

HERNE HILL

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HERNE HILL SOCIETY • ISSUE 146 • Summer • 2019 • £3.00



HERNE HILL, JUNE 1944

► See page 15

HERNE HILL'S
BIGGEST EMPLOYER

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STATION WAR MEMORIAL

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The Magazine of the Herne Hill Society



THE HERNE HILL SOCIETY

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Does Your Society have a Future?

In the last issue of this magazine I wrote: “as with so many other local societies we desperately need more people — and, specifically, more women — on our Committee ... Just a few people are trying to do too much and they can’t — and shouldn’t feel obliged to — go on for ever. It would be irresponsible not to consider the future of the Society, and I hope everyone present will do so at this year’s AGM.”

I know that we have many loyal members. They appreciate what the Society does and they see it as filling a role that is distinct from the part played by other groups in our community. So it is with great regret that I feel it necessary to say that loyalty alone is not enough to ensure the survival of the Society. At the 2019 AGM no new volunteers stepped forward to join our already depleted Committee and none have done so since. The senior members of the Committee have more years’ experience on it than they care to remember — but this is not sustainable. My own position, after more than six years as Chair and 15 years as a committee member, is that I believe I have given as much as I feel able to contribute. Val Suebsaeng (Membership Secretary) and Pat Roberts (Secretary) are in a similar position. Of the remaining four members of the Committee none are prepared to take on the role of Chair. Four is plainly not enough to sustain the Society and, like it or not, societies need a Chair.

So there is a choice. The Herne Hill Society will quietly fade away after 37 years of making a valued contribution to our community, or a new guard will appear to carry the Society forward as the old guard departs. I know there are plenty of people out there endowed with every conceivable skill to make the latter option a reality. Will the lights be going out all over Herne Hill if the Society succumbs to the universal plea of “I’m so sorry, I just can’t find the time”? Probably not, though they might glow just a little less

brightly. Many of our current activities, such as historical research and scrutiny of planning applications, could be undertaken by keen individuals or single-interest groups, and there are other local volunteer and civic groups, such as the Herne Hill Forum and friends’ and residents’ associations, all of whom in varying ways promote local causes. My personal position is that I will stand for election as Chair in March 2020, but it will be on the basis that, if elected, I will see it as my responsibility to wind up the affairs of the Society in an orderly manner in the course of 2020. If workable solutions can be found to prevent me doing so, I will be the first to cheer!

On a more positive note, we had an excellent response to our recent Membership Survey. Over 100 (approx 30%) of you completed it — a higher figure than we had expected. You told us that you really value this magazine, and that the Society is generally doing a good job and that our efforts are appreciated. Some findings confirmed what we already knew or suspected: that the majority never attend the monthly meetings or make use of our website or social media platforms; and that — perhaps

crucially — 70% (of those who responded, at any rate) are over the age of 60. To the question “Would you be willing to help?”, some 20 members answered that they would be happy to give some of their time (though half were ex-Committee members) but no-one — apart from those already on it — was interested in serving on the Committee. And therein lies the Society’s existential problem!

We need members to get involved now, review our options and start making decisions, so you can expect to receive news of one or more upcoming meetings this autumn. Your Committee is here to listen and help.

Feel free to email me anytime chair@hernehillsociety.org.uk

Colin Wight



FROM NORMANDY TO HAMBURG

Not only the centenary of the First World War has been on our minds. June saw commemorations for 75 years since the Normandy landings. The Society is especially proud to have as its president Bill Kirby, one of the very small number of soldiers who are still with us and who took part in those momentous events in 1944. This December he will reach his centenary.

Bill joined up in 1941. He trained initially as an anti-aircraft gunner and was kept extremely busy during the London Blitz at various ack-ack stations, including Clapham Common, not far from his home in East Dulwich. He later trained as a driver, and it was as part of the massive logistical back-up for the invasion that Bill embarked at Tilbury docks and crossed the Channel on the Liberty ship John E. Sweet, arriving on the French coast on 26 June 1944. Then it was down a rope ladder and onto a landing craft and waiting uncomfortably overnight until the clearance for going ashore in the morning was given. That was just the beginning. As the British army fought its way up through Northern France, Belgium and Holland, Bill’s company helped transport the vast quantities of ammunition, foodstuffs, diesel and petrol that were vital if the liberation of Europe was to succeed. Bill crossed the Rhine at Xanten and when the war ended found himself in Hamburg, where, amidst the devastation, he managed to find a professional photographer to take the portrait we show here.



Bill Kirby in 1945

A community triumph

The event on 8 May in Herne Hill's Baptist Church, organised by the Herne Hill Welcomes Refugees team and sponsored by the Herne Hill Society, turned out to be quite possibly the biggest public meeting held in Herne Hill for many years.

As over 300 people heard, it was late in 2017 when a few Herne Hill residents heard about the government's Community Sponsorship Scheme for vulnerable refugee families and decided that they would try to make it happen in their own area.

The government's Community Sponsorship Programme, launched in July 2016, supports the empowerment of refugee families to become self-

refugees in the UK.

From this early commitment, publicised through personal contacts, social media and leafleting campaigns, as well as many a private and public meeting, a plan developed. And the Herne Hill Welcomes Refugees (@HHWR_ on Twitter) team was born.

A year later, after a challenging and complex application process, the team learnt that their application had been approved by the Home Office and that they would be matched with a refugee family to be settled in Herne Hill. Flown out of dangerous conditions in Lebanon, an Iraqi family arrived in December 2018 and are settling in well, making many friends in

Herne Hill. The meeting on 8 May was a celebration of the success of the community in finding a new home for a vulnerable family, a shout of gratitude to everyone who had helped to make this a success, and a proclamation that the group, with all



Helen Hayes MP addresses the meeting

sufficient and active members of their new community. In effect it allows communities to become directly engaged in welcoming, resettling and supporting vulnerable

that experience now behind them, now felt able to start the process of welcoming a second family.

Helen Hayes, Member of Parliament for



Dulwich & West Norwood, was welcomed as a long-term supporter of HHWR. This initiative, she said, represented the very best of humanity and made her proud of the community she represented. Of course more needed to be done by the government and they needed to deliver, quickly, on their promise to renew and expand the scheme beyond 2020. The meeting was also attended by local councillors including the Mayor of Lambeth, Cllr İbrahim Doğuş.

After the refugee family were greeted on the stage with an emotional standing ovation, an open mike session allowed a panel chaired by Harriet Lamb CBE, one of the original founders, to answer questions, many from people from Lewisham, Peckham, Sydenham, Bermondsey and other surrounding areas who were planning similar schemes, or had already embarked on one. Anna Burton, the Chair of HHWR, listed some of the expertise and attributes they would need to welcome a second family to Herne Hill (not least, money!).

Pat Roberts

Dilemmas in Community Sponsorship ...

It's a movement built on steaming tea and crumbly cookies. Herne Hill Welcomes Refugees has enabled one wonderful family to join our community. For them, it means the world. For us, it's been fun and we've made new friends. But we've also got our dilemmas.

Two tricky questions have got us scratching our heads. Firstly: is it more important to enable a family to join our community as soon as possible – or to focus on a gentler community pace, given we are all volunteers? Secondly: is it right that the Government's Community Sponsorship scheme means lots of people give lots of volunteer time for one family, while other refugees get so little?

Lambeth Council has enabled 27 families to resettle, receiving funds from the Government to provide housing, translation and school places. Locally, a small group of dedicated people are

Harriet Lamb reflects

responding to their huge range of needs, providing the softer, caring side of support – from extra English classes to half-term outings. But each of these families receives a fraction of the support given to those coming via Community Sponsorship.

