

SYDENHAM SOCIETY

NEWS

Spring 2011

Baroness Mary Warnock and Lucy Mangan lead Sydenham Library's Read-in

Sydenham locals turned out in their hundreds for Sydenham Library's recent Read-in to share a morning of readings by local authors and members of the teenage reading group, a singing and music session for children, a visit from the Itinerant Poetry Librarian and an appearance by a dub group.

Life peer and philosopher Baroness Mary Warnock led the readings with extracts from David Lodge's 'Death Sentence', while Guardian columnist, Lucy Mangan, closed the Read-in with an extract from her novel 'The Reluctant Bride'.

Lucy Mangan said: "Libraries mean so much to so many people and to a sector of people that fly under politicians' radars. That's why it's important to come along, raise awareness, and make our feelings known. There is enough money in this country ... if political will is there to not deprive the already deprived institutions and communities further."

Baroness Warnock said of the proposed closure: "Sydenham Library is one of many under threat....In times of economic misery and unemployment we need more not less consolation from libraries, more access to newspapers, books and computers, more places to sit, research and make friends. It is barbarism to close it."



Also participating in the Read-in were author and poet Chrissie Gittins, who read her poem 'Longing to be Heard' in honour of Sydenham Library (see back page), authors of illustrated children's books Jim Helmore and Karen Wall read from their new book 'Oh No Monster Tomato', and local author Julie Day read from her novel 'Rosie and the Sick School'. Alice and Meleez, two members of the teenage reading group, meet weekly at the library. Together they read from 'Knife Edge' by Malorie Blackman. Also making an appearance outside the library were dub group Sly and Reggie who sang their song 'We Love Libraries' from their Morris Minor with a built-in sound system.

The event culminated in the cutting of a cake by Baroness Mary Warnock and a balloon release.

Lewisham Council is currently reviewing bids from independent groups to take over the library.



IN THIS ISSUE

East London Line Extension • Sydenham Road improvements • Football & Crystal Palace • AGM Call Profile: Anthony Scully • Alhambra Court Tiles • Review of 2010 • Bell Green Sculpture • Sydenham Mosaic

YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD VOICE

www.sydenhamsociety.com

SYDENHAM SOCIETY CONTACTS**Acting Chair**

Annabel McLaren
chair@sydenhamsociety.com

Conservation

Barbara Kern
conservation@sydenhamsociety.com

Treasurer & Membership

Roger Feather
membership@sydenhamsociety.com
8778 4318

Events

Jackie Aldridge
8778 5455
Mob: 07837 838710

Newsletter Editor

Pat Trembath
news@sydenhamsociety.com
8659 4903

Roads and Transport

Ilse Towler
iandj.towler@btinternet.com
8778 3743

Newsletter Design & Layout

Julia East
news@sydenhamsociety.com
8699 8027

Local History

Steve Grindlay
localhistory@sydenhamsociety.com
8699 6398

Newsletter Distribution

Hilary Jarrett
8778 9560

Contact Address for post

Sydenham Society
35 Bishopsthorpe Road
Sydenham
SE26 4PA

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.

YOUR LOCALLY ELECTED OFFICIALS**LOCAL MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT**

Jim Dowd MP for Lewisham West and Penge
Tessa Jowell MP for Dulwich and Upper Norwood
c/o House of Commons London SW1A 0AA

LEWISHAM COUNCILLORS

Civic Suite Lewisham Town Hall Catford SE6 4RU
8314 6000

Bellingham Ward

Alan Hall Ami Ibitson

Forest Hill Ward

Anne Anikue Alex Feakes Philip Peake

Perry Vale Ward

John Paschoud Alan Till Susan Wise

Sydenham Ward

Chris Best Liam Curran Marion Nisbet

BROMLEY COUNCILLORS

Bromley Civic Centre Stockwell Close BRI 3UH
8464 3333

Crystal Palace Ward

John Carvin Tom Papworth

Penge and Cator Ward

Peter Fookes John Getgood Katherine Bance

SOUTHWARK COUNCILLORS

Town Hall Peckham Road SE5 8UB
7525 5000

College Ward

Helen Hayes Lewis Robinson Andy Simmons

OTHER CONTACTS**Community Police Teams**

Community Police contact non-emergency numbers for Lewisham have all changed to **0300 123 1212**

In an emergency dial 999

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

East London Line extension to open late February

The East London Line extension from Dalston Junction to Highbury & Islington looks likely to open on **February 28 – almost three months ahead of schedule.**

The 2.1 km extension to the northern end of the ELL will allow passengers to access the Jubilee Line and North London Line at Highbury. Destinations such as Kings Cross/ St Pancras can then be easily reached without locals having to travel through London Bridge or use the overcrowded Northern Line. And when the extension opens, even a Sunday afternoon walk on Hampstead Heath could be a real possibility for Sydenham dwellers!

The East London Line has enjoyed a huge surge in users since it opened. October 2010 passenger counts show that the number of journeys undertaken per weekday on the route had risen to 70,000, compared with 40,000 in the first full month of operation.

December's new rail timetables also brought good news for locals with two additional evening rush hour trains

from London Bridge and extra late night trains on both the East London Line and from London Bridge. The timetable to and from London Bridge is slowly returning to the one we enjoyed before the East London Line opened – apart, of course, for our direct services to and from Charing Cross.

The Jubilee Line upgrade, originally due to be delivered in December 2009 before the Overground reopened last May, will now be completed this spring. The new system will enable London Underground to run more trains on the Jubilee line, increasing capacity by 33 per cent and cutting journey times by around 22 percent.

The final phase of the East London Line upgrade from Surrey Quays to Clapham Junction will not now be delivered before the Olympics in 2012. Transport for London has confirmed that the timetable has slipped and it will be the end of 2012 before the extension will open.

Barry Milton

Sydenham Road improvements and Station Approach

The news at the last Sydenham Assembly that the long-awaited pedestrian improvements to Sydenham Road had been delayed by possibly as much as twelve months has been tempered by information from Network Rail that an agreement is now in place to transfer Station Approach to Lewisham Council on a 99-year lease. The transfer is being confirmed with the Office of the Rail Regulator, legal documents are being drawn up and that transfer should be completed between the end of April and mid-May.

At a recent meeting with representatives from Network Rail (NR), Transport for London (TfL), London Overground Rail Operations Ltd (LOROL), Lewisham Council and the Greater London Authority, Cllr Chris Best and members of the Sydenham Society were told that plans are being finalised for the redesign of Station Approach, that funding is in place and that the tendering and contract process will begin shortly, with work scheduled to start in September. This is the first stage of the Pedestrian Improvement Scheme and work will continue in Sydenham Road early in 2012, with the final £2m needed to complete the scheme being released by TfL in April 2012.

A new square will be created outside the station building with a tree, benches and other plantings. Station Approach will be paved in York stone, as will the alleyway between the station and Silverdale, and there will be an upgrade in lighting. Power outlets will be provided for potential market stalls and,

in due course, probably Sydenham's Christmas tree.

One downside is that the newly designed Station Approach will lose its toilet, which has been misused for sometime, and there is no provision for a replacement within the new design.

Use of Sydenham Station has increased by 20% since the Overground train service was introduced and the discussions included a request that the main doorway into the station be widened to match the width of the ticket barriers. It was agreed that it is too narrow at busy times and could become a health and safety issue. The representative for TfL agreed to take this request away for consideration, with change possible within the next two years as funding becomes available.

The new shelter on the 'Up' platform was welcomed and there was a request for a second, similar, shelter. LOROL said this would be considered, but the narrow platform was the reason for limited shelter provision. LOROL advised that the 'down' platform would be lengthened to take 10-carriage trains – the length of current trains is to be upgraded to 10-coaches. However there was insufficient NR-owned land to increase the length of the 'Up' platform, so there will need to be selective door opening on longer trains.

The meeting also provided the opportunity to raise the poor state of the Forest Hill underpass and the NR representative agreed to consult with colleagues on a definite date for NR to complete their share of the underpass refurbishment, following which, Lewisham will press ahead with their share, which includes better lighting.

