

# SYDENHAM SOCIETY

## NEWS

Winter 2011

## Station Approach Shambles

### Bureaucrats get in the way of progress

The last newsletter featured a colour double page centre-spread showing the finalised plans for the improvements to Sydenham Station Approach, and following completion of this, the main improvements to Sydenham Road, which we have been waiting for since funding was agreed in 2008. By now we should have had contractors' plant in Station Approach and work should have started.

All that was necessary at the end of August was for an agreement from the Office of the Rail Regulator (ORR) giving permission for the transfer of Station Approach from Network Rail to Lewisham Council. The ORR is a key stakeholder and permission is a statutory requirement.

The delay last August was due to the original application for the transfer being set up using Network Rail's National Consultation system, rather than an area-based consultation with the operators who use Sydenham Station. As a result the consultation was sent to every Train Operating Company in the UK!

The consultation had to wait for the responses of 60+ consultees (some as far away as Scotland – who clearly had no interest in land transfer in Sydenham, London) and responses, not surprisingly, were slow in being returned or not sent at all.

When the error was identified the consultation was revised so that it asked for the comments of the local consultees (about ten Train Operating Companies). The Sydenham Society, keeping a close eye on progress, was told that the revised application would be re-submitted to the Office of the Rail Regulator in mid-September. There were no objections and it was assumed that the ORR would therefore authorise the transfer, probably by mid- to late October. If this timescale had been followed Lewisham Legal Services would by now be involved with the conveyancing and any other legal requirements, and the tendering process would have been under way.

Lewisham Council advises, "The design team recently met with Network Rail to discuss progress of the land transfer. From the meeting it became clear that problems with resources within NR have delayed the transfer significantly. LB Lewisham have offered NR any support they might require in an effort to get the transfer authorised. Station Approach will be discussed



at the next NR departmental meeting and Cllr Chris Best will be having another meeting with them in the coming weeks to check progress is being made. The key task that NR needs to complete is to send the Office of the Rail Regulators the results of the consultation with Train Operating Companies that was completed over the summer. There have been no objections to the transfer from the Train Operating Companies, so the ORR approval will be a formality once they receive the paperwork from NR."

As we go to press there has been no word about the transfer taking place and the timescale is such that it is highly unlikely that work in Station Approach will begin this side of Christmas, as the tendering process is also being held up. Work on Sydenham Road, which should have begun in 2009, and currently due to start early in the New Year after completion of Station Approach, will now be further delayed.

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[www.sydenhamsociety.com](http://www.sydenhamsociety.com)

## SYDENHAM SOCIETY CONTACTS

### Chair

Annabel McLaren  
chair@sydenhamsociety.com

### Treasurer & Membership

Roger Feather  
membership@sydenhamsociety.com  
020 8778 4318

### Newsletter Editor

Pat Trembath  
news@sydenhamsociety.com  
020 8659 4903

### Newsletter Design & Layout

Julia East  
news@sydenhamsociety.com

### Newsletter Distribution

Pat Trembath  
020 8659 4903

### Conservation & Planning

Barbara Kern  
conservation@sydenhamsociety.com

### Events

Jackie Aldridge  
020 8778 5455  
Mob: 07837 838710

### Roads & Transport

Ilse Towler  
iandj.towler@btinternet.com  
020 8778 3743

### Local History

Steve Grindlay  
localhistory@sydenhamsociety.com  
020 8699 6398

### 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.

## E-NEWSLETTER

Want to be kept informed about news and events in SE26? If you haven't already signed up for the Sydenham Society e-newsletter, you can do so by visiting [www.sydenham.com](http://www.sydenham.com) and forwarding us your email address. You'll then be sent our regular e-newsletter packed with local news and information about what's going on in Sydenham and the surrounding area.

## 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  
020 8314 6000

### Bellingham Ward

Alan Hall Ami Ibitson Jacq Paschoud

### Forest Hill Ward

Anne Affiku 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 BR1 3UH  
020 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  
020 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 **020 8314 6000**  
Bromley Council **020 8464 3333**  
Southwark Council **020 7525 5000**

**The deadline for articles for the next newsletter will be Friday 3 Feb 2012.**

# Rush hour London Bridge trains to be extended to 10 carriages – but two evening rush hour services are axed

Good news and bad news for rush hour passengers who travel to and from London Bridge with the introduction of the new winter timetable which comes into effect on December 11.

First the good news. Southern has announced that nine of our morning and evening peak services will be lengthened from 8 to 10 coaches. Times of the morning lengthened peak-time trains leaving Sydenham will be: 06.39, 07.09, 08.09 and 08.39. Times of the evening lengthened peak-time trains leaving London Bridge will be: 16.36, 17.05, 17.36, 18.06 and 18.36.

In addition, an extra service to London Bridge will be introduced, calling at Sydenham at 09.39. This welcome additional service fills a 17-minute gap in the existing timetable.

But, as we've come to expect, good news for rail travellers is often mixed with bad. The new timetable will also axe two peak-hour trains leaving London Bridge at 17.25 and 18.24. Southern put this down to "low passenger numbers". But as regular commuters will know, these two trains are scheduled to run just five and six minutes after the previous services, allowing

Platform 2 is being extended to take 10-carriage trains.



practically no time for passenger numbers to build.

The Society has contacted Southern asking them to reinstate these services and to spread train times more evenly. However, we have been told that this is impossible since there are no extra "slots" at peak times in the crowded interchange around Norwood Junction.

**Barry Milton, Roads & Transport Committee**  
Tel: 020 8778 6914

## Sydenham Station Some eye-watering statistics

Sydenham is an extremely busy and well-connected station carrying passengers to London Bridge, Victoria, and East and West Croydon using mainline Southern services, and to Highbury & Islington, West Croydon and Crystal Palace on the new East London Line - part of the London Overground network, which links Sydenham directly with the Jubilee Line at Canada Water, and with the District and Hammersmith and City Lines at Whitechapel. The station has 14 trains per hour in each direction during the rush hours and 12 trains per hour in each direction during the off peak.

The latest figures from the Office of the Rail Regulator show that in the year ending April 2010, 2,162,656 passengers used the station. This equates to over 7,000 passengers per day. This was an increase of over half a million extra annual passengers since the same period in 2005.

Transport for London's figures on passenger numbers using the East London Line are as follows:

During the first full month of operation,  
June 2010: 40,000 passengers used the line daily;

By September 2010: 70,000 passengers used the line daily;  
In March 2011: 100,000 passengers used the line daily;

By the end of 2015: 120,000 passengers will use the line daily;

According to TfL the new line means an extra 1,000 passengers using Sydenham Station every day.



After the Investiture on 26 October, Pat Trembath MBE and Annabel McLaren, Chair of the Sydenham Society share a moment or two with Yeomen of the Queen's Bodyguard

## To Postal Members

Members who receive their newsletters by post are kindly reminded that they should add £2 to their 2012 subscription if paying by cheque, or issue a new standing order for an increased amount to include the increasing cost of postage. **Roger Feather**

## Working for a vibrant high street

As Chair of the Sydenham Town Centre Steering Group I am disappointed with the delay in starting the improvements to Station Approach and high street from Cobbs Corner to Mayow Road. One of my priorities is a vibrant high street and whilst we have several new businesses they are not as diverse as many would wish. We have another pawnbrokers, Cash and Cheque Express, as well as a Cheque Shop offering financial services when we have the established Credit Union at the top of the high street.

There was a record breaking turnout for Halloween with over 30 traders participating and more than 300 children trick or treating as well as 90 children at the Naborhood Centre for the best costume competition with Jim Dowd MP presenting the prizes. The next event not to be missed is the turning on of the Christmas tree lights – 5pm on Friday 2 December outside the Post Office – with carol singers and other entertainment in the high street and with shops staying open for late-night shopping.

