
HERNE HILL

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HERNE HILL SOCIETY ♡ ISSUE 163 ♡ Summer/Autumn ♡ 2025



OLD DAIRY PROVIDES NEW HOMES ► *page 7*

THE HERNE HILL SOCIETY
EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2025 ► *pages 14–15*

SOUTH LONDON PRESS CLOSES ► *page 16*

The Magazine of the Herne Hill Society



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Brockwell Hall opens – then closes

On 7 May Lambeth proudly opened Brockwell Hall following a major restoration project. Presiding over the ceremony were Lambeth's Mayor, the Leader of the Council and the National Heritage Lottery Fund's representative.

Also attending were members of the Management Advisory Committee of Brockwell Park Community Partners, who have represented local stakeholders throughout the project and played an important role in its realisation.

The restoration is something we have regularly covered in this magazine. Not surprisingly the work has taken longer than originally envisaged – the initial Lottery-funded design and feasibility study went ahead more than six years ago.

But it is now complete and, amidst all the controversy about summer events in the park, the restoration comes as news that will surely meet with universal approval. Brockwell Hall had been

neglected over many years. With its fabric carefully repaired and with hugely improved facilities for community uses it is well set up for a new future.

Except that having been officially opened it then closed and, at the time of going to press, remains firmly closed. One trusts that the delay in opening is merely temporary. It seems that one particular problem is the completion of an agreement for the café, which will form a vital part of the building. July saw a temporary weekend opening for one particular event, but otherwise it has not been possible to admire the interior refurbishment. We note that the Open House Festival has tours on 13 and 21 September

that include Brockwell Hall, with café open for refreshments, as their highpoint. One can only hope those taking part will not be disappointed.



Sam the Wheels *of Railton Road*

Clovis Salmon OBE died in June at the age of 98. But he was probably better known as “Sam the Wheels” because of his skills in making and repairing bicycles. In later years this work was done entirely from his home in Railton Road, with bikes



spilling out from the house into the small front yard and then onto the pavement. There is now a sort of improvised memorial to

Clovis outside his house, as our picture shows.

Clovis was born in Jamaica, arriving in England as part of the Windrush generation in 1954. His enduring legacy will be as a self-taught documentary film-maker who, long before the arrival

of digital technology made film-making accessible for all, was recording the day-to-day Black British experience seen through the eyes of the Black community itself. Within the many thousands of feet of film that survive is rare footage of the 1981 Brixton Uprising, filmed by Clovis at considerable personal risk. His work is increasingly recognised as an important cultural archive. Last year Clovis was awarded an OBE for services to Culture and the Black Community. The real reward, he said in a recent interview, “has always been seeing how my work has helped bring people closer, created conversations and sparked a deeper appreciation for the rich diversity of life in this country.”

Clovis made an important contribution to the diverse culture of Railton Road over 70 years. He is survived by his wife Delores and five children by his first marriage. He was laid to rest in West Norwood Cemetery on 25 July.



Lambeth Heritage Festival 2025

A fascinating collection of talks, walks and events is again on offer during September, organised by the Lambeth Local History Forum and Lambeth Archives. Full details can be found at www.lambethlocalhistoryforum.org.uk/. It includes talks about Henry Morton Stanley (of Dr Livingstone fame), mudlarking finds on the Thames shore, and Lambeth windmills; tours of Lambeth Palace Library, the National Theatre Archive and Brixton Market; walks that reveals the story of an all-female criminal gang based in Lambeth in the early 20th century, or Waterloo's links to H.G. Wells and his *War of the Worlds*, or famous writers in Clapham, or what West Norwood Cemetery can tell us about the Victorians' dining predilections – and so much more.

The **Herne Hill Society** will be making two particular contributions to this year's Festival.

Firstly, for more years than he cares to remember **Robert Holden** has been conducting Herne Hill heritage walks. This year will be your last chance (see more at page 22) to join Robert on one or more of his fabled walks:

- **Saturday 13 September 2025 2.30pm**

starts at Herne Hill Station and includes Station Square, Poet's Corner and Brockwell Lido

- **Saturday 20 September 2.30 pm**

starts at North Dulwich Station and wanders along Half Moon Lane, ending at the Herne Hill Velodrome

- **Saturday 27 September 2.30pm**

starts at junction of Rosendale Road with Guernsey Grove and wanders along Rosendale Road, ending at All Saints' Church

All walks are free. They can be booked by email at

noticeboard@hernehillsociety.org.uk



Secondly, **Laurence Marsh** will be giving a copiously illustrated talk about a number of eminent art collectors who lived in what is now the Borough of Lambeth in the Victorian period. It will reveal some surprising facts about how the growth of a wealthy merchant class saw tastes in art emerge, very different from those of the aristocratic elite that had preceded them, with changing tastes accounting for some remarkable contrasts in financial value, both then and today.