STOP PRESS!

On Thursday, the Mayor of Lewisham, Sir Steve Bullock, took the decision to close Sydenham Library on 28 May. He instructed officers to seek detailed bids from groups who have expressed an interest in running the library. The officers confirmed that the local community will be involved in discussions about the future of the library.

The deadline for articles for the next newsletter will be **Friday 7 May.**

Forest Hill Pools – Latest

In early December the Forest Hill Pools stakeholders, including representatives of Forest Hill and Sydenham Societies, met with the team from Willmott Dixon, the construction firm selected to build the new Forest Hill Pools.

The team gave a presentation starting with the 148-year history of the firm, pictures of pools they have built previously and other Lewisham buildings they have worked on. In addition to the normal project team, they have a leisure sector specialist and confirmed they would be working closely with the architects, Roberts Limbrick. Lewisham Council will also be retaining independent experts to monitor the building services.

The team presented diagrams showing how the phases of the build will progress. The enabling works began in early January and involve moving office workers into the first floor of Louise House, which they will refurbish to make it usable (roof and window repairs, making the electrics safe, etc). There will be temporary structures in front of Louise House to hold the toilets, showers, drying area and canteen for the site workers. These facilities are too specialised to fit into Louise House, and it was also thought inappropriate to have muddy boots going in and out of the building all day.

Willmott Dixon say they pride themselves on the good quality of the welfare provision they make for their staff, a good health and safety record, their sustainable construction methods and engagement with the local community.

Sustainable construction includes working to an Energy Performance Certificate rating of B or above, using recycled materials in the building itself and diverting 85% of the waste from landfill (the aim is for 100% in 2012). Some months after handover, Willmott Dixon will do a post-occupancy evaluation, which includes ensuring those appointed to manage the building know how to get the best out of the new Leisure Centre in the most efficient way.

The developers promise to engage with the local community and this includes communicating with local residents

over when work will be taking place and who to contact if there are problems, providing work experience for local schools, offering to support an associated community project (they will be looking for ideas here) and willingness to attend local amenity society meetings if invited.

Expected Timetable

Commence on site 4 January 2011, complete 23 March 2012 i.e. 68 weeks.

This will be broken down into:

- 4 weeks - Enabling work
- 24 weeks - Demolitions and alterations to existing building
- 18 weeks - Substructure works
- 18 weeks - Superstructure and envelope works
- 25 weeks - Pool plant installation
- 36 weeks - Finishes
- 42 weeks - Swimming pool fitting out and testing
- 30 weeks - External works and landscaping

Mathematicians will have noticed that this adds up to considerably more than 68 weeks, so I assume some of these activities will be taking place alongside each other!

After March 2012, Lewisham will supervise fit-out and commissioning in partnership with whomever has won the tender to run the new pools. The council has already begun the tendering process and have a shortlist of interested parties who will be invited to submit business plans during this current year. They are optimistic about the quality of the tenders, and anticipate an opening date in the summer of 2012.

Penelope Jarrett

Ed: as a footnote, there will be a “ground-breaking ceremony” of 21 February to which representatives of the stakeholders have been invited – photographs will be included in our next issue.

Greyhound Public Art Competition

On Saturday 28 January the judging panel met and decided not to choose any of the entries submitted for the competition. Some of the entries were liked very much by some of the judges but there was no single entry that ticked all the boxes for all of the judges.

As a result of this it has been decided to extend the competition, probably until the end of March. This will certainly help all those who found they had insufficient time to prepare their entry during the busy Christmas and New Year period.

There will be changes to the competition brief to clarify what is required and there will be a £1,000 prize for the winning entry. As soon as these details are finalised they will be made available on the Sydenham Society and local websites. If you are interested in entering the competition please email your name, address and phone number to greyhoundpubwalldesign@hotmail.co.uk

On behalf of the organisers I would like to thank everyone who has been involved or shown an interest in the competition so far.

Bruce Harrison

Football and Crystal Palace Park

Even non-football enthusiasts will know that Crystal Palace Park has inadvertently been caught up in a major dispute about the “legacy of the Olympic Stadium”. What effect will this have?

West Ham is prepared to keep the existing Olympic Stadium to use mainly for football but also other events, including athletics. Tottenham Hotspur would demolish the Stadium, build a football only venue and refurbish the Crystal Palace athletics track. As we go to press we hear that West Ham is likely to be confirmed as the preferred bidder.

Crystal Palace Football Club (CPFC), too, has made a move, possibly having its hand forced by Spurs stated plans for the athletics track. It has indicated it would like to move to Crystal Palace Park, the original home of CPFC and which, in the past, played host to the FA Cup Finals.

At this stage, no more is known about their proposals than is on the CPFC website. However, on 25 January it was confirmed by Bromley Council that no proposals have been submitted by CPFC to the Council. The statement quoted at the CPFC press conference and on their website simply says, in effect, that Bromley, the Planning authority for Crystal Palace Park, is interested in their proposal and will need to look at it very carefully; any viable plan to improve the park could have a positive impact but it would be subject to planning permission in the usual way.

Sydenham Assembly

The next Sydenham Assembly meeting on Thursday 3 March will start with a report on the Council budget-making meeting which takes place on Tuesday 1 March. The Council has to make difficult choices over service provision and one of the most controversial is reorganising the library service.

At the last Assembly meeting Darren Taylor from Eco Computers talked about his proposal to run Sydenham Library based on his own business model run from Pepys Resource Centre. Eco Computers, a Social Enterprise company, recycles computers and uses the income to support a community library and café to provide a very welcoming space for residents to meet and run other activities.

There was also good news to announce. The new Youth Centre planned for Wells Park Road will definitely be going ahead. For a while it looked as though the £3.5m “MyPlace” grant for its development would be withdrawn because of government cuts. However it has now been confirmed that this money has been secured and young people in the area can look forward to the TNG (The New Generation – the name of the building chosen by them) being built and opening in due course.

The Assembly voted to support four fantastic local projects with grants from the Mayor’s Fund –

- Sydenham Arts Festival 2011 - £10,000
- Sydenham Community Radio - £5,000

Master Plan for Crystal Palace Park

The Secretary of State finally confirmed approval of the Master Plan Outline Planning Application on 13 December 2010 which was granted by Bromley Council on 9 December 2008. The six weeks grace period after the December sign-off ended with the Crystal Palace Community Association (CPCA) lodging an application for judicial review on the last day. The application is in the names of Anthony Elliot and John Payne – the latter being the Chair of the CPCA. As we go to press the outcome of the request for Judicial Review is not known.

What is known is that the Grade 2* park continues to decline and that it is in need of a massive capital input to restore it, if not to its former glory, then at least to standards expected of a major regional park, which is still home to the best swimming, diving and athletic facilities in south-east England, at least until the Olympic facilities are completed.

One footnote to the above. It has been noted that the London Mayor, Boris Johnson, has now taken the management of the Royal Parks under his wing. It is pure conjecture, however the question arises – what might this mean for Crystal Palace Park?

- Sydenham Film Club - £4,500
- Switch It! Football and life - £4,000

Because of government cuts some reorganisations have already been decided, including the cut to Town Centre Management, while others are being consulted on, such as changes to Adult Social Care. The Council is facing a 26% cut in revenue over a four-year period, with an 11% cut next year – some £33 million in 2011/12.

Part of the Local Government Finance Settlement is a grant to cover the Council Tax freeze in 2011/12, worth around £2.3 million, equating to 2.5%, which is the expected level of the Council Tax cap. The Council is currently reviewing fees and charges to see where additional income can be generated to help bridge the funding gap.

The Assembly Coordinating Group has agreed that at the 3 March Assembly ideas would be discussed about what should be supported by the Mayor’s Fund for the coming year, given that there will be a reduction in funding. The closing date for Mayor’s Fund applications is Tuesday 19 April with voting at the June meeting.

