

HERNE HILL

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HERNE HILL SOCIETY 🌿 ISSUE 151 🌿 Summer 🌿 2021 🌿 £3.00



INSPIRED BY JOHN RUSKIN

► See pages 16 - 17

MR DANE'S DESIGN

► See page 3

ST PAUL'S HERNE HILL -
A FEAST OF COLOURS

► Turn to pages 12 - 13



The Magazine of the Herne Hill Society



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Mr Dane's Design

Street artists like to disguise their true names with an alias – a nom d'aérosol one could say – and the latest addition to Herne Hill's public art provides a good example. In contrast to the mystery about Banksy's identity there seems to be no mystery about the true name of Mr Dane, whose design will soon be disguising the dull doors of Station Square's electricity sub-station. Mr Dane is otherwise Luke Warburton, an experienced street artist, designer and illustrator. With funding from the Arch Company, who have taken over the shops and railway arches that were once the property of Network Rail, the Herne Hill Forum organised a popular vote on a choice of designs by Mr Dane. The image featuring a heron and a Victorian stink pipe was the winner – two appropriate reminders of this once watery corner of Herne Hill, known in former times as Island Green, where the River Effra ran until covered over in the 1860s. Mr Dane's design joins a good number of other pieces of public art in Herne Hill



Mural at 198 Railton Road



Sub-station art

that have all appeared within the last six years: the large black and white wall painting by Phlegm in Dulwich Road, the Victor Szepessy 40m station underpass mural painted by volunteers, Caroline McCarthy's 15 steel-cut drawings mounted on various local buildings, and the murals under the Burbage Road railway bridge. To that list should be added the artwork on the wall of the Contemporary Arts and Learning building at 198 Railton Road, which earlier this year was able to crowdfund £5900 for a work to commemorate the events in Brixton of 40 years ago, described by some as Uprisings and by others as Riots. As the recent unveiling of the Diana monument at Kensington Palace shows us, opinions on works of public art can differ hugely. But that is surely part of the role of public art, to provoke reaction and deny indifference.

Split in Three – the Boundary Commission proposals

At the time of going to press the recently published proposals of the Boundary Commission for England were only just beginning to gain attention. The Commission's proposals see many changes to parliamentary boundaries, not least in London, which will gain two additional seats. But there is only one London seat which will cease to exist under the proposals and that is Dulwich and West Norwood, the seat that embraces all of Herne Hill, however you define the precise boundaries of the Herne Hill area.

The Commission has a statutory duty to establish approximate numerical parity between constituencies, a process that has been delayed and is now overdue. Assuming no earlier general election takes place, the proposals, if unaltered in the consultation process, will take effect in July 2023. The proposals would see Herne Hill divided between three constituencies. This would be achieved by the Lambeth local authority ward of Herne Hill becoming part of the new Clapham and Brixton constituency; the Southwark ward of Dulwich Village becoming part of the



new constituency of Dulwich and Sydenham; and the Lambeth ward of Thurlow Park joining Streatham. Herne Hill is already divided between two London boroughs, but these proposals see

it wholly losing its current unity within one parliamentary constituency. By the time this magazine reaches readers we hope we will have been able to alert members, through an emailed message, to the issues involved and that they will have had an opportunity to respond to the Boundary Commission by the consultation deadline of 2 August 2021. The

Society will also have submitted its own comments. This is not a party political issue but a question of local identity. One of the criteria that the Boundary Commission must take account of is "local links that would be broken by changes in constituencies". Community cohesion - a sense of belonging to a particular place - brings many social benefits. The Society has worked for many years to encourage this. There can be no doubt that the Herne Hill community and its identity are the losers under these proposals. See <https://bcereviews.org.uk>

Rebecca and Colin in conversation

Rebecca Tee has been a member of the Herne Hill Society since 1996. She joined the Committee in March 2020 and, after some months as Acting Chair, was confirmed in the role at this year's AGM. Here she talks to Colin Wight, her predecessor.

Colin - Next year will be our 40th anniversary as a Society. Do you have any thoughts about celebrating the milestone?

Rebecca - Yes I do, but let's not forget that the Society has been through a difficult time with two key stalwarts and yourself standing down from the Committee, so even "business as usual" is an achievement. The Society can only continue if there are people prepared to put the work in. It's not self-propelling, and many amenity groups have gone to the wall over the years. We can have a real influence over how our area changes. Our objectives, what we were set up to do 40 years ago, are still relevant: planning, local history, community cohesion. Our Herne Hill magazine is a terrific vehicle for keeping people informed.

Colin - We have quite a few sister organisations locally. When you add them all up, how many active volunteers are there in Herne Hill? Maybe a couple of hundred at most and it's possible to meet and get to know them. Once you start to get involved, you get hooked because you realise you can make a difference. I did not appreciate that when I was younger. Sometimes you win a battle, sometimes you lose, sometimes it is not clear which!

Rebecca - As well as individual efforts local authorities are very important: they have planning and transport powers, and they invest. For example, our members have been very successful in getting grants. Many thousands of pounds have been spent on residents' ideas. Things like hanging baskets and better lighting are not trivial because aesthetics are important. It shows that we care about the environment in which we live.

Colin - Back to the upcoming 40th anniversary; do you have a big idea in mind?

Rebecca - From March 2022, the Herne Hill Society Awards for Excellence will launch. One of the things we would like to do is identify unsung heroes. It will be about celebrating diverse ways in which our area has been improved, under three headings - something like environment, historical research, people - in accordance with our constitutional objectives of course. Individuals or groups could apply, including commercial

organisations and schools. It will be interesting to see the range of what's going on. The judging panel will be made up of experienced Society members, but not the current Committee. We will publicise the winners in our magazine and elsewhere. It will be about recognition not money, but of course we do also have our Small Grants Scheme for local organisations which need some extra investment.

Colin - Pioneers don't always reap the financial benefits but someone has to make a start. Talking about the environment, for example, we are much more aware of issues such as packaging and micro-plastics than we used to be. But the damage goes on. I'm

quite interested in economies of scale. Can a whole street bulk buy, e.g. to get a better broadband deal? Do we have to have all these separate van deliveries? It might be difficult to pick the winners but people could apply again. Well, there's always next year!

Rebecca - We have been going through a rough time with the Covid pandemic, but this is an ideal opportunity to make a positive statement about our locality.

Colin - Talking of positive signs, you have been very successful in recruiting people and I think we now have more members than ever

before. But there's still room for growth. Most local residents are neither members nor even know who we are.

