

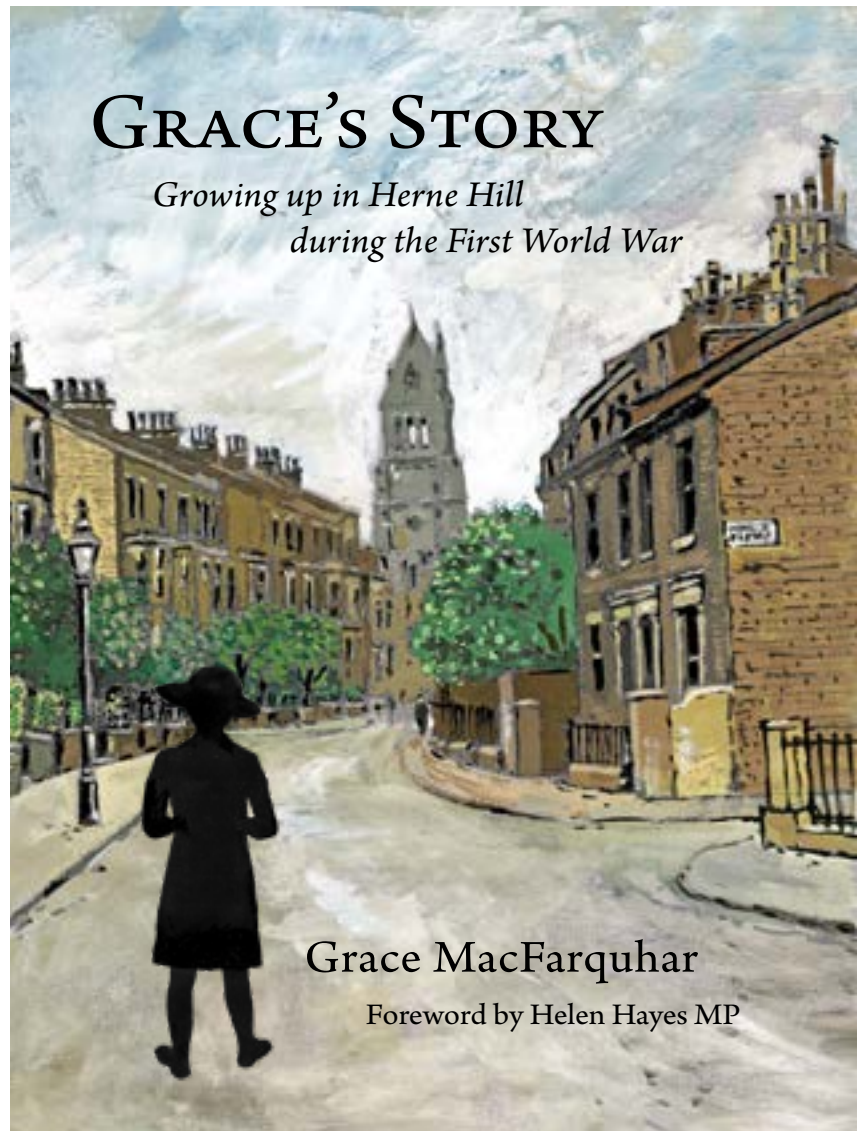
# HERNE HILL

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HERNE HILL SOCIETY ♣ ISSUE 144 ♣ Winter ♣ 2018 ♣ £2.50

## A LOCAL GIRL'S MEMORIES OF ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

*Society publishes  
new book*

► *Turn to page 5*



PARROTS &  
HEDGEHOGS

► *See page 16*

RETURN OF  
RAILTON ROAD SHOPS

► *See page 3*

LIVE MUSIC AT OFF THE CUFF

► *Turn to page 14*



# The Magazine of the Herne Hill Society



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## CONTENTS

Railton Road shops reborn	3
Station Square gets new plaque	4
Spooktacular fun in Station Square	4
Grace's Story	5
Herne Hill Welcomes Refugees – an update	5
The Hamlet is coming home	6
Old Dairy for sale	6
Society subscriptions to go up	7
Roger Humbles retires	7
Sunday 11 November	7
Diary of events	9
The impeccable timing of Amelia Clarkson	9
Planning and Licensing	10
Grafton Hall seeks plaque	10
Velodrome award	10
Underpass and upstairs at the station	11
Remembering all the Harrys	12
Underneath the Arches	14
Central London bus services consultation	15
... and more than 60 years earlier	15
Parrots & Hedgehogs from Doodles & Scribbles	16
The Peabody Estate at Rosendale Road	17
Violence in Dulwich	18

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# Railton Road shops reborn (up to a point)

The parade of old shop units at the end of Railton Road, tucked alongside and under the railway arches and the railway bridge, closed for business in 2016. Planning permission for the much-needed redevelopment had been granted in September 2015 (yes, 2015!), subject to finalising some detailed



October 2017

requirements about the restored shop fronts being compatible with neighbouring traditional façades (see Magazine issue 133/Winter 2015). Network Rail finally gained vacant possession of the whole site in September 2016; the units were boarded up in January 2017 to allow the project to start. As we all remember, some businesses were rehoused, and indeed now seem to prosper in their new premises; others opted to close.

Since then, the work has dragged on. And on. Evidently the ground floor and upper floors of these 19th-century structures were less sound than their landlords had expected, and more fundamental refurbishment was required, including the removal of invasive buddleia roots, and then hazardous asbestos. And just this year, there was alarm and a further setback over the reported requirement to find a home for an electricity sub-station to serve the new businesses. We are still in the dark about how this might be resolved but at least the Flower Lady's business was saved, after a vigorous local campaign.

Now at last some shops have emerged from their gestation.



November 2018



December 2015

There are three cheerfully-painted retail premises hunting new tenants (having temporarily attracted pop-up traders in the run-up to Christmas). And there are flats on the upper floors. The shop fronts, though brand new, have been finished with traditional details, to harmonise with other shops in the area as the planners required.



February 2018

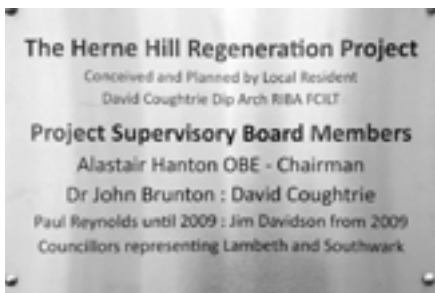
But the section closest to the railway bridge, which includes a double-fronted trading space that might accommodate a restaurant, is still in limbo and boarded up. Network Rail tell us that this will be completed and released in a second phase. No one is saying how long that might be.