**Chris Best, Councillor for Sydenham Ward.
Chair of the Sydenham Assembly and Sydenham Town Centre Steering Group.
Tel: 8659 6445 Cllr_Chris.Best@lewisham.gov.uk**

The Alhambra Court Fire Surround

The remarkable Gunnvor Stallybrass died in December 2008 at her house on Westwood Hill. In the cellar was a tiled fire surround made from a large section of the brightly coloured Minton tiles designed by Owen Jones for the Alhambra Court at the Crystal Palace in 1854.

The Alhambra Court was a scale replica of the Court of the Lions at the Alhambra Palace in Granada. Jones was author of the famous colour-printed volumes *Plans, Elevations, Sections and Details of the Alhambra* (1836-45) and the *Grammar of Ornament* (1856), which first brought this treasure of Islamic architecture to the attention of the British public. His obituary said the Alhambra Court was his masterpiece, and that his happiest days were during its construction.

Amazingly, much of the Court survived the fire of 1936; tiles were removed by Chrystal Buckland, daughter of the Palace's Manager, Sir Henry Buckland (seen with a friend in the photo) and sold at a Fete at St Bartholemew's Church.

A previous owner of Gunnvor's house, George Eraut,

bought the tiles from the church bazaar in 1937. The panel from which the fire surround is made is the largest known group of tiles from the Alhambra Court to survive. Luckily, it escaped Gunnvor's plans to make it into a coffee table!

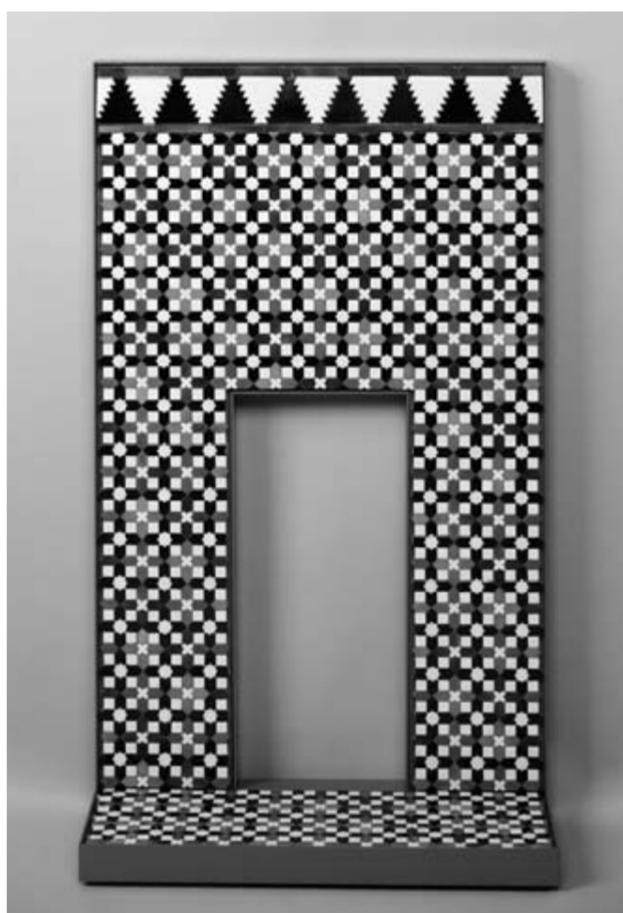
After her death, the family donated the fire surround to the Victoria and Albert (V&A) Museum.

Now splendidly restored, the fire surround is on display for the first time at the Nasjonalmuseet in Oslo, where a V&A touring exhibition on Owen Jones has just opened. Since Jones was such a crucial figure in the formation of the V&A and the dissemination of the Alhambra style in 19th-century Europe, curators at the V&A would be fascinated to learn of any other survivals of the Alhambra Court. Do members of the Society know of any pieces which are said to survive in the neighbourhood? If so, please contact Mariam Rosser-Owen on m.rosserowen@vam.ac.uk.

Jan Piggott



Chrystal Buckland and a friend removing tiles from the burnt remains of The Alhambra Court replica at the Crystal Palace.



Fire surround

*Minton & Co., Tiles 1854, this assembly after 1936
Glazed earthenware, originally on a plaster backing
V&A: C.350-2009, ©V&A Images/Victoria and Albert Museum, London
Dr Mariam Rosser-Owen, Curator, Middle East Asian Department
Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington, London SW7 2RL*

Sydenham International Music Festival

May 20 – June 26

Highlights include the return of Sergey Dogadin (violin) and Maja Bogdanovich (cello) playing Brahms Violin and Cello Concerto in A Op.61; Sir Willard White (bass/baritone) and Sylvia Kevorkian (soprano) with music by Schumann, Liszt, Mozart, Gershwin and Rogers and Hammerstein; Valerie Tryon (piano) with a programme of piano music covering some of the best known and the lesser known repertoire; and the 2010 BBC Young Musician of the Year, 17 year old Lara Meldal (piano), playing Mozart's concerto No.20 in D Minor K466. Full programme listings and tickets now on sale at the Kirkdale Bookshop.



Sydenham Arts Festival

1 July – 17 July

Sydenham Arts Festival is back for its third fantastic year – 60-plus diverse events at venues throughout the area. A few highlights: several completely free 'Take Part in the Arts' workshops; the Pop Up Theatre Project – free drama performances in empty shops on the high street; the ever-popular Visual Arts Trail of artists' homes and studios; another wonderful Free Film Show, this year in Mayow Park; and Arts in the Park with the Family Fun Day in Home Park. Plus Balalaika at The Dolphin, Alex Carter at Trattoria Raffaele and Raise the Roof Choir at the Horniman. And lots, lots more.....



“The Englishman who Posted Himself”

by John Tingey

This recently published book describes the exploits of a little known but endearingly eccentric Forest Hill resident. In 1898 Willie Reginald Bray began a detailed study of the Post Office Guide which contained the regulations defining what could and could not be sent through the post. Bray decided to put these regulations to the test and so he posted, mostly addressed to himself, a wide variety of unwrapped items including a shirt collar, the sole of a shoe, a bicycle pump, a turnip and a hat. Eventually he posted himself, and the long-suffering postman dutifully delivered him to his home in Devonshire Road.

Bray then turned his attention to autographs. He posted thousands of personal requests to the famous, infamous and largely unknown ranging from Churchill, Hitler and Santa Claus to the station master at Forest Hill station. Bray declared himself “The Autograph King” and few could dispute this. He sent out over 32,000 requests and received some 15,000 responses.

Reggie, as he preferred to be known, was born in Stanstead Road in 1879 and educated at St Dunstan's College. His family moved to Devonshire Road in 1899 and in 1912 Bray moved to Queens Garth, Teymount Rise where he lived until 1939.

This meticulously researched book (I played a small part) describes Bray's life in Forest Hill, and lists many of the challenges that he set the postal service. It is beautifully illustrated with many examples of both the objects that

Bray posted and the autographs that he collected.

The book is available from Kirkdale Bookshop, 272 Kirkdale, SE26 and further information is available online.

Steve Grindlay
sgrindlay@gmail.com



Mayow Park Updates

I begin with a big thank you to Hilary Jarrett who stepped down as Chair of Friends of Mayow Park at the last AGM. Her dedication and campaigning raised the profile of the park including negotiations on relocating the bowls club, the 'Masterplan' designs and organising events. She continues her active involvement now in the role of treasurer. Thank you, Hilary.

It may be winter outside but the Friends of Mayow Park (FOMP) have not been hibernating.

The Friends held their annual tree dressing event at the end of November 2010, decorating an oak tree using only natural materials. Thank you to all who contributed on that cold day and to Hilary and John who removed the decorations a month later.

A number of projects are in the pipeline. First is the long-awaited young people's play space. This had 'Playbuilder' funding which was frozen by the Government but has now been re-instated. A number of meetings with FOMP and Glendale/Greenscene in recent months have moved this project forward. The latest designs, prepared by Groundwork, will be available for the Mayow Park notice board and work should start in the next few weeks, with Groundwork managing the project and Glendale undertaking the installation.