- **Thursday 25 September 7.30pm**

Herne Hill Baptist Church, Half Moon Lane, London SE24 9HU. Free, no booking.

Voters choose Green in local by-election

In our last issue Jim Dickson, now Labour MP for Dartford, said farewell to Herne Hill and Loughborough Junction, the ward he had represented on Lambeth Council for 35 years. His resignation as a councillor resulted in a by-election held on 1 May. It was a tight-fought contest between Labour and the Green Party, the latter taking the seat from Labour with a majority of 315. The Greens had a share of the vote of 48.3%, with Labour on 39.7%. No other party came close, with Conservatives on 5%, Reform on 3.7% and Lib Dems on 3.3%. The turnout was 32%. The new Green Party councillor is Paul Valentine, who joins two other Green councillors. This group and three Lib Dems constitute the opposition to the Labour-led administration in Lambeth, Labour (and one Independent) holding the remaining 57 seats.

There is a precedent for the Green Party holding a seat in Herne Hill, with Becca Thackray elected in 2006 (the very first Green councillor in Lambeth) and again in 2018.

Paul Valentine is not the first politician to come from the ranks of the acting profession. He has stated that the use of Brockwell Park for events is an issue of particular concern to him, so too the

protection of public libraries, in particular the Carnegie, and he looks forward to "being able to provide an alternate voice while strengthening the opposition and improving governance across the borough". We congratulate him on his win.



Local Councillors' Surgeries

Lambeth

1. Carnegie Library Hub at the Carnegie Library, 192 Herne Hill Road, SE24 0DG, 6 – 7 pm fourth Tuesday of each month
2. Lilford Area Residents Association, Lilford House, Lilford Road, SE5 9QD, 10 – 11 am, second Saturday of each month

Southwark

Herne Hill Methodist Church Hall, 155 Half Moon Lane, SE24 9JG, 6.30 pm, second Thursday of each month

“The Coalyard” – is it too tall?

Five years ago, at a time when we were gripped in the Coronavirus lockdown, this Magazine continued to appear, although issue 148 was confined to an online edition, printing and distribution being considered too hazardous in lockdown conditions. The issue contained an article



entitled “The height of things to come?” It looked at building heights in London. The city’s tallest building, Wren’s masterpiece St Paul’s Cathedral, at 111 metres remained unsurpassed for two and a half centuries. In the 20 years after 1970 just six buildings over 100m were built in London. In the next 20 years this increased to 16. Over the next 10 years the figure grew to 50. Currently (as at 2024) there are 68 applications for tall buildings in London – not all over 100 metres –though, interestingly, New London Architecture in their comprehensive survey, report an increase in refusals.

The subject is topical because of a recent planning application affecting Herne Hill. This is for the building of residential blocks on a site that, until a major fire in September 2023, provided a waste recycling facility on Shakespeare Road. Many years ago, when London’s energy needs relied on coal, this land had railway sidings and coalyards. The proposed name for the development is The Coalyard, for older generations who grew up without central heating and remember the dirt, grime and daily inconvenience of using coal not the most appealing name, but for those without such memories perhaps quaintly nostalgic.

The application has caused considerable local concern, particularly from those who would live closest to the development. Height is the major issue and the effect this can have on loss of light, overshadowing, sense of overlooking and excessive dominance. There are five blocks, two of them interlinked. The two tallest blocks are 68 and 59 metres high; these blocks are closest to the railway and furthest from Shakespeare Road, but the street has blocks facing on to it that measure 40 and 37 metres.

The current application has been categorised by Lambeth as a “variation of conditions” (VOC) in an existing planning permission. The existing permission (ref.20/01822/EIAFUL) was given at the end of 2021. The Society had objected, as had

168 others (with 14 supporting). The permission allowed the same group of blocks and the same design features as the current revised application, but, importantly, they were not as tall and therefore comprised fewer dwellings. The revised scheme (ref. 25/01393/VOC) sees the tallest block rise by four floors to 15 storeys and the second tallest by two floors to 12 storeys. The block directly facing Shakespeare Road will increase by one storey to six storeys. As a result the developers (Legal & General) will see the total number of dwellings rise from 218 to 278. The mix of private/“affordable” remains the same at 65/35%.