Has it all been worth it? The new premises are attractively finished – on the outside – and if they can attract the right tenants who are able to run viable businesses, they ought to be warmly welcomed. Network Rail deserve credit for their perseverance. The new units smarten up the neighbourhood, for sure. The only snag is that they make some of the other businesses in Station Square look a bit shabby by comparison.

**Pat Roberts**



## Station Square gets new plaque



Memories of the area now known to most people as “Station Square” are fading fast. Should we be nostalgic – about all that noise, the traffic fumes, the rows of minicabs, the danger of being run down by a bus? We have surely benefited immeasurably from

the Regeneration Project that banished these woes and gave us a pedestrian-friendly village centre at the heart of Herne Hill.

Eight years ago, on 4 December 2010, a commemorative plaque was unveiled on the wall of Brockwell Art Services at 232-234 Railton Road to commemorate the inauguration of the Project. This has now been joined by a second plaque acknowledging the local community members of the Project Board, without whose hard work and dedication it is doubtful whether the Project would ever have got off the ground.

Our picture shows (from the left): Jim Davidson, Brockwell Art Services, who

provided an important link with the local Herne Hill traders; David Coughtrie, architect, project designer and developer of the original concept; Alastair Hanton, Chair of the Project Board; and John Brunton. Missing is Paul Reynolds, a founder Project Board member, who sadly died in 2009 but who made many important contributions to the Project.



## Spooktacular fun in Station Square

For the sixth year in a row the Herne Hill Forum ran a Herne Hill Halloween party in Station Square. There were 10 stalls offering activities for children, including a ghost hunt, monster cookie decoration, spooky crafting, a mini-cinema and an unlucky dip – as well as a Halloween-themed disco by Jessica Sparkles, amazing magic shows by Amigos Magic, a little children’s play area run by Apple Tree Café and, of course, the fantastic face painter Snezana Kairos.



This year saw our biggest ever turnout with about 1,000 ghosts and ghouls coming! It was wonderful to see so many families have a lovely time on Halloween in a safe

and fun environment. The Herne Hill Halloween Party has always been, and will continue to be, free, with the Forum fundraising to keep it that way. This is why I volunteered to lead the project. This event is only possible because of the generosity of the volunteers who helped on the night and the many local businesses who supported us. This year we received a grant from the Field Day and Mighty Hoopla Community Fund which covered half the costs,

and of course we had the brilliant Alison Gibbs helping to organise everything.

In over two hours of ghoulishly good fun, 350 prizes were given out from the goo of the unlucky dip (thanks to Tales on Moon Lane for donating that), 150 people completed the ghost hunt challenge (thanks to Kinder Lala for helping us source the prizes) and 300 biscuits were decorated in a suitably creepy fashion, (thanks to Sweet Carolina). Great fun was had by all!

A big thankyou to so many people who helped to make this event a success.

**Sián Dragonetti**



## GRACE'S STORY

The convenience of publishing via the internet rather than in printed form is not in doubt. However, the Society still sees a distinct value in the printed page and placing a physical object into readers' hands – as evidenced by our quarterly Magazine. But the Society is also proud of its record as a regular publisher over the last 20 years of books about our area. We are therefore delighted to add to that record with the publication of a wholly new title, *Grace's Story: Growing up in Herne Hill during the First World War*. The book is a result of the research undertaken in the course of the project that has played such an important role in the Society's activities over the last year. One of the many men from our area who lost his life in the war was Staff Serjeant Fred Lucas of the Royal Garrison Artillery. He lived with his wife Charlotte and their five children in Kemerton Road. We found out that his eldest child, Grace, had written a memoir at the end of her life covering the period 1913 to 1922.

Grace's father was killed in France in 1916 in the Battle of the Somme. How the family dealt with this blow, everyday life in South London, escapes to the countryside while London was under attack from the air, Grace's thwarted hopes of going to art college – these and many other events are described with compassion and humour. Grace was an intelligent and imaginative child and her account has an exceptionally vivid quality. Her story offers a rare insight into the life of a London family 100 years ago.

The book contains 43 illustrations and detailed notes.

The Society is especially grateful to two grand-daughters of Fred Lucas, Elizabeth Sirriyeh and Frankie Maclean, who made our "discovery" possible and who have assisted us in every way in the painstaking process of publication.



*Grace at the age of 22*

### GRACE'S STORY

*Growing up in Herne Hill during the First World War*

Grace MacFarquhar

Edited by Laurence Marsh and Colin Wight

Foreword by Helen Hayes MP

ISBN 978-0-9540323-3-3

£8.00 + £1.50 per copy P&P when buying online from the Society

[www.hernehillsociety.org.uk/bookstall](http://www.hernehillsociety.org.uk/bookstall)

## Herne Hill Welcomes Refugees – an update

Thanks to amazing local support, a refugee family will be joining us in Herne Hill before the year's end. Herne Hill Welcomes Refugees' application was approved by the Home Office in the autumn, a year since the first public meeting. Almost immediately, a family was selected by the United Nation's refugee wing, choosing from those most vulnerable and in need of resettlement. The family are originally from Iraq and are currently living in Lebanon.

Now everyone is working flat out to get their house ready, fully furnished



and with everything the family will need – from cooking pots and spices to blankets and toys. If you'd like to donate, the group has set up a list.

Rachel Griffiths, who has chaired Herne Hill Welcomes Refugees, commented: "We're all so excited to welcome the family. There's been a flurry of activity, from rotas for interpreters and befrienders to people decorating the house and talking to schools".

*To get involved, please email*  
[hhwelcomesrefugees@gmail.com](mailto:hhwelcomesrefugees@gmail.com)



## The Hamlet's coming home

There was an outburst of relief and delight at the announcement on 23 October that Dulwich Hamlet Football Club (DHFC) will, after all, be able to return to Champion Hill, its historic home, from which they were excluded earlier this year by the ground's new owners, international real estate investors Meadow Partners.