The appalling state of the footpaths and the need for their repair has been an on-going concern. FOMP have been assured that money will be available to work on the most urgent areas.



Poor state of paths. Photograph: Emma Tarling

The Grow Mayow Community Garden and plant nursery continues to thrive as an independent project, thanks to the dedication of its two volunteer managers, Iris and Suriya, and other regulars who help at the site. It attracts people into the park to learn more about its activities.

FOMP's blog and email address were managed so professionally by Emma who recently moved to Devon. There is now a new email address and 'a work in progress' blog, although the original one will be available for some time yet. Offers of help to improve the site will be considered. Visit us on <http://friendsofmayowpark.blogspot.com> or email us at friendsofmayowpark@ymail.com

**Alona Sheridan, Chair, Friends of Mayow Park
8244 4259**

Grow Mayow Community Garden

A garden in South London voluntarily managed and available to use and enjoy throughout the year.

The old nursery site and park garden is now officially part of Lewisham community gardens. Lewisham Council has granted permission to the Grow Mayow Community Garden group to manage the site, which is run by committed volunteers and 2 volunteer garden coordinators who have worked hard on a budget of donations and fundraising events since last July.

With months of tireless working on funding paperwork we were delighted to receive the good news before Christmas that we have been awarded a small grant from The Capital Community Foundation, much needed funding, and we are now able to continue to operate an open space that can be used creatively by the community.

Grow Mayow Community Garden is a place which:

- Cares for the environment - soil, plants, water and wildlife.
- Offers all people access to green, breathing space, for relaxation and leisure.
- Demonstrates practical ideas for healthy living – growing food, recycling waste, and using Permaculture principles.

- Learning – through demonstrations and workshops.
- Creativity and Innovation – where art meets science, hope and inspiration cross generations and cultures.

We have general volunteer days, community gardening and tidy up sessions; we also are running a monthly kid's nature watch club, a kid's Permaculture club on Sundays, and many annual events. We have also teamed up with London Abundance, a project to harvest the seasonal glut of local fruit like apples, pear and plums.

Thanks to all those in the Sydenham community and beyond who have supported and given generous donations to make the garden a great success!

For more info go to our web blog:
<http://growmayow.blogspot.com/>

**Iris Borgers, Garden Co-ordinator,
Grow Mayow Community Garden**



The Green Chain Walk

The South East London Green Chain, also known as the Green Chain Walk, is a linked system of open spaces between the River Thames and Crystal Palace Park. In 1977 the Greater London Council and four London Boroughs created a Green Chain of 300 open spaces, linked by a network of signed footpaths, in order to protect them from building activity. The four London boroughs are Bexley, Bromley, Lewisham and Greenwich. Many parts of the system are also part of the Capital Ring route.



A Southwark section was planned from Nunhead to Crystal Palace, following the old High Level rail route. This long-awaited extension finally opened on 26 September 2010 with splendid signage in place and a large crowd of walkers gathered at Nunhead station to inaugurate it.

The new route (about 5 miles in length) links Nunhead Cemetery and One Tree Hill with Horniman Gardens and Sydenham Hill Woods. At Lapsewood Walk it crosses the bridge painted by Pissarro and follows the route of the High Level railway to Crystal Palace, winding through the woods as far as the Dulwich Woodhouse. It then dives down Wells Park Road to the old Upper Sydenham Station house into another patch of the Great North Wood along High Level Drive, again following the old railway track and then up a steep footpath to Bluebell Close on Sydenham Hill, finally reaching the Italian Terraces in Crystal Palace Park and Crystal Palace station.

At the Upper Sydenham Station house there is an alternative spur around beautiful Sydenham Wells Park, where a comfortable wooden bench has been placed.

The Sydenham Society post-Christmas stroll explored the route from Bluebell Close to the Harvester on Dulwich Common for our seasonal Christmas drink following the splendid new signage. The route is very easy to follow and it is hoped that walkers will now follow and enjoy the new extension to the Green Chain.

Iris Humphries

News from Sydenham Wells Park

For the seventh year we are delighted to report that Sydenham Wells Park has been awarded the coveted Green Flag status.

We have had a donation of a Monkey Puzzle tree, which has been planted in a discreet place inside the duck pond area. We have also planted a replacement Handkerchief tree within this area – the original of which died several years back – look out for the new tree in May when it will flower!

Every Tuesday Iris Humphries leads the Healthy Walks Group which meets by the duck pond in the park at 11am for a walk around the park. If you are interested come and join in and meet the locals – everybody is welcome. The Healthy Walks group accommodates a mixture of pace so everyone is catered for.

If anybody is interested in keeping bees please get in touch as we have people who will tend the hives.

Plans for the future include:

- Installation of a drinking fountain
- Redesigning the Rose garden at the of the park
- Ideas for the plot at the top of Taylors Lane are being discussed possibly as an Outdoor Gym or as a Community Garden.
- The Playground and Tennis Courts are in need of updating and we are constantly looking for funding for both of these. Any ideas will be most welcome

The Sydenham Wells Park Improvement Group meets four times a year in the hut inside the park's compound by the main gate and everyone is welcome to attend – just keep an eye on the Notice board for the dates...

Thank you for being a visitor to the Park.

**Monika Mitchell
Chair, Sydenham Wells Park Improvement Group
8659 6868**



SYDENHAM SOCIETY

Annual General Meeting

The Society's 38th Annual General Meeting will take place on Wednesday 6 April 2011 at 7.45 pm at the Golden Lion, 116 Sydenham Road. All members are warmly invited to attend and to join the Executive Committee for a drink and get-together after the formal meeting.

Agenda

1. To receive the 2010 Accounts and Auditor's Report
2. To elect Officers and Members of the Executive Committee
3. To appoint an Auditor
4. Any Other Business

Election of Officers and Members of the Executive Committee

Any member can be nominated for election as an Officer or Member of the Executive Committee. Nominations in writing must be seconded and have the Nominee's consent. Nominations must be sent to arrive 7 days in advance of the AGM to Annabel McLaren, 35 Bishopsthorpe Road, Sydenham, SE26 4PA; email annabelmclaren@myriadbooks.co.uk. The Society's Constitution allows for up to 12 members, plus officers. In 2010 there were 8 Executive Committee meetings.

Attendance was as follows:

Annabel McLaren (acting Chair from April 2010)	8/8		
Jackie Aldridge	6/8	Julia East	0/8
Roger Feather	6/8	Angela Hall	7/8
Barry Milton	8/8	Bryan Leslie	4/8
Ilse Towler	7/8	Steve Grindlay	2/2
Tim Lund	2/2	Tim Walder	2/2

The Society has three established sub-committees, which in 2010 were chaired by:

Conservation and Planning:	Barbara Kern
Roads and Transport:	Ilse Towler
Events:	Jackie Aldridge

During the year Julia East and Emma Tarling have left Sydenham for pastures new, and we wish them both well. Julia continues to provide graphic work for the Sydenham Society.

The Executive Committee would like to put on record its

warmest appreciation for help over the past year from the sub-committee chairs, and their members: Julia Farr, Steve Grindlay, Iris Humphries, John Hutchinson, Lesley Kennedy, Rosemary Linnell, Ruth Locke, Mary McKernan, Patrick Moulik, Alona Sheridan, Peggy Stacy, John Towler and Katherine Willett.

The Executive would also like to thank Pat Trembath and Julia East for all their hard work on the Newsletter, and Hilary and John Jarrett and their army of distributors for their tremendous effort in walking the streets of Sydenham and Forest Hill delivering it. We would also like to thank our hard-working treasurer and membership secretary, Roger Feather.

E-newsletters

The e-newsletter is sent out approximately every 10-14 days to all members who want them, containing brief details of forthcoming events, news and consultation exercises. If you would like to be added to the database please email me at the address below. If you have changed your email address please also let me know and I will amend the records. Please contact me too if there has been a sudden "break in transmission" – this may have happened if you have recently changed your email address from goooglemail to gmail.

Annabel McLaren
Email: chair@sydenhamsociety.com

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.