Some will see the need for more housing as paramount and the additional height as not significant, given the effect of the consented application. That is essentially the developers’ argument, who, while acknowledging loss of light and overshadowing, contend that the additional loss caused by the increased height is minimal – and rely on copious computer-generated data to support this argument. But others are far from convinced, as a study of the objections (68 at the time of writing, with two in support) shows. This Society, through its planning group, has again objected (as has the Brixton Society). Our view is that buildings up to 11 storeys in this location is already damaging, so every effort should be made not to increase that damage, even if the damage is, arguably, slight. For a significant number of properties, in particular on Shakespeare



Proposed elevation facing Shakespeare Road

Road, Milkwood Road and Mayall Road, the scheme will have a major impact – and it will not be improved by increased height. The Society is also concerned by the wider trend of such tall buildings and their effect on an area whose predominant character is of two- and three-storey houses and how this can be damaging in terms of views, for example from Brockwell Park and the Poet’s Corner conservation area – and also that more intangible, but no less important, sense of an area’s “feel”. Herne Hill is not an area subject to extensive redevelopment in the postwar period, thus tall buildings cannot be said to be an inherent part of our area’s identity.

Our objection to the application can be found on the Society’s website. At the time of writing Lambeth’s decision is awaited.

Laurence Marsh

Brenda Jones– obituary

In the last issue of this Magazine we reported that Brenda Jones, a former Chair of the Society, had recently died at the age of 96. We promised a fuller account of her life in the next issue.

Brenda was born on 9 December 1928 in Knaresborough, North Yorkshire, the only child of Clem and Gladys Pickles, who owned a shoe shop in Cudworth. She very much had her own ideas about her future and after her first job at the age of 18 in Barclays Bank she moved to Beirut where she worked as an au pair and later for the British Council. She went on to work in a library in Harrogate, where she met her future husband Robert Jones.

In the 1960s Brenda and Robert were living in a flat in Gray's Inn Road and later the house in Poplar Walk, Herne Hill, where their sons Philip and Peter grew up. Brenda trained to become a social worker and ended up working for Lambeth Social Services in the Adoption and Fostering department. She pioneered the idea that children should be placed within the same racial grouping within which they were born, if at all possible. She became a team leader and retired at 65, but was called back on several occasions to lead the team in times of staff shortage. In retirement Brenda found more time to pursue her wide-ranging cultural interests. She always made the most of what London could provide by way of galleries, exhibitions and theatre.

She became a member of the Herne Hill Society soon after it was founded in 1984, and later joined the Committee, becoming its fifth Chair from 1994 to 2003. As Chair she was energetic and inspirational, encouraging the Committee to move forward and develop. It was during her time as Chair that the books about Herne Hill started appearing in print, and she was always encouraging and involved. She enjoyed organising outings to places of interest.

I was Secretary during much of the time she was Chair and we had many meetings over tea and cake (she was an excellent



cook) to talk about HHS business. After I succeeded her as Chair in 2003 we continued our chats, and I valued her wisdom and experience as well as her friendship enormously. During this time she became Chair of the Friends of Carnegie Library, after Lambeth Council tried to close it down in 1999. She organised events in the Gallery that was created by the Friends, and held her 80th birthday there, as well as a number of very successful HHS events, including several book launches.

Robert died in 2016 after 54 years of marriage. At the age of 90 Brenda eventually decided to move away from London to live near her older son Philip in Totnes. However, Brenda kept up many of her links in Herne Hill, and regularly came up by train to stay with and visit friends in Herne Hill and the wider community. She was often on the way to, or the way back from, visiting her younger son Peter and his family in Paris, where she enjoyed spending time with her two young grandchildren Pierre-Lou and Sophia.

After she died, Philip and Peter organised a private ceremony in Totnes, and then suggested we organise a group of her friends to come together in Herne Hill to celebrate her life over a glass of champagne.

The upstairs room in the Carnegie Library Hub was duly booked, and 35 of us sat round in a circle and we were able to share our memories. Her sons spoke first, very emotionally and lovingly, and filled us in on her life before Herne Hill and how, for example, she decided to lose her Yorkshire accent when she moved to London and over a weekend learned to change her Yorkshire 'buth' to a Southern ba(r)th. Several of her long-term friends were not able to be there, but we shared photos with them afterwards. It was a lovely occasion, where I think we all learned something we didn't know about her. We all agreed it would have had Brenda's complete approval – including the champagne that Peter had brought with him from Paris that very morning.