Rebecca - Some of our new members are coming forward, after a bit of encouragement, to get involved in different ways. The best marketing tool is always word of mouth. You don't have to be on the Committee to play a role. We know that volunteering is a way of enhancing your life.

Colin - It certainly has been for me. Most of the skills I'd acquired at work could be adapted and further developed at a comfortable pace. I'd never describe myself as a historical researcher but I found the WWI project fascinating to do. And next year the 1921 Census will become available online.

Rebecca - I agree, there are great research opportunities there and a huge potential for growth in so many ways. We invite readers to join us!



Welcome to Nigel and Lin

Since the last issue of this magazine our co-opted committee member Nigel Thorpe has been elected as a member and Lin Proctor has become a co-opted member. We are delighted to welcome both to the Society's committee. Before retirement Nigel's lifetime career was in the diplomatic service with particular

experience in Eastern Europe. After working as a PR professional and running her own business, Lin now works in education, helping to build links with the world of work.

Not so long ago the Society was gravely concerned about its survival. We have weathered that storm, but the Society's future depends on people stepping forward and contributing their experience and enthusiasm and engaging with our varied work. Our thanks to Nigel and Lin for responding to the call.

40 Years On – An Appeal

Next year the Society will be celebrating 40 years since its founding in 1982. We think this is something to celebrate and are beginning to think of ways to do so. We would like, for example, to explore events and changes in Herne Hill over four decades. This could be shown through photographs and personal reminiscences. If we can collect enough material we could even stage an exhibition. But first we need the material. Can you help? Or do you have your own ideas for ways of marking our first 40 years? We would love to hear from you.

The changing face of Station Square



2015



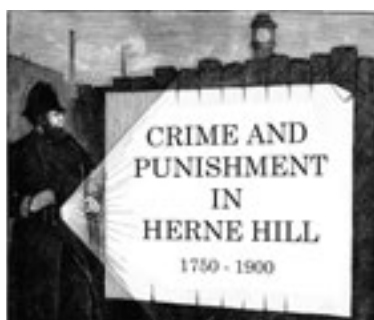
2017



2019



2021



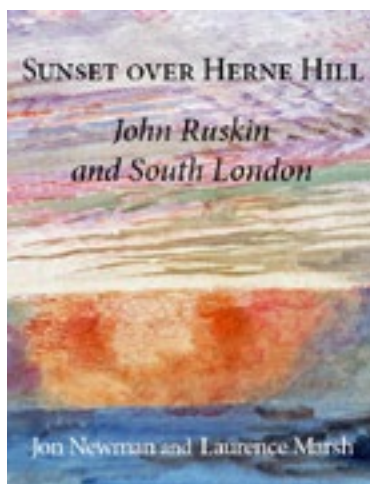
Lambeth Heritage Festival

Was the nine-year-old John Ruskin aware of the dreadful murder of a servant in the house opposite his family's home on Herne Hill? This is just one of the many stories uncovered by research into the murkier history of Herne Hill and its neighbourhood. In September the Society will be presenting a live online talk as their contribution to the Lambeth Heritage Festival 2021. The talk will start at a period when there were more than 150 "capital" crimes – crimes where the death penalty could be imposed. It ends with the theft of billiard balls from a house on Denmark Hill and the very first use in evidence of fingerprints in an English courtroom. "Crime and Punishment in Herne Hill 1750-1900" will be presented by **Laurence Marsh and Rebecca Tee on Monday 27 September at 7pm.**

Sunset over Herne Hill – the Society's next publication

Two years ago saw the bicentenary of the birth of John Ruskin. This magazine had a special issue that celebrated the man, who is surely Herne Hill's most illustrious resident and the Society invited Jon Newman, a writer and archivist with a particular interest in Ruskin, to give a public talk. From this grew the idea of creating something more permanent to examine Ruskin's close relationship with our part of London, a place he lived in for the greater part of his life. Like most good things in life, they need time to grow and mature. We are now delighted to say that the Society will shortly be publishing *Sunset over Herne Hill: John Ruskin and South London*. There are countless publications about John Ruskin but we believe this is the first book that concentrates on how South London did so much to shape Ruskin's thinking. Jon Newman explores Ruskin's reactions to railway building, the potent and visible symbol of the new age, and to the Crystal Palace that arrived at Sydenham in 1853 and forever changed the view from Ruskin's home on Denmark Hill. South London Gothic provides another important theme and Jon Newman also examines the importance of the natural world for Ruskin, a world that – to Ruskin's dismay – was changing out of all recognition as London grew. He concludes

with a chapter on Ruskin's legacy, with a particular focus on Ruskin Park. The final quarter of the book, by Laurence Marsh, comprises a close look at the Local History of John Ruskin and concentrates on the Ruskin homes on Herne Hill and Denmark Hill and their more immediate surroundings, of which almost every trace has disappeared.



The eminent architectural historian Andrew Saint has read the text and we quote his comment: "This illuminating and touching book restores John Ruskin to South London ... In a generous act of restitution, the authors of *Sunset over Herne Hill* take us back to the neglected roots of the great Victorian romantic's creativity."

Sunset over Herne Hill will contain 80 illustrations and a specially commissioned map. It is probably the most ambitious book the Society has ever embarked on. We are now turning our minds to how to finance the printing. We have received a generous donation

towards the cost of printing, but otherwise we will be relying on sales of the book. One way of showing support for the Society will be by purchasing a copy – or even more than one. We plan to have the book out in the autumn, a time when some are already planning their Christmas presents.

Alastair Hanton – Reminiscences from friends in Herne Hill

It was with great sadness that we learned of the death in May 2021 of our friend Alastair Hanton, aged 94. Few of us knew of the many innovative achievements in Alastair's long and distinguished career in industry and finance. He invented the direct debit system and also transformed banking by the introduction of the giro system of payment, running the National Girobank from its inception until his retirement in 1986.

However, Alastair did not retire! He continued to devote his energies to founding and setting up campaigns and charities for the greater public good. His son, Angus, who is also well known in the local community, said, "Alastair loved campaigning because it combined two of his favourite activities – making new friends and creating change."

The extent of his work, as an inspiring transport campaigner, only became apparent later in his life to those of us who were addressing the multiple difficulties of the Herne Hill Junction. These problems were the subject of many discussions and disagreements at meetings of the Herne Hill Forum. When a holistic approach was suggested and subsequently planned, as a rationalised solution for the roads with good provision for pedestrians and cyclists and giving better open access to Brockwell Park, Alastair offered his support. In the words of Cllr Becca Thackray, "Alastair completely got it". When invited to do so, Alastair readily agreed to chair a small group of local residents to take forward this plan for the regeneration of the junction.