Janet Vitmayer

Congratulations to Janet Vitmayer who was awarded a CBE for services to Museums in the New Year's Honours list. Janet is Chief Executive and Director of the Horniman Museum and Trust, a post she has held since 1999. She is also Trustee of the London Transport Museum. In addition she is also a Visitor of the Pitt Rivers Museum, at Oxford and Chair of the Women Leaders in Museums Network.

Review of 2010

The end of the first decade of the 21st century has seen a great deal of activity in Sydenham – mostly positive, but with some setbacks too. The highlight for many people has been the opening of the new East London Line, meaning that Sydenham is now part of the underground network and rapid transit to many points north (including Highbury & Islington, three months ahead of schedule) is now possible. The low point must be Lewisham's decision to close Sydenham library. At the time of going to press we await the outcome of a "community solution" and will keep members up-to-date with the latest developments, via our website, e-newsletter and at our AGM – which this year takes place on April 6th.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to all those who have moved to the area or recently joined the Sydenham Society. Our membership hovers just below 1,100, making the Sydenham Society one of the largest civic societies in London. We continue to benefit from membership of the London Forum and have recently joined Civic Voice, the organisation chaired by Gryff Rhys Jones which has replaced the Civic Trust.

Sydenham Road – good news and bad!

We learned at the end of last year that the start of the long-awaited Sydenham Road Improvement Scheme has been delayed and will not now get underway until January 2012. Whilst this is disappointing, the benefit is that our traders, the lifeblood of the road, will have a chance to trade unimpeded by the seemingly endless roadworks which have beset Sydenham in recent years; the pause will also give our shops the chance to hold their own in the current challenging economic climate. On a more positive note, ownership of Station Approach has now passed to Lewisham and the planned improvements to this "gateway to Sydenham" can now begin in September.

The Greyhound development

Autumn 2010 saw work begin on the Greyhound development, with the developers Purelake going on site to begin their refurbishment of the pub (which closed in 2007) and the construction of apartment blocks to the rear and side. The plan for the pub includes a new rear wall which will face one of the new retail units beneath the residential block. The developers are holding a public art competition to create a piece of artwork to enhance this north-facing space. The Sydenham Society was delighted to be invited to help promote the competition (along with the Sydenham Arts Festival) and the developers have now announced that there will be a prize of £1,000 for the successful entrant. For more information please go to: greyhoundpubwalldesign@hotmail.co.uk

Good news for young people!

Sydenham's parks continue to improve, in large part as a result of the hard work put in by the amazing "Friends of" groups. Mayow Park has recently learned that funding for an older children's play space, on the north side of the park, has now been confirmed and work will start in the spring. The designs have been developed in consultation with Groundwork (who will manage the project) and will shortly be posted up on the Mayow Park notice board. Home Park saw a string of positive developments with the opening of the community garden, the construction of an outdoor classroom, the redevelopment of

the adventure playground and the installation of the outdoor gym. The Family Fun Day in August gave the wider community a chance to appreciate these tremendous improvements and enjoy the screening of *The Fantastic Mr Fox* in the evening. Meanwhile, up the hill at Wells Park, news came just before Christmas that a £3.5m "MyPlace" grant has been awarded to Lewisham for the development of the Wells Park Youth Facility Project. The centre will be open seven days a week and young people will have a major role in its management. In the park itself the work of the Sydenham Wells Park Improvement Group continues and the park now has a new bench and signpost at the top to direct walkers to the new extension of the Green Chain Walk.

Sydenham Arts and Music

In 2011 the Sydenham Arts Festival will be in its third year and the Sydenham International Music Festival will reach the grand age of 14! These two events really put Sydenham on the map and must be the envy of every other London suburb. The Arts Festival will take place in the first weeks of July and is currently finalising its programme. Highlights of the music festival include an appearance by Sir Willard White, the acclaimed bass baritone, who will perform music by Gershwin, Rogers & Hammerstein, Schumann, Liszt and Mozart at St Bart's church on June 9th. Festival concerts will also take place at St Christopher's Hospice and the Dolphin.

Sydenham Society website

Our re-designed website has received positive feedback and keeps members up-to-date with news about the area. It is now possible to join online via Paypal, debit or Visa card – all secure methods of making payments over the web. Please invite friends and family to go to the front page of the website and click on the 'Join us' button.

Annabel McLaren, Acting chair

May Day on Albion Millennium Green Sunday 1st May 2011, Noon – 3.00pm

Friends of the Green are planning a Free May Day Event on The Green: The Bedlam Bunch return to offer 2 free shows for young people aged 3 – 8. Parents welcome. (12am and 2.00 pm). Bring your own picnic lunch (1.00pm – 2.00pm) Face Painting, (Not Tigers but Squirrels, Badgers, Hedgehogs Galore). Come along and join the fun.

THE SYDENHAM SOCIETY

Income and Expenditure Account for the Year Ended 31st December 2010

2009		2010	
£		£	
	Income		
3989	Subscriptions	3979.00	
268	Donations	396.50	
20	Interest on National Savings and Bank Accounts	13.89	
4330	<u>53</u> Excess from functions and excursions	-	4389.39
	Expenditure		
1684	Printing and stationery	1246.38	
220	Postage and telephone	235.90	
85	East London Line launch	188.14	
182	Subscriptions	60.00	
40	St Bart's floodlighting	40.00	
190	Insurance	200.00	
73	Equipment and website	793.12	
-	Civic Voice	500.00	
1171	Sydenham Arts Festival	500.00	
-	Sydenham Mosaic Project	500.00	
-	Sydenham Music	500.00	
-	In memory of Mark Thompson	50.00	
102	Miscellaneous expenses	11.37	
3772	<u>25</u> AGM	<u>25.00</u>	4849.91
<u>558</u>	Excess of expenditure over income		<u>-460.52</u>
	Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2010		
6947	National Savings Investment Account	6960.81	
10054	<u>3107</u> Cash at Bank	<u>2596.91</u>	9557.72
	Less		
<u>285</u>	<u>285</u> Subscriptions in advance	<u>249.00</u>	<u>249.00</u>
<u>9769</u>		<u>9308.72</u>	<u>9308.72</u>
	Accumulated fund 31.12.2009	9769.24	
	Excess of expenditure over income	-460.52	
	Balance 31.12.2010	<u>9308.72</u>	

H R FEATHER - HON TREASURER

I have examined the above Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet with the books and records of the Society, and have obtained all the information I require. In my opinion these financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial affairs of the Society as at 31st December 2010 and of the income and expenditure for the year then ended.

M J WHEELER - HON AUDITOR

Date: 06 February 2011

Syd Soc Member Profile:

Anthony Scully

Anthony is Chair of the Friends of Home Park and Chair of the Save Sydenham Library Campaign. He also co-ordinates the Libraries Campaign for the whole of Lewisham.

At one point in the conversation Anthony talks about last year's Family Fun Day in Home Park as the butterfly that emerged from the chrysalis of an idea. That is a very pertinent metaphor for the hard work put in by Anthony and others to enhance the area.

Anthony is an inspirational community activist. When he and wife Shelley moved to Sydenham five years ago they picked it for its amenities, transport links and community feel. When this was threatened by anti-social behaviour in his neighbourhood Anthony became involved with the local Neighbourhood Watch which then became the Fairlawn Park Residents' Association. Through networking with Hyde Housing and the Safer Neighbourhood Teams in Sydenham and Bellingham, a proactive and supportive network was created which diffused the tensions.

More anti-social behaviour in and around the park convinced Anthony that here was an area in need of organized investment. Having identified the key stakeholders, which included Glendale, ward councillors and the Safer Neighbourhood Teams, Anthony called an inaugural meeting in October 2008 with the aim of making the park a safer place. The Friends of Home Park (FOHP) was born. Consultation with schools and residents identified the issues that prevented people from using the park and the Friends set to work. FOHP has gone from strength to strength, with Glendale commissioning sports in the park, a Playbuilder Fund grant of £32,000 for an outdoor gym and a further grant for an outdoor classroom. A community garden was also created and the Youth Service rebuilt the Adventure Playground.