Sheila Northover

Boundary marker stolen

At the top of Ruskin Walk stands an old parish boundary marker. Dated 1870 it is evidence of the fact that although the land on one side of Herne Hill lies within the Parish of Camberwell and within the Dulwich Estate the parish of Lambeth had, for reasons that seem to be lost in the mists of time, a significant enclave that encroached into this land and has never formed part of that Estate. The cast iron Ruskin Walk marker

will be familiar, but less well-known is an identical marker (pictured) that stood in Elam Street SE5, a small street off Lilford Road in Loughborough Junction/Camberwell. Sadly, it was recently stolen. We understand it was being stored when the house against which it was mounted was undergoing building work. The police crime number is 01/7644918/25. It is a very distinctive object and we can only hope it will be spotted and recovered.



Old dairy provides new homes

In the days when deliveries of fresh milk to the doorstep were very much part of British daily life, local milk depots were a common sight. One such was on Rosendale Road, between the Peabody Estate and the arched railway viaduct. The Express Dairy Co. Limited was advertising the existence of one of its dairies in Rosendale Road by 1898 and it seems likely the distinctive façade



The old façade incorporated in the new

that has survived to this day and is now locally listed dates from then (see front page).

An application was made five years ago to develop the site, demolishing the warehouse that housed the dairy but retaining the distinctive façade and adding behind it 34 flats with heights varying between two and five storeys. The Society's planning group supported the application. Although there were differing views about the architectural merits, the strong overall view was that the development would restore a useful purpose for the site after decades of dereliction and add something of value to Herne Hill's built environment. The application then ran into difficulties because of Lambeth's concern about the proximity of some of the dwellings to the railway. An appeal by the developers and lengthy negotiations since then have delayed the scheme, but it seems a revised scheme, essentially to the same design but with a reduced number of 23 flats, can now proceed.

In June work began on the demolition, captured in our pictures

by Robert Holden, who remembers from his childhood the days when horse-drawn carts would trundle in and out of the dairy. He also grew up with a story that there had been a daring theft at the dairy when thieves broke in and with explosives blew up the safe in the upstairs office. The safe held the takings that the milkmen had collected from customers at



the end of the week, the thieves muffling the sound of the explosion with horse blankets and sacks of bran taken from the stables below. He thought the story might be apocryphal. Far from it – on 19 September 1938 the *Daily Express* ran precisely this news item, with the added detail that experts thought gelignite was used and the thieves got away with £300, leaving some money strewn about



Archaeological finds on site!

the floor. It doesn't sound an awful lot of money for such a risky enterprise, but at this date a good-size house could be bought in Herne Hill for £1000 to £1500.

LM

Jessop Primary wins Tesco Stronger Starts funding

Jessop Primary School, thanks to customers using their blue tokens in Tesco stores earlier this year and choosing "Friends of Jessop PTA - Outside Space and Biodiversity", have won £1000 in the supermarket's programme to support initiatives to help children and young people.

Jessop plan to use their grant to revitalise the playground with new plants and

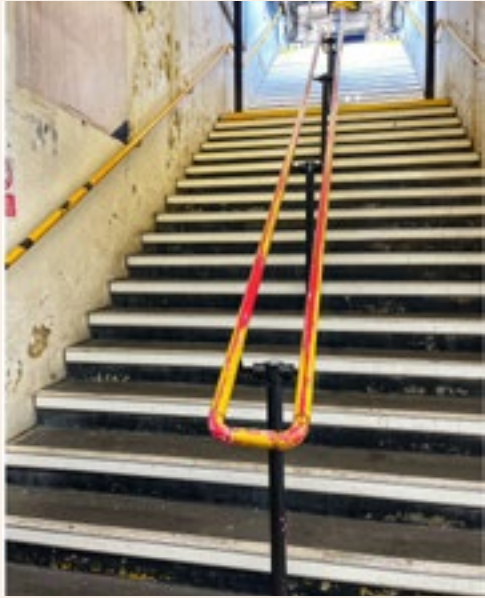


greenery, creating opportunities for pupils to explore wildlife and relate to the natural world. Head of School Kenneth Baffoe said: "We're incredibly grateful for the community's support. This project is about more than just a playground; it's about creating a space where our children can thrive, connect with nature, and build a brighter future."

Across the border – notes from our foreign correspondents

Loughborough Junction station

The campaign to secure step-free access and a safer environment at Loughborough Junction station hit the blocks last time when the UK-wide government scheme for such improvements ran out of money. It is not clear when the next dollop of funding might be released: the current state of government finances is not encouraging. But a local group has recently formed – appropriately named Lift Up



LJ – to renew the campaign and is aimed at winning a credible place in the queue.