With many vested interests and entrenched views, the consultation with the two local councils, whose borders straddle the junction, and the various local societies, was not easy. During a long-drawn-out process, Alastair's patience and determination were crucial in achieving implementation of the scheme. Becca has spoken of his compassionate conversations and



uncompetitive approach in order to achieve an understanding of the benefits of the plan, while determinedly resisting the various 'pick and mix' suggestions that would have diminished its integrity.

Over an eight-year long period of consultation and implementation, Alastair would cycle to Half Moon Lane to chair regular meetings with John Brunton, Paul Reynolds (succeeded by Jim Davidson) and myself. He also cycled to Blue Star House, in Brixton, to chair the Supervisory Board for the scheme during the many meetings we had with Lambeth Council officers. Alastair always conducted these meetings with kindness and respect for all, despite much frustration with the slow progress. There is no doubt that the Herne Hill regeneration scheme, eventually implemented with few changes from the initial vision, would not have been achieved without the qualities that Alastair possessed

and brought to bear.

After the official opening of the scheme in 2010, the group, under Alastair's chairmanship, continued to meet from time to time to consider further improvements. Robert Holden, an ardent supporter of the scheme, reminded us all that the 10th anniversary of the opening was due on 4 December 2020. On the day we all met for a video call – Alastair, as sharp as ever, was still considering how we might move forward with the further improvements we had in mind.

John Stewart, the Chair of Trustees of the Campaign for Better Transport, wrote of Alastair's campaigning, "His achievements have been many but what a lot of us will miss, are his words of wisdom, his gentleness and his encouragement ... A unique life; modestly lived."

David Coughtrie

With thanks to Angus Hanton, Becca Thackray and John Stewart

Two Towers refused

On 21 July Lambeth refused permission for the development proposed on the border of Herne Hill and Loughborough Junction. The scheme by developers Metaphorm included two towers of 29 and 20 storeys. The Society strongly opposed the application as did other local groups, including Loughborough Junction Action Group, the Brixton Society and the Camberwell Society, as well as hundreds of individuals. It was at one stage feared that the requirement for the application to be also considered by the Mayor might result in the mayor "calling in" the application and deciding it himself, Lambeth having made it clear that they would refuse permission. However, the Mayor decided that he did not wish to intervene and wished Lambeth to retain the power to decide. The multiple reasons for refusal represent a comprehensive defeat for the developers.



However, it is almost inevitable that further applications to develop the site will emerge in future. Some will also wonder why none of the many planning policy grounds for rejecting the Metaphorm application were somehow considered by Lambeth to be not applicable to the Peabody scheme on the neighbouring site, a scheme that includes a 17-storey tower and 8-storey blocks along Herne Hill Road. (See also p. 18 on proposed changes in the planning system.)

Shops – latest!

Ayla's Pet Store

The pet supplies business is a major commercial player. The leading retail chain Pets at Home raised its profit forecast last winter to £85 million, while a survey carried out earlier this year by the Pet Food Manufacturers' Association estimates that the country now has 17 million pet-owning homes. Indeed, the UK's pet population is estimated to have risen by 8% over the 12 months since the first lockdown. It's probably right to assume that these are mostly cats and dogs.

That aside, anyone can see that there are loads of dogs scampering around, with their owners (not always scampering), in our local parks. By no means have all been acquired during the last 18 months or so: casual observation suggests that dog ownership



Ayla's Pet Store

had already escalated in the last few years. And cats abound too. Good business for vets and for pet food makers. So the opening of a shop dedicated to the needs of pets and owners seems to hit the right moment. Ayla's Pet Store on Dulwich Road (corner of Rymer Street) opened this spring, taking over the premises previously occupied by their dog-owning client Lowie (now moved to Half Moon Lane). With his long-established dog and cat grooming business in Shakespeare Road, owner Tony Rexha can count on a wide circle of loyal followers who he hopes will use his new shop which sells pet food, training aids and playthings for our four-legged family members.

020 8062 3714

aylaspetstore@gmail.com

www.theloyaltygroomers.co.uk

Lowie

As reported some weeks ago on our blog, sustainable womenswear maker Lowie, founded by designer Bronwyn Lowenthal in 2002, moved during lockdown from their Dulwich Road corner shop to bigger, more excitingly colourful premises on Half Moon Lane where there is also a studio.

020 7737 3310

www.ilovelowie.com

info@ilovelowie.com

Utter Waffle

And now for two-legged appetites ... Utter Waffle have opened their first bricks-and-mortar outlet on Dulwich Road, to complement their well-established truck-based business that's been



The team at Utter Waffle

supplying all manner of waffles to events, weddings, film sets and festivals for a couple of years (and still does). The name hints that they don't take themselves too seriously, but Julia Jefferis and James Timmins are very expert at making savoury and sweet waffles for all occasions and times of the day. Indeed, they have won numerous Street Food awards, and represented the UK in the Euro Street

Food finals in Sweden in 2019. So it's nice that they have decided to put down roots in Herne Hill, which they love because of the throngs of locals and visitors who come to enjoy our independent businesses, the area's buzzing atmosphere, and Brockwell Park. Their food is all gluten free, and many vegan and allergy-aware dishes are served. Speaking again of dogs – Utter Waffle are, unusually for a small restaurant, dog friendly, and new canine visitors have their photograph taken and pinned on a board.

020 7274 6409

www.utterwaffle.co.uk

Tales on Moon Lane

Not a new shop of course (and part of the larger Moon Lane Group) and a long-standing ornament to our community, but we should take this chance to congratulate them on winning – again – a major publishing industry award. Not just as a children's bookshop (Children's Bookseller of the Year 2021, 2020 and 2017) but now also, up against the premier league players, UK Book Retailer of the Year 2021.



020 7274 5759

www.talesonmoonlane.co.uk

info@talesonmoonlane.co.uk

Unto This Last

For the opening of Unto This Last, a furniture workshop and store just next to the Half Moon Hotel, see page 16. **Pat Roberts**

The Traffic Issue - a reader responds



Dear Editor

The editorial on Low Traffic Neighbourhoods in the last issue gave the impression that these schemes simply transfer traffic from one road to another, and therefore the magazine couldn't take a stance. However the Dulwich scheme is comprehensive with protection for alternative roads like Burbage Road. The displaced traffic from Dulwich Village is forced to go either through the Herne Hill junction or along Lordship Lane, and pre-Covid both of these were full of traffic and could not take additional flows.

By reducing road capacity the LTNs reduce total traffic flows but they mean that drivers have a reduced choice of routes. The Dulwich LTN led to huge queues immediately after the scheme opened, but as with other similar schemes some drivers gave up and changed their travel arrangements.

The choice then is between driver

convenience and an improved environment along the relieved roads. On this basis I would have thought the magazine's approach should be to support LTNs in principle. Of course there are issues such as protecting affluent areas like Dulwich rather than poorer areas, and the practical details of specific schemes, but I think we should be looking for less traffic and better urban environments.

Bernie Hewing



Dulwich Healthy Streets

– Bil Harrison suggests compromise solutions

My apologies to Lambeth residents – this article relates to detailed comments on the Southwark Dulwich Village Low Traffic Neighbourhood schemes. It is a personal view, and has not been debated by the Committee of the Herne Hill Society.

Introduction

Programmes of road closures and timed bus gates controlled by traffic cameras have been introduced by Southwark Council under the London Streetscape Funding in late 2019 and early 2020, using Emergency Traffic Orders – collectively Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs).

These measures were introduced with only limited consultation, mainly online; have been very difficult to monitor and assess in the rapidly changing traffic conditions and work and social behaviour during the Covid pandemic; and hence have engendered polarised and firmly held views for or against. The online comment-gathering ‘Streetspace Commonplace’ map now contains over 1,700 unsorted comments. LB Southwark circulated a five-page document to local residents, setting out the proposed programme of online ‘Consultation’, lists a few minor ‘changes’ which have been made, though failing to recognise the strongly held, polarised and entrenched views of local groups. The Consultation ended on 18 July – just after the publication of a short traffic monitoring report.

The Interim Monitoring Report includes comparisons of traffic levels between April 2019 and April 2021, with work ongoing. Over the two years, motor traffic in Southwark as a whole has reduced by 12%; on the main roads round the LTN by 11%: while within the LTN overall traffic is down 31%. Cycle traffic has gone up by about 50% around the LTN, and doubled within the LTN. Separating the effects of general trends, the pandemic, and the LTN is very difficult.

While there should be widespread support for environmental improvement and pollution reduction measures in general, at the very local level there are winners and losers; serious concerns about accessibility for mobility-impaired residents, carers, local businesses, and the emergency services; confusion over the details of timed restrictions; irritation and delay on diversion routes; and perceptions of street crime opportunities on very lightly used roads.

The Council is now on a tight timescale to conclude the consultation before the 18-month deadline for the confirmation, or lapsing, of the ‘Emergency’ measures. There are many entrenched online and leafleting pressure groups, with little chance of changing their positions on the currently implemented measures.

Ways forward

There is no easy way out, but three options are possible:

- Dismantle the ‘Emergency’ measures, and restart real local engagement when the ‘new normal’ is stabilised. This approach is being adopted by several Conservative-controlled London Boroughs, but it wastes the Government/TfL funds used to implement them, and has not been mentioned by Southwark.
- Press on with defending the current schemes, improving the quality of engagement and hoping for the best when the decision time arrives.

- Develop compromise adjustments, and engage with the ‘for’ and ‘against’ groups to seek more generally supported, less divisive ‘better’ solutions.

This article provides a personal view on some compromise options, without revisiting the points for and against the current measures.

Options for Court Lane and Calton Avenue junction

- Install rise and fall bollards to allow access by permitted vehicles – for example emergency services (this would require three bollards); or
- Install road narrowing at Calton Avenue and Court Lane to allow one way, or priority direction, single-lane motorised vehicle accessibility (for example to permit the left turn one-way from Calton Avenue into Court Lane); or
- Re-open the junction connecting to either Court Lane, or Calton Avenue, with the other remaining closed to motorised vehicles, with a public open space; or
- Re-open the junction fully, but with camera controlled timed restrictions in line with adjacent roads.

If the junction is somehow re-opened to some motorised traffic, Gilkes Place could be developed as a ‘Dulwich Square’ with adequate litter bins, seating, skateboard-unfriendly cobbles, and no through travel for any wheeled vehicles.

Options for the P4 bus route could be explored – perhaps a route down Court Lane, or Townley/Calton Avenue, to improve reliability and local access.

Options for the current camera-controlled bus gates

- Adjust the timing of restrictions to follow more closely school travel times - replace 8am to 10am with, say, 8am to 9:30 or 9am; replace 3pm to 6pm with 3pm to 4:30pm – this would reflect the ‘School Streets’ aspirations, and reduce the end of time restriction surge.
- Indicate more clearly the location of the restriction ‘gates’ using roadside posts and distinctive road surface markings.
- Introduce road narrowing chicanes to calm traffic generally (like, for example, Nightingale Lane in Clapham or Salters Hill by Norwood Park).
- Provide clearer and illuminated advance warning roadside signs of the ‘gate’ restrictions.
- Undertake a consultation on a Controlled Parking Zone proposal for Dulwich Village, to enable exemption from the timed camera ‘gates’ for vehicles registered to local residents, businesses and carers.
- Remove the ‘gate’ restriction on the main, most heavily trafficked northbound route into Dulwich Village from the roundabout (this will somewhat reduce the diversion onto Croxted Road, although traffic will still be dissuaded by the narrowing at the East Dulwich Grove junction).

Herne Hill Music Festival

8 – 17 October 2021

The Herne Hill Music Festival is excited to be back again this year, offering a selection of 23 varied events. Throughout the lockdown both committee and performers have been working hard behind the scenes, curating a diverse programme of stunning musical performances for you to enjoy in the comfort of local Herne Hill venues.

Friday 8 October Smooth late-night Jazz from singer-songwriter Nel Begley at the Half Moon pub at 8pm. If tragic stories and historical performance is more your thing, then The Friends' Musick Chamber Choir will be performing down the road (in traditional costume), at the Prince Regent pub, also at 8pm. Commemorating the 420th Anniversary of the 1620 sailing of the Pilgrim Fathers in the Mayflower, you can experience that fateful 66-days' voyage across the Atlantic.

Saturday 9 October The Festival is building on previous years' successes in inviting our public to participate in open musical workshops. Passionate music educator Margaret Omoniyi and her band invites babies, toddlers and young children to St Paul's Church Hall at 11am for a 90-minute workshop of singing, movement, instrument fun and props. Don't be surprised if parents are invited to join in! Later that afternoon, there will also be an opportunity to watch a showcase of Youth Musical Talent from young musicians from local schools at St Saviour's Hall at 3pm – please note this event is provisional.

Later that evening, for this year's Music For Practical Action fundraising concert, we have invited Japanese concert pianist Haruko Seki for a spellbinding programme of keyboard classics at 7:30pm at St Faith's Church. If jazz is more your style, then we are delighted to have the Nigel Grice Quintet performing for the first time at the festival, at the Prince Regent pub at 8pm.

Sunday 10 October The festival moves outdoors with the Lambeth Wind Orchestra performing at the Bandstand in Brockwell Park at 1:30pm, a mix of classical and popular tunes. Donations will be gratefully received. Nearby in the Community Greenhouses at 3pm, the Giant Folk Trio will be playing a curious selection of jazz and folk music, inspired with an infusion of Irish and Scandinavian melodies. At 6pm head up the road to St Paul's church, where we will once again be featuring a traditional Choral Evensong.

Monday 11 October Aspiring Jazz lovers will again be welcome to play along as well as listen in our Jazz Jam session at the Off The Cuff bar, led by Roger Humbles at 8pm.

Tuesday 12 October A little further down the arches enjoy another pint (or two) of local craft beer at Canopy Beer alongside a performance from iyatraQuartet, with velvety tones of clarinet alongside ambient mandolin and enchanting percussive tones.

Wednesday 13 October An offering of country-style guitar and vocal music of Americana with Pete Bruntnell in the intimate setting of The Workshop at the back of the Half Moon Pub.



Palace Acappella choir

photo: Harry Livingstone

Thursday 14 October We hope once again local school pupils will be performing a School Musical at St Saviour's Hall – please note provisional at this stage. At 8pm the Tijuana Jazz ensemble is sure to have you leaving the Prince Regent with tunes you can't get out of your head for the rest of the evening, including hits from the Beatles and other 60s hits.

Friday 15 October A delightful oboe recital from Julia White and Andrea Kmecova, performing well-known film score melodies at 7:30pm at St Paul's Church, raising money for its Organ Fund. At Off The Cuff at 8pm, the festival welcomes Hotmotel, offering a selection of upbeat original indie-rock songs.

Saturday 16 October Raising money for Norwood and Brixton Foodbank, Opal Flutes, a local mixed-ability flute choir brings you Coffee Morning Music at Herne Hill United Church at 11am. Later at 3pm, we again welcome four local amateur choirs to perform in Herne Hill Sings On at St Faith's Church. Your support would also be welcome in aid of local charity Herne Hill Welcomes Refugees, for whom cover band Talking Strawberries will be performing at 7:30pm at Off The Cuff.

Sunday 17 October Young people are again invited to showcase their musical skills at the Junior Open Mic Concert at Off The Cuff at 11am. Also for the final day of the Festival, enjoy an afternoon in Ruskin Park with a performance from the Crystal Palace Brass Band at the bandstand from 2pm. Meanwhile, back at Brockwell Park's Community Greenhouse at 3:30pm, Greenhouse Folk with Fran & Mike. The duo will be performing an uplifting acoustic vocal and guitar set of Country and Blues music.

The festival concludes with the very talented Southwark Sinfonietta at 7pm at St Faith's Church, performing a mighty programme including Beethoven's epic Piano Concerto No. 5 ("Emperor") with Nadia Lasserson as soloist, and Mozart's 36th Symphony in C, the "Linz".

Scott Greig

More details and tickets on sale at www.hernehillfestival.org



Smelling the Flowers

Marieke's conversations with those finding solace in the park at a troubling time. As one visitor to the park told Marieke, "It has grounded and steadied me. Ordinary life has slowed down. In this enforced stillness the joy of every note of nature is somehow more heightened. More poignant. More precious." This feeling is beautifully captured in Marieke's photographs. Copies of the book can be purchased (cost £20) from www.smellingtheflowers.org



Last summer this magazine used a view over Brockwell Park for its front cover by local photographer Marieke Wrigley. Until retirement in 2018 Marieke's career was in the NHS working in the field of mental health. Since then she has been able to concentrate on photography and her love of nature.

From the start of the lockdown Marieke set herself the task of documenting the natural sights of Brockwell Park. Now she has brought together her photographs in a book – *Smelling the Flowers: what a city park meant during lockdown*. The book not only presents a lovely variety, whether from the plant or animal kingdom, it also draws on



Ladies in the Park

Caroline Beamish, a life member of the Society and former Herne Hill resident, now living in East Dulwich, sent us this picture taken shortly before the second lockdown. The octagonal pavilion in the walled garden of Brockwell Park provided the ideal setting for socially-distanced seating. It has been a favourite destination for Caroline and her friends, who go back many years, to when they would meet up to go swimming after work on Ladies Night at the Brixton Rec. Caroline and her friends are among the huge number of visitors who have enjoyed the unique benefits that Brockwell Park has been able to provide during the pandemic.

We show the pillar-box cosy that mysteriously appeared at the top of Herne Hill (junction with Frankfurt Road) at the end of July. It seems these happy adornments to our streets first started to appear in many parts of the country three years ago, but so far as we know this is the first in Herne Hill.

Phantom knitter of Herne Hill!



ST PAUL'S HERNE HILL – A FEAST OF COLOURS



Clerestory window shows Noah with ark and rainbow

In the first of two articles, illustrated by his own photographs, **Howell Huws** explores St Paul's.

Over many years living in Herne Hill, I have been familiar with the outside of St Paul's Herne Hill without paying too much attention. At just about the highest point in the parish, and with a prominent spire with flying corner buttresses and pinnacles, the church is a noted local landmark, visible from Brockwell Park.

Intrigued by the evidence of stained glass on the windows facing the street, I walked in and was warmly welcomed by the former church warden. Passing through into the nave is to enter a light, peaceful space, full of colour and delights for the eye. The open feel of the timber arch-braced roof over the nave is particularly attractive. But the windows offer a feast of luxuriant, vibrant colours generated by the sun coming through, inspiring a contemplative attitude through the transformation of the ordinary into the mystical, but also leading to delight in the story-telling craft displayed.

Victorian stained glass

Nearly all of the Victorian stained glass was destroyed by a fire bomb landing in the south aisle in 1940. Most of the remaining stained glass is by the prolific John Hardman & Co of Birmingham, with typically rich colours and clear well-executed schemes, telling key stories of the Christian heritage. Of the two main surviving windows, the one on the right of the entrance, depicts events in the life of St Peter: "Feed my sheep", the Crucifixion of Peter (upside down out of reverence for Jesus), and Peter being led out from prison. The one on the left shows St John: comforting the Saviour's Mother, healing a lame man, and with Jesus at the Last Supper.

The clerestory has pairs of round windows with quatrefoils and

trefoils hosting Old Testament figures to look over the congregation and perhaps inspire them. The figure of Noah is my favourite, with ark and rainbow. David and Enoch are easy to identify, while Abraham has a knife of sacrifice and Jesse is holding the noble stem.

The Arts and Crafts East Window

However, the real gem of the church is the wonderful Arts and Crafts-inspired east window, installed in 1949 to replace a window lost to blast damage from a V1 flying bomb in Carver Road in 1944. It was designed by the stained-glass artist Lilian Josephine Pocock, whose work also graces Christ the King in Holborn.

The window is unusual in its extensive use of 'slab' (clear glass, one inch thick) and 'streaky' glass, with colours unevenly distributed. Pictorially, the faces (even those of the angels) are all individual and expressive, and the framing is complex, while the colours are attractively varied. At the top, the rose window shows the Creation animated by the Spirit in the form of the dove. The main lights depict the annunciation, nativity, crucifixion, Pentecost and resurrection, with Christ in Majesty in the centre. But look closely and see other wonderful mini-scenes of



Nativity scene in the east window



The commissioning of St Peter

the transfiguration, the empty tomb and the Last Supper, together with images of the sacraments.

This window can now be clearly seen in its full glory thanks to a controversial element to the 2014 re-ordering of the church interior in order to provide a new welcoming area. The 1920 war memorial screen had stood at the entrance to the chancel, where traditionally such screens separated the nave and chancel, inviting worshippers deeper into the mystery of the cross and altar.

Moving the memorial screen

The screen was moved to face the exit at the back of the now shortened nave, where it forms a frame for the glass separating the body of the church from the new welcoming area. The memorial screen is attractive in its own right, enabling contemplation of the mystery of the cross, the pain of the mother's loss, with the supporting angels holding symbols of the crucifixion.

The reframing enables the church to respond to the needs of today, the reordering facilitating a modern entrance hall and facilities, including a dedicated creche. Some will feel the memorial screen just faces the wrong way, passing without notice on leaving the sacred space, rather than drawing the faithful further into the mysteries. However you respond, St Paul's leaves you with plenty to marvel at and ponder about.



The Creation depicted in the east window



Scenes from the life of St John

EIGHT RAILWAY BRIDGES AND A TUNNEL

THE RAILWAY HERITAGE OF HERNE HILL



Rosendale Road bridge before removal of columns and the goods depot bridge behind, photo c1966

In the 1860s two railway companies – the London, Chatham & Dover Railway (LC&DR) and the London, Brighton & South Coast Railway (LB&SCR) built no fewer than eight bridges to carry their tracks over roads in Herne Hill on or close to land owned by the Dulwich Estate. The governors of the estate insisted that the railway companies not only built the bridges but also accepted the designs of the governor's estate architect and surveyor, Charles Barry Junior. The land had been bought in 1606 by Edward Alleyn as part of the foundation of what was to become Dulwich College.

Charles Barry Junior was a noted architect, the eldest son of Sir Charles Barry who designed the Houses of Parliament, Highclere Castle (TV's *Downton Abbey*) and the Cliveden mansion on the Thames in Buckinghamshire. Charles Barry Junior's most well known works in London include Dulwich College (1866-70), Dulwich Park (1890), St Stephen's Church on College Road (1875) and the Great Eastern Hotel at Liverpool Street (1884) – all now listed by Historic England.

His railway structures in Herne Hill include the long, low North Dulwich viaduct which has 32 red-brick segmental arches aligned on a gentle curve (designed by the LB&SCR's architect Robert

Jacomb Hood with Barry as consultant architect and built in 1866 with a bridge over Burbage Road which bears the Dulwich College arms on sandstone caps), two bridges crossing Croxted Road, two crossing Rosendale Road, one crossing Turney Road and one crossing over Village Way. Barry also acted as consultant for



Listed bridge over Rosendale Road

Jacomb Hood's Knight's Hill Tunnel which also bears the college insignia on its magnificent portal.

The bridge over **Rosendale Road** just south of the junction with Norwood Road, is the only bridge in Herne Hill that is currently listed (Grade II - designated since 1981). Most of the others (all lattice-iron girder bridges) had their bridge decks replaced in the early 21st century although two retain much of their historic character. All of these structures date from 1866-69.

The listed Rosendale Road bridge was built by the LC&DR in 1869. It is of a very different design to the others being of a wholly masonry construction - three spans of buff brick with bright red-brick and stone dressings, brick modillions, arch rings, spandrel panels, corbelling, prominent keystones and rusticated piers.

The bridge crossing **Half Moon Lane** immediately south of Herne Hill station is of a standard, utilitarian design, rebuilt at least once as the tracks were widened during the later decades of the 19th century and further remodelled in the 1920s as part of the Southern Railway's electrification programme and its reconstruction of the station.

In 2005 the bridge deck of the LB&SCR bridge crossing **Burbage Road** was rebuilt, the original iron girders replaced by concrete beams and decorative steel parapets, but retaining its original rusticated abutments which would have been designed by Charles Barry Junior.

In 2014 three more railway bridges (all built by the LB&SCR) in Herne Hill and Dulwich were replaced by Network Rail - those over **Croxted Road** (near the garden centre) which had its abutments sporting the Alleyn crests restored, **Rosendale Road** and the bridge over **Village Way**.

Another railway bridge built at the same time was that which crossed Rosendale Road a few meters in parallel with the existing former LB&SCR bridge to serve the **Knight's Hill goods depot** (largely coal), a facility closed by British Rail in 1968 and redeveloped by Lambeth as the Lairdale estate completed in 1980.

These bridge replacements and demolitions have left just two historic unlisted bridges designed by Charles Barry Junior which retain much of their historic character.

The first of these unlisted bridges crosses the Herne Hill end of **Croxted Road**. Designed by Charles Barry Junior, surveyor to the Dulwich Estate and completed in 1866, it retains its iron pavement

columns (removed from three other railway bridges in the vicinity in the early 2000s) which have brackets incorporating the Alleyn's College (AC) inscription. Cherry & Pevsner referred to this structure in *Buildings of England London 2: South* as one of a group of 'good bridges' (written in 1983 before all of the others except for Turney Road were reconstructed).

The second such bridge is described in Cherry & Pevsner as 'unusually ornate'. It carries the railway over **Turney Road** and was built by

the London, Chatham & Dover Railway in 1863. Its three-span ornamental cast-iron façade is largely independent of the wrought-iron girder structure behind. In 2003 it was restored by Network Rail with additional funding from the Railway Heritage Trust and Southwark Council.

These works included the meticulous reinstatement of a cast iron parapet removed in the 1960s after a bridge strike, restoring the bridge to its original condition and appearance.

The initials AC (Alleyn's College) and the Dulwich College Crest and the date of construction (1863) were picked out and new protective measures were added, installing islands with tall kerbs to increase protection of the historic structure.

The 331 yard (302 metre) tunnel beneath the slopes of Knight's Hill and Peabody Hill Wood also dates from 1860. The tunnel portals have, in Cherry & Pevsner's words, 'elaborate classical portals' in red and yellow brick with

ashlar stone dressings. The south portal has twin ball finials, paired pilasters and spandrel mouldings sitting either side of the semi-circular arch which is heavily dentilled. The north portal is similar but has a simpler parapet. Again the Alleyn's College insignia takes pride of place mounted within a large medallion above the parapet at the centre of the composition. The tunnel was designed by Robert Jacomb-Hood, architect and surveyor to the LB&SC Railway in consultation with the Dulwich Estate's architect Charles Barry Junior.



Croxted Road bridge, photo c1975



Knight's Hill tunnel



'UNTO THIS LAST' COMES HOME

This could be one of the most unexpected changes of use in Herne Hill's retail scene in recent years.

A popular, but slightly fading brunch and dinner venue, Café Prov, has now risen again as a stripped back clean, contemporary furniture workshop and saleroom – moreover, at one of the most visible sites in our town centre, and embracing, as a brand, a title coined (or rather, borrowed from a Biblical parable) over 150 years ago by our most famous local celebrity, John Ruskin, who spent his childhood and much of his adult life just up the road.

In June Unto This Last (UTL) finally opened to the public in Herne Hill. They had set up their first workshop in Brick Lane, over in Shoreditch. As trendy a location as you can wish for. Their handmade, minimalist furniture style, modestly priced and made in full view of customers and passers-by, has won them many fans. They were already attracting interest and customers here south of the river, but wanted to be closer to their market. “Local Is Logical” is one of their mantras – meaning that they want to be close to their customers and avoid unnecessary delivery journeys and costs. They take this seriously by using specially designed bicycle trailers to deliver finished furniture to their customers.

All the same, we wondered why they had ended up in Herne Hill and not in some other part of South London. Maybe it was serendipity. Project Manager Stuart Underwood said that they had surveyed over 30 different sites all over South London, including many a railway arch. But the excellent situation of the now boarded-up Café Prov caught their imagination and they opened discussions with the Dulwich Estate's property letting agents and negotiated a short-term deal. So keen scouting, not just luck.

Since the start, it has been one of the key features of UTL's operation to make their work as well as their products visible, as

mentioned above, so that that the saleroom is also a workshop. They build only to order and are scrupulous about avoiding waste, using the best modern methods as, for example, developed and embedded by Toyota, probably the world's most efficient and quality-obsessed motor manufacturer – but embracing authentic natural materials and craft practices. Characteristically, instead of using contractors to carry out the deep refurbishment of the Café Prov premises, they have been doing it themselves. Already, locals have admired their willingness to preserve many of the heritage features including shop signs, and to install thoughtfully designed modern windows which reflect and echo the traditional style of other shops in Herne Hill. Some of their shop furniture can already be seen in Perks & White, the coffee shop in our station.

Inspired by John Ruskin

The enterprise was launched in Brick Lane (this is their second outpost and surely more will follow) by Olivier Geoffroy who was inspired, though not uncritically, by many of John Ruskin's beliefs in the nature of work, the importance of craft and the damaging effects of soulless mass production. Hence the name of the business, Unto This Last being of course the title of a collection of some of Ruskin's most passionately worded and controversial collected essays.

Thus it was that two or three years ago this unusual and boldly named project caught the eye of *Financial Times* journalist and writer Andrew Hill whose book *Ruskinland* (2019) was one of the most thoughtful publications to emerge during Ruskin bicentenary year. Andrew Hill interviewed Olivier Geoffroy and quoted him as saying “The public today wants a relationship with an economy they can relate to, and check. This is the simple idea that keeps the business going. Ruskin was prescient: we can state every day that

the public prefers buying from a local workshop because of ‘social affections’”.

“Social affections”

Ruskin’s *Unto This Last* was published in 1862. It incorporated four long articles published two years earlier in the *Cornhill Magazine*, and which had provoked hostile feedbacks from some readers, feeling that his arguments were dangerous and subversive. Yet with its criticism of the then prevailing capitalist economic practices and the destructive effects of industrialisation, mechanisation and mass production, the book famously went on to inspire many subsequent thinkers and commentators, including the non-violent activist Gandhi and some in the early Labour Party. This, and other Ruskin writings, also earned him a place, although a late entrant, in the long-running ‘Condition of England’ debate inaugurated some 20 years earlier by his friend Thomas Carlyle and which was amplified and popularised in the writings of Charles Dickens and others.

Ruskin’s rhetorical, richly argued, high-coloured and often passionate Victorian prose can place demands on many of us more attuned to today’s plainer English. But it invites and rewards the attentive reader. His conviction and even anger in these essays burns through to the surface, even in the first one provocatively titled “The Roots of Honour” which addresses the importance of what Ruskin called ‘social affections’.

Nowadays we would probably say ‘emotions’ or even ‘social conscience’. Ruskin was trying to show that the prevailing economic and commercial system – which encouraged many proprietors to see employees as little more than soulless economic units – could only lead, in the end, to lower quality, failure, poverty and bitterness. He conceded that manufacturers and other

employers naturally required high standards and value for money. But, he argued, these outcomes were best achieved by ensuring that workers’ enthusiasm, first-hand knowledge and commitment were also promoted, valued and rewarded. Only thus could the economy, society more broadly, and workers individually, flourish in the long term. It is no surprise that this attack on the mercantile doctrine – the engine of the United Kingdom’s Victorian prosperity – made many of Ruskin’s contemporaries uneasy.

This outburst (and of course Ruskin was not alone here) was a progression from Ruskin’s earlier and probably over-romanticised enthusiasm for mediaeval and Renaissance reliance on individual, artistic craftsmanship. As our new neighbours say “Our particular focus is efficiency at the scale of the local economy. We don’t have warehouses; we use design, lean manufacturing and technology to reduce waste, keep costs down and get things right first time. UTL is not about nostalgia: we are constantly looking for innovative methods, developing new products and exploring technology to make local manufacturing on the high street part of the future of the city.”

So UTL is born from a conviction that the making of things (regardless of scale – whether Japanese cars assembled in vast factories or London furniture made in a local workshop) is optimally achieved through infinite care, scrupulous measurement, the harnessing of the best industrial software, continuous improvement, and a passionate commitment to avoid waste and encourage the human maker’s ingenuity and commitment. Such practices, Olivier Geoffroy demonstrates, can deliver seductive modern furniture at attainable prices which will meet the desire of modern consumers to understand how, and by whom, their purchases were sourced, put together and delivered.

www.untothistlast.co.uk

Pat Roberts

SIGN OF THE TIME

Unto This Last has meticulously restored the long-concealed old signage over their shop. So what can be said about Hammett, the Cash Butchers? There were no shops here until after the arrival of the rebuilt Half Moon public house in 1896. Before then a large stable block occupied the land between the earlier pub building and the railway. Hammett the butchers did not arrive until after the First World War, taking the place of earlier butchers businesses. The Herne Hill shop was still going in the 1970s. The archive photograph dates from about 1920. The busy junction had no traffic lights (first introduced at Piccadilly Circus in 1926). Pedestrians clearly took their chances! A notice above the shop informs us that



Herne Hill junction c1920 (Lambeth Archives)

“This business has been acquired by R. C. Hammett”.

The Hammett family came from mid-Devon. In 1881 Nathaniel Hammett was farming 50 acres. He had five sons and one daughter. By 1891 he had moved with the family to London and was working as a butcher and dairyman. It seems that it was his son Richard Christmas Hammett (born on Christmas Day 1877) who developed the business and opened the Herne Hill premises. There were once many Hammett butchers shops in the London area. At an early point the business became part of the

huge Vestey Group, meat producers and distributors, though the Hammett name was retained. Richard Christmas Hammett worked as a managing director and clearly did well, because in 1947 he was elected to the office of a Sheriff of the City of London. And why “Cash Butchers”? It seems this was designed to indicate to customers that all business, wholesale and retail, was done in cash, by cutting out the debts and delays that business on credit could cause, and therefore, it was suggested, providing fresher produce and better value.

Laurence Marsh



PLANNING – IMPORTANT CHANGES PROPOSED

Planning has been in the news a lot recently. It is one of the reasons why the Conservatives lost what had been a safe seat in Buckinghamshire. Many readers of this magazine may not be aware of what is proposed in the Planning Bill or unduly concerned about new permitted development rules. Herne Hill seems on the surface to be a pleasant area of Victorian and Edwardian houses with a few new blocks of flats. But changes to legislation and some proposed schemes locally could affect our local area considerably.

Let us first consider the new London Plan, prepared by the GLA and approved by the government on 2 March 2021. All London boroughs need to take on board new policies in this plan and will be expected to update their own local plans in due course. The London Plan is over 500 pages of dense analysis and policies but a fundamental change is that it refers to “densification” compared to the density guidelines in the previous plan. The plan expects and welcomes new developments to be built at a much higher density than has been allowed in the past. You only need to look at the Two Towers scheme in Loughborough Junction: buildings of 29 storeys and 20 storeys on a small site resulting in a density of 772 units per hectare. The previous London Plan would have had a maximum limit of 57 units – although Lambeth often ignored these density guidelines.

More fundamental at a national level is the Planning white paper “Planning for the Future”: presented as a “once in a generation reform” the proposals will – if legislation planned for autumn 2021 is approved – fundamentally alter the way local plans are prepared and planning applications dealt with. Currently local plans contain strategic policies by topic such as housing and industry, and local policies for specific areas and sites. Applications for development need permission and these are generally subject to public consultation. However, if the bill is approved, it will mean that the country will be divided into three zones, with areas identified for protection, renewal or growth.

Areas of protection would include conservation areas and open spaces, areas identified for renewal would be where redevelopment would broadly be welcomed, and growth areas would cover brownfield sites and areas where the local authority would welcome comprehensive development. In these latter two areas, there would be no public consultation on detailed applications but only at the plan-making stage and with an assumption that permission would be given. These proposals have attracted a

great deal of criticism from professional bodies and organisations representing community groups such as the London Forum and Civic Voice. There are also proposals to improve the quality of design and a National Model Design Code has been produced. Local authorities will prepare their own codes and Southwark is trialling its own approach at the moment.

Added to this proposed fundamental change are changes to permitted development (PD). Although most development needs permission, it has long been the case that house-owners can add small extensions, or a pub can be changed to a café, or a warehouse to an office – all without needing permission. These PD rules have increasingly been relaxed to allow, for example, bigger extensions and conversion of offices to residential. Recent changes proposed to the Use Classes Order mean that many uses are now within one single class (Commercial, Business and Services, Class E), so that changes will be allowed without needing to apply for planning permission, and only constrained by the need to get prior approval for some details and subject to limits on size and time constraints. This means in practice that many high street uses, not only shops, could be changed to residential without any need for planning permission.

Local authorities would no longer be able to plan for their high streets’ futures and although they can control PD changes through the use of what are called Article 4 directions, which take away any right for automatic permission, the government intends to revise the National Planning Policy Framework by severely restricting the use of Article 4 directions.

What does this mean for the Herne Hill Society and its planning group? First of all, it means that many proposals would no longer be subject to any public scrutiny. If the Planning Bill is approved it will mean we will need to get involved at a much earlier stage in the plan-making process as most detailed applications will not have any public consultation. Whereas it is relatively straightforward to judge applications against agreed policy, it will be far more complex and time consuming to consider broad land-use designations and draft design codes and how they might impact on our community. With complex applications, the group struggles with its limited resources compared to the well-financed developers and their expert advisers and the group feels that many of these proposals are aimed at assisting developers and not designed to foster community involvement and accountable local government.

David Taylor



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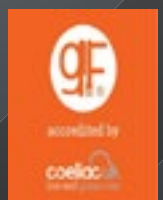
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