Everything came to fruition at the beginning of 2010, and Anthony says that the Family Fun Day in July exemplified, in his words, "the local community reclaiming the park". There were stalls and music, a children's story corner, a football tournament and a large screen film show. There was a fire engine and police horses, offering young people the chance of a positive engagement with the police.



The euphoria was short-lived however with the news of the proposed closure of Sydenham Library. Anthony said there had always been a close working relationship with the library, and he saw it as the hub of the "learning zone" that had been created in the park. Anthony spearheaded the campaign to save the library, amassing over 5000 signatures. He believes it is unacceptable to close the library. His view is that the current economic crisis will pass and we should look, in the long term, to building up the service not destroying it. "Once it is taken away, it will never be restored" he says.

Anthony states that the stakeholders continue to meet and he believes it is important to maintain the momentum of dialogue. In the meantime he has set his sights on reinstating the changing rooms in the park, and opening up the space in front of the library with benches. The butterfly continues to spread its wings.

For more information about the park and the library go to <http://homepark.wordpress.com/>.

Sue Grindlay

This is the eighth 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

Cinema approved for Crystal Palace

Bromley Borough Council has approved the change of use for the building at the junction of Anerley Hill and Crystal Palace Parade. The Grain and Grape pub (formerly The Sportsman and prior to that part of the Crystal Palace Hotel and car showroom will be redeveloped as a two-screen cinema, cafe and bar.

It is reported that Peter Hall of Future Projections

was "delighted it's gone through. This is something we've been wanting to do for years. What we want to do is create a mix of the Electric Cinema in Notting Hill and the Everyman in Hampstead, with more of a neighbourhood feel. Ninety-nine per cent of the art cinemas in the UK were made by us, including the Clapham Picturehouse. That's what we're looking at for Crystal Palace."

It's Not Grim Up North. Part 2:

A Guide to Some of the Restaurants and Pubs on the Northern Stretch of the East London Line.

Part 2: Shoreditch...

The Restaurants

Shoreditch High Street is a brand new station right on the edge of the city, just over 20 minutes from Sydenham. It was built on a vast area of disused land and so when you exit, it does not feel like you are on the edge of anything; it feels industrial, even desolate. But within minutes you can be on Brick Lane, Spitalfields Market, Old Street and a longer stroll takes you to Columbia Road – the place to get your fresh flowers on a Sunday morning.

However, the area immediately outside the station has plenty to offer. Turning left out of the exit, you are on Bethnal Green Road. At the weekend there is a market along the road, which continues down Sclater Street. A cauliflower from one of the makeshift tables costs 50 pence. Crossing Bethnal Green Road, nip down Ebor Street (directly opposite the station) to Redchurch Street, the same cauliflower is £2 – well it is probably organic!

THE ALBION is a modern restaurant on the ground floor of the **BOUNDARY** and sells a range of fresh vegetables, neatly displayed in wooden crates. The **BOUNDARY** brands itself as a Restaurant, Rooms & Rooftop. It's an impressive building on the junction of Redchurch Street and Boundary Street.

It has a great deli, shop and the restaurant serves simple French food. The weekend Prix Fixe is decent value at £19.50 for 2 courses. A pitcher of Bloody Mary for £27 would be extravagant unless there were four of you. Be warned, book ahead. **THE ALBION** has a long row of outside tables running along Boundary Street, which is cobbled, and makes for a very pleasant place to sit. It's quiet, with little or no traffic and shaded by old-fashioned canopies.

Just opposite, on Redchurch Street, is the **ALLPRESS ROASTARY CAFE**. Fantastic coffee and fresh pastries and sandwiches all made here, with a sign on a chalkboard by the door. It is modern and airy inside with plenty of free papers.

It's odd that in this tiny network of streets are some of the East End's most expensive places. Shoreditch House is members only, with its entrance on Ebor Street, identifiable only because of the gorgeous Cowshed spa on the ground floor. If you fancy spoiling your nails, a manicure will set you back 50 quid.

LES TROIS GARCONS on Club Row, which runs parallel to Ebor Street, is extravagant, French and expensive but worth it. Not much to look at from the outside, but inside it's as camp as it can get away with. One other notable spot is the basement cinema, **The AUBIN**, on the corner of Club Row and Redchurch Street. A Deluxe 2-seater sofa on a Sunday is £22 - it's a small, chilled, luxurious cinema showing current titles.

- www.theboundary.co.uk
- www.timeout.com/london/restaurants/venue/2:27956/allpress-espresso
- www.loungelover.co.uk/restaurant/index.html (Les Trois Garcons)
- www.aubincinema.com
- www.shoreditchhouse.com/cowshed/cowshed-shoreditch/

Jonathan S. Clarke

The Pubs

Since the last edition of this newsletter, two more Sydenham pubs – the Woodman and the Prince Alfred - have closed. Some relief from this dire situation, however, can be found by heading for Sydenham Station and boarding a north-bound Overground train. In twenty minutes you are in Shoreditch, where there are good pubs and good beer in abundance. It's an area unfamiliar to many Sydenhamites, and it is rich in Victorian architecture and history, and has something for everyone.

Before heading to our first pub, it is worth stopping off briefly to look at **LES TROIS GARCONS** (1 Club Row), just north of the station. Although now an up-market restaurant,



It's Not Grim Up North continued

this was originally a grand purpose-built Victorian pub called the Knave of Clubs. If you peer through the windows you will see evidence of its former glory: huge gilded mirrors on the walls and elaborate woodwork around the servery.

Head north and within a couple of minutes is **THE OWL AND THE PUSSYCAT** (34 Redchurch Street). This mid-terrace Victorian pub may be well hidden in a back-street but is definitely worth discovering. It has been refurbished in a pleasing mock-old-fashioned style and there was a real fire blazing at the time of my visit. A good food menu is available and, for those who enjoy the traditional drink of Britain, there is a choice of real ales at the bar. My Ringwood Boondoggle was in excellent condition.

One of the delights of the Shoreditch area is that this is all former Truman's Brewery territory. The old brewery was located in Brick Lane and the company built numerous pubs in the area. Truman's pubs are renowned for their unique architectural features and interior décor, and there are plenty of good examples in Shoreditch. A few minutes walk north-east

from **THE OWL AND THE PUSSYCAT** brings you to **THE BIRDCAGE** (80 Columbia Road), impressive green tiling on the outer walls, and a traditional, well-kept interior. A similar walk west finds **THE OLD KING'S HEAD**, Holywell Row, also adorned with eye-catching green tiling. Not to be missed is the fiercely traditional **GOLDEN HEART**, south of the station (at 110 Commercial Street). High up, a huge neon Truman's sign still beckons thirsty passers-by (probably still there because no-one can afford the expense of taking it down). Inside still boasts original Truman's brick fireplaces and other interesting features.

Other pubs which are well worth visiting include **THE BARLEY MOW** (127 Curtain Road), which, with good reason, prides itself on being a proper, unpretentious boozier and **THE GRIFFIN** (93 Leonard Street), another fascinating survivor from Victorian times boasting many interesting features as well as some good beer.

Neil Pettigrew, Pub Preservation Officer for South East London branch CAMRA

Mayor opens long-awaited centre for therapeutic charity

Just before Christmas hundreds of local residents braved the cold to watch the Mayor of Lewisham officially open Sydenham Garden's brand new resource centre.

The award-winning local charity has been supporting people in Lewisham and Bromley experiencing mental and physical ill health for over 8 years, without having its own building from which to operate. The charity has been fundraising to build the resource centre since 2005 and thanks to numerous grants and donations construction finally began in March 2010. The resource centre will provide a much needed welcome for service users attending therapeutic gardening and art sessions as spring approaches, along with a space from which to hold events for the community including the 2011 Spring Fair.

At the opening ceremony, which formed part of the charity's annual community Christmas Fair, Sir Steve Bullock, Mayor of Lewisham said "The work Sydenham Garden does is fantastic and during challenging times projects like this become even more important. I hope this building will enable Sydenham Garden to go on and do more wonderful things."