An early objective is to persuade Lambeth that some of the funds released by local developers under the planning regime's Section 106 procedures

could be shared with Network Rail on condition that they fund a comprehensive feasibility study. The Junction station has the advantage, in that respect, that only one lift would be required; but on the other hand some imaginative negotiations would be required with local property owners to secure the necessary ground footprint.

The station has broadly the same layout (apart from the relocation of the booking office) that it had 100 years ago, and the steep staircase would almost certainly not qualify under modern safety rules. Access by people with child buggies, heavy luggage, wheelchairs or mobility impairments is either impossible or very difficult, breaching all modern accessibility principles. Meanwhile passenger traffic through the station can only grow, especially given the completed development at Higgs Yard and that now proposed at Hardess Yard.

For more about the LiftUpLJ campaign see their website at www.ljstation.com

PR

Organoke

In Camberwell, they do it with music. To raise a challenging amount of money for the repair of the classic organ in St Giles church, the supporters run hugely successful music events throughout the year. The most spectacular is the regular Organoke evening – yes, it's a sort of karaoke with a live band, singers and, naturally, the church organ. It runs a few times a year, in the summer and at Christmas where they have three sellout shows. It attracts 400 people a night and the profits go to the Friends of St Giles Organ fund. Participants describe the experience as "euphorically joyful" and they've raised over £30,000 so far. This year they are also doing a Halloween show for the first time on 1 November and the "Early Bat" tickets will probably have been sold out by the time you read this.

Together with other Live at St Giles musical events held in the church, they host over 6,000 people a year.



Separately – if you swing to a different rhythm – there's Jazz Live in the Crypt where they've been putting on jazz concerts since 1995, each Friday evening.

www.organoke.com/

www.liveatstgiles.com/ and www.jazzlive.co.uk/

PR

West Norwood Cemetery

This summer saw the completion not merely of the Brockwell Hall regeneration project, but also one for West Norwood Cemetery. These major projects have only been possible with the help of significant funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and from Lambeth Council. For anyone unfamiliar with West Norwood Cemetery I can only encourage a visit at the earliest opportunity.

The cemetery was laid out on a 40-acre site in 1836 according to the designs of the architect William Tite, who also designed a number of monuments and the entrance gateway. It was one of the "Magnificent Seven" cemeteries created around London's periphery in this period to provide for the burial needs of the city's rapidly expanding population.

The cemetery has no less than 65 monuments that are Grade II or II* listed. Part of the regeneration project has been to remove a number of these from Historic England "At Risk" status, and this has been achieved in the case of 17 monuments. Another major completed element is the restoration of St Stephen's Chapel, the remarkable mini-Parthenon that stands in the Greek Orthodox section of the cemetery. Two new pedestrian entrances have also



been created along with major upgrades to drainage, roads and pathways.

Brockwell Park Events – *what now?*

The last issue of this Magazine reported in April on the contentious issue of commercial summer events in the park. It is a controversy that created national headlines.

On 16 May Mr Justice Mould in the High Court ruled that Lambeth's decision to allow these events to proceed as "permitted development" (and therefore not requiring a full planning permission application) was unlawful. Permitted development applies to temporary events, provided they do not exceed 28 days in any one year, but the time taken by the commercial events followed by the Lambeth Country Show plus the days at each end for installation and de-rigging took the number of days to 37. The test was for how long the normal use of the park as a public open space would be interrupted by its use as an event space and the point at which it would revert to its normal use. Since 28 days were exceeded Lambeth's decision was wrong in law and the judge quashed the Lawful Development Certificate. The fact that Lambeth went on to give full planning permission for the Lambeth Country Show was legally irrelevant.

On 22 May, the day before the first event was due to take place, Lambeth approved an amended Certificate from the event organisers and stated in a press release "This certificate confirms that the use of part of the park for the summer events is lawful. The events in Brockwell Park are proceeding. The application for the new certificate of lawfulness follows the High Court ruling last week on the previous certificate which was submitted in a different context and format." The events then went ahead.

Solicitors for Protect Brockwell Park, the local group that organised the legal challenge and the crowdfunding that made it possible, responded to Lambeth's action in these terms: "the latest amendment is desperate, legally flawed and factually unbelievable. [The event organisers] are taking Lambeth Council and local residents for mugs. Local residents are not mugs. The Council will have to demonstrate that they are not mugs either."

There has been talk of an appeal by Lambeth against the High Court ruling and further legal action by Protect Brockwell Park to challenge approval of the amended Certificate. But for the moment

things seem to have gone quiet and, unlike two years ago, when a Pokemon "festival" was inserted in August, events in the park will be confined in 2025 to those in May and June.

In their recent newsletter Friends of Brockwell Park have said: "It's more than six weeks since the last trucks rumbled out of the park leaving the grass devastated. Lambeth Council promised that the remediation would work this year, but the grass is no better recovered than last time. We will be pressing the Council to comply with the planning conditions they set themselves on ground

condition and ecology. And we will continue to campaign for decisions about future events to be made in the best interests of the park and with the benefit of full impact assessments."

In a statement released by Lambeth, Cllr Donatus Anyanwu, Lambeth's Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities, makes the point: "In addition to the significant cultural and wider economic benefits, holding these events brings in £150,000 for park investment and local community projects, on top of the £500,000 spent annually maintaining Brockwell Park, and allows the much-loved Lambeth Country Show to remain

one of the largest free community festivals in the UK. Due to the unprecedented budget pressures on local government, these investments for local residents would likely not be possible without income generated from events ... Clearly it will never be possible to please everybody and we will continue to engage with all residents, community groups and businesses to hear the concerns raised by local people around noise, the condition of the park and the impact on the surrounding area and we will continue to work hard to put in place mitigations."

I have previously expressed the widely supported view that a fallow year for the park would be wise. Like any living thing parks can be pushed beyond their natural capacity for recovery. Such appeals were made to Lambeth last year but, in the words of Ann Kingsbury of Brockwell Park Community Partners, they have "fallen on deaf ears". This is not an issue that has gone away and neither is it one, I suspect, that is likely to be resolved for summer 2026 in a way acceptable to critics of Lambeth's approach.

LM



My recent visit was spurred by reading about the opening of a Visitor Centre and community space housed in the ground floor of the entrance lodge building (hitherto used for administration), to which a discreet single-storey addition has been made as part of the regeneration project. I was disappointed to find the ground floor empty with no evidence of a Visitor Centre, but I happened to meet a very helpful member of the Friends of West Norwood Cemetery who told me that Lambeth had expected the Visitor Centre to be staffed at all times by volunteers, with no input on their part. Perhaps not surprisingly, this is beyond the resources of the Friends, who, it

should be said, have worked immensely hard to help push through the regeneration project.

One hopes a solution can be found to the question of how to make the Visitor Centre a reality. I could only peer through the windows and think how such a facility would greatly benefit the cemetery. As I wandered off in the sunshine, past the immense memorial for Mr Gilbert ("engaged for fifty years in advancing the science of banking") and on through an enchanting mixture of Victorian splendour and decay amidst nature run wild, I paused to pick some delicious blackberries.

LM

Herne Hill Music Festival returns this October!

After last year's huge success, the award-winning not-for-profit music festival returns this year from Friday 10 October to Sunday 19 October. Herne Hill Music Festival will showcase a programme packed with a great variety of musical genres – from jazz to folk, classical and more.

The first weekend alone will include South London-based jazz singer Nel Begley and friends, a battle of local choirs, New-York born Matt Kent in collaboration with Olivia Lester, and a festival choral evensong at St Paul's Church – and much more.

The festival will see two firsts this year: a quantum gong bath meditation at Brockwell Lido, and a night showcasing local talent in support of the Save Dorchester Court and Save Cressingham Gardens campaigns, in collaboration with the Cost of Living Crisis Concerts.

The festival maintains its focus on the local community. As well as the annual Herne Hill Sings On, our 'battle of the choirs' where



Mazaika

four community choirs go head to head, it will also support Junior Open Mic's Brockfest on 14 September at Brockwell Hall, and feature a coffee morning on 11 October in aid of the Brixton and Norwood Food Banks.

Other highlights of this year's line-up include: free music in Ruskin Park from the South East London Folk Orchestra, South London musicians Misty & Rufus Miller, acclaimed singer-songwriter Adam Beattie, and a dance class followed



Fabulous Honeys Swing Band

by a performance from the Fabulous Honeys Swing Band. iyatraQuartet will bring their distinct vocal harmonies rooted in ancient melodies and folk tales, and indie-pop artist Creature & Machine will present an evening of folk, pop and spoken word.

The final weekend will see folk fusion from the Magic Tree Collective, a junior school musical from Judith Kerr School with fun for all the family, storytelling at the Lido from Whippersnappers, gypsy fire and tango passion from Mazaika, and an evening featuring Vaughan Williams and Fauré from the Southwark Sinfonietta.