Talks between the Club, the Supporters' Trust, Southwark Council and Meadow Partners had laid the basis for a successful meeting on 22 October chaired by the then Sports Minister Tracey Crouch MP (who later resigned from government). The meeting was also attended by local MPs Helen Hayes and Harriet Harman, who had been supportive of the Club's campaign.

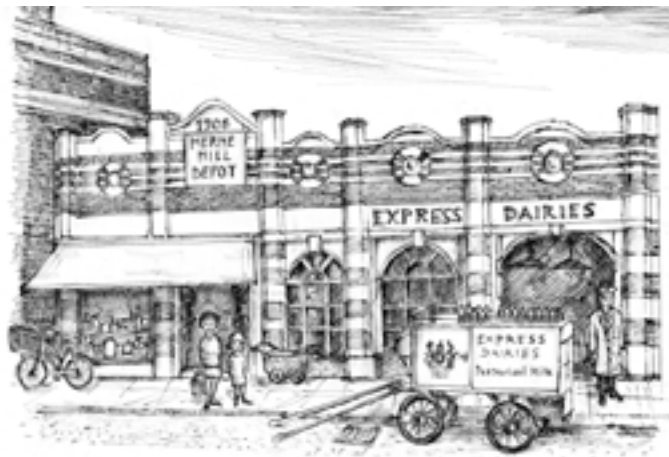
The joint statement following this meeting explains that the Club will be granted a new lease from Southwark Council on the neighbouring Greendale Astro turf pitch, alongside a lease on the original Champion Hill site granted to the club by Meadow Partners. Both leases have an 18-month term and include a one-year rolling extension provision. The Club will also be able to retain match-day income, bar takings and catering proceeds to help re-establish their financial viability. Meadow Partners reportedly also agreed to loan the Hamlet £50,000 to ease its current financial situation.

Meadow Partners remain owners of the original football ground, and clearly still hope to persuade Southwark to grant them planning permission to build apartments there. So in the long run it looks as though the Club will end up playing their matches on the artificial pitch. But in the meantime the Council has agreed not to progress activity on a compulsory purchase order for the duration of the Club's short-term lease at Champion Hill.

The Club has completed the work required to prepare the ground and, as we were going to press, it is expected that the first home fixture will be in late December.

**Pat Roberts**

Old Dairy



for Sale

*The dairy as it might have looked in its heyday*

From 1906 there was, for 75 years, an Express Dairies depot and shop in Rosendale Road. At the rear were stables for the horse-drawn milk carts. It later became a warehouse for a Chinese food distributor. But for many years now it has been largely redundant with the building and its attractive façade becoming increasingly dilapidated. In 2012 Lambeth gave it locally-listed status.

Six years ago, prompted by the failure to exploit its potential, the Society began a campaign to encourage redevelopment. We held a number of meetings with the owners, with Lambeth officers and councillors and with the Peabody Estate, owners of the adjoining blocks of flats. Architect's plans

showed the potential for 22 two-bedroom flats on the site, with commercial use on the ground floor. The attractive façade would

be retained. Sadly the owners appeared unwilling to sell the property, though buddleia and other plants (which have since returned) were removed from the façade and some repainting carried out.

After that nothing much happened. But the good news is that the property is now advertised for sale – asking price £2.45 million for the 0.095 hectare site. Hopefully we may soon be seeing the long-awaited development of this site to provide much needed homes and opportunities for local businesses.



*The old dairy today*

**John Brunton**



# Society Subscriptions to go up



In our Autumn 2018 issue we advised members that we would be increasing subscription prices, which have remained at the same level for the last seven years. We hope you will agree that membership of the Society still represents good value.

## Revised rates for 2019

<b>Household membership</b>	£10 (up from £8) *
<b>Concessions</b>	£8 (up from £6)
<b>Life membership</b>	£100 (up from £75, <i>but of course this rate only applies to new Life members</i> )
<b>Corporate membership</b>	£25 (no increase, <i>but with two rather than three copies of each magazine</i> )

\* 2018 rates in brackets

We have looked at the rates charged by neighbouring local societies, and nearly all charge £10 a year or more.

## What should members do now?

A Membership form should be included with this magazine. If you pay by Standing Order, please complete the Standing Order section with the new rate and return it to me.

**Val Suebsaeng**

**Membership Secretary**

**The Herne Hill Society**

**PO Box 27845**

**London SE24 9XA**

**membership@hernehillsociety.org.uk**

We'd also be grateful if you would kindly complete the Gift Aid section. I will then send the form to your bank.

If you prefer to pay by cheque, then please note the new rates. We encourage members to pay annually via our website, the new rates will come into force automatically. Just go to [www.hernehillsociety.org.uk/HHS\\_store](http://www.hernehillsociety.org.uk/HHS_store)

*We appreciate your support!*

**NHS**

**Get your prescription medicines before the Christmas holidays start**

Especially if you are 65 or over, or have a long term health condition.

If you start to feel unwell, even if it's just a cough or a cold, seek advice from your pharmacist before it gets more serious.

**STAY WELL THIS WINTER**

[nhs.uk/staywell](http://nhs.uk/staywell)

## Roger Humbles retires

The Charlie Parker / Stan Getz / John Coltrane (take your pick) of Herne Hill has hung up his white coat, or whatever it is that pharmacists hang up.

Roger Humbles, two years ago the poster boy of a national NHS campaign, ran the Fourway Pharmacy in Half Moon Lane for two decades. Most people in Herne Hill will be aware that he is also a talented jazz saxophonist, having played at Ronnie Scott's and the Royal Festival Hall and toured with his own quartet.

Roger and Head's Up can be heard on Monday evenings at Off the Cuff, where they are the house band.

More about this venue on page 14.



## SUNDAY 11 NOVEMBER 2018

Our picture shows the team responsible for leading the project Remembering Herne Hill 1914-18, photographed in the Station Hall on Sunday 11 November after the Armistice Centenary commemoration in Station Square. They were joined for this photograph by Councillor Becca Thackray, who brought a wreath with white poppies.

From the left: John Conway, Colin Wight, Becca Thackray, Dan Townsend and Laurence Marsh.

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# DIARY OF EVENTS

## Winter 2018/19

For more information please check our website, Facebook page or Twitter.

*Unless otherwise stated, Herne Hill Society meetings will be at Herne Hill United Church Hall, at 7:30 (doors open) for 7:45pm.*

*Please try to arrive before the speaker is introduced.*

### Talks

**Wednesday 12 December, 7:45pm**

**“Remembering Herne Hill 1914-18”**

**Speakers from the Herne Hill Society**

A celebration of our Lottery-Funded First World War project and launch of our new book, *Grace’s Story*, the memoir of a young girl growing up in Kemerton Road during and after the war.

Herne Hill Baptist Church, Half Moon Lane

**Wednesday 16 January, 7:45pm**

**“Vesta Tilley and Her World”**

**Keith Fawkes and Richard Norman**

An illustrated talk with film clips about the life of Vesta Tilley (1864-1952). Miss Tilley was a legendary male impersonator, recognised as one of the most successful performers of her generation. She lived for some years at 56

Tulse Hill. She helped to recruit soldiers during World War I, and introduced many popular songs, notably “Burlington Bertie”.

**Wednesday 13 February, 7:45pm**

**“Stories from Remembering Herne Hill”**

**Dan Hill**

Dan Hill looks at some of the surprising and often tragic stories that we uncovered during the course of our First World War project. Dan is a military historian who works as a battlefield guide across Europe and as a historical consultant and researcher.

**Wednesday 13 March, 7:45pm**

**Annual General Meeting of the Society**

**followed by**

**“Brockwell Park Community Greenhouses”**

A representative of BPCG will talk about this innovative scheme.

## The Impeccable Timing of Amelia Clarkson

**B**ring Back Big Ben! is a new 45-minute musical commissioned by the Herne Hill Festival for St Saviour’s Church of England Primary School, and premiered on 11 October at St Saviour’s Hall. Amelia Clarkson was originally invited to write a piece for October 2019, but – in a major change of plan – found herself having to come up with an adventure story and music for children in just two months. In fact, the score was only delivered in September. There certainly wasn’t time for second thoughts.

“Big Ben feels unwanted and decides it’s time he took a long-overdue holiday. How will London cope when the bells go silent?” At the 22-year-old composer’s disposal was a class of 30 Year-5 pupils. Clearly there are challenges involved in writing music for a mixed ability class of nine-year olds, but Amelia quickly realised

that the key was to work with the syllabus and make good use of what the children already knew. So she observed the class before beginning work in earnest. For



*Amelia Clarkson*

example, they had studied France, Egypt, and the Antarctic. They liked to show off the facts and figures they had absorbed – and had a lot of fun doing so. The result was a triumph, thoroughly enjoyed by the children, their parents and the packed

audience. The performance was directed by Geraldine Garner, and accompanied by Andrew Chadney. The musical directors were Miss Atkinson and Music Festival founder Alan Taylor, with choreography by Alex Mavolwane and costumes by Clare Dunne and Nicky Somerville-Jones.

Northern Ireland-born Amelia is a graduate of the School of Music at Cardiff University and is currently studying for her MA in composition at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance in Greenwich. What’s next for the talented Ms Clarkson? She is excited to be writing *Beacon of Hope*, a 12-minute orchestral work for the Pro Youth Philharmonia, to be performed in Blackheath before going on tour next January. She is also working on a dramatic vocal piece about Reggie and Frances Kray.

Bring Back Big Ben! was sponsored by the Herne Hill Society. **Colin Wight**

## PLANNING & LICENSING

**The Society's planning group has commented on the following:**

**Lambeth 18/02703/FUL, 20 Milkwood Road**

We objected to a proposed conversion of ground floor shop premises to residential accommodation on grounds of the poor design of the conversion. Lambeth have refused permission.

**Lambeth 18/03956/G24, Telecoms mast Dorchester Court**

We objected to a mast that would be sited in front of the Dorchester Court flats, on grounds of its inappropriate position in the context of the Grade II listed building and the potential damage to the protected plane tree very close to the mast. There were no less than 72 other objections. Lambeth have refused permission.

**Lambeth 18/03956/FUL, 32 Spenser Road**

We objected to a proposed front dormer that was of excessive width and out of character with neighbouring houses and damaging to the Poets Corner conservation area. Lambeth have refused permission.

**Lambeth 18/03815/FUL, former St Jude's Vicarage, Dulwich Road**

We objected to a proposed garden studio, on grounds that the planning website showed no assessment of the impact on the Brockwell Park conservation area, and in particular the effect of the removal of trees and other screening vegetation in terms of views from the Park.

**Lambeth 18/04123/FUL, 65 Milton Road**

We objected to a mansard roof extension to a house in the Poets Corner conservation area on grounds of the inappropriate mansard design and we drew attention to the failure to remedy grossly unsympathetic alterations to the property in the past.

**Dee Dee's, 77 Herne Hill**

A representative from the Society's planning group attended a hearing of Southwark's Licensing Sub-Committee on 4 October, to reiterate our objection to an extension of licensing hours for the premises by one hour on Fridays and Saturdays. The Sub-Committee granted the extension, despite this appearing to run counter to Southwark's policy with regard to such premises in residential areas.

**Laurence Marsh**



## Grafton Hall seeks plaque

Among the seven nominees this year for Southwark blue plaques are Bob Burgess and Doreen Freeman. They were world professional dance champions in the 1960s and for almost 30 years ran the Grafton dance hall in Village Way. More about this unusual institution here [www.dulwichsociety.com/2011-autumn/654-grafton-hall](http://www.dulwichsociety.com/2011-autumn/654-grafton-hall). Herne Hill has only one Southwark blue plaque (to Sam King at Warmington Road) and it would be good to see another. Anyone is entitled to vote and you can do so by emailing [news@southwarknews.co.uk](mailto:news@southwarknews.co.uk) or [admin@southwark.org.uk](mailto:admin@southwark.org.uk). We understand voting ends in mid-February.

## Velodrome award

Structural engineers Heyne Tillet Steel have received a prestigious 2018 award from the Institution of Structural Engineers for their work on the Herne Hill Velodrome. They won in the category for Small Projects (of between £1–3 million). The outstanding Velodrome pavilion is a good example of how the architect's vision needs the engineer's skill to render that vision a reality.



# Underpass and Upstairs at the Station – what’s afoot ...

You may be wondering what’s happening with the Mural World Record attempt on 12 September (featured in the last issue of this Magazine). We believe we well and truly broke the record, as – with 2332 participants – we went far beyond the previous record, but we’re awaiting verification from the Guinness team. We’ve sent them the video footage from the day, along with our witness



has continued in the hall above Herne Hill Station, because the work done on one day in September came nowhere near actually completing the huge mural.

Led by the mural’s creator Victor Szepešsy, a small band of loyal volunteers, including Victor’s wife

Emma, has been helping to complete the 40 -metre-long painting. They have put in countless hours for the past few weeks in order to finish the painting. Also present throughout, has been the Szepešsy dachshund, Spencer, who makes more than one appearance in the mural.

It had been planned to have a grand unveiling on Sunday 25 November – along with the other elements that will be installed in the new-look underpass (exhibition boards, noticeboards etc.). Unfortunately, technical problems intervened. We can only use a type of glue which doesn’t corrode the fabric on which the mural is painted and the glue must be used at 18 degrees or over to enable it to cure and harden. We looked into the feasibility of closing the underpass and heating it for a few days but baulked at the logistics. We are now hoping it will be possible to mount the mural on boards in the upstairs Station Hall, where temperature can be controlled. The boards can then be fixed to the underpass wall.

As for Station Hall, the Herne Hill Forum has secured development funding from the Mayor’s Office to run trial activities until March 2019. If we can prove



strong demand and the case for turning it into a permanent community asset at the heart of Herne Hill, we can apply for more



*Victor and Emma with Spencer*

statements and written evidence so that they can make their official verdict. While they pore over the evidence, artwork



*Lots to do!*



*Rolling up*

substantive capital funding to undertake vital works, such as installing a lift. We have already met with potential users of the space and have a draft programme shaping up. The Forum would love to hear your ideas and talk to you if you have a use in mind – whether permanent, regular or one-off...

**Lucy Reynolds**



*Ready for temporary storage*





*Peabody Estate memorial*

Private Harry Reynolds died in France on 29 October 1914, aged 25. As a career soldier, his service was undistinguished. He appears in the army records only when he lost



*Poppies by local artist Mary Rodríguez*

his equipment and slipped cigarettes to prisoners he was supposed to be guarding. Harry, who



*One of the St Paul's panels*

joined up at the age of 14, was 4ft 11, with defective eyesight. This short, unremarkable soldier left no family behind. There is no grave for Harry.

I found his story as part of a fantastic community history project in Herne Hill, the leafy corner of South London in which I live. The Herne Hill Society, in partnership with The Charter School and local volunteers, undertook a project to map the men and women connected to Herne Hill who were killed in the First World War. The team believe that as many as 700 local residents were killed. On my street alone, there were five telegrams delivered, five families left bereft. The team has unearthed many heart-breaking stories, including a family which lost its three sons. But somehow, Harry's story is the one that has lingered. As historical writers, the lives we focus on tend to be the ones that are significant: either because they are remarkable, or they are important, or they fit the narrative pattern we're seeking to impose.

Harry's story brings no clarity to the greater picture. It adds nothing but a single digit to an unbelievably large number. The mud of France cracked open, swallowed Harry, and sealed again. Most of us will be invisible to posterity and to be troubled by that lack of significance is pompous and hubristic. But most of us will be mourned by someone. Perhaps Harry had friends in the army who missed him. Perhaps poor, short, squinty Harry had a girl at home.

As the veterans of the World Wars die of old age, we need new ways to remember the Harrys. The map that this history project has created is hugely powerful. Children, in particular, need specific stories of flesh and blood people, not

numbers, to force them to remember. They were fascinated and appalled by the names of soldiers who had lived on our streets. The specificity gave them a sense of scale and made them really think about the lives of the fallen men.

We talk of bringing history to life through non-fiction. To do that demands a recognition of the commonality of human experience. The past for instances of difference.

But London, much as I love it, is a hotchpotch place which consists of a mosaic of commonality. People pass through it but don't connect. Most of us are in our own little villages. Most of us, too, are not Londoners. We don't have that sense of belonging. We make Remembrance Sunday a day of national mourning. I remember, in particular, being in Norfolk for one Remembrance Day. The surnames of the fallen were told to us, doubtless, in the records of men and women who live, secluded in our



*The Society's display boards*

# REMEMBERING ALL THE HARRYS

pathy. My older children  
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ce Sunday service, and the  
he names on the graves and,  
marriages and baptisms. We  
our overpriced houses and

disconnected to our past. We are ancestor-  
less.

I was thinking about this, as I watched a  
friend's 10-year-old find the story of a man  
who grew up in the house next door to  
her: Lieutenant John Hood. John was born  
in Herne Hill, and baptised in the church  
attached to my kids' old school. He studied  
at Cambridge, and was beginning a career  
as a teacher, before enlisting. He joined the  
29th Siege Battery in France in November  
1916 and for the next two years fought in  
Belgium and France. John Hood survived  
the German guns, but caught influenza on  
11 November 1918, and died three days  
later in France.

One hundred years after John Hood  
caught influenza, the team behind the  
Memorial project organised a two-minute  
silence in the centre of Herne Hill during  
the usually busy Sunday market. We  
stood amid the veg-sellers and the artisan

butchers, the smell drifting past  
from the cheese stall; the fat  
from the burgers spitting and the  
steam rising from the giant vat  
of tartiflette. Kids and dogs and  
hungover youngsters clutching  
coffees. All the busyness of a  
London Sunday. Then a teenager  
(Walter Feeny) from The Charter School  
played *The Last Post*, and we all fell still.

There is a particular intensity to a silence that  
falls on a busy London street. I found it deeply  
moving – all these decent, unremarkable  
strangers standing together. It gave me a  
much-needed dose of optimism. I have been  
dispirited of late by the mood music of public  
life, and its combative, fearful timbre. We seem  
to be more frightened than I can remember,  
more growlingly convinced of the coming  
apocalypse. Frightened people who feel  
powerless find anger easy.

We have different visions of the peril: for  
some it is Trump and Brexit, and the rise of  
the right; for others Corbyn and a resurgent



*Walter Feeny from The Charter School*

Marxism. Then there's the climate. The decline of the  
US and the rise of a more brutal Chinese hegemony.  
The coming of artificial intelligence. Putin gurning at  
Europe's growing chaos. The likelihood that future  
generations will, at best, be poorer than us; at worst, face  
horrors that we cannot imagine. There's a competitive  
edge to the catastrophising – my vision is more true and  
more terrifying than yours. We are strangers, gawping at  
a pick 'n mix of dystopian futures.

I keep telling myself that there is an impulse in  
humans to anticipate an imminent Armageddon. True,  
yesterday's silence reminded me that, sometimes, we  
are right and the Horsemen do sweep in and scythe  
us down. But it also reminded me that within all the  
tremulous cacophony of modern British life, there can  
also exist two minutes of meaningful silence.

**Antonia Senior**



*at Herne Hill Station*



# UNDERNEATH THE ARCHES – LIVE MUSIC AT OFF THE CUFF

The days when British rock bands ruled the world have probably gone. For now, at least. But there is still a pulsating live music scene in British cities, especially here in London. There are labels and promoters hungry to discover and develop new talent. Oh, and since you ask, fear not: there is still money – sometimes incredible amounts of it – to be made by successful bands and singers, and their managements.

But before an independent band or singer can expect to perform a profitable gig at big live music venues or on the important festival circuit, they need to gain confidence, experience and recognition in a smaller, less threatening environment. So where might that happen? Here, in Herne Hill, is one place where it might happen.

Off The Cuff (OTC to its friends) is a live music bar in the heart of Herne Hill, offering an array of events throughout the week. It's based in two cavernous but sound-proofed railway arches next to the station, which used to be a timber yard and then stood empty until Tony Porter took it over nearly four years ago and realised his dream of running an independent venue.

Now, amazingly, OTC hosts events, sometimes in both venues simultaneously, pretty well every evening of the week and is often open at other times for coffee and drinks. The decor and environment is comfortable and deliberately informal, even artfully random – definitely more Shoreditch or Bermondsey than Wigmore Street or today's disappointingly scrubbed-up Soho. It feels totally at home here in Herne Hill.



*Tony Porter*

This has created a welcoming place for independent musical acts (and some stand-up comedians too) to play to a relaxed sympathetic crowd. Tony Porter is committed to encouraging young musicians who want to showcase their talent at the start of their playing careers, as well as acts with an established local or wider reputation. The business model is deliberately non-exploitative. Hiring out the

location to private parties, filming and corporate events goes a long way to paying the overheads; audiences attending the paying gigs contribute only a modest door fee to cover technical expenses; bar takings do the rest.



*Tony Porter on the mural*

## **Junior Open Mic**

The same positive approach to emerging talent has led OTC, working with Andy Gray, to support and host the local Junior Open Mic project. Performers (aged between four and 12) can include singers, poets, duets, beatboxers, guitarists, drummers, trumpeters, pianists, ukulele and recorder players.

The series is organised and supported by local parents, who are keen to make Junior Open Mics

a regular occurrence and use the opportunity to nurture young people's confidence in performance. As reported by the Herne Hill Forum, Andy Gray explains the thinking behind Junior Open Mic: "We're treating it as a next step beyond performing in the living room - which many kids love to do but then stop when self-awareness kicks in. So we want to make performances as pressure free as possible, acknowledge bravery and ensure every performer feels as special as possible."

## **Growing reputation**

All this energy and activity means that OTC attracts a following from all across London and from overseas. This in turn continues to bring useful business to Herne Hill's caterers, restaurants, coffee bars and pubs. As for the music – Tony is only half joking when he says "Somebody asked me today what OTC offered our bands in terms of sound and equipment. My off-the-cuff remark was 'It's the Cavern Club of South London.'" A cheeky challenge to the Liverpool venue that was once thought of as the centre of the pop world and where the Beatles were discovered by Brian Epstein, but now seems to trade on nostalgic Beatles-themed events.

So the early days of struggling for recognition have given way to a wide and growing reputation which attracts regular audiences without constant paid publicity. OTC was Winner of "Best Bars" in Time Out's Love London Awards 2015, and was nominated one of the top five indie music venues in London.

And as for those residents who are sorry that the resurrected Half Moon pub did not turn out to be the regular home of live music as celebrated in former times – well, they can be content that Herne Hill now has a venue that is totally committed to encouraging live music pretty well every day of the week.

## **The Green Parrot**

Across Station Square, the Green Parrot restaurant (formerly trading as Fish & Wine) is now also run by Tony Porter, and its unconventional combination of classic breakfasts and brunches, morphing into cocktails and vibrant authentic Thai food in the evenings, seems to have hit the spot for many visitors and residents.

**Pat Roberts**

**offthecuffbar.com also on Facebook and Twitter: @CBarSE24  
thegreenparrotlondon.com and Twitter @greenparrotse24**



# Central London Bus Services Consultation

Over recent years London Buses have been adjusting their central London routes to respond to increased pressures for pedestrian priority, and to reduce frequency or curtail underused route sections where parallel

routes are available. Last year, in an exercise to reduce bus congestion in the Oxford Street area, several routes were adjusted. This was undertaken with the introduction of the Hopper bus fare, which allows bus passengers to switch buses without paying a second time. That is, reducing little used through routes and making some passengers change between buses.

In October 2018 London Buses launched another set of proposed central London bus route changes (mainly but not exclusively reductions). These proposals are informed by the traditional “Keypoints” manual sample passenger surveys at important interchanges, and now can also use the detailed data available from Oyster transactions.

Bus services have the advantage of being

easily adjusted to respond to traffic and patronage issues, and London Buses now have more data available for analysis. Overall central London bus patronage has been declining in recent years, and is expected to decline further with the

will have a negligible effect on Herne Hill passengers, although they will need to walk a few metres down Whitehall to reach the new bus route starting point.

The 172 route is proposed to be severely curtailed, stopping at the Aldwych



rather than continuing to Clerkenwell Green. This should result in a more regular service between central London and the south.

The relatively low-frequency 171 route is proposed to be severely curtailed, stopping at the Elephant and Castle rather than continuing to Holborn, with the passengers

introduction of the Elizabeth Line. The current proposed package for consultation covers the central London portions of 34 individual bus routes, which have been analysed in 13 groups, and is expected to save some £12 million per year.

Investigation of buses in the Whitehall and Westminster Bridge area concluded that the number 3 bus route could be curtailed slightly, to avoid using Trafalgar Square, and will take over some of the passengers from a shortened route 53. This

transferring to the 68 and 188 routes. This should reinforce the role of the 68 service and protect it from future adjustments.

The general explanation of the changes appears thoughtful and sensible. The approach is a proper part of gradual adjustment to bus routes to respond to changes, and tidies up several loose ends of bus services in central London. With increasing pressure on London Buses finances, the process can be expected to be repeated elsewhere. **Bil Harrison**

Our thanks to Martin Sharpe for allowing us to use this photograph. Martin is a Streatham-based photographer. See more here [www.martinsharpe.com/index.php](http://www.martinsharpe.com/index.php) which includes details about high-quality framed prints for sale.



## ...and more than 60 years earlier

A tram enters from the other side of the bridge. The final journeys of the last London trams took place on 6 July 1952. The route of the 48 tram ran between the City and West Norwood, via the Elephant and Camberwell Green, then along Coldharbour Lane and Milkwood Road, under the Herne Hill railway bridge and on to the West Norwood depot.



# PARROTS & HEDGEHOGS FROM DOODLES & SCRIBBLES

Lucy Reynolds, Herne Hill Forum project manager, young mum and children's author talks to Colin Wight about her publishing venture.

"Parrots Don't Live in the City! has been one of our best loved and bestselling picture books": Waterstones Clapham

**People may know you as a Forum project manager – recently on the underpass and mural world record attempt, but also the lamppost banners and recycling collective etc. Tell us a bit more about yourself.**

I grew up on a small farm in Somerset, down a bumpy lane. I had freedom to roam, build dens, climb trees, and set my imagination free. It was my West Country upbringing that fostered my love of the natural world – and you can still be an avid leaf-collector and bird-spotter in the Big Smoke.

**Having a baby would encourage lots of parents to make up stories for their children but not everyone publishes a book or sets up their own company!**

Much of this journey has taken place in the middle of the night, around baby feeds, nap times, nappy changes... It's been a juggle and a steep learning curve to launch Doodles & Scribbles and produce a range of books, gift sets and artwork. We've had to teach ourselves everything from paper finishes to book distribution... But a year in, we're stocked by bookshops across the country; we've sold thousands of copies; we've been invited to schools and literary festivals; and we've received great feedback.

**These are picture-books with rhymes for little children. The choice of words is very important. What are your favourite / son's favourite authors?**

My son would have to say "Lucy Reynolds" or he'd get no pudding. For me, it would be Thomas Hardy and G.M. Hopkins, two great Victorian noticers of nature. I studied both for my DPhil in poetry, and it's the way in which they pause, look up close, and notice nature's smallest details that inspires me. But there's also something about the pleasure of rhyming words – rhyme puts a rhythm in your head; it stays with you for years; and it helps children to learn to read by anticipating the rhyming pair.

**Is Jenna Herman someone you've known a long time? How do you work with her?**

Jenna and I have known each other for 20 years – we met at Oxford, where I was studying English and Jenna Fine Art. It makes all the difference to have a business partner you know well. We can barrel through our to-do lists, often on Skype or the phone, as Jenna is on the other side of London.

**What advice did you get, and did you act on it?**

In the early stages of creating *Parrots Don't Live in the City!* we sought guidance from everyone we could think of, including some of our favourite authors and illustrators: Tamara Macfarlane, Rob Biddulph and Frann Preston-Gannon. But some of the richest advice came from children themselves. We visited lots of schools with a draft to see what the children thought of it – their ideas were vital.



**Now, for your second book, Hedgehogs Don't Live in the City! You obviously had a successful formula. Was it any easier this time around?**

In some ways, yes, because we knew the ropes. But of course there's more pressure of expectation, so it's been nerve-wracking waiting for the response. But again, we've been overwhelmed. Ben Fogle has given us his support; Londonist featured us this week; London Wildlife Trust are running a feature; we've been invited to read at Hedgefest (yes, there's a London festival dedicated to hedgehogs). It's been a whirlwind and the books

have been selling faster than we could ever have imagined. We are using it to encourage people to sign the change.org campaign to make hedgehog highways mandatory in all building developments, and to make small changes in their gardens to help this precious little animal which is facing catastrophic decline.



### Is Herne Hill itself a key player in your writing success?

Herne Hill's parrots will always be special – that first glimpse of green inspired the book, and Brockwell Park is where I find so much inspiration. I feel rooted in Herne Hill and so proud of the projects I've helped to deliver – I love seeing these as I walk about. But I also love the people I know here. So many Herne Hill businesses have been part of our journey: Tales on Moon Lane, Herne Hill Books and Kinderlala; Sweet Carolina has made us parrot cakes; Tricia of Portrayed Photography has taken photos; Kimberly at Bumble Box helped create our range of activity gift boxes; Brockwell Greenhouses hosted our launch party... the sense of community here is so strong. Combine that with the pockets of nature wrapped all around us – and I feel very lucky to live in such a place.

### What's next in "Animals in the City" series? I can imagine bats. Will you eventually move on to rats? They are clever little so-and-so's and, like foxes, it's not their fault that we leave food for them to gorge on.

We'll add bats and rats to the list! Every species is fascinating when you pause to notice its peculiarities. This is a four-part series, with each book set in a different season... under wraps for now. They'll be building on our founding mission: "To create lovely books for little explorers".

### Would you consider publishing other people's work?

For now we have our hands full, but we've been sent a few manuscripts, so never say never say never...

Written by Lucy Reynolds and illustrated by Jenna Herman, *Parrots Don't Live in the City!* and *Hedgehogs Don't Live in the City!* are available locally from Tales On Moon Lane, Kinderlala, and Herne Hill Books, as well as from Waterstones and bookshops nationwide.

## THE PEABODY ESTATE ROSENDALE ROAD

American-born financier George Peabody (1795-1869) was an early Victorian philanthropist who moved to London and founded the Peabody Trust in 1862. In 1902 the Peabody Estate in Herne Hill opened to its first tenants. Built away from smoky Central London, near Brockwell Park, it was a pioneering venture and a significant step in the history of social housing. Nevertheless it was essentially a commercial venture and it was expected that running costs would be covered. During the Victorian era most people in London lived in dire accommodation in the centre of the city. Housing was not the business of the state at this time, but this shifted during the Edwardian period, and especially after the First World War. The Metropolitan Board of Works bought up poor housing and sold the land at a non-commercial rate to the charities.

Most of the Peabody Estates were in central London. The purchase of a greenfield site in Herne Hill was a departure from usual policy. Herne Hill was a suburb, but it had good transport to the city via the railway stations at Herne Hill and Tulse Hill. There was a huge amount of manufacturing industry in Central



Peabody residents from the Rosendale Estate in 1911

London at this time – factories in Southwark, Bermondsey, the City of London. The cost of travel into the city was a penny each way or a shilling a week. This was a substantial sum, given that the average wage at the time was 23 shillings. It is significant that the average wage in the Peabody Estate flats was a little higher (27-28 shillings) – and in the cottages, where the rent was also higher, the average wage was at least 30 shillings a week. The Herne Hill Peabody Estate was designed for working families in stable and

relatively well-paid employment – a “better class of tenant”: the deserving working poor.

At the Society's September meeting, Bob Reeves shared his research into the Peabody archives. Tenants covered a wide range of occupations. The cottages included a Metropolitan Police inspector, a soldier and a teacher. Teenagers' wages were an important contribution to the family income. One in five adult men were postmen, earning 35 shillings a week.

Peabody built high-quality property; it has lasted. By 1911 over half the flats consisted of three or four rooms, each with a gas cooker and a scullery with running water. There was a shared bath house and shared WCs and a public laundry. Rotas were set up for cleaning the common areas. The quality of the housing is borne out by the fact that the infant mortality rate on the estate was half the average of London: a startling statistic.

The Estate was ruled with an iron fist by a Superintendent who lived on site. For example, tenants caught taking in washing would be threatened with a Notice to Quit. Families were closely watched. There is evidence that “undesirable families” were moved

on. Entries in the records were marked with red ink to indicate tenants about whom there were concerns. A labourer's wife was caught stealing from the communal laundry; a porter at the Half Moon with four children had appeared in court; a Church Army worker was accused of embezzlement. Such

people were marked out for monitoring and, in some cases, evicted. Breaking Rule 7 (resulting in a broken window) meant that the tenant, a porter, was moved to a smaller flat after one month, and then evicted.

However, there are reports of a strong sense of community and camaraderie in spite of the strict rules. This was a fascinating talk, based on an impressive piece of original research by Bob Reeves.

Val Suebsaeng



# VIOLENCE IN DULWICH

No, our genteel neighbours have not broken out in rioting. Dulwich Picture Gallery follows its sunny summer show of Edward Bawden with “Ribera: Art of Violence”. The contrast could not be greater.

Jusepe de Ribera was born in Xàtiva, a town of churches, convents, monasteries and a hilltop castle some 55km (34 miles)



from Valencia. Steeped in the Spanish Baroque, he spent much of his career in Rome and Naples, becoming a key Catholic Counter-Reformation artist who influenced Italian masters and was in turn inspired by Caravaggio's realism and use of dramatic lighting. He died aged 61 in 1652.

This retrospective, the artist's first solo exhibition in the UK, explores his disturbing depictions of human suffering and shocking scenes of sadistic punishment. The curators are at pains to assure us that Ribera was not himself violent or abusive; he merely painted the religious obsessions and harsh realities of the time in which he lived.

We enter Room 1 in the dark, to be confronted with two large paintings of the *Martyrdom of Saint Bartholomew*. The old man is being flayed alive by ugly, leering torturers for smashing a pagan idol, the head of which lies on the ground. The room also features a marble head of Apollo from the British Museum; this or the Vatican's earlier Apollo Belvedere may have been Ribera's model.

The next room explores Ribera's preoccupation with skin and the five senses. Paintings, drawings and prints depict the instruments and process of flaying, augmented with grotesque heads, book illustration and an actual fragment of tattooed skin. *The Sense of Smell* is personified by a beggar in layers of rags, his eye tearing as he holds an onion, orange blossom on a table providing light relief. There are also striking studies of ears, nose and mouth, as well as a bat, the heraldic symbol of Valencia.

The theme of crime and punishment attracted many artists. An

anonymous Neapolitan painting, *Tribunale della Vicaria* shows the teeming square where a condemned man hangs by his wrists from the strappado. The spectacle of public torture and execution formed popular entertainment; and artists including Ribera witnessed and sketched the scene. Several works by Jacques Callot show forms of judicial violence and wartime atrocities, including a firing squad, prefiguring Goya.

Ribera records harsh interrogation and inquisition scenes, with victims struggling and defecating in fear. One of his drawings and etchings of men tied to trees includes a young man, possibly related to the victim, defecating. This is thought to relate to a Spanish proverb about dung working miracles where it falls. Ribera must have been familiar with the late 15th-century silk and commodity exchange in Valencia, la Llotja; a stone door carving shows two men defecating into a bowl held by a woman, perhaps representing the fertility of nature and cycle of regeneration.

Three brush and ink views of the binding and crucifixion of Saint Peter give way to a roomful of Saint Sebastian, at various stages of his ordeal. One oil painting shows him tended by holy women, one gently removing an arrow, the other ready to apply ointment. It is a rare example of healing and calm.

The final room has one large painting, *Apollo and Marsyas*, depicting mythological violence. A satyr has lost a musical competition with the god and is ruthlessly punished by flaying. In contrast with the hideous executioners in the Bartholomew pictures, Apollo is beautiful and serene as he carries out his gruesome task. Has the smashed idol come to life again and taken his revenge?

This exhibition, on through the cold, gloomy days of winter, is not for the squeamish or faint-hearted; but it serves to show



Ribera's skill as observer, master draughtsman and painter of dramatic force.

Jeff Doorn

*The winning design for the 2019 Dulwich Pavilion has been announced. "The Colour Palace", a lively and celebratory fusion of European and African cultural traditions by Pricegore and Yinka Ilori, will open in June during the London Festival of Architecture.*

**Ribera: Art of Violence opened 26 September and continues to 27 January 2019**

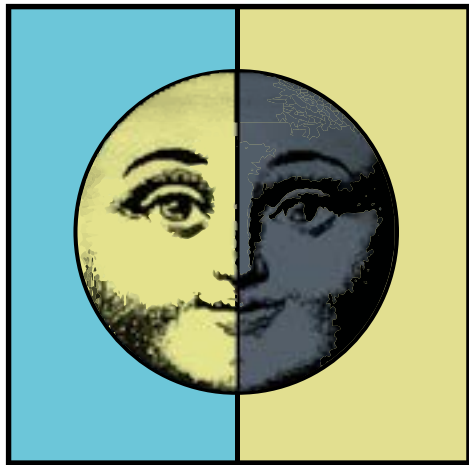
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