Jennie Graham, Chief Executive of Sydenham Garden said: "The building will mean we can expand our capacity and the range of opportunities we provide for our service users, who are referred to the project from over 30 community organisations and health sector agencies."

The building, which sits beside the garden and nature

reserve, was designed by Archtype to blend with the surrounding environment with sustainable features including a solar panel, thick insulation and a heat recovery system to dramatically reduce heating requirements, as well as a bio-diverse roof to provide new habitats for wildlife.

To take part in spring Community Workdays at Sydenham Garden on 5th March or 2nd April please email claudia_sydenhamgarden@hotmail.co.uk or call or by telephone on 8291 1650 to register. To become a Friend of Sydenham Garden and hear first about upcoming events visit www.sydenhamgarden.org.uk.



The Concrete House

The long-running saga of the fate of The Concrete House, 549 Lordship Lane, the forlorn and derelict Listed Victorian house opposite St Peter's church (near the Harvester PH) will hopefully reach a conclusion. We reported in 2009 that Southwark Council had obtained a Compulsory Purchase Order on the property. This process can be challenged by the owner; however, on the first day of the public inquiry the owner and his representatives dropped their objection. Southwark Council has confirmed that they are anticipating restoration work to commence on the site in the New Year.

The Concrete House, named Lyddon House, was built in 1873 by Charles Drake's pioneering Patent Concrete Company with its walls constructed of mass concrete and is one of the earliest surviving examples of this type of construction in Britain and has been awarded Grade 2 Listed status.



Original article published in the Dulwich Society Winter Journal

Sydenham and Forest Hill Voluntary Care Centre

The Voluntary Care Centre (VCC) was formed 41 years ago when ministers of two local churches, Baptist and Congregational, were working with their respective congregations on a scheme for partnership. What better way of achieving this unity than joining together to establish and staff an advice centre for local people in need?

A small room was opened in the Baptist church in Dartmouth Road, where Heron House now stands. In the first year there were about 50 referrals – not very encouraging! An early entry in the log-book reads "Broken my duck. My first client in two years!" About a year later the centre moved to 55b Dartmouth Road at a rent of £750 p.a. and, as the number of clients steadily increased, the need for training and professional involvement became clear. By 1972, with about 1500 referrals a year, the first paid director was appointed. Local churches gave generous financial support, but a successful application for Urban Aid funding for a partnership between the Advice Centre and the Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) provided a firm financial base for the next 13 years. In the late 1970s the partnership with CAB ended, and the VCC found itself giving not so much advice but practical help: befriending, gardening, shopping, visiting, transporting. In particular, much good work was done at that time with the Vietnamese "boat people" who were settled by the Greater London Council on the Sydenham Hill Estate.

As the years passed so the work expanded. About nine years ago the VCC moved to 300 Stanstead Road, where

there are now three paid members of staff who manage some 150 volunteers and over 1000 clients. Volunteers receive full training and are the greatest supporters of the Centre and it was in recognition of their involvement that the VCC gained the prestigious Investment in Volunteers Award. From time to time clients have been known to become volunteers themselves and have even joined the management committee.

The Voluntary Care Centre is now mainly funded by Lewisham Council and local churches, but many businesses, charities and individuals help in many ways, especially at Christmas when the VCC supplies food hampers, gift vouchers, toys and presents to over 1400 families and individuals who are in need. It also runs a borough-wide voluntary driving scheme, a club at the Grove Centre in Jews Walk for those with mental health needs, and has recently been working with the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation (SLAM) in preparation for taking over the running of their Drop-in Centre in Deptford. Social and fund-raising events, outings for the elderly and disadvantaged to places of interest, and an annual Thanksgiving Service at a local church are regular activities.

The Voluntary Care Centre has a strong Management Committee. An Annual Report and quarterly newsletters are published in which further details of the work of the VCC can be found.

Garth Davidson
Chair, Management Committee

Bell Green Sculpture – “Pear Blossoms”

One of the conditions to the planning permission for the “Snail” development currently being built at Bell Green was that there would be money made available for creating some urban artwork within the development as part of the gateway to the pedestrian link within the scheme. The design brief was that the concept should relate to the site's history and location.

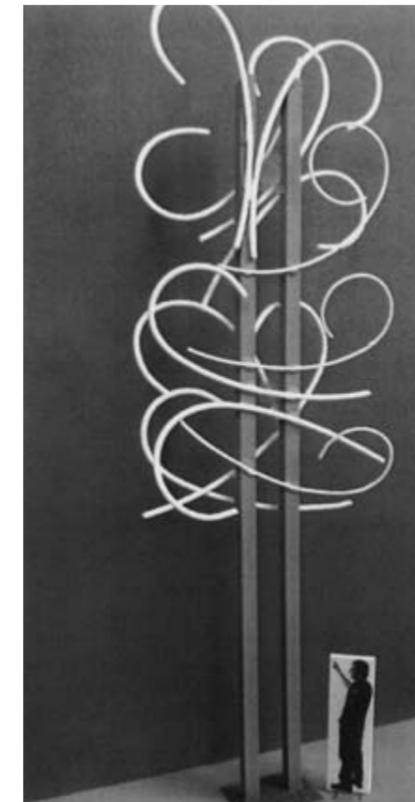
The sculpture depicted is based on the fact that the area around Bell Green was once mainly farmland with a preponderance of pear orchards with the abundant production of pear cider (perry) as evidenced by the local street names around the area – Perry Vale, Perry Rise etc.

The unnamed artist's vision is that on approaching Bell Green one will become aware, from a distance, of two white flower structures, apparently “floating between the two buildings, presenting a soft, gentle poetic presence, amidst the bustle of Bell Green.

“Moving closer the petal structure forms and the shape emerges with clarity, revealing rhythms, movement and a magnificence of gestural curves. Amidst the whiteness sits yellow and pink centres giving a focus around which the flowers radiate.

On approaching the car park your eyes are lifted upwards and away from hectic noisy technology, attracted and enticed by the quiet, peaceful, contemplative white pear blossom sculptures.”

A planning application for the erection of “Pear blossoms” has been submitted.



Sydenham Mosaic Update

The unveiling of the first two completed ‘spheres’ or roundels which took place at the last Sydenham Assembly was met with much delight. The first was of the Croydon Canal; the second was of Camille Pissarro, depicted as a copy of his self-portrait working on his famous painting of St. Bartholomew’s Church.

The Mosaic Committee commissioned Oliver Budd to make the first roundel thinking the community would then have more of an idea of how they would appear on the finished Mosaic and this was born out by the reaction at the Assembly.



The Committee hopes to obtain sponsorship for the individual roundels. Pissarro has been sponsored by a local business, Woodfall Opticians. The mosaic depicting Sir Ernest Shackleton is being sponsored by The Shackleton Foundation, and we hope to show this at the next Assembly meeting in March. We also hope to unveil “The Kitten in the Pot”. Local resident and artist Horatio Henry Couldrey (1832-1918) was nicknamed “Kitten” Couldrey because of his paintings of kittens and we hope children will enjoy the one that has been chosen.

The roundels come in different sizes and different prices from £800- £3000 plus VAT. Sponsorship is being sought for other roundels. These include John Logie Baird's TV logo; the musicians, Groves, Manns and Sullivan; a film roundel with the former cinema and Boris Karloff and Leslie Howard; a buildings roundel; a World War 2 scene; St Christopher's Hospice; Music, including the logo of our International Music Festival and, lastly, commemoration of local residents such as W.G. Grace, Eleanor Marx and Dame Cecily Saunders. We would be very interested to hear from any potential sponsor.

Meanwhile, fund-raising activities have continued. The Thorpes Attic Sale made nearly £2000. The Carol Singing and first “15 Bishopsthorpe Dinner” raised £663. We are also looking into a non -competitive “Come Dine with Me” suggestion.