Herne Hill Music Festival will be taking place at a range of venues, from local churches to the Half Moon and the Prince Regent pubs, and Brockwell Lido. The festival is delighted to announce that some of its events this year will be held for the first time at the Carnegie Library Hub, an Edwardian heritage building with function rooms, a community gardening scheme, and a café soon to open.

Tickets are now on sale for the festival on its website: please scan the QR code to see the full programme or head straight to

www.hernehillfestival.org. Some of these events are sure to sell out! Sign up for the newsletter on the website to stay updated.



Susanah Moody

Transport Notes

Fewer Thameslink trains!

After celebrating the four trains per hour frequency improvement to the southeastern trains to Victoria in the Spring Magazine, since then, on the other hand, the Govia Thameslink service has continued to be unreliable. While 'trains on time within 3 minutes' has stayed fairly good, the number of Wimbledon to Blackfriars trains through Herne Hill cancelled has remained around 8 percent over the last year.

Bakerloo Line Underground trains – arriving before 2030...

Following a Government capital grant to TfL, plans are now underway to replace the 53-year-old Bakerloo rolling stock with new, air-conditioned, walk-through carriages. (Not sure how the air-con will work underground). Orders are to be placed in the next few months for delivery 'late this decade'. Some minor improvements to the existing route and signalling will be involved. No progress has yet been made on the financing of the south-east

The Brockwell Lido – *much loved, but unloved*

Brockwell Lido was singled out this year by the AA as Britain's Best Lido. It has had a busy summer, with thousands of visitors coming to swim and sunbathe on glorious summer days. But it is immediately apparent from the fenced off front door and the broken turnstiles (both out of order for months) that the much-loved Lido badly needs major investment.

Regular users will be all too familiar with a litany of complaints over the last couple of years – having to bring their own pliers to operate the showers, numerous gym machines out of order, the hydro pool closed and the steam room out of action for months. Although some progress has been made tackling such problems, there remains an air of neglect, both inside and outside.

Fusion, the operator of the Lido, promised investment of £500,000 last November, to be implemented by Spring 2025. But it failed to materialise, although billboards are now promising a new gym imminently. What Fusion has managed to implement this year is an increase in charges to users.

Brockwell Lido Users (BLU), the group that since 2001 have been working to represent users and to liaise between Fusion and Lambeth Council (owners of the Lido), are concerned that substantial profits from the Lido are being used to fund other parts of Fusion's activities and not being re-invested in the Lido. Lambeth has indicated it will take the facility in-house when Fusion's lease expires in six years' time – but BLU's concern is that this could be too late and the Lido could again face the threat of closure. BLU is now exploring the option of a community-run venture to take over the Lido, arguing such a model could access funding unavailable to the Council and ensure surpluses are ploughed back into the pool



and gym.

BLU also stress the need for Lambeth councillors to play an active role and there have been meetings with Councillors Deepak Sardiwal and Paul Valentine. Local elections are due in 2026. BLU are urging all those who care about the future of the Lido and want to see it as an "oasis in the city" to make their voices heard by contacting their local councillors. Pressure must be brought to bear on Lambeth to prioritise the Lido. Only Lambeth are able to directly hold Fusion to account.

BLU are appealing to anyone interested in the possibility of the Lido becoming a community venture, run by the community for the community, to get in touch with them. They are especially looking for volunteers with skills in communications, finance and fundraising.

BLU website: www.brockwelllido.com

extension plans from the Elephant and Castle along the Old Kent Road...

Solve the School Run

As we prepare for the return to school in September, it is worth a look at solvetheschoolrun.org – a parent led charity with a strong Herne Hill focus seeking to publicise the issues surrounding the school run, especially on the Southwark side with a high proportion of private school pupils commuting in. Their website has a lot of detailed statistics on the methods of travel by area and school type. It also discusses the issues involved, and publicises the use of sustainable modes. It promotes the use of cargo bikes, and has organised a series of park events through the summer – 'Cargo and cakes' – where users, prospective users, and suppliers can meet and discuss the issues involved. The last of these is planned for Dulwich Park in October – see their website for details.

Cross-footpath charging of electric vehicles

Using much cheaper home charging for electric vehicles is currently not legal for the majority of Lambeth and Southwark Councils' residents with



no car driveway, and hence needing a cable to cross the footpath. Recently, however, the government has started a small scheme to encourage local councils to change policy, and trial various cross-footpath channel solutions, by liaising with the installers (for example Kerbo, Gul-e – other installers are available). Such systems fit a narrow channel flush across the footpath, allowing the house-to-car charging cable to be safely inserted and removed, and not causing a trip hazard. So, for an initial outlay, residents can make ongoing savings when re-charging – as long as they can park directly outside their gate, and can persuade their Council to change policy.