Despite the cuts we still have street sweeping seven days a week and a trade waste collection three times a day so that we do not have the obstruction of large Eurobins on the pavement. We still have a free 140-space car park at Girton Road as well as free high street parking for half an hour and no Controlled Parking Zones! There is the Love Lewisham website for online reporting of flytipping, graffiti, litter, overhanging trees and dodgy paving stones and a refuse truck that drives round regular flytipping hot spots to keep the area clean. Enforcement action has been taken over the yellow carpet posters. Abandoned vehicles as well as dead animals continue to be removed.

With the traders we are discussing a Sydenham Town Centre website to promote our high street and develop Sydenham as a destination. We have a fantastic cultural offer ranging from jazz and blues at the Golden Lion to a more classical programme through the monthly concerts at St Christopher's Hospice. Sydenham International Music Festival will now be based at Sydenham School and, as well as three successful years of the Arts Festival, we have the monthly Sydenham Film Club. You can tune into Sydenham Community Radio (and "listen again" is available if you miss a broadcast), to keep you in touch with what is going on locally.

There have been ongoing improvements to our three parks – an outdoor gym at Home Park, cricket squares at Mayow Park and fantastic children's play areas in all three. The £3.5m Wells Park Youth Venue now has planning permission and work on site is expected to start soon for The New Generation (TNG) with completion in winter 2012.

**Chris Best, Councillor for Sydenham Ward and Chair of the Sydenham Assembly**  
Tel: 020 8659 6445. [Cllr\\_Chris.Best@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr_Chris.Best@lewisham.gov.uk)

## Awards for local allotments and gardens 2011

We all know that gardens come in many and varied forms and that allotment sites provide much more than a place to grow vegetables. They both fulfil a need to be creative and a place of refuge and peace, where each garden brings its own story of its owner and an allotment site is a place to mix with like-minded members of the community and to exercise in the fresh air.

This autumn, I was pleased to host the award ceremonies for both Lewisham in Bloom and Lewisham's Allotments Awards. As always for Lewisham in Bloom, there was an outstanding response from Lewisham's businesses, community groups, residents and schools. The star of Lewisham in Bloom 2011 was Sydenham Garden, which was awarded both first prize in the Community Garden category and the Frank Mason Cup for Best in Show.

There was torrential rain and storms on the evening we celebrated the achievements of our vibrant growing allotment community, however it was a great event with three of the Sydenham sites awarded Best Plots at Sydenham Park, Taylors Lane and Trewsbury Road, with Trewsbury Road achieving third place in the Best Site category.

As someone who has recently acquired an allotment, I can now empathise and sympathise with the frustration when, despite the love and care poured on your plants, the continual attack by birds, slugs and weeds destroys them. But I now take great pleasure in freshly picked vegetables that I have grown myself.

We should never underestimate the importance of allotments, as they are places where future generations can be educated in the skill of providing nutritious food, and in passing on this knowledge we are keeping alive a basic tradition that will only become more vital in the future. It is only by understanding the true value of allotments and treasuring them as such that we can ensure their longevity and sustainability.

The therapeutic properties of gardening and growing vegetables are well documented, and the work performed at Sydenham Garden speaks for itself, which is why it justly deserved its awards at Lewisham in Bloom 2011.

**Cllr Susan Wise, Councillor for Perry Vale ward and Cabinet Member for Customer Services. Tel/Fax: 020 8699 6520.**  
[Cllr\\_Susan.Wise@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr_Susan.Wise@lewisham.gov.uk)

### Eve Thompson

We have learned of the recent death of Eve Thompson, widow of Mark Thompson who was, for 17 years, Membership Secretary of the Sydenham Society. For the past two years Eve, aged 87, had been living in Sussex near her daughters. We extend our sympathy to her family.

# Launch of new community planning group

The Forest Hill and Sydenham Society are playing a key role in the launch of a new and exciting local planning group. The group intends to take advantage of the Localism Bill (due to become law in the next few months). This Act has the lofty claim to “end the hoarding of power within central government and top-down control of communities, allowing local people the freedom to run their lives and neighbourhoods in their own way”.

Under the new legislation, local groups (Neighbourhood Forums) can get together to establish planning policies (Neighbourhood Plans) for their areas. Such a plan has to take into account adopted national and borough policies. But Neighbourhood Plans (NP) can strongly influence where development, such as housing, can go and what it might look like.

Local authorities, such as Lewisham, will have a duty to ensure that neighbourhood planning works effectively. LBL must advise and support neighbourhoods and also organise (and finance) an independent check of the NP once it is drawn up. They will then have to hold a local referendum on the plan. If the referendum votes in favour of the scheme, then the authority has to adopt it and it becomes part of the area’s planning framework.

To date we have organised two local meetings in an effort to spread the word about local planning and how it could work. The first meeting on September 21 at the Hob in Forest Hill, was addressed by three experts who also happen to live in our local area: architect and Urban Designer Hilary Satchwell of the Forest Hill Society, Nigel Kersey from the Department of Communities and Local Government and John Pounder from SKM Colin Buchanan. The three speakers outlined the key provisions of the new Act and this was followed by a workshop and discussion on how this Act could impact on our area.

The second meeting at Sydenham Community Library on October 17, organised by local architect and lecturer Ed Holloway, was a Design by Consensus workshop organised by GlassHouse

Community Led Design and the Open University. The workshop was based around ideas for redesigning Home Park, an initiative led by local resident Anthony Scully. But the ideas and techniques which we learned could be easily transferred to other areas locally.

Following this meeting, Friends of Home Park and the Society are discussing a new more open layout for the frontage of the park with Greenscene and hope to conduct further improvements under the Sydenham Road (East) road improvement scheme planned for implementation in 2013-4.

At the end of October, Hilary Satchwell, from the new community planning group, wrote to John Miller, Lewisham’s Head of Planning, to confirm our intention to constitute a neighbourhood forum to produce a Neighbourhood Plan for SE23 and SE26.

We would like to encourage anyone who lives, works, trades or has a business locally to join us in this exciting initiative and become part of a planning group that can help to improve and transform the area.

If you are interested in hearing more about our plans or want to join the group, phone us (telephone number below) or contact us via the Society’s website [www.sydenhamsociety.com](http://www.sydenhamsociety.com) where you can look at more details of our activities and the Localism Bill by searching under “planning”.

**Barry Milton. Tel: 020 8778 6914**

## Sydenham Wells Park

We welcome back Terry, our gardener, now fit again, as the Park was really showing his absence. The winter flowerbeds are being planted up and weeds are finally being taken care of. There are two days each week when there is no park-keeper. If you see any vandalism please phone Glendale on 020 8318 3986 or dial 101 (local neighbourhood police).

Our water-play area will be completely refurbished next February as, due to maintenance problems, this year it has only been working intermittently. The Green Chain walk from Crystal Palace Park is well signposted through the Park so do keep on using it.

If you are interested in coming to the Sydenham Wells Park Improvement Group Meetings, which are open to anyone interested in future improvements to the park, these are held in the maintenance hut in the yard by the main Wells Park Road entrance. Meetings in 2012 will be held on 7 February, 8 May, 11 Sept and 13 Nov 2012.



Please contact me if you have any queries or feedback.

**Monika Mitchell, Chair, Sydenham Wells Park Improvement Group. Tel: 020 8659 6868**

# Sydenham Community Library is looking for Volunteers

Sydenham's library has been running as a Community Library since 31 May 2011. There are a team of volunteers, but more would enable us to provide a better service, and to extend the activities on offer. We would like volunteers for any time during the Library's opening hours, for all or part of the day, or for occasional work-days at weekends.

## What do volunteers do?

They work in a team to support the Library Manager. There are some "library assistant" jobs such as enrolling new users, and issuing and returning books; also replacing books on the shelves, and making sure they are in the right place and look tidy. Library users might appreciate help in searching for books, sometimes for school or college projects. Some use the computers, and may need guidance. Although Lewisham have reduced the stock by removing old and less used books, there is some scope for stock development.