Valerie Kelly, Robert Side, 8778 4775

EVENTS

Dates for your Diary

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

Thursday 3 March – 7pm Sydenham Assembly at Grove Centre, Jews Walk – open to all residents interested in the future of Sydenham Ward.

Tuesday 8 March – Quiz Nite at the Golden Lion. Entry £2 with all proceeds going to a local charity. Teams of 4-6 players, individuals welcome and scratch teams can be made up on the night. Contact Jackie ((8778 5455) or Pat (8659 4903) if you would like to take part.

Thursday 17 March – visit to Bromley Environmental Education Centre at High Elms; for further information see box below.

Saturday 26 March – Return visit to the Steam Museum, Kew, for the Saturday “Steam Up” combined with Club 26 lunch – meet at Sydenham Station at 10.00am for 10.08am train to Clapham Junction and change for Kew Bridge. Following the visit to the Steam Museum there will be an optional walk from Kew to Hammersmith along the North Thames Path. This will be at medium pace and cover a distance of about 3 miles.

Wednesday 30 March – Forest Hill Assembly – time and venue to be confirmed.

Wednesday 6 April – Sydenham Society AGM – see details on p.10.

Tuesday 26 April – Club 26 returns to the ever-popular Gurkha’s restaurant in Sydenham Road. Phone 8778 3222 to reserve your place and mention Club 26 so that we can all sit together.

Wednesday 18 May – The Festival of Empire 1911 – an illustrated talk by Jan Piggott at 7.45pm in the back room of the Golden Lion PH. Admission £2. For full details see p.19

Beckenham Place Park

Sunday 6 March – Tree Walk. Meet at 1.30pm on the Mansion steps for a walk around the park with a special look at the trees. Several have had to be cut down this winter due to safety considerations as they have rotted, but there are still many impressive trees all over the park.

**St Christopher’s Hospice Fun Walk
Sunday 22 May 2011**

Join 3,000 people on a walk in and around Keston Common to raise money for St Christopher’s Hospice. With four walks available pick one that suits you – 3, 5, 8 or 11 miles!

To register to join the Fun Walk click on www.stchristophershospice.org.uk

There are trophies to be won for the best fancy dress costume and the team and individual who raise the most money.

The Dame Cicely Saunders Concert Series

The series continues at 7.30pm on the first Thursday of each month in the Dame Cicely Saunders Room at St Christopher’s Hospice. Tickets £12 include canapés and wine during the interval. Visit www.stchristophers.org.uk for full details.

May Day on Albion Millennium Green

Sunday 1st May 2011, Noon – 3.00pm. See page 11 for details.

Dulwich Picture Gallery

Norman Rockwell’s America – this marvellous exhibition continues to 27 March.

Sydenham International Music Festival

May 20 – June 26. See page 7 for details.

Sydenham Arts Festival

1 July – 17 July. See page 7 for details.

The Festival of the Empire at The Crystal Palace 1911

A talk by Jan Piggott on Wednesday 18 May at 7.45pm
Admission £2. In the back room of the Golden Lion PH

In 1911 the entire Crystal Palace and Park were taken over by an ambitious Festival of Empire, now largely forgotten. The Festival was not intended for ‘self-glorification’ but knowledge; it was also billed as ‘the social gathering of the British family’, aiming to teach ‘the average Britisher’ to understand ‘the gospel of Empire’.

Jan’s Piggott’s Powerpoint centenary talk will describe the Festival’s special features: the three-quarter reproductions of the Parliament buildings of the Dominions, an Indian Palace, the elaborate scenic railway, the lively King’s Day with 100,000 children, the fairgrounds, and the delightful Pageant of London – during which residents of Sydenham undertook the scene of Pocahontas at the Court of James I!



**Visit to High Elms Country Park,
Thursday 17 March**

Meet at Penge East station at 10.15am for 10.26 train to Bromley South, then bus to Farnborough village and a walk of less than 1 mile along good country footpaths to the High Elms Estate.

The visit will take in BEECHE (Bromley Environmental Education Centre at High Elms). Distinctive features of the BEECHE building include its straw bale walls and natural light via sun pipes. The visit includes a guided tour, £1 per person. Enjoy lunch at the BEECHE cafe.

For more information or to say you wish to attend, please contact: Alona Sheridan on 8244 4259 or Iris Humphries on 8693 9525

**Introduction to Forest Gardening
Sunday 20 March 10am – 3pm**

This one-day course will clearly explain the principles of managing a forest garden in an urban setting through a series of practical steps. Combining theory and practical exercises, there will be opportunities to practice perennial planting design, and learn about implementing and maintaining your own site. We’ll also cover the history of Forest Gardening and its connection with Permaculture.

The course will take place at Grow Mayow Community garden and will be led by Claire White from Nature Wise www.clairewhitegardens.co.uk

Cost £25 includes a shared lunch and a free edible hedgerow variety to take home.

Booking is essential – email: Growmayow@gmail.com

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

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.

Name _____

The Sydenham Society STANDING ORDER

Bank details for standing order

Address _____

Name of your bank/building society _____

Address of you bank/building society _____

_____ Post code _____

Account Number _____ Sort Code _____

Tel day _____ Tel eve _____

Signed _____

Email _____

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

Sssh! Sleeping bat spotted in Sydenham Hill Wood

During a recent hibernation survey in Sydenham Hill Wood Local Nature Reserve a brown long-eared bat was found roosting in a small wall cavity of the old Crescent Wood railway tunnel. This is the first record of this locally rare species roosting on the site, managed by London Wildlife Trust since 1982. This species of bat is nationally common but locally rare and marks a significant find for the Sydenham Hill Wood bat project.

Brown long-eared bats have been recorded in Sydenham Hill Wood in the warmer months since 2005 but this is the first time a hibernation roost has been found. Hibernating bats require cool, steady temperatures and a four-year project, funded by the SITA Trust, has seen two hanging walls constructed in the tunnel to block draughts and improve conditions for hibernating bats.



Kim Taylor/naturepl.com

There are no insects to eat in the winter so British bats hibernate. They build up body fat during the autumn, find a cool, humid place to shelter and then slow down their bodily functions to save energy. Their heart rate drops from 700 to 20 beats per minute and they breathe as little as once an hour.

As the name suggests, a brown long-eared bat's (*Plecotus auritus*) most distinctive feature is its ears which are nearly as long as its body! It is a medium-sized bat with a head and body length of approximately 4-5cm and weigh about as much as a £1 coin! They typically inhabit rural farmland and woodland but are less common in London as it appears to be less well able to survive in urban surroundings.

Although found throughout the UK, brown long-eared bat numbers have declined in recent years, primarily due to habitat loss and the impact of intensive agriculture practices on the insects they feed on. As a result, this species is now listed as a UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Species.

All UK bats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) and it is illegal to harm them or destroy or disturb their roosts. While some bat populations are stable or recovering, many more are vulnerable due to environmental pressure.

Longing to be Heard

For Sydenham Library, opened in 1904 at the Gift of Andrew Carnegie; one of five libraries under threat in Lewisham.

A sound becomes a syllable,
A syllable becomes a word,
A word becomes a book
Longing to be heard.

A child speaks the word,
Mouthing every sound,
The child seeks the book,
Will the book be found?

Will the book be in the library?
Will a library be in the town?
Will a van deliver riches
The child cannot put down?

Or will the child be halted
On paths which are not there
Which would've given wealth,
In books they cannot share?

Chrissie Gittins

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome to the following new members:

Mario Amaro &
Duncan Dunnett

Leslie & Stephen Batchelor

Mrs M E Beale

Mr & Mrs Daniel Cohen

Laura Curry

Sarah Eldred

Mrs June Elmer

Bruce & Anne Harrison

Sandra Lafleche

Helen Leslie

Robert Scales

Robert Trory &

Nina Whitehurst

Cliff Watkins

Gary & Teresa Yakub

Members are reminded that subscriptions for 2011 are now due.

Roger Feather Tel: 8778 4318

Email: membership@sydenhamsociety.com

MEMBERSHIP CARD REDESIGN

Look out for your new membership card:

