christmas evening

On Friday, December 4th from 4 – 9 pm, Kirkdale Bookshop will be celebrating Christmas in Sydenham with Christmas readings by local actors reading from Dickens and various other authors. Come and enjoy some mulled wine and mince pies. There will be 10% discount off everything in the shop and a Christmas lucky dip for the children

New in the shop are a series of DVDs on London history. Using unseen or rarely seen footage, each lasts about 55 mins There are eight titles on the East End, London in the Fifties, Docklands, Railways, Haunted London & the Krays. At £9.99 they could be the perfect Christmas present.



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’.

Please return to: Roger Feather, 71 Hall Drive, Sydenham, London SE26 6XL Tel: 8778 4318 Email: membership@sydenhamsociety.com

Sydenham Society News

Xmas at Dulwich Woodhouse

Saturday 28 November, 10.00am – 3.00pm

The Dulwich Woodhouse PH, Sydenham Hill, in association with Great Ormond Street Hospital, is holding a Christmas Market to celebrate local produce and create awareness of local business. Kids' Arts and Crafts, mulled wine and mince pies. Stalls cost £25 with proceeds going to the hospital. Further information email dulwichwoodhouse@youngs.co.uk or phone 8693 5666.

Sydenham Garden Christmas Fair

Saturday 12 December, 11.00am – 3.00pm

A fun day out for all the family with tasty healthy lunches, sales of home-made jams and chutneys and much more.

Entrance in Holland Drive, off Queenswood Road, SE23.

Entry £1 for adults, or 50p for 12-16 years olds and concessions.

All proceeds from the day to go to Sydenham Garden.



Visit to Handel House

Friday 5 February

A visit to the house on Brook Street lived in by George Frederick Handel. Meet at Sydenham Station at 10.00am to catch 10.09am train to London Bridge or at Handel House at 11.20am (nearest station Bond Street). Tour starts at 11.30am and includes a conducted tour and a recital. Cost £10. Numbers are limited so please book your place by phoning Ruth (8699 4614) or Jackie (8778 5455) by 1 Feb.

Local Artists and Musicians

Tuesday 9 March, 7.45pm at the Golden Lion

Local historian Steve Grindlay gives a fascinating talk on the great arts heritage of Sydenham. From the 1850s Crystal Palace was the major centre for musical performances in Britain, perhaps Europe, largely due to Sir George Grove, organiser of the concerts, who lived in Sydenham for 45 years and attracted a circle of like-minded people referred to as "The Sydenham Set". And it was not just musicians and composers who came to the area; poets, artists, authors and actors also settled here. Steve's first sell-out talk on this subject was during last year's Sydenham Arts Festival. By popular demand he returns to the subject especially for Sydenham Society members. Admission £2.

Post Xmas Stroll

Sunday 27 December, 11.00am

The Society's Annual post-Christmas stroll – but this time mainly around Crystal Palace Park. Meet at 11am by the Border Oak at the junction of Sydenham Avenue, Lawrie Park Avenue and Border Road, to finish at The Bridge House Tavern, Crystal Palace Road, for a social drink or meal. Please phone Tim on 8659 6137 or 07717207009 for more details, and to say if you will be eating as well. No promises to keep to paths, so sturdy shoes essential!

Club 26 goes to Brighton

Friday March 26

We plan to lunch at the Terre a Terre, a vegetarian restaurant near Brighton Pavilion – highly recommended by several Sydenham residents. In the morning there will be an optional visit to the Brighton Pavilion. (a group rate will apply for numbers over 15 (£6.20 concessions/ £7.90 adults). If sufficient people are interested we can also book a tour at an additional cost of maximum £4 each. Phone/email Jackie (8778 5455) (jackiege1@yahoo.co.uk) by 1 Feb to register your interest). Further details regarding trains and booking of restaurant will be in the next newsletter.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome to the following new members:

Julianne Bowman Richard Roberts
& Barry Marks Shaun Spiers
Liam Curran

Members are reminded that subscriptions for 2009 are now overdue. I shall shortly be contacting members whose subscriptions I have not yet received for this year. If you are not sure whether you have paid please let me know

Roger Feather Tel: 8778 4318 Email: membership@sydenhamsociety.com

E-NEWSLETTERS

These are emails sent approximately once a week 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