## Community Libraries

Sydenham is one of three Lewisham library buildings leased by Eco Computers, a social enterprise run by Darren Taylor, who has run a community centre with a library on the Pepys Estate since August 2010. Lewisham still supply books, but the building is run by Eco Computer Systems, and although there is a community library manager, the library is staffed by volunteers.

Sydenham Community Library is open four days a week, from 9.30am to 5pm on Monday and Saturday, and from 9.30 am till 7pm on Thursday and Friday. Users can reserve books, both from Lewisham's catalogue and from twelve other London boroughs, and collect them from Sydenham. The catalogue can be accessed on-line from home or in the library.

Eco's ambition is to offer a wider range of community activities and services in the library. Currently, they run computer courses for the over 50s, and offer help with job applications and CVs, for which there is a high demand, on two days a week.

## Friends of Mayow Park (FOMP)

**Autumn has arrived and the magnificent trees in Mayow Park are shedding their leaves, changing from green and covering the ground with many colours. One green, however, will not change this autumn: the Green Flag awarded to Mayow Park is now flying proudly on a tall flagpole adjacent to the picnic area. Well done to those who continue to work on maintaining the park.**

In recent months two volunteers have been looking after the Pavilion Triangle beds – thank you both. There will be a fruit bush and tree-planting day at the Triangle early in December, which will include weeding and general tidying up of the space.

Looking towards 2012, a new community orchard project is set to take off. The London Orchard Project, working with

**There is a range of weekly events on offer at the library:**

### **Rhyme Time Baby Bounce**

Every Tuesday morning, 10.15 – 10.45am

### **Stages**

Interactive storytelling/art workshop every Thursday at 10.00am

### **Saturday School**

Every Saturday morning, Maths and English, 10.00 – 12.00pm,

### **Crochet group**

Every Saturday morning from 11.00 – 1.00pm.

### **Monthly events include:**

#### **Over 55s group**

Third Thursday morning in the month, 11.30 – 12.30pm

#### **Book Club**

First Tuesday evening of the month, 7.30 – 8.30pm.

**The next meeting of the Friends of Sydenham Community Library is on Tuesday December 6, 7.30 – 9.00pm in the library. All welcome!**

The Library is looking for more people to run events, such as a Seniors Clubs, and additional reading groups – if you have suggestions, please get in touch.

The library now needs to look after itself, and to earn its living. It can be hired for events, so please consider it as a venue for meetings etc. It can accept donations of books, mobiles, and computers, which are recycled and sold. Volunteers can also help to sell donated books via the Amazon website. There is a backlog of repairs and refurbishment, and help with DIY or deep cleaning would be appreciated, too.

**Please talk to the Library Manager, Nesrin Ingham on 0208 314 8148, or email [nesrin.ingham@ecocom.org.uk](mailto:nesrin.ingham@ecocom.org.uk)**

Friends of Mayow Park (FOMP) and Lewisham Greenscene, plan to plant an orchard of ten fruit trees. A date in late January will be set for planting. FOMP is looking for volunteers to become involved in planting and maintenance as well as sponsors for the trees.

Anyone interested in involvement with the Pavilion Triangle or the community orchard should send an email to [friendsofmayowpark@ymail.com](mailto:friendsofmayowpark@ymail.com) or contact Alona on 020 8244 4259. Further information will be publicised through the Sydenham Society newsletter, SydSoc e-newsletter, FOMP notices in the main park notice board, on the FOMP Facebook page and the FOMP blog.

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

## Peter Springall – bee-keeper extraordinaire

How can I begin to express the sense of loss of such a huge character as Peter? Ever-helpful friend, problem solver, inventor, teacher, advisor, bee-keeper, vintner, plantsman, engineer, computer enthusiast, CB radio buff, jazz lover, jiver, ballroom dancer and useful badminton partner.

Peter grew up in a one-parent family when TB robbed him of his father and all his uncles at the age of two. His mother's skills as a dressmaker kept them afloat in those difficult times.

His bravery was recognised as a young man in the ARP as his engineering abilities in the firm he worked for prevented him from joining the RAF during the war. At work he gained a 6d-a-week rise for devising a rapid means of cutting the supporting struts for disposable supplementary fuel tanks made of papier-mache to enable bombers to make long-distance runs. After the war he was sent for ONE DAY to Bathurst in Australia to cure a malfunctioning machine! Racing motorcycles on the Isle of Man, he developed a winning adaptation to recently developed suspension, which became known as the "swinging arm suspension" on later production models.

The recent National Honey Show will have already missed his input to their annual event. He taught many people the ins and outs of bee-keeping and one TV employee who attended his evening classes in the seventies made a programme about this bee-keeping engineer. He spent the last few years trying to breed stocks of the mild British Black Bee.

He often rescued useful items from skips, auctions and boot sales and he spotted and acquired the building which is now the Club House at Kent House Leisure Gardens as it was being demolished somewhere along his route home from work. His enthusiasm also generated the development of vineyards and wine-making at the allotments. Several

newspapers have featured Peter and his wine-making colony in Sydenham.

He ruefully acknowledged his untidiness, often the result of his readiness to respond to calls for help as he would leave whatever he was doing unfinished. Many willing helpers tried to sort things out for him but the challenge grew ever greater. However his competition entries of honey, mead or wine were always immaculately presented and usually gained prizes.

The huge attendance at his funeral, from all walks of life, was testament to the high esteem with which this dear man was so widely held.

**Jill Dunn**

*[Ed: I'm sure many Sydenham Society members will remember Peter, either as allotment owners or visitors to the Open Days, at Kent House Leisure Gardens. On one such occasion when I attended, a swarm of bees had presented themselves on site about half an hour before Peter was due to give a Bee Keeping demonstration. This went ahead but only after Peter had shown us all how easy it was to knock down and capture the swarm!]*



## Dulwich Picture Gallery celebrates HM The Queen's Diamond Jubilee with its seventh annual Lecture Series

Dulwich Picture Gallery is marking the Queen's Diamond Jubilee with its seventh impressive Contextual Lecture Series. The Jubilee Series will be launched on 3 January 2012 by Professor Lord Peter Hennessy on "The Queen as a Heineken Lager Monarch: The Parts of the Constitution that only She can Reach".

This inaugural lecture is followed by lectures by 18 eminent scholars and authorities on the major themes relating to Monarchy, including David Starkey on "Henry VIII", Anne Sebba on "Wallis Simpson – Duchess of Style or Duchess Defamed?", A.C.Grayling on "Descartes and his Royals", and Lucy Worsley on "The Secret History of Georgian Kensington Palace". Richard Thorpe will review "The Queen and her Prime Ministers from Churchill to Blair" and Robert Lacey will speak on "Elizabeth II – The Inside Story". The last lecture of the Series is on Tuesday 11 December when Lord Butler examines "The Order of the Garter" and David Hilliam

"Crown, Orb and Sceptre – A Thousand years of English Coronations".

The series will begin and end with an evening drinks reception in the Gallery's cloister. There will be book signings at the close of selected sessions. All the other lectures will be held on Tuesdays throughout the year, taking place in the Linbury Room.

The series Evening Launch is on Tuesday 3rd January 2012 – 6.30pm for a 7.00pm start and closes on Tuesday 11 December 2012. All other lectures are on Tuesdays, 10.30am – 11.30am

Tickets will be available from the end of November and cost £180 for the series, £162 Friends and concessions (includes the opening launch and final lecture). A very limited amount of tickets will be available for each lecture at the door on a first come, first served basis for £10 (£9 for Friends and concessions).

**To book and for further information contact Lettie McKie, Public Programmes Manager on [l.mckie@dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk](mailto:l.mckie@dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk), or Tel 0208 299 8732**

## Kirkdale Institute, another listed building in Sydenham

After the decision to end adult education classes at the Kirkdale Institute earlier this year it seemed vital that this important building should be recognised and protected. An application for listing was sent to English Heritage and in September we learnt that the Minister for Heritage had agreed that the building should be listed Grade 2.

The origins of the Kirkdale Institute can be traced back to 1853, a year before the Crystal Palace opened on Sydenham Hill. Sir Joseph Paxton, architect of the Crystal Palace and designer of the park, and John Scott Russell, who was also closely involved with the Crystal Palace and had just moved from his cottage in Charlecote Grove to be nearer to the new building, discussed the need for an institution for “working men” and their families in Sydenham, who had neither the money nor the free time to take full advantage of what the Crystal Palace would soon be offering.

In 1858, four years after the Crystal Palace opened, a meeting was held where it was agreed to build a lecture hall in Sydenham along the lines of the Mechanics' Institutes. These institutes were intended as “self-improving working men's adult education colleges”, often funded by wealthy, liberally inclined local people. The institutes offered free lectures on arts, science and technical subjects and might also include a library and a newspaper reading room. Occasionally there was also a school for their children.

A suitable site was bought with the help of a loan from Robert Harrild, of Round Hill, and Sir Joseph Paxton agreed to produce plans for the building. Unfortunately funds were not sufficient to follow his rather grand designs, and they were modified by Henry Dawson.

Sydenham Society member Cecily Foulger has a print that has been in her family for many, many years (see footnote). It was produced in the late 1850s as part of the fund-raising campaign for the institute. It is probable that the print shows

the building as originally conceived by Paxton. Henry Dawson's modifications meant that the side towers were not built, and the building was not so deep. However, the present central block was built largely to Paxton's original design, and survives intact. The arrangement of the windows with the polychromatic brickwork can still be seen although much of the brickwork has since been covered with roughcast.

The foundation stone was laid on 12 October 1859 by Alderman David Wire, Lord Mayor of London, who lived at Stone House, Lewisham Way and 15 months later, on 15 January 1861, the building was officially opened by Sir Joseph who was appointed its first president and a trustee. Other trustees included John Scott Russell and Sir George Grove.

Since its opening, the Kirkdale Institute has been used almost continuously for community and educational purposes for people of all ages. From 1861 it housed the Sydenham Working Men's Institution with a reading room, a library, evening classes and a lecture hall. The English Heritage report specifically mentions the unaltered first floor lecture hall as giving a clear indication of the institution's original purpose.

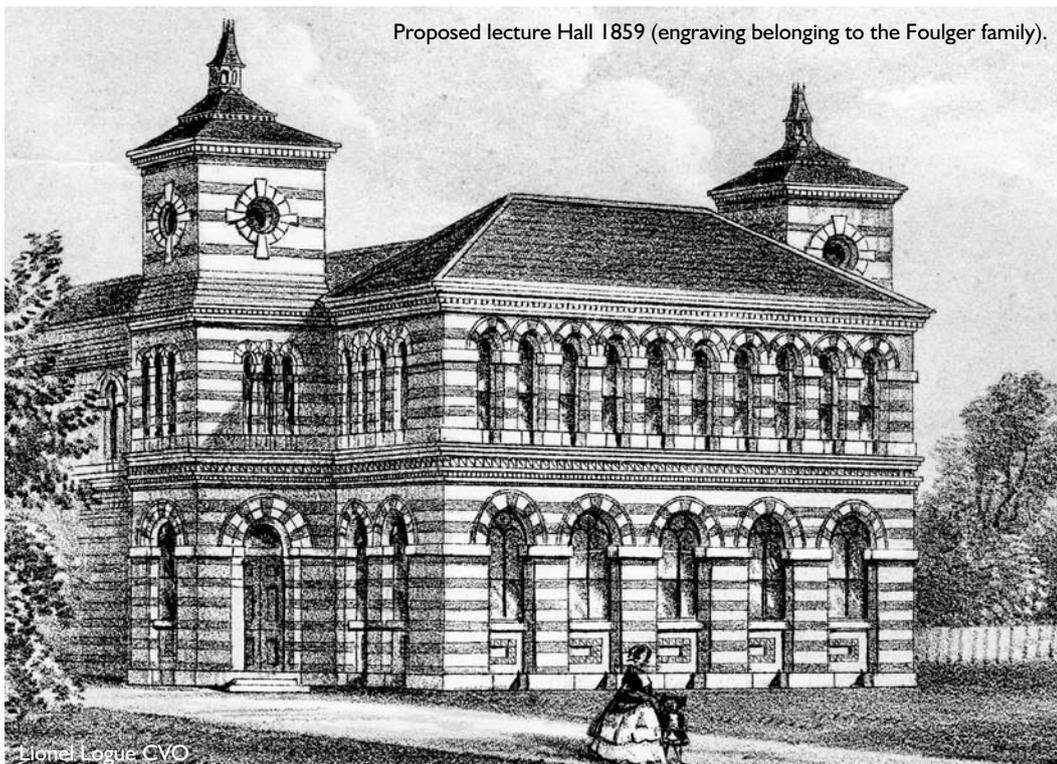
During the 1890s the Institute housed the Sydenham and Forest Hill Art School. After World War One the Sydenham Liberal and Radical Workingmen's Club met in the building and by 1925 it housed an Evening Institute offering instruction in technical, commercial and domestic subjects, a role that it continued to fulfil until earlier this year.

For a few years between 1894 and the opening of the library at Bell Green in 1901 the Kirkdale Institute housed

Sydenham's first Public Library.

The building also contributed greatly to the education of younger people. In January 1861 the British School, which had been founded near the Golden Lion in 1851, moved into the new building. A girls' school opened a couple of months later on the first floor. British Schools were non-denominational, set up as an alternative to the National Schools such as St Bart's and Holy Trinity which were strongly Anglican. This, too, reflects the liberal views of those involved with the Kirkdale Institute. In 1876 the School Board for

Proposed lecture Hall 1859 (engraving belonging to the Foulger family).



Lionel Logue CVO



Sydenham Public Lecture Hall 1880.



Kirkdale Institute in recent times.

London became responsible for the British School, and it was renamed Sydenham Central School for Boys.

In 1904 the LCC took over responsibility for the school and it became the Sydenham County Secondary School for Girls (and, for a while, Shackleton Girls School). In 1917 the school moved to new premises in Dartmouth Road to become today's Sydenham School.

The LCC enlarged the building in 1904 with large wings at each side, a single storey extension and entrance porch across the front of the building, hiding the lower part of the original windows which still survive behind the extension. I had wondered whether this might have detracted from the original building.

However, a year or so ago I was contacted by Alan Calder who was writing a book on the architect William Flockhart. He asked whether I knew of a "Technical Institute" in Sydenham designed by Flockhart around 1904. The Kirkdale institute seemed a possibility so I sent him pictures and information. He wrote back excitedly: "... this extension to the Kirkdale Institute is a typical Flockhart commission for the LCC and this must be it." Flockhart was an important architect with several listed buildings to his name. English Heritage commented that "the work was carried out with remarkable sensitivity to the original structure" and is "a very early instance of an Arts and Crafts

LCC school". So my misgivings were misplaced.

The Kirkdale Institute is an important, perhaps unique, building not only for successfully combining the work of two major architects but for providing a variety of opportunities for education and study for all local people for 150 years. There are few, if any, similar institutions that have provided such services for so long and it would be good if the Kirkdale Institute could continue, in some way, to do so.

### Steve Grindlay

*Footnote: I was surprised and delighted to learn how deeply rooted in Sydenham's history Cecily's family has been. By the mid-1850s her great-grandfather Charles Fenner (1834-1912) and his two brothers were living in Sydenham. Charles was a carpenter and builder living in Crystal Crescent (now the Wells Park Road end of Halifax Street). His brother William was also a carpenter living in Willow Walk (now Willow Way) while brother George was a carpenter who also ran the Hanover Arms, on the corner of Halifax Street and Wells Park Road, between about 1851 and 1855. Living so close to the site on which the new Kirkdale Institute was soon to be built it seems highly likely one, if not all, of Cecily's ancestors worked on the building. This would explain how the drawing of Paxton's original vision of the Kirkdale Institute came into Cecily's family and why it has remained as a cherished item of family memorabilia for over 150 years.*

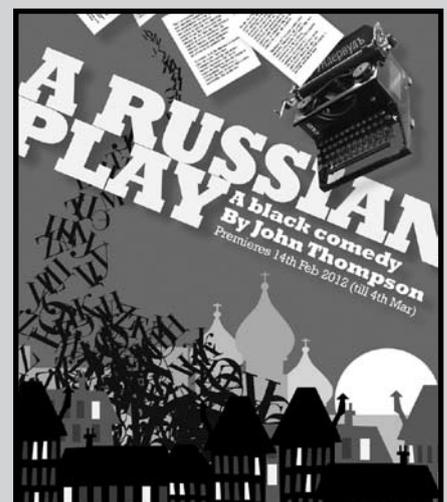
## Inspirational Sydenham!

Inspired by a snowy view from his window over Sydenham Wells Park, Sydenham Society member John Thompson penned 'A Russian Play'. Two years on, the play is now set to premiere at The Lion and Unicorn Theatre in Kentish Town (trains/tube from London Bridge).

'A Russian Play' is a black comedy, set in St. Petersburg during the winter of 1916, and has been billed as 'The Odd Couple' meets 'Crime and Punishment'. It runs from 14th February to 4th March 2012. We hope to see you there!

Tickets can be booked online at: <http://www.giantolive.com/arussianplay.html>  
Or on the phone via Ticketweb: 08444 771 000

The Lion and Unicorn, 42-44 Gaisford St, Kentish Town, NW5 2ED.  
Nearest Tube/Train: Kentish Town. Buses: 46, 134, 214



# Crystal Palace Park Update

It is some time since there was any news about the future of Crystal Palace Park. The Masterplan, long discussed and consulted on, finally got its planning permission from Bromley Council on 9 December 2008, but was promptly called in for Review by the Secretary of State for Communities.

The Public Inquiry took place over 5 weeks in July and August 2009, and the decision ruling in favour was eventually handed down on 22 July 2010, nearly 12 months later. However, anything to do with this Grade II\* historic park is not simple and straightforward, and an application for a High Court Judicial Review was lodged in December 2010. The outcome of this will not be known until 7 March 2012. A frustratingly long time has passed since the idea of the Masterplan was first floated in 2004 and, meanwhile, although some significant improvements have taken place, the general fabric of the park has continued to deteriorate and its future has remained uncertain.

A Parks Conference last May, jointly called by the local amenity societies of Sydenham, Dulwich and Norwood and the Crystal Palace Campaign group in an attempt to get the 'great and the good' into one room to discuss the park, its management and funding, proved a positive exercise with the Leader of Bromley Council, senior officers of the Greater London Authority (GLA) and English Heritage all pledging to work to put together ideas to explore opportunities for the future management of the park.

On 19 October, a not for profit 'Crystal Palace Park Executive Project Board', chaired by the Leader of Bromley Council, with a Vice-Chair to be appointed by the GLA, along with Bromley officers and a representative of English Heritage amongst others, was approved by Bromley Council. Its Vision Statement says "the Crystal Palace Park Management structure is being established to explore the opportunities for the management, restoration, development and protection of Crystal Palace Park; recognising the site's multi-faceted historical significance and creating an environment which is valued and admired by local people and visitors alike". The Eden Project is on board to assist with mentoring, especially with regard to local engagement and regeneration.

Bromley Council is also exploring the possibility of reclaiming the £400,000 Lea Valley Precept it pays annually to support the Olympic site. If successful this money could be a source of funding improvements to Crystal Palace Park.

The timetable set is tight as it is proposed that a Board of Trustees will be set up by 2013. The decision of the High Court is due on 7 March next year, but at long last it does look as though there is some real movement forward to regenerate this much-loved park.

## National Sports Centre

It is nearly two years since the National Sports Centre (NSC) re-opened after its £70m refurbishment. Greenwich Leisure Ltd (GLL) who run and manage the NSC report an increase in its pre-paid gym membership to 2,700 and its Swim-school has 1450 signed up members with this due to increase to 1700 in 2012. Its 'Beacon Programme' for elite swimmers and water polo

players has 300 members.

The Crystal Palace Ladies Football Club results in 350/450 young women practising at the NSC each week, and holding their home games inside the main stadium.

A Beach Volleyball area was recently refurbished as a partnership between GLL and the Brazil and England Volleyball federations and now boasts two Olympic standard pitches and three training pitches. Seven hundred tonnes of sand were used during the refurbishment. Opening rather late in the season, last September, it attracted 300 participants during a recent 'open weekend'. A full programme of Beach Volleyball is due to start in February 2012.

The NSC will be used as Team Brazil's training camp in the run up and during next year's Olympics, with officials arriving on 9 July and athletes being resident from 16 July to 17 August. Various Paralympic teams have showed considerable interest but it is, as yet, not known which team might use it for training purposes.

The Brazilian Olympic swimming team has tried out the refurbished pool and announced itself happy with the services provided and impressed by the facilities. However this was one team of 30 with its officials; next year Team Brazil will be bringing multi-sports teams and their associated officials, which will be a completely different experience.

The GB Ladies Handball federation is now using Crystal Palace as its headquarters and its results have been improving since moving to the new facilities.

Key dates and events for next year include the Diamond League London Grand Prix on 9 July, just before the Olympic games. The London Grand Prix will remain a fixture at Crystal Palace although the British Grand Prix may move from Birmingham to Stratford. The London Youth Games is also likely to remain at Crystal Palace as it is 'the best multi-youth facility in the UK'.

Whilst the new Combined Heat and Power unit installed has resulted in an 80% reduction in electricity used on site and 75% savings on combined energy costs, it has not all been good news. Almost half the roof of the NSC was stolen on two occasions using scaffolding erected for other work, even though this was alarmed and the police attended very speedily.

## Friends of the Subway

Ideas to renovate the Subway have been put forward over the past 12 months. These have been very ambitious and the funding for this (as well as any planning matters) would likely take up considerable time. An immediate and simpler idea has recently emerged and initial consultations indicate overwhelming support for opening the subway to guided tours using the Southwark side of Crystal Palace Parade to gain access. A "Friends" group is in the process of being formed with the intention of raising funding to take this forward. Money has already been pledged and more

is being sought. Target date for the re-opening is Open House Weekend, September 2012.

## Crystal Palace Station

Following on from its partial refurbishment it would appear that there are plans in the pipeline, long overdue, to install a lift and to re-open the original Victorian Booking Hall as the main access to the station.

## Bed and Breakfast, anyone?

The Athletes' Lodge in the centre of Crystal Palace Park was refurbished in 2009 to provide good facilities for any team using the NSC as their Training Camp in the run up to the Olympics. When not in use by athletes this is now available for the general public. With 140 rooms, double and single, and shared bathroom facilities, bed and breakfast can be had at £27.50/per night for single occupancy. This is becoming better known and currently there is a general occupancy of 42%. Following this newsletter the percentage occupancy is expected to rise considerably!

Pat Trembath

## Alhambra Art Exhibition

Alhambra, 148 Kirkdale, SE26 4BB will have three top-notch local artists exhibiting in the run-up to Christmas. Joyce Treasure ([www.joycetreasure.co.uk](http://www.joycetreasure.co.uk)) and Lara Bowen ([www.larabowen.co.uk](http://www.larabowen.co.uk)) will be exhibiting from Thurs 24 November. They will be joined by Kirkdale local artist, Nick Haseltine. All three have perfect Christmas-present prints. This will be a great chance to buy some quality art at a special price!

## The Sydenham Mosaic

The Ernest Shackleton roundel, sponsored by The Shackleton Society, found its way into the Kirkdale Bookshop window in early October. It was there to advertise Henry Worsley's sell out talk about the Shackleton expedition which he and other descendants of the original team had recreated. The journey, vividly described, is in his book "In Shackleton's Footsteps".

Another unexpected interest was generated when it was discovered that the Mosaic artist, Oliver Budd, had been asked by Mary Portas' (Queen of Shops and High St Tsar) Design Team to mosaic her logo. It is to be found on the floor of her first shop in House of Fraser in Oxford Street and was glimpsed a number of times during her recent television series.

The Mosaic Project has, meanwhile, soldiered on in a somewhat less spectacular fashion. In June we made a successful £2,000 bid to Sydenham Assembly's Mayor's fund, which has enabled us to fund the St. Christopher's Hospice logo and still have over £1,000 towards another roundel. In September we received planning permission for the mosaic. Sponsorship has been received for "The Kitten in the Pot" by local artist Horatio Henry ('Kitten') Couldrey, the "Blitz" roundel and the 'Manns/Groves /Arthur



Man Digs Pond in 24 hours from 8pm on 5 November to 8pm on 6 November. Bruno Roubicek stands beside the pond he dug at Albion Millennium Green. Well done, Bruno!

Sullivan' roundel, making seven completed roundels so far.

The Art Departments of local schools have been approached to see if Sixth Form art students would like to come up with ideas for our 'Multi-Cultural Community' roundel.

This and other roundels will need sponsorship and fund raising if we are to be part of the rejuvenated High Street next year. Any help or ideas, please contact Valerie Kelly or Robert Side on 020 8778 4775.



Valerie Kelly and Henry Worsley, author, with Shackleton mosaic, outside Kirkdale Bookshop.

## Syd Soc Member Profile

# Roger Feather

**Roger is Treasurer and Membership Secretary of the Sydenham Society. He sits on the Executive Committee.**

When I arrive at Roger's house in Hall Drive, the first thing to do is meet the newest resident, Syd, a black 'Munchkin' kitten brought all the way from Aberdeen! As anyone who knows him would aver, Roger deals in absolutes. His greatest passion is for Arsenal football club. A cousin of one of Roger's uncles, Sir Bracewell Smith, became Chairman of Arsenal many years ago, and Roger chose Arsenal as the team to support while at primary school. He supports them to this day and owns one share in the club, possibly the last of the Smith dynasty to do so. He sees all home matches, and goes to about 20 away games a season, including some in Europe. He is off to Athens in December.

Roger grew up in Skipton, Yorkshire, studied classics at Birmingham University and moved to London in 1962 to join the Civil Service. He and wife Bev have lived in the area since the early 1970s, and Roger says they became members of the Sydenham Society in its early days, he becoming Treasurer and Membership Secretary in 1999. Sometimes meetings clash with a football match and, as everyone knows, the latter always takes precedence.

It is interesting to note that while Sir Bracewell Smith was a Conservative M.P. for Dulwich between 1932 and 1945, Roger is a staunch Labour supporter and has been the treasurer for the local constituency party for over 20 years. A Guardian reader since the 60s, he opens today's paper to show me an article on a rising star of the Labour party and one of the so-called 'Mili's fillies', Rachel Reeves, who grew up in Sydenham and went to school with one of Roger's daughters. Rachel is now Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury and is, in the view of some pundits, destined for even higher office.

Unsurprisingly, Roger became an accountant and says he liked looking after people's money since his schooldays. Besides keeping track of the Society's finances and membership (currently around 1050) Roger does voluntary work for St Christopher's Hospice, helping the shops' manager with admin and finance. Roger loves Sydenham and cites the transport links and community cohesion that exists, especially in his particular locality. He has not always supported the campaigns the Society has engaged with, and believes we should be more open to change.

Roger is obsessive about numbers. A train spotter in his youth, he has been to the grounds of all 92 Premier and Football League clubs, 'topping up' the list as new clubs come into the league. Bev being American, Roger has visited all 50 states of the US on their frequent trips there. He has developed a love of walking since he missed the last train after a football match and had to trudge 13 miles home! He says his most strenuous hike was to the bottom of the Grand Canyon (and back) in one day, with temperatures around 115 degrees Fahrenheit at the bottom. Roger's two daughters live in Yorkshire, and Roger and Bev have a flat in Leeds so they maintain links with Roger's roots. As I leave, Syd is sleeping peacefully on a chair and this self-styled "proud Yorkshireman" in his adopted Sydenham is just about to book his flight to Athens.

### Sue Grindlay

*This is the eleventh 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*



## Shackleton plays truant in the 'Silverdale Wood' (Dacres Wood Reserve)

**It is well known that Ernest Shackleton passed his schooldays in Sydenham, as commemorated by the Blue Plaque on the large house on Westwood Hill next to St Bartholomew's Church, now called 'St David's', but originally 'Aberdeen House'.**

He was the son of Dr Henry Shackleton, who settled in Sydenham as a General Practitioner, who was also a Classics graduate of Trinity College, Dublin and originally a small landed proprietor, of Kilkea House, County Kildare in Ireland. He practised homeopathy. Ernest was the second child, and had eight sisters who attended Sydenham High School, and a brother. In the back garden Dr. Shackleton had a famous rose garden, and the young Ernest built a switch-back railway from the drawing-room window right across the lawn; he also liked to play on the roof of the house. He explored the radius of a day's journey on his bicycle all around Sydenham. On his return from the Antarctic, his sisters would later decorate the house with pennants.

Shackleton loyally kept up a friendship with the manager of

the bookstore at Sydenham railway station, Charles Lethbridge, and wrote to him during his first Antarctic expedition (with Scott on the Discovery) on 20 September 1902. In his early days Ernest and his sisters belonged to the Band of Hope, a children's Temperance Society group, who regularly sang songs about the evils of alcohol outside the Sydenham pubs. From 'Aberdeen House', starting at the age of thirteen in 1887, for three years he walked over the hill to and from Dulwich College. At the College he 'did very little work' according to a contemporary, 'and if there was a scrap he was usually in it'. His form positions, usually low, very likely indicate impatient boredom; however, the single high results in Mathematics and English that he gained twice, reveal his exceptional intelligence.

Dr. Shackleton reluctantly let him join the mercantile marine after his sixteenth birthday in 1890; later, he was to say that for all the good points of Dulwich, his first year at sea was a better school: he had the leisure to read for hours on end, and memorised long passages of poetry; he was saved from the sea (pulled out by his hair) and experienced a hurricane. Returning to the Great Hall of the College to present the prizes as the man of the hour in July 1909, after the return of his Nimrod expedition, he declared that he had never been so near to the prizes as he had been today. The Dulwich boys used to call him 'Mick', 'Mike' or 'Micky', as he retained traces of an Irish brogue.

Significant further details of local interest about Shackleton's youth was given by Hugh Robert Mill in his *Life of Shackleton* (1923):

*'The story of these days would not be complete without a paragraph of secret history, the revelation of which is no longer an indiscretion. Mike was addicted to playing truant from school, and we may assume that he was versed in the art of plausible excuses both at school and at home. He was the leader of a sworn band, other members of which were Arthur Griffiths ("Griff" for short), Ned Sleep and Chris Kay. With such names they could not help playing at the hunt for hidden treasure on desolate islands, the chosen haunt being a strip of private wood adjoining the railway. Many a long day they spent there, cowering in a hollow under the root of a great tree, speaking in whispers, for might not the next lair hide the lurking shapes of Ben Gunn, Black Dog, old Pew, and even Long John Silver himself? – in that wood in those days time and space, fact and fiction were a continuum of romance. All things there were held in common by the four, and the properties in the drama that was being lived included a revolver with cartridges, an air-gun, a flute, a concertina, and the hull of a large model boat, the rigging and altering of which gave rise to lengthy discussions and very unsatisfactory results. Food was stored up also, for missing school meant doing without dinner, and there was a box of the cheapest cigarettes on the market, which Mike smoked with the best of them, and once when cash was available a bottle of cooking sherry was smuggled in for a grand carouse. This Mike would not touch, and the others long regretted their rashness. All the talk was of adventure, and many a rousing tale of the sea did Mike read aloud to his comrades, all of whom resolved to be sailors; and remarkable as it may appear, all four grew up to follow the sea.'*

Mill's source for all this seems to be from Shackleton himself, who was his friend, as the passage contains many details only found in his book, but confirmation that the strip of private wood was what is now the Reserve with the pond on Silverdale comes from a book of reminiscences written by 'Griff' himself, called *Surrendered: Some Naval War Secrets*, published in 1918, in which he states that 'the safest haunt' of their trauancies, selected by Shackleton himself, was 'a deep hollow in the Silverdale

Woods, where the thick undergrowth obscured all vestige of trespassers. Books on ships and sails found their way into the lair. Sails and flags were stretched taut to the spars of the model ship. Arguments and reference to nautical works occupied weeks and weeks before the little model passed muster. An old wooden box was installed in the hollow to act as a table, where the model was secured for close inspection – and it became the imaginary vessel of their travels'.