This worries us. But then you consider asylum seekers who risk their lives to reach Britain, waiting to know if they can stay, unable to work or claim proper benefits, sometimes in detention; or those millions stuck for years in refugee camps overseas. Then you consider people struggling on deprived estates just on Herne Hill's edges.

Are we wrong to overlook these competing needs? We

WAR MEMORIAL STONE FOR THE STATION

The Herne Hill Society is working with Southeastern Railway, who run Herne Hill station, to install a First World War memorial in the Ticket Hall. Calligrapher and stone-carver Mark Brooks will design and produce a hand-carved Welsh slate plaque, to be financed by South Eastern and unveiled in time for this year's Remembrance Day. Currently based in Canterbury, Mark's formative years were spent in Kennington, Walworth Road, Stockwell, Crofton Park, Honor Oak, Forest Hill, East Dulwich and Crystal Palace! He says: "It is a wonderful opportunity for me. I will strive to make something beautiful, interesting and appropriate for this important memorial".

Southeastern, whose Managing Director David Statham is a former Herne Hill resident, have been a generous supporter of the Society's "Remembering Herne Hill 1914-18" research project, granting permission for the mounting of two information



Mark Brooks at work

panels to accompany last November's Armistice Centenary commemorations. There are individual memorials in churches to men who lost their lives, but nothing to commemorate all the people of Herne Hill. The station, at the heart of our community and a place through which countless men must have passed on their to the Channel ports and thence to France and Flanders, seems singularly suited for a permanent memorial.

David Statham says: "During the First World War the railways played an important role in the transport of troops and resources to and from the front. It's a fitting privilege that, come November this year, Herne Hill station will serve as the site for a permanent memorial

in commemoration of all those residents who died, were wounded or otherwise suffered in that terrible conflict."

We show the proposed text here. Readers may recognise the short quotation from Philip Larkin's poem "MCMXIV".

HERNE HILL 1914-1918
 IN MEMORY OF ALL THE PEOPLE
 OF HERNE HILL WHO SUFFERED
 IN CONSEQUENCE OF THE WAR
 INCLUDING MORE THAN FIVE
 HUNDRED WHO LOST THEIR LIVES
 NEVER SUCH INNOCENCE AGAIN
 THIS STONE WAS PLACED HERE IN 2019 ON BEHALF OF
 THE HERNE HILL SOCIETY * THE CHARTER SCHOOL NORTH
 DULWICH * LONDON & SOUTH EASTERN RAILWAY LIMITED

Herne Hill Society gives grant to HHWR

Following the well-attended and successful public event on 8 May, and in response to an application from Herne Hill Welcomes Refugees (HHWR), the Committee decided to offer a donation of £500, under its Small Grants Programme, as a contribution to HHWR's fund-raising programme prior to welcoming a second refugee family to Herne Hill under the Home Office scheme.

recognise them but have decided we are best placed to build on our experience and our proven ability to organise very locally. So we are now organising to enable a second family to come through Community Sponsorship.

We also know our impact has been wider. We've talked to anyone who'll listen, secured press coverage, spoken in Parliament, to students and at meetings from Milton Keynes to Peckham. We've been shamelessly promotional on Twitter. We know we have inspired other communities from Newcastle to North London to sponsor other families.

The generous support we've received sends a signal to Government that accepting refugees can be popular. That's why we are a member of Lambeth Citizens, the local chapter of the community organising charity. We've been campaigning for refugees coming to Britain via community sponsorship to be counted as additional to any Government target numbers. You might assume that would be the case; but it was not. So we campaigned with others, including local MP Helen Hayes. And in mid-June, the Government announced that refugees coming via community sponsorship would indeed be additional to those coming through mainstream schemes. It's a major change that we're delighted to have helped achieve.

Additionally, we believe that the intensely personal involvement with one family, can shift attitudes. In one English village, people opposed sponsorship, saying refugees were not welcome; until that is, they met the family. Once they saw the disabled boy struggling to get on the bus, or the mother with complications in childbirth, the whole village lost their hostility and joined the support team.

In Canada, one third of people have had contact with a family through Community Sponsorship. In Canada, the far right's racism and xenophobia have not taken root. There may be no causal connection; or there may be.

Ideally, we'd have a golden combo: the UK government accepting significant numbers of refugees, who are welcomed by organised communities. But in the meantime, Community Sponsorship is a lifeline that we should keep extending. Again and again; in the hope that we can send ripples of compassion wider, in our own lives and beyond. If I'm ever a refugee, I'd like to be welcomed by a community. Which is why we hope you will join us in welcoming a second family to Herne Hill. Please email: hhwelcomesrefugees@gmail.com

Or, to help Lambeth Welcomes Refugees' support of 27 refugee families, email: lambethrefugeewelcome@gmail.com

Herne Hill Station Underpass



The Big Reveal

Every day hundreds of people march or amble through the underpass below the railway lines at Herne Hill station, which caters for some one million passenger journeys a year. Many are dashing through the gloom to catch their train, or at least to join the scrum on the platform. At the other end of the day, they are hurrying home; but not, on either occasion, loitering. For the fortunate non-commuters, the underpass is an essential route to shops, schools, coffee bars, restaurants, pubs, parks or buses; but always as a shortcut, not a destination. This 50-metre tunnel may witness the highest pedestrian traffic of any patch of Herne Hill, but for no-one was it an uplifting experience.

Now we have an excuse to linger. The long-awaited mural, finally installed on 7 June, projects vibrant new colour, life, energy and humanity into this once depressing passage. People stop and search for familiar sights and other cleverly crafted visual clues. Some seek out the sections they or their children have coloured.

Instigated and managed by the Herne Hill Forum team, this imaginative and brilliant work harbours an astonishing amount of engaging detail that brings to life the spirit of Herne Hill's history, contemporary streetscape and its people – the famous and the not-so-famous, historical and contemporary.

It was all painstakingly conceived, researched and drawn by artist Victor Szepessy. Then on 12-13 September last year it seized the interest and affection of the whole community when children (from eight local schools) and adults, including councillors, mayors and one or two genuine celebrities, flocked to Station Square to begin the long process of colouring in the painstakingly numbered squares.

Spotting an opportunity to win a place in the record books, the Forum had entered the project with the Guinness World Record for the most contributions to a colour-by-numbers mural. The

previous record-holders in Mexico achieved 1,119 participants across three days; Herne Hill residents doubled this to 2,332 in just two days! The achievement was made possible with funding, resources and support from Aviva, station operators Southeastern, Network Rail, Lambeth Council and local businesses.

Once the record-breaking attempt was over and the crowds had left, the completion of the mural still required serious commitment. Supervised by Victor, assisted by his wife Emma and observed by their intelligent dachshund, a small number of residents and friends, some of them members of our Society, spent hundreds of hours on their hands and knees painstakingly colouring in the remaining strips of mural stretched across the floor of the Station Hall – an endeavour that continued until 3 December when the fabrics were gently rolled up and put into storage until warmer weather, needed for attaching the mural to the tunnel wall, would return in the spring.

In the interim, the Forum team formed the view that for technical and precautionary reasons, and to protect the original from vandalism, it would be imprudent to attach the original to the tunnel walls, and they decided to have the original professionally photographed and reproduced onto high-grade durable and weather-resistant vinyl, which is what now adorns the underpass. This move and other issues have provoked a regrettable dispute between the artist and the Forum. We can, for the present, sidestep this sad disagreement, but there is obviously a difference, in immediacy, authenticity and emotional engagement, between an original and a reproduction, however good. So we are left wondering where the final resting place of Victor's actual, hand-painted 40-metre mural will be, bearing witness to the handiwork, smudges and corrections of so many children and residents, and of the artist himself.

Pat Roberts

More empty shops in Herne Hill – old and new

The fortunes of our shops and other local businesses continue to fluctuate.

Many residents were sad to see that **Mimosa**, the excellent delicatessen on Half Moon Lane, closed without warning for business in May, as did their branch up in Crystal Palace. No explanation has been volunteered but it's probably fair to assume that they simply didn't have enough customers, and therefore income, to cover fixed costs such as staff wages and business rates and rents. They continue to trade in Vauxhall and Kennington, and as outside caterers for events.

This brings the shutters down on a second shopfront on the Dulwich Estate side of Half Moon Lane. Just across the road, our resident conjurer, Barrie Westwell, also known as **The Illusioneer**, has also announced he is no longer trading from his magically small premises, though he stays in business with a base elsewhere.

Near the bottom of Herne Hill, **MW Solicitors** (officially McMillan Williams Solicitors) recently closed their office, though they have numerous other practices elsewhere in London and the South-East. A step or two away, the double-fronted corner offices occupied by **Pedder** are also looking for new tenants: the firm says it is relocating in search of bigger premises, and they do of course have another outlet focusing more on residential properties on the corner of Stradella Road. And further along Half Moon Lane it seems that **Bacchus**, the wineshop on the corner of Holmdene Avenue, has also ceased trading.



Railton Road shops, June 2019

Meanwhile there appear to be no takers yet for the new **Station Square shops** owned by the Arch Company, a spin-off from Telereal Trillium and Blackstone Property Partners, the new owners of the nationalised Network Rail's huge estate of railway arches. Tantalising whispers and rumours come and go, but no actual tenants seem yet prepared to take the plunge. These aren't easy times in which to start a new business. On top of rent and business rates, the capital cost of fitting out, equipping and decorating brand-new premises could be a steep challenge to any start-up, especially for the bigger double-fronted property with an upstairs area, presumably intended for a restaurant. And could

Herne Hill support yet another eatery?

But there is good news

Over on Milkwood Road, two units were left empty after the closure of the **Kitchen Counter** coffee shop and the adjoining food preparation kitchens. These were run by Ella Mills, better known as Deliciously Ella. But she closed her Herne Hill operation in 2017. More recently, the kitchen premises have been occupied for some time by Harry's Kitchen, promoted as a party organising business. And

now they have just re-opened the former coffee shop unit which will be in business throughout the week (except Mondays and Tuesdays), offering breakfast, light meals, cakes and hot drinks throughout the day. It's still called **The Kitchen Counter**.

So there's still a future for coffee shops, maybe. Will we ever drink enough?

Pat Roberts

Colin Crooks is awarded MBE

Colin Crooks, CEO of Tree Shepherd and a member of the Society, has been awarded the MBE for "Services to disadvantaged people and the environment". Colin has started six social enterprises employing over 1,000 previously unemployed people and recycling thousands of tonnes of waste. In 2012 he set up Tree Shepherd, which supports people to start their own businesses, and has recently opened GLOWS workspace for creative businesses (textiles, crafts, photography etc.) in Tulse Hill. Find out more at treeshepherd.org.uk



Local Winner for Southwark Blue Plaque



In the Winter issue of the Magazine we reported on the competition to find who should win a Southwark blue plaque for 2018. One of the nominees was the Grafton Dance Hall in Village Way and world-champion professional ballroom dancers, Bob Burgess and Doreen Freeman, particularly associated with the hall. The

result, based on a popular vote, was announced in May and, as Southwark News announced: "Bob and Doreen Waltz to Blue Plaque Victory", beating Rotherhithe-born Max Bygraves into second place by 1,000 votes. You can catch Bob and Doreen in glorious black and white Pathé News on YouTube.

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DIARY OF EVENTS

Summer 2019

For more information please check
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Talks

Wed 11 September, 7:45pm
“From Half Moon to Red Post”

by Ian McInnes

In the nineteenth century Herne Hill was lined with many grand houses - now, with just two exceptions, all demolished. In this talk, part of the Lambeth Heritage Festival, Ian McInnes, local historian and Chair of the Dulwich Society, will cover the most important houses, some of their famous, and not so famous owners, and the history of the roads that replaced them.

Herne Hill United Church Hall

John Ruskin

Two special events sponsored by the Society – see below

Herne Hill Heritage Trail walks

Join **Robert Holden** for three walks following the Herne Hill Heritage Trail, the award-winning book published by the Herne Hill Society, which will be available on the day at £8.00. If necessary, a megaphone will be used to ensure that everyone can hear.

Sat 14 September, 2.30pm

Herne Hill Heritage Trail: North

Meet Herne Hill Velodrome, Burbage Road entrance

Sat 21 September, 2.30pm

Herne Hill Heritage Trail: Central

Meet Herne Hill Station

Sat 28 September, 2.30pm

Herne Hill Heritage Trail: South

Meet All Saints' Church, Lovelace Road entrance

Wed 9 October 2019, 7:30 – 9:30pm

Ruskin & Friends: John Ruskin and Music

Charles MacDougall (tenor), **Robert Mingay-Smith** (piano), **Andrew Wilson** (composer and presenter)

This year marks the bicentenary of the birth of one of Herne Hill's most famous residents: John Ruskin. The celebrated art critic, author,



Andrew Wilson

poet and social reformer had a life-long love of music and this programme explores this enthusiasm from a number of different angles. There will be performances of a selection of music that Ruskin loved and wrote about, from Mozart to popular ballads of his time, as well as music he famously despised such as Beethoven and Wagner. The music will be interspersed with entertaining readings on the subject of music from Ruskin's own writings: sometimes serious but often very funny too!

It is not so well known that Ruskin composed music himself and there will be a rare opportunity to hear some of his own charming songs.

The evening will feature the premiere of a new song cycle, “Pearls on Scales”, by award-winning composer Andrew Wilson, showing how Ruskin's influence on artists continues to live on into our own time.

The third theme of the programme is music associated with places that figured in Ruskin's life and career - from Herne Hill to Venice.

A joint event organised with the Herne Hill Society

Herne Hill United Church (not the Church Hall)

Full price £8.00; £5.00 concessions for Society members - Tickets from hernehillfestival.org



Charles and Rob

Thu 10 October 2019, 5:30 – 6:30pm

Junior School Musical - Inspired by Ruskin's King of the Golden River

In John Ruskin's bicentenary year, year 5 of St Saviour's School give the premiere of a new musical by Paul Ayres. Ruskin grew up a short walk from the site of the school, and played as a child on the banks of the River Effra. He wrote a children's story, *The King of the Golden River*, for Euphemia Chalmers Gray, known as “Effie”. This new work takes inspiration from the Grimm-like tale, with its moral echoes of The Good Samaritan, and celebrates how the local river – and water in general – can be shared rather than owned.

Followed by refreshments and a folk music show till 9:30pm - *St Saviour's Hall, Herne Hill Road - Free!*

PLANNING & LICENSING

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

108 Herne Hill, London 19/00292/LDCP

We objected to an application for a certificate of lawful development for a large ground floor extension on the grounds that the proposal fell outside permitted development. Lambeth took the same view and refused to grant the certificate.

50 Stradella Road, Southwark 19/AP/0531

As part of a wider application permission was sought to remove a street tree and create a crossover and parking space in the front garden. We objected to this part of the application, because use of front gardens for parking and loss of street trees damage the streetscape and environmental objectives, not least in a conservation area (as here). We are disappointed that Southwark has allowed the application, though with a condition that a substitute street tree be planted.

Land at Red Post Hill, Southwark 18/AP/1626

Last year we objected to an application to build three houses in a conservation area in part of the original garden land behind 'Lydenhurst'. That application has not been pursued and its place taken by a new application, now for two houses. We have repeated our objection, upon the principle that garden land, especially in a conservation area should not be developed and that, if allowed, would set a dangerous precedent. In any event

two high-end houses would make a negligible contribution to the need for more housing in Southwark.

St Paul's Church, Herne Hill, Lambeth 19/AP/1130

We objected to proposed changes to the space at the front and side of the church, on the grounds that these would increase the hard landscaping, when what was appropriate was less. We also objected to illumination of notice boards and drew attention to the historic value of the original wall along the street and objected to further dismantling of the wall to provide access for vehicles.

129 Casino Avenue, Southwark 19/AP/0955

We objected to a ground floor rear extension and a rear dormer and, in particular, a front glazed porch. Southwark has allowed the rear extension, but required sloping roof lights in place of the dormer. It has not allowed the porch. The latter is important because it affects the public streetscene. We have been concerned for some time at what we see as the gradual erosion of the Sunray/Casino conservation area through alterations that do not respect the special character of the estate. These include alterations carried out without permission and with no enforcement action subsequently taken. The planning group is currently working on a survey that will map the situation in detail, with a view to present our concerns to Southwark.

Laurence Marsh



Ruskin in the Park

In the 200th year of his birth, John Ruskin's ideas, writings and drawings are making a welcome appearance in exhibitions and events across the country, including several in Herne Hill. In many ways Ruskin Park can be seen as a memorial to the area's most famous resident. He would surely approve of the sight of ancient trees, the corners of the wildlife garden, the spaces for children to play, the focus on health and well-being, Dulwich Art Group's classes in the open air, growing heritage wheat, the photography competition, community gardening and of the Friends of Ruskin Park (FoRP); but how many park users make the connection back to its namesake?

This year FoRP is organising a programme of art and events to commemorate Ruskin and his extraordinary intellect and ideas. In *Why Ruskin Matters* Suzanne Fagence Cooper

makes a passionate case for Ruskin's relevance to our own world. His intellect was grounded, Cooper argues, in a devoted attention to looking. Alongside art criticism and social polemic, Ruskin published guidebooks on how to draw – start by studying a stone, he said; or a section of the sky. This curiosity and attention had far-reaching effects. From his windows in Herne Hill, Ruskin watched pollution gather in the clouds over London. He was one of the first people to warn of what we recognize today as the climate crisis.

For **John Ruskin at 200**, Brixton-based poet Francesca Beard is running workshops with local adults and school children that take Ruskin's ideas as inspiration for new poems, manifestos and other pieces of writing. Meanwhile, the adult workshops are part of the Recovery College, run by the South London and Maudsley Trust (SLaM), which runs courses that

contribute to well-being. Ruskin argued passionately for universal education and universal healthcare. What do his words have to say to the beneficiaries of these revolutionary ideas today? What happens when we turn Ruskin's passions and principles towards the problems we face right now?

Jon Newman will lead four walks (beginning in Ruskin Park) drawing on new research into Ruskin's relationship with urban, and suburban, planning. In his role at Lambeth Archives, Jon will also curate an exhibition at the Carnegie Library of heritage materials relating to Ruskin's time as a local resident. And, as the year grows to a close, we will close our programme with a talk by Suzanne Fagence Cooper, looking back on Ruskin's life and forward to his influence.

Our long-term ambition is to create a permanent memorial to Ruskin inside the park. Our programme asks the question: how do we remember John Ruskin? We invite participants, visitors, park users and local residents to join us in remembering him, now and in the future.

Full details: www.friendsofruskinpark.org.uk/johnruskin200

Lucy Hadfield

ANOTHER CENTENARY

The proposal for a memorial in Herne Hill Station (see page 5) links to another important centenary with a local connection. We refer to the Treaty of Versailles, signed one hundred years ago on 28 June 1919. This is not the place to explore the complicated whys and wherefores of a European political negotiation that led to unintended calamitous consequences. What we



The UK signatories

record here is a little known fact (and not mentioned in his entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* or in that excellent publication *Herne Hill Personalities*), namely that local resident George Nicoll Barnes was one of the primary signatories of the Treaty. His signature is there alongside those of Lloyd George, Bonar Law and Balfour. Barnes was a Scottish Labour politician. He joined Lloyd George's war cabinet in 1916 and it was for that reason he was present at Versailles. He is included (seated second from the right) in the famous painting by William Orpen, who was officially commissioned to capture the occasion in the Hall of Mirrors. George and Jessie Barnes lost their youngest son Henry in the war, killed in France in 1917. The following year they moved to 76 Herne Hill. It was George Barnes's home until his death



*Signing the Peace Treaty
by William Orpen*

in 1940. The late-Victorian house at the junction with Kestrel Avenue, which would have matched the Herne Hill surgery next door, was demolished in the 1960s and replaced by a block of maisonettes.

The Charge of the Electric Car

The vehicles ...

Most vehicle manufacturers are now offering purely electric vehicles, which are usually £5,000 to £10,000 more than their petrol equivalent – after allowing for a small, and recently reduced, government “plug-in grant”. Even so, there are waiting lists. The vehicles available have varying driving ranges between charges, with battery technology changing rapidly from a slow and heavy starting point. A good battery monitoring system is required to minimise “range anxiety”. There is not yet an established second-hand market for these new, and fast developing, models. Running costs comprise insurance (likely to be high because of concerns about repair costs); car tax, congestion charge and parking permits (exempt or low – for the time being – remember diesel fuel tax?); and electricity (depending on where and how you buy the electricity, this could equate to about 3 pence per mile compared with 12 to 14 pence per mile for petrol or diesel). Hybrid petrol-plus-electric cars are a well-established alternative – mainly the very common “mainly-petrol” Toyota Prius, and its more expensive “plug-in” variant.

The charging points ...

The dilemma of choosing an all-electric car is particularly difficult in an inner London suburb like Herne Hill. While a few homes have off-road driveways where a private domestic charging point can be fitted and electricity from the normal domestic tariff can be used, most local residents would need to use a public charging point at the roadside.

There are now a wide range of private providers of on-street slow (typically over-night) charging points – and a strategic, but still sparse, network of high-power, short-period re-charging facilities, for use typically for half- or one hour. Slower, low-power charging points are still a rarity in residential areas, but are beginning to pop up. Both Lambeth and Southwark Councils operate systems to accumulate requests for charging points, but these are totally opaque and non-responsive. The points themselves are provided by a range of private suppliers, and can be fitted to existing lamp standards. Users need to sign up with the provider, acquire a specific locking charging lead, log in to reserve a charging time, and negotiate with neighbours to use the parking space near the charging point.

The current availability of charging points can be found from the website www.zap-map.com. Around Herne Hill, there are several provided by *Source London*, *Char.gy*, and *Urbitricity*. *Char.gy* uses a consultation website www.Commonplace.is to accumulate requests for residential charging points. There is a variety of tariffs, for occasional users through to regular subscribers (when the cost of electricity approaches that of the marginal rate for domestic electricity). Realistically, for a busy user of a car for frequent urban trips, the availability of public overnight slow charging points is not yet convenient, but the situation is changing rapidly. However, the scope for drawing electricity from the Councils' lighting wiring may be limited.

On the road, the availability of fast charging points is also not yet convenient. For longer trips, programmed stops for recharging takes time. At motorway service stations, Ecotricity provides fast charge facilities, and you can check if the point is currently in use as you approach the service station with a smartphone app. Many employers, shopping centres, and other longer-term parking locations are installing fast charging points, but it's not always convenient to pop out during a meeting, or in the middle of a film, to disconnect.

A purely electric vehicle is still for the tech-savvy aspirational driver – but the situation is changing rapidly.

Bil Harrison



A VICTORIAN CHURCH REPURPOSED

Peter Bradley describes the history of St Jude's

Sitting modestly half-way down Dulwich Road is a grey church building that this year celebrates the 150th anniversary of its dedication, on the feast of St Jude, 28 October 1868. Although St Jude's building is intact and indeed in good order, its function has changed dramatically over the period, from a religious to a commercial one.

Why build another Herne Hill church in the 1860s? There were two main reasons. The railway station opened on 25 August 1862, cutting people off from St Paul's, on Herne Hill. Also, private estates were being sold off for housing and it was thought the increased population needed a new church. St Matthew's, Brixton, decided to set up St Jude's as a satellite church. The curate of St Matthew's, R.B. Ransford, was to

become its first vicar.

In 1867 the land was purchased from Joshua Blackburn, owner of the Brockwell Estate, for £736 (roughly £80,000 in today's terms); in the event, however, Blackburn returned the money and donated the land



St Jude's 150 years ago

for free. The foundation stone (still in place) was laid by Blackburn on 3 August 1867 and by 14 March the following year, to judge by an illustration in *The Builder*, the church was complete. Ransford, who went on to be vicar for more than two decades, built up a thriving community and kept the finances on an even keel. St Jude's was built to accommodate a congregation of over 1,000, most of whom paid pew fees, helping the church to flourish.

The nave of five bays (30 metres long and seven metres wide) was

flanked by aisles. It was built of brick, faced by Kentish ragstone, with Bath stone dressings, with a two-stage tower and broach spire. The Scottish architect Edward Cookworthy Robins (1830–1918) embraced the then fashionable neo-Gothic style advocated by John Ruskin, and St Jude's is in the Early Gothic style. Other local churches designed by Robins include St Saviour's, Lambert Road (1874) and Emmanuel, West Dulwich (1877, demolished in 1966). Robins had



EC Robins, architect

wide interests. He was an Associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects from 1853 and a Fellow from 1860. He attended RIBA committees, presenting many papers. He was also a Fellow of Surveyors' Institution and Society of Antiquaries. Robins actively promoted technical education, leading to the founding of the City and Guilds Institute.

Thanks to the work of its founding vicar St Jude's possessed a lively community, as recounted in a booklet published for its Diamond Jubilee in 1928. From the earliest days, the church

had an excellent choir and organ. It ran schools and Sunday schools and there was a plethora of clubs and organisations, from the Mothers' Union to the Boys' Brigade (44th London). It quickly recovered from a disastrous fire in 1923 and a beautiful memorial of eight oak tablets in honour of the Herne Hill dead of the First World War was erected in 1920; this disappeared after the Second World War.

St Jude's never recovered from the Blitz and services were moved from the main body of the church to a side aisle. By the 1960s it was derelict. After a devastating diocesan report in 1976, it was deconsecrated and, in 1980, the freehold was sold to Budget Furniture, ending more than a century of religious use.

Budget Furniture was a seller rather than a manufacturer of furniture. It had a high-end subsidiary called Morgan River, whose plate is still on one of the doors of the church. But after 20 years Budget Furniture was facing bankruptcy and the liquidators sold St Jude's to publishers Mark Allen Group (where I work). Now, with more than 200 employees packed to the rafters of St Jude's, MAG is probably our biggest local employer. MAG is committed to continuing investment in the building, spending £250,000 on the roof and £45,000 on the spire in 2018.

By lucky accident, the original Bible of St Jude's, embossed in gold on the cover with the name of Revd Ransford and the date 1868, has returned to the building and greets staff and visitors in reception. Full circle.

From a talk given in September 2018 as part of the Lambeth Heritage Festival

HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT

HERNE HILL'S BIGGEST EMPLOYER

We thought we would take a closer look at the Mark Allen Group who operate from St Jude's, like a colony of ceaselessly productive bees crammed snugly into a sturdy Gothic hive.

Hence we called on Ben Allen, chief executive officer of the group,

son of the founder and chairman, Mark Allen, and a solicitor by training and profession until he joined the company. Inevitably we had start by asking the first big questions: why, and how, did a significant publishing company come to squeeze itself into a disused church? And why in Herne Hill?

It was a personal journey. This was and remains a family company. Mark Allen started off as a journalist based then in the north of England, and was offered a job near

London – a city he did not, at the time, know well. His new employers were the major publishers International Publishing Corporation (subsequently Reed Business International), headquartered in Sutton and having earlier taken over much of the business of the publishing giant IPC. So 45 years ago, job offer accepted, but new to London, Mr Allen wisely followed a taxi driver's advice and started looking for a house in Herne Hill. (Let's admit it: some of us ended up here on even flimsier grounds.) Having looked around, Mr Allen was sufficiently happy with the area to buy a property in Elmwood Road. As the family expanded, they moved to a bigger house in Stradella Road, closer to the centre of Herne Hill. Some years later, the distant din, smoke and flames of the 1981 Brixton riots intruded on the calm of their road, but not enough to make them flee.

Yes, you think, that's the story of many of us who happened to move into Herne Hill some decades ago and now find themselves, to their surprise and satisfaction, in a still attractive, friendly and successful small community with a strong sense of place – but most of us haven't started a business here employing more than 400 people. That's a much bigger step.

Mark Allen, in 1983 happily based in Herne Hill by, was working for Thomson Publishing and had launched its medical publishing division. Less than two years later, Thomson decided to withdraw from medical publishing, leaving Mark looking for employment. As

part of a redundancy settlement, Mark bought out two of Thomson's medical magazines – *British Journal of Hospital Medicine* and *The Physician*. With these two titles he set up his own embryo publishing business, Mark Allen Group, with just two people in a modest office in Battersea. That was 1985. A few years later he moved the now expanding



St Jude's in 2019

business to Croxted Mews: closer to home, and an easier commute.

But why, finally, in a church? Prepare to witness one of the tricks that fate plays on some of us. The Allen family were in the habit of sourcing the furniture they needed from Budget Furniture, a company based in St Jude's Church. (The furniture company had acquired the freehold to the building for £38,000 in 1980 after it had been decommissioned as a church.) A couple of decades later, Budget Furniture ran into financial headwinds and

put the building on the market.

Having outgrown Croxted Mews, Mark Allen put in an offer to buy the building. It looked as though he might miss out to competing offers from property development companies, until he made it plain to the administrator that his offer included taking over the furniture business as a going concern and ensuring some continuity for its employees. On this basis, the deal was signed; the cohabitation lasted only a few years until the furniture enterprise succumbed to a nasty downturn in the credit cycle and finally went out of business.

By contrast the Group's specialist publishing business, allied to the events business which is also a major part of their activities, has flourished. Some 250 people are employed here in a now air-conditioned St Jude's Church, with another 45 to come when more cunning mezzanine floors have been slotted in. Overall the company employs some 420 people, with other offices in Dartford, Guildford, and Dinton in Wiltshire.

All this means that Mark Allen Group is now one of the UK's largest independent publishing companies. A new visitor to this outwardly traditional Gothic-style church will be astonished at how such a large number of staff, along with their desks and computer screens, have been ingeniously accommodated in a busy and well-lit but still unmistakably ecclesiastical work space on several different floors and mezzanine levels. To a visitor enjoying some dimly lingering remnants of church

history, it could evoke those grand and profitable scriptoriums operated by the great Benedictine monasteries of the Middle Ages. But with computers, not vellum and ink.

Some of the staff, arriving with the magazine titles that the company has progressively acquired over the years, have settled in Herne Hill. As Ben says, Herne Hill is a very different place from when he was growing up here. Now a vibrant and busy community, with outstanding transport links into London via Brixton and



Ben Allen

says Ben Allen. As a publisher they are, as he puts it, “platform agnostic”. It’s the high-quality, relevant specialist content that their subscribers buy, not the paper: everything they publish can be read digitally on screen, with a subscription, and almost everything can also be read in the traditional paper mode. They also have a major and growing business organising specialised industry events and conferences where professionals can also engage with their content and the expertise of their contributors, editors and industry leaders.

A steady series of acquisitions over the years means that the Group now publishes a remarkable 80+ range of titles. They range from scholarly academic peer-reviewed healthcare titles, such as *The British Journal of Hospital Medicine* and *The British Journal of Healthcare Management*, through a host of other professional and vocational healthcare, business and educational titles. But they also publish respected consumer titles with a particular strength in the music business such as *Jazzwise*, *Choir & Organ*, *Songlines*, the iconic *Gramophone* and - quite recently acquired - *Classical Music* and *Opera Now*.

The group’s very deliberate diversity is one of the pillars of their survival and indeed growing success. “We’re involved in 10 different sectors, so if one sector is doing badly, chances are that there’s another sector doing well,” Mark Allen said in a recent interview. Indeed since 2013 the Group has increased its annual turnover from £16m to £43m and is now projecting to hit £50m this year, a year earlier than planned.

Now admit it, dear reader: you didn’t know, did you, that we had such a powerhouse lurking in a Victorian Gothic church next to Brockwell Park?

www.markallengroup.com

Herne Hill stations, it offers an attractive work/life/leisure mix for many of the people who come to work in publishing at MAG.

But, says the alert reader, surely print magazines – print media in general – are declining as people opt more and more to read stuff on screen and online? Not a problem,

HERNE HILL AND THE GREAT WAR

At the Society’s February public meeting, the military historian Dan Hill provided a detailed and inspiring presentation of the history of the Great War. Never before have I been able to get to grips with the progress of the war, as it has always seemed very complex: one bloody battle after another, for what appeared to be no real gain. However, Dan helped us to make sense of the different stages – and to appreciate that there was strategy and method behind the apparent madness, as well as considerable military learning as the war progressed.

Dan was also able to bring the story to life by telling us the individual stories of men from Herne Hill. The lives of these men have been researched as part of the Herne Hill Society’s “Remembering Herne Hill 1914-18” project. It felt as though their lives were being celebrated and remembered outside their own families. For this reason the evening was special and moving.

One of the first men from Herne Hill to be killed in the war was Arthur Ernest Boardman. Born in Herne Hill, later moving to Hertfordshire, he was a member of the Hertfordshire Territorials. Arthur was killed in action at Ypres, aged 21, only four months after the beginning of the war. His parents lived at 5 Oakbank Grove.

Mass mobilisation started in 1915 with “Kitchener’s Army”. Loos was the first major set-piece battle in September 1915. The battlefield was six miles deep. Chlorine gas had first been used by the Germans in April 1915. The percentage of people killed by gas was small, less than 0.5%, but it was discovered that soldiers were rendered far less effective. The Battle of Loos saw the Allies use gas for the first time - but a change in wind direction meant that the gas floated back to their own lines. Lieutenant Henry Barnes, aged 26, was lost at Loos. His father was an MP for Glasgow who became Leader of the Labour Party 1910-11 and went on to take part in the Versailles Peace negotiations of 1919. Henry joined the Gordon Highlanders and arrived in France in the middle of 1915. On the first day of Loos, 25 September 1915, Henry’s battalion took 499 casualties. Henry went missing on the same day. His body was not discovered until 15 October 1919. The family lived at 76 Herne Hill. Rudyard Kipling’s son John (Jack) was killed on the following day. This part of Dan’s talk held particular resonance for me as my grandfather was killed on 13 October at the same battle.

Moving on to 1916, Dan talked about the Somme. On the first day, 1 July 1916, over 19,000 British soldiers were killed – several from Herne Hill. One of them was Lance Corporal Albert William Wexham, whose widow later lived in one the “Homes Fit for Heroes” at 45 Casino Avenue. Albert had enlisted with the Public Schools Battalion. He was lost in the attack on Beaumont Hamel at 7:30 am. The battle went on to for 143 days. The usual picture that we have is of mud and rain in the trenches, but the first day of the Somme was a beautiful summer’s day, with a temperature of 29C.

Pat Roberts



Dan Hill

The weather changed in September. One of those lost in the later phase of the battle was Sub-Lieutenant John Noah Bowden. Born in 1885 he was a resident of several addresses in Herne Hill: 56 Kestrel Avenue, 16 Elfindale Road, 26 Stradella Road. He arrived in France on 7

July 1916 and served with the 255th Tunnelling Company on the Somme. He went missing in action on 13 November at the Battle of Ancre. On that day there was a thick mist over the battlefield. John's name is remembered on the Thiepval Memorial.

Dan described 1917 as a year of offensives: Arras, Vimy Ridge, Messines, The Third Battle of Ypres and Cambrai. One of those killed in 1917 was Major Gerald Philip Bailey, whose mother lived at 11 Herne Hill Mansions. Major Bailey had two brothers who were also killed during the war. Gerald Bailey went to Dulwich College Preparatory School, then Dulwich College itself. He went up to Clare College Cambridge in 1905, and was awarded a First Class degree in Natural Sciences. Major Bailey arrived in France on 2 February 1915 and saw action at Festubert, Loos, the Somme and Arras. He commanded the 48th Battery, 35th Brigade, Royal Field Artillery. The Battalion's War Diary for 26 April 1917 records:

"This afternoon the brigade suffered an incalculable loss in that Major Warlind, Major Bailey, 2/Lieutenant Mansfield and 2/Lieutenant Ball were all killed by one shell which landed in the mouth of their dugout as they were sitting at mess."

The Third Battle of Ypres, also known as Passchendaele, holds

a particular horror for the British Army. Private Thomas Bennett Eastham was a resident of Herne Hill. He enlisted at Camberwell and died on 11 October 1917, along with 14 other men, killed by shellfire while holding trenches near Polderhoek Chateau. We were shown three photographs of the Chateau, before, during and after the war – a poignant reminder of the impact on the environment.

1918 was eventful in many respects. The Russian Revolution had taken Russia out of the war, and had therefore freed up more than a million German soldiers serving on the Eastern Front. Consequently, the Germans made a great push forward in their Spring Offensive and made many gains, capturing huge numbers of Allied soldiers. Dan reminded us that the war was very close run – the Germans could have won. In the Allies' retreat Sergeant Harold Clyde Cullen, 479th Field Company, Royal Engineers died, killed by shellfire when the house he was occupying took a direct hit. Harold was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal (Posthumous). He was only 21 years old. He had married Alice Cullen in November 1917 while on leave; their home was at 50 Frankfurt Road.

The tide of the war turned in the last 100 days. The stalemate was broken and the Allies, now including the Americans, moved forward. Company Sergeant Major Edward Ward, who was born at 76 Milkwood Road, died on 28 October 1918 – just two weeks before the war ended. He was a pre-war professional soldier in the Berkshire Regiment and had served at Mons, Ypres, Loos, the Somme, Arras and Passchendaele. He was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal in 1915 for "going out several times under heavy fire and bringing in wounded men". He was also "Mentioned in Dispatches" and awarded the Russian Order of St George 2nd Class.

In all, at least 600 men with links to Herne Hill were killed in the Great War; average age, 27. There is no single civic memorial to them, although there are memorials in some local churches and elsewhere. Dan Hill's talk honoured their memory.

More information about the casualties listed can be found on our Remembering Herne Hill 1914-18 website

memorial.hernehillsociety.org.uk

A recording of Dan Hill's talk is available at bit.ly/dan-hill-123

Val Suebsaeng

OUR FRONT COVER

We are pleased to bring readers (at not inconsiderable expense – having acquired the requisite permission from Getty Images) a historic picture of local interest, and also a bit of a puzzle. The caption Getty Images have for the picture is "June 1944. Women war workers taking a break for PT on the lawn in the garden at Herne Hill whilst making life saving devices for the RAF". A companion photograph – our budget did not extend to reproducing both images – has the ladies sitting around tables in what appears to be another part of the garden, almost as if they are

enjoying afternoon tea after their exercises, except that they are working on objects in



front of them. The exact nature of these objects is not obvious. We asked Getty

Images if they had any further information about the pictures, but they did not. Assuming the Herne Hill attribution is correct, we wonder whether any of our readers can shed any light on the puzzle. We cannot think of any houses standing in Herne Hill today that have the appearance of those in our front cover photograph – so where were they? And what sort of occasion was it where war work was done in a private garden? And what were the life-saving devices?

Laurence Marsh

PATRICIA M. JENKYN'S

Patricia (Pat) Jenkyns, who was instrumental in the founding of the Herne Hill Society, died in March at the age of 93. In many ways she put Herne Hill on the map, and we owe her a great debt of gratitude.

Born in Catford and raised in New Eltham, Patricia started as a nurse during World War II, but contracted tuberculosis and had surgery at the Royal Brompton Hospital, and so was unable to complete her training. I remember her telling me about losing half a lung and spending a long time in a sanatorium.

She lived in Canada for two extended periods in the 1960s, working as a medical secretary in Toronto. Her niece in Boston wrote to me about her memories of her visiting family in the USA, and of her many letters. On her return she lived in Streatham and Belsize Park, before moving in the mid-70s to The Quadrangle, at the top of Herne Hill. She worked in several London hospitals as a secretary until she retired in the 1980s. Patricia was elected as a Conservative councillor for Herne Hill ward in 1978, and again in 1982, but losing to Labour in 1986.

She became interested in local history, collecting postcards and other archive materials, and in late 1981 arranged a meeting with the aim of forming a history society for Herne Hill. There were already societies in Dulwich, Brixton and Camberwell and she thought Herne Hill should not be left out. It became clear that residents were interested in local history but also wanted to campaign for issues like the environment and transport. So in March 1982 the first meeting of the Herne Hill Society took place at SS Philip and James in Poplar Walk, attended by 77 residents and traders. Patricia was elected Chair of the Historical Sub-committee, and subsequently served as Publicity and Events Officer, Secretary and, before she moved away, Newsletter Editor.

As a local councillor Patricia was very active in fighting for important local causes. In 1985 she organised a meeting at the Lido to protest about Lambeth's plans to build a 1000-seat athletics stadium in Brockwell Park. She presented the residents' case to an overflowing Lambeth



1926 - 2019

Council chamber. The Friends of Brockwell Park was formed to carry actions forward, and the Council's plan was defeated. She was also an important force in the founding of the Friends of West Norwood Cemetery in 1989. She researched the grave of Sir Henry Bessemer was notable in documenting the historical significance of the cemetery. Patricia wrote all the early Society publications, including the original *The Story of Sir Henry Bessemer* (1984), collaborating with John Brunton on a revised version in 2013, as well as *The Making of John Ruskin* (1986) and *A Glance at the History of Herne Hill* (1986).

She moved to Eastbourne in 1991 and was awarded life membership in recognition of her drive and hard work with the Society. Through the magazine and friends she maintained her strong interest in the area for the next 28 years. She was a keen letter writer and carried on her historical research after leaving Herne Hill. In 2003 she published *The Book of Herne Hill*.

Pat did not have children of her own, but was much loved by her nephew and nieces in the UK, USA, Canada and Uganda. If you wish to make a donation in her memory, at her request please contact www.rbhcharity.org/donate/royal-brompton-hospital/5.

Funds have been raised to plant a memorial tree in Brockwell Park. The Society has made a donation and the target

has been reached.

Thank you to the following for information on Patricia's life: Nephew Mike Jenkyns, and nieces Katie Broady in the UK and Tricia Jenkyns in Boston USA
Jane Fenwick, Founder Member
Bob Flanagan, Chair, Friends of West Norwood Cemetery
Graham Pycock, Dulwich and West Norwood Conservatives

Sheila Northover

Memories of Pat Jenkyns

The Speaker of the US House of Representatives, Tip O'Neill, is credited with the aphorism that "All politics is local". Pat Jenkyns knew that, which is what made her such a formidable opponent. Her passion for all things Herne Hill and eagle eye for detail meant she was a splendid ward councillor. With Pat it wasn't just doorstep politics, it was front room politics!

As the ward agent who ran Labour's campaign when she was narrowly elected as a Conservative in 1982, I made it my business to unseat her in 1986. But in the intervening years I developed a considerable respect for Pat's diligence and magnanimity. In the end I was sorry that our winner-take-all electoral system and the steamroller effect of party voting robbed Herne Hill of an authentic voice. I told Pat at the Election Count that her defeat was not personal and she could walk out with her head held high, for she had done a great job. Sometimes the Electoral Gods just aren't with you.

Pat's legacy is prodigious, not just for the Society but for the ward. I recall arguing the toss with her about her campaign to put a controlled crossing on Herne Hill between the shops and The Quadrangle. I said there really wasn't the traffic. She said there soon would be. She was right and I was wrong. Every time I cross, I think of her. It's now another unsung legacy from her. Thanks Pat. Rest in Peace.

Fred Taggart

Labour Councillor for Herne Hill ward,
1986-90

DULWICH AT THE CUTTING EDGE

Cutting Edge: Modernist British Printmaking is the first major exhibition of work by artists from the Grosvenor School of Modern Art. Founded in Pimlico in 1925, the school was at the forefront of interwar printmaking. There, Claude Flight taught his new method of lino cutting, which transformed the process from something deemed fit only for children to a vibrant



medium expressing the energy of modern life.

We begin with avant-garde precursors including Paul Nash and Christopher Nevinson, who influenced Flight. Their works hark back to the Gallery's 2013 exhibition *A Crisis of Brilliance*.

'Urban Living' provides the theme for cafe scenes, street decorations for the 1937 coronation, people queuing for special edition news and a boy trying to catch papers swirling around him on a London street in *The Gust of Wind* by Ethel Spowers. A display case has related books, photos and postcards.

Blue walls give way to yellow for 'At Work/At Play'. Depictions of porters, sail cleaners, students in an exam room contrast with boys swimming, music making, entertainment. Sybil Andrews shows seven workmen pulling and turning *The Giant Cable* and curved balconies suspended over an audience in *Concert Hall*. Lill Tschudi arranges forms and colours to transfigure men against the sky in *Fixing the Wires*. W E Greengrass's *Jazz Musicians* is a riot of curving lines; Cyril Power's *The Merry-Go-Round* twirls dizzily.

For 'Pastoral Life' the walls turn pistachio green. There are Australian landscapes by Spowers, Dorrit Black and Eveline Syme, who also captures rural Tuscany in "Outskirts of Siena". A display case adds sketchbooks, photos and a catalogue.

Deep blue walls back 'The Sporting Life'. Power observes rowers from above in *The Eight*; Flight has racing cars on a banked track in *Brooklands*. Rugby, football, cricket, skiing, sledging, running, skating, gymnastic exercises and more provide a visual feast for sports fans.

'On the Move' sets transport against deep yellow walls. Power's

The Tube Train shows commuters in hats, reading newspapers or strap-hanging in a District Line F Stock train; in *The Tube Station* he echoes the curved tunnel ceiling in train, platform and walls. Curves also predominate in *Flight's Speed*, an open topped bus driving along Regent Street. Power's *The Sunshine Roof* sits us in the upper deck of a similar bus. Lino cutters and holders, books, photos and a 1989 Redfern Gallery catalogue of prints fill a display case.

The final room celebrates London Transport. Power's *Whence and Whither* has robotic commuters descending the Tottenham Court Road escalator to the Northern Line; studies for this and working proofs of *The Tube Station* in the original block colours are also on display. Posters by 'Andrew Power' (the artistic and life partners Andrews and Power) delightfully evoke the era, advertising bus hire, for sporting and other events, including a tennis player hitting the ball over a net formed by the word WIMBLEDON. It is fascinating noting prices and transport details on these nostalgia-inducing posters.

The Gallery's entrance hall features an installation by Nahoko Kojima, providing another interpretation of cutting edge. The Japanese artist has created an amazing eight metre *Crocodile Sumi*, cut from a single sheet of Washi paper, painted in black above gold Sumi ink – a stunning tribute to one of nature's most resilient creatures.

The winner of the Summer Pavilion competition graces the grounds. The Colour Palace by Peckham architects Pricegore and British Nigerian artist Yinkaallori imagines what Soane might have designed had he visited Africa rather than Europe for inspiration. Thousands of



pieces of timber hand-painted in bold colours forming diamond and circle patterns evoke the fabric markets of Lagos. The structure, raised on monumental feet and angled for a variety of viewpoints, provides a flexible performance and activity space; it is open to 22 September. The pavilion, like the exhibition and installation described above, celebrates innovation.

Jeff Doorn

Cutting Edge: Modernist British Printmaking opened 19 June and continues to 8 September.

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TWO HERNE HILL CELEBRITIES - A NEW DISCOVERY

The Guinness record-breaking mural for the station underpass (see p. 6) will contain many portraits of eminent Herne Hill residents. Unfortunately, missing from it – because the discovery is too recent – will be two true stars from the world of Victorian music hall and fin-de-siècle entertainment.



Marie Loftus

They were Marie Loftus (1857–1940) and her daughter Cecilia, known as “Cissy” (1876–1943).

It was a classified ad in a newspaper from 1892 that gave the Herne Hill connection. Music hall artists were always on the lookout for new material and Marie was offering “A Big Price paid for Big Songs”. She asked that they be sent to Iffley Lodge, 8 Herne Hill. She must have moved there recently since in 1891 she was living with her husband Benjamin Brown, also an entertainer, at 20 Trent Road, Brixton. Their daughter Cissy was not with them, almost certainly because she was away

at her convent school. Cissy showed precocious talent. She left the school aged 16 and went straight onto the West End stage, to huge popular acclaim. Female entertainers in this era, in a world before sound and film recording became the norm, enjoyed a fame for which there is no modern parallel. And they played an important role in the social changes that led to increasing female emancipation. Demand for Cissy’s appearances was such that within a couple of months of her debut in 1893 the Gaiety Theatre, keen to profit exclusively from her power to draw in audiences, sought an injunction to prevent her appearing in rival theatres, but Mr Justice Chitty (whose name will be familiar to today’s lawyers from his great work on the law of contract, the current edition of which will set you back an eye-watering £565!) decided the case in Cissy’s favour.

“Chitty on Contracts meting out genial justice to little Cissy Loftus was a sight for gods and men”, gushed *The Sketch* and the magazine sent off their reporter to interview Cissy at her home, who was, as propriety no doubt demanded, accompanied by her mother. The interview provides a very rare glimpse – no image of the house survives - into one of the residences that used to stand on Herne Hill but are no more. “An old two-storey country cottage, standing well back from the road, hidden in a clump of trees, and backed by one of those delicious walled gardens well



Cissy Loftus

stored with the flora loved by our ancestors, fruit-trees bending under well-laden boughs, surrounding a velvety lawn innocent of tennis net or disfiguring chalk ... such is the home of the young girl who is providing nightly a new sensation to the jaded habitué of ‘the Halls.’ Cissy spoke about her metier as an impersonator of other famous performers. Although she went on to develop a



Cissy by Toulouse Lautrec

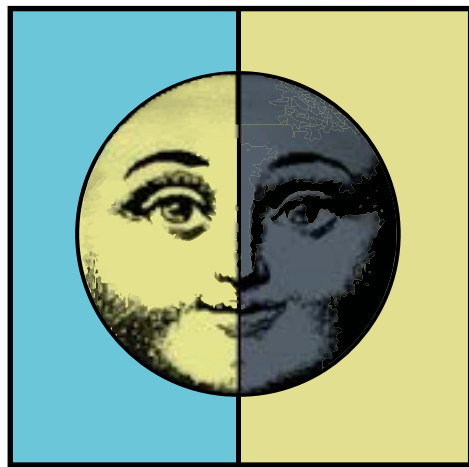
broader acting career, her phenomenal talent for impersonation was her greatest gift. The interview in *The Sketch* concludes by describing how, while the horse in being put into the dog-cart to drive the interviewer back to Herne Hill station, mother, daughter and journalist sauntered down the “flower-edged path of the fragrant garden” and Cissy offered their guest a handful of mulberries. There is no intimation of the scandal that would erupt only a few weeks later, when Cissy,

at an age when she could not marry without parental consent, eloped to Scotland (which had no such constraints) with Justin Huntly McCarthy, a playwright and, until recently, Irish Nationalist Member of Parliament – and twice her age.

Cissy’s residence at the top of Herne Hill must therefore have been short-lived. Her parents stayed there a few years, and Marie Loftus, along with other celebrities would attend charity events at the London County Athletic Grounds (that also accommodated the Herne Hill Velodrome); but they were gone by 1901 and the “country cottage” – old maps suggest a substantial villa – was demolished and replaced by the building (Nos. 8 and 8A) that survives today while almost all of the large rear garden was built over. The scandal of Cissy’s elopement in due course subsided and her career blossomed in the years up to the First World War. But her marriage was short lived. And her later acting career, which she pursued in America after 1923 saw a slow decline into ill-health and alcoholism.

Such was Cissy’s early fame that Henri de Toulouse Lautrec, in a fine lithograph dated to 1894, caught her impersonation of another famous female performer of the fin-de siècle, the Parisian Yvette Guilbert. Lautrec may have seen Cissy in Paris or in London, where he made several visits. He was a great fan of cycling sports and it is known that he visited the newly built Catford Velodrome, but whether he also came to the Herne Hill track, that predated Catford’s by two years, is not recorded.

Laurence Marsh



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