The lads, Griff wrote, decided to run away to sea, and set off to London in quest of a ship, but the mate smiled at them and said they were too young. Later they were 'not deserted by the growing call of the sea, and one by one exchanged school caps for the smart badge and buttons of sea service'. The 'cheery lads' all worked in full rigged ships. Shackleton left in the Houghton Tower, a ship of the White Star Line, for Valparaiso in 1890. The three others eventually became officers in ocean liners.

One fascinating element of this truancy is how closely their activities appear to have been a boyish rehearsal for the real drama when Shackleton was marooned on the ice during the *Endurance* expedition after the ship sank, with music (instead of the flute and concertina of Silverdale Woods) from Hussey's banjo, now preserved in the National Maritime Museum; when it was suggested to discard the banjo on account

of its weight, Shackleton insisted it must be kept, as 'vital mental medicine' for the group. The men on the ice took part in smoking and feasts from dwindling stores; they had with them an arsenal, and books; they discussed sails and other nautical matters, and talked about literature.

### Jan Piggott, generously assisted by Steve Grindlay

*Footnote: Steve Grindlay has cleverly established the ages and addresses of the other boys, so that we can imagine them covertly converging on the Silverdale Woods on school days: Arthur 'Griff' Griffith (not Griffiths), born in Sydenham on 12 July 1873, lived at Elmcroft, 15 Recreation Road, on the corner of Silverdale, from 1881 to 1890, on the other side of the road from the Reserve, but not many paces away; he was not a pupil at Dulwich College. Ned Sleep (not 'Sleep'), born at Belvedere in Kent, on 1 July 1870, also lived in Silverdale, at Birch Tor, from 1881-2, and then at 'Homestead', Recreation Road, (either no. 1 or 2) from 1884 to 1891. They then moved to Longton Grove; he was at Dulwich College for four terms only, from September 1884. Chris (actually Christol) Kay, the son of a General Practitioner, was born 17 September 1871. He was at Dulwich College for only one year, in 1880-1. The Kays lived at 48, Crystal Palace Park Road, from 1880 until about 1885 and then moved to 'Darley House', Venner Road, where Dr. Kay had his surgery, until 1891. In the late 1890s the address of 'Darley House' was changed to 14 Sydenham Road; later the house was the Midland Bank, then the HSBC, and is now Pedder Estate Agent. Steve surmises that they probably all met when they attended the small preparatory school, Fir Lodge, which was on the corner of Jews Walk and Kirkdale, though the records have not survived. Shackleton, conspicuously the youngest, was said to be the leader.*



Photo.]

ERNEST HENRY SHACKLETON, AGED 11.

[P. Mitchell.]

## It's Not Grim Up North. A Guide to Pubs and Restaurants on the Northern Stretch of the ELL

### Part 5 – Wapping

#### The Pubs...

In this fifth look at pubs which can be easily reached on the East London Line, we travel to Wapping, a mere twenty minutes from Sydenham station. This may well be the jewel of the East London Line, since it features no fewer than three classic riverside pubs. All are open at lunchtimes as well as evenings.



From the station, walk east along Wapping High Street until you come to the **Prospect of Whitby** (57 Wapping Wall, E1W 3SH). This legendary Victorian pub (named after a sailing ship) reeks of history inside and has a terrace and a courtyard overlooking the Thames. Don't miss the chance to walk down the passage beside the pub, go down onto the beach (not recommended at high tide) and admire the rear of the pub. Several real ales are offered.

Retrace your steps and head away from the river to the **White Swan and Cuckoo** (97 Wapping Lane E1W 2RW). This circa 1920s pub does a very good salt beef sandwich but their Courage Best was mediocre. Even worse, the lovely old wood panelling had all been painted white in a misguided attempt to 'brighten up' the pub, thereby losing all cosiness. Publicans please note: pubs do not need 'brightening up'.

Back on the river front and slightly west is the wonderful **Captain Kidd** (108 Wapping High St, E1W 2NE). The pleasingly dark and atmospheric interior gives every appearance of being ancient but in fact the pub is of relatively recent vintage, having been built in the 1980s. There are splendid river views, and Samuel Smith's Old Brewery Bitter sells at a very reasonable £2.11 a pint.

Head further west still and you will reach the **Town of Ramsgate** (62 Wapping High Street, E1W 2PN), a properly traditional pub offering a cosy atmosphere and a rear courtyard overlooking the river, as well as several real ales. This excellent pub is well worth a visit (or two).

This crawl ends, uncharacteristically, with a recommendation to visit an alcohol-free establishment. Head a few yards 'inland'



to the **Turk's Head Café**, (1 Greenbank, E1W 2QD), a former pub which was saved from demolition when local residents bought it and turned it into a popular café. It is worth seeing for its dramatic tiled exterior and impressive Taylor Walker signage dating from Victorian times: it is a reminder of how wonderful so many back-street boozers used be, and how sad it is that so many are now gone.

Neil Pettigrew, Pub Preservation Officer, South East London CAMRA (Campaign for Real Ale)

#### And a Restaurant...

From the station platform a lift takes you up to street level. Turn right out of the station, following the north bank of the river, you come to Wapping Wall, part tarmac, part cobbled. It's pretty much residential; still some Wharf buildings remain untouched. It's quiet, literally quiet. I know exactly where I am taking you.

However there are treasures to be found. The Prospect of Whitby is one, which I am sure my fellow writer, Neil, will tell you about. Opposite the Prospect of Whitby, on Wapping Wall, is the amazing Wapping Hydraulic Power Station, housing The Wapping Project and I want to take you inside. It's an original power station and it is literally all still there. It is many things: a restaurant, dining space, gallery and a place of beauty.

The building is in two parts. The large grey doors open into a long narrow hall, full height windows along one side. The bar has high stools with picture books and magazines to browse. The bar runs the full length of the building with an open plan kitchen at the far end. The rest of the space, and there really is space, is laid out with smart black tables and white chairs.

Brick arches separate the other side of the building, which houses all the old equipment. You sit amongst the huge green hydraulic equipment. Chains, cranes, huge fuse boxes, pipes, all the workings of the station are there to be seen, as you drink or dine or do both. Mind the huge chain and hook hanging at the top of the stairs that take you down to the underground bathrooms.

It's lit beautifully in the day by natural light and in the evening with candles and a perfect red glow, with background modern music. The gallery space in an adjacent room, also houses a small cinema. A spiral staircase leads to the roof for a river view.

So what can you eat? Well, you can pop in for coffee (they also sell coffee beans), a good range of teas, desserts (pear crumble with amaretto custard, nice), have a drink (Connemara Peated Irish Single Malt) or come for brunch, lunch or dinner.

You won't be disappointed with anything. They serve brunch between 10 and 12.30, lunch between 12 and 3.30 and dinner from 7 to 11. Ham Hock terrine, Hare Saddle with swede and carrot mash will set you back around £25. It's not an everyday place, but for something special, it is special. Service is polite, efficient and friendly.

There is also a small but very cosy bookshop in a glasshouse out front warmed by a wood-burning stove where readings and special events are held. [www.thewappingproject.com](http://www.thewappingproject.com)

Jonathan S Clarke

## EVENTS

## Dates for your Diary

If you have a suggestion for a Syd Soc event please call Jackie Aldridge on 020 8778 5455.

**Thursday 29 December – Post Christmas Stroll** – I am starting from Low Cross Wood Lane, opposite the Dulwich Woodhouse. Join us for our annual post-Christmas stroll through Sydenham Hill Woods, following the usual circular walk and ending with a social drink at the Dulwich Woodhouse. To be led by Alona Sheridan 020 8244 4250. Stout footwear essential.

**Thursday 26 January – Club 26** – 7.30pm. Meet to eat at the ever popular Trattoria Raffaele in Sydenham Road. Phone 020 8778 6262 to reserve your place, mentioning that you belong to Club 26.

**Tuesday 7 February – Quiz Nite** at Golden Lion PH in Sydenham Road, Sydenham Society's popular quarterly Quiz Nite in aid of a local charity. Contact Jackie 020 8778 5455 or Pat 020 8659 4903 to book a table for your team. Individuals are welcome and teams can be formed on the night.

**Sunday 26 February – Club 26** will be visiting The Estorick Collection of Modern Art in Canonbury for lunch. This little known museum is tucked away in Canonbury Square – a 5 minute walk from Highbury and Islington Tube Station. It 'brings together some of the finest and most important works created by Italian artists during the first half of the twentieth century and is Britain's only gallery devoted to modern Italian art' including works by Modigliani and other Modernists. Entrance to the cafe and shop is free, admission to the Gallery is £5. (£3.50 concessions) <http://www.estorickcollection.com/about.php>. Meet at 11.45 a catch the 11.55 Overground Train to Highbury and Islington. Please contact Jackie 020 8778 5455 [jacquelinealdridge@gmail.com](mailto:jacquelinealdridge@gmail.com) or Pat 020 8659 4903 [pattrebath@gmail.com](mailto:pattrebath@gmail.com) if you are coming. If there are engineering works that weekend on the Overground we will have to change our plans and then make alternative lunch arrangements.

### Beckenham Place Park

**Wednesday 7 December** 1.30pm on the Mansion Steps – Mince Pie Walk. A mince pie and a soft drink will be provided on this short, or long, walk dependent on the weather (and the health of the Walk Leader!)

**Conservation Workdays** – second Saturday of each month until March. 10.00am on Mansion steps. Tools and gloves provided for a couple of hours light work including holly and rhododendron control, some de-brambling and possible work in the sensory garden.

## Sydenham Film Club



### Movies on your doorstep

As the dark nights begin to draw in, what better way to enjoy an evening than with friends and family over a glass of wine or beer while watching a film on the big screen? We're not talking about going all the way to the West End to one of the big multiplexes. Why travel for miles when you have the Sydenham Film Club right on your doorstep! Set up earlier this year, the film club provides monthly screenings showing a variety of films from art house, world cinema, classics to the more obscure.

### Next screenings:

**Thursday 15 December – 13 Assassins.** Cult director Takeshi Miike (Ichi the Killer, Audition) delivers a bravado period action film set at the end of Japan's feudal era in which a group of unemployed samurai are enlisted to bring down a sadistic lord and prevent him from ascending to the throne and plunging the country into a war torn future.

**Thursday 19 January – Future Shorts Festival.** Sydenham Film Club brings you the best short films from around the world as part of the Future Short Festival. Six shorts including The Eagleman Stag – a unique 9-minute stop-motion animated film which depicts a man's haunting obsession with the passage of time and his unorthodox relationship with a beetle and Deeper Than Yesterday (Winner of International Short Filmmaking Award at Sundance), which tells the story of a Russian crew who suffer a rather savage form of cabin fever.

**Thursday 16 February – La vie de Jésus.** One of the great debut films of recent times, Bruno Dumont's La vie de Jésus (The Life of Jesus) presents life's brutality and exhilaration played out by turns within the quarters of a tiny Flemish country town. Here, positioned in relative isolation from the rest of so-called cultural Europe, the connections between individuals will take on a physical power inflected by boredom, by desperation, and by urges as raw as the earth.

**All screenings start at 7.30 pm at Golden Lion Pub, 116 Sydenham Road. £5 on the door. For more information go to: [www.facebook.com/sydenhamfilmclub](http://www.facebook.com/sydenhamfilmclub) or visit our website at [www.sydenhamfilmclub.org](http://www.sydenhamfilmclub.org)**

## 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)	£8.00/£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 £8/£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: 020 8778 4318 Email: [membership@sydenhamsociety.com](mailto:membership@sydenhamsociety.com)



## Forest Hill Pools update

Work goes on apace, the construction programme is on time, and the new pools have been filled during the testing period so that any leaks can be identified. The building should be weathertight by December and then internal works can begin. Work has also begun on restoring the original Victorian Superintendent's House frontage.

On October 28 a 'Topping Out' ceremony was held with Mark Tant, Managing Director of developers Willmott Dixon Construction being joined by Mayor, Sir Steve Bullock, Cllr Chris Best (Cabinet member for Communities) and Ivan Parkinson, Financial Director of Fusion Lifestyle, the successful bidders to run Lewisham's Leisure services. A symbolic mixture of red wine, salt, oil and corn was poured into a prepared recess and used to mark this stage of the development.

As Willmott Dixon explained, "Topping Out is a ceremony that marks the structural completion of a building and is performed to ensure there are no evil spirits trapped in the



Topping out ceremony

building when the envelope is sealed, and that prosperity and good luck for the future will ensue.

It takes place when the highest point of the building is reached and provides an opportunity for the client, consultants and workforce to toast the success of the building.

In Saxon times, a yew tree branch was placed on the uppermost part of the building. This originates from the roof gardens that were popular thousands of years ago in Persia and were the last point of the building to be constructed. The trees were essential for shade and so were regarded as a symbol that the building was complete and ready for occupation.

Wine, oil, corn and salt were sprinkled on the roof once the tree was planted. The wine symbolised fertility and wisdom, the oil – liberty and prosperity, the corn – ripen prosperity into abundance, and the salt – purity and hospitality.

Around the world, topping out celebrations vary widely. However diverse the celebrations, all usually involve food, drink and a toast to the success of the project and workforce so far."

Completion is due late spring with the new leisure facility re-opening to the public in September 2012.



Main pool

### WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

#### A warm welcome to the following new members:

Jennifer Blake	Pen Else	Paul Newton
Andrew Budd	Siri Lowe	Jane Preston
Vanessa Collier	Mr & Mrs Lillywhite	Carlos Viudez
Mrs Valerie Crozier	Jennifer Lucas	Mrs Beulah Walker
Mrs Eames	Miss D L Metcalfe	Gerald Wiles

I have now attempted to contact all members whose subscriptions are outstanding for 2011. If they have not already done so, would these members please let me have their subscriptions as soon as possible. All members are reminded that subscriptions for 2012 are due in January.

**Roger Feather, Treasurer Tel: 020 8778 4318 Email: [membership@sydenhamsociety.com](mailto:membership@sydenhamsociety.com)**

### POSTAL MEMBERS

Due to the considerable increase in the cost of postage over the last few years we regret that we have to ask postal members – those living outside our hand-delivered areas (SE26, SE23 and SE6) to pay an additional £2 towards the cost of the quarterly newsletter.

The Society has over the past few years been subsidising the cost of postage, which has remained at £1 since at least 2005! We hope that the rise of £2 will be sufficient to cover further postal increases, which will no doubt occur in the next year or so. From January 2012 the annual cost of the quarterly newsletter, including postage, will therefore be £8 (£7 concs).