Rental e-scooters roll on

As reported in Issue 160, the rental e-scooter trial in Southwark and Lambeth was expected to be reviewed in May 2026. Now the national Department for Transport has announced a further two-year extension to the 'trials' – with encouragement to the rental operators to reach agreements with more local traffic authorities. No mention in the announcement of any curbing of the illegal use of private e-scooters on public roads.

Bil Harrison

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Shops & Business News

Pat Roberts reports

Closing ...

It is always sad to see a local business closing but the estate agents at 5 Half Moon Lane, **Oliver Burn**, appear to have ceased trading. The landlords have displayed a repossession notice. There seems no doubt that the residential property business is slowing down somewhat in any case, and anyone in search of an estate agent won't have far to stroll.



But opening ...

Sessa, a new all-day café and bar, are shortly opening on Station Square, just next to the vets. This is a welcome takeover of very well-placed but recently neglected premises in the historic old cinema building, latterly rented but rarely used by the Off the Cuff owner. The new owners are Molly and Liv Kyte, sisters with a successful grounding in the catering business, and they intend to open every day from 8am to 11pm and it will be fronted by Edd Clibbens (ex Forza Wine in trendy Peckham), who is bringing over a decade's worth of drinks and hospitality experience.



A few steps away, at the very start of Milkwood Road, the off-licence which closed a few weeks ago has re-opened under different ownership and with a new name – **The Arch Wines**. The new owner tells us that he will offer a somewhat wider stock than the previous owner, and will be open every day between 11am and 10pm.

And protesting

Some local traders, particularly the ones beneath and very close to the bridge, have launched a campaign to mitigate traffic noise and pollution at this busy point, requesting the council to install better drainage, safer crossings and – more controversially – wider pavements. Not an easy ask when this convergence of five roads and several bus routes is, notably at rush hours, one of the busiest junctions in the area. It is however a blissful haven when compared with the centre of Brixton, or how things used to be before the huge improvements brought about by the Herne Hill Junction Regeneration Scheme, implemented in 2010–2012.

Station Hall – *providing proper access*

Station Hall, the spacious room on the first floor of Herne Hill Station is, as its website proclaims “a unique and vibrant space dedicated to bringing people together through a diverse array of arts, cultural, and community-focused events”. But it suffers one significant deficiency, a lift to make it fully accessible. At the moment there is only a rather ancient external iron staircase. Station Hall is now a Charitable Incorporated Organisation with its own trustees and separate from the Herne Hill Forum that originally secured the space for community use. Their first two objectives are to become financially self-sufficient and to create full access to the space, with a lift and with an accessible loo. The station building is Grade II listed. They have asked the Herne Hill Society, given its engagement in heritage and planning issues, to support them in their ambition and we have said we are more than happy to do so.

www.stationhallhernehill.org/



THE 2025 HERNE HILL SOCIETY EXCELLENCE AWARDS

HERITAGE/HISTORY CATEGORY

Winner

**Dorchester Court
Residents Association**

Highly Commended

- Lambeth Archives
- Grafton Dance Centre

COMMUNITY CATEGORY

Winner

**Herne Hill Free Film
Festival**

Highly Commended

- Wheels for Wellbeing,
Herne Hill
- Jessop School Dads Male
Carers Club

ENVIRONMENT CATEGORY

Winner

Get Rid of and Donate

Highly Commended

- Jarr Market
- Delawyck Crescent
Residents

There is so much to celebrate in Herne Hill. In 2023 we launched the Herne Hill Society Excellence Awards. The success of the scheme far exceeded expectations and two years later we have repeated the scheme. Helped by some canny promotion on social media we had more than double the number of nominations compared to last time. Nominations, in the three categories of Heritage, Environment and Community, were open to any local individual, group, business or organisation who could be shown to be making a positive contribution to life in Herne Hill.

The awards were presented at a special Celebration evening held at the Temple Bowling Club on 7 May 2025. The Society's website at www.hernehillsociety.org.uk has short video highlights of the evening, with Awards presented by Helen Hayes MP.

Our thanks to Helen Hayes for her participation and very positive words about the Awards. Huge thanks also to a small team who worked with



Pat Roberts, Sheila Northover,
Colin Wight – the Awards' Judges

me to organise the Celebration evening and helped make it such a success. As Chair of the Society and the person who can be blamed for having the idea of the Awards in the first place, I confess to having undergone some very anxious moments along the way, sometimes wondering whether it was such a good idea after all – not least when I learned at the very last moment that the supplier of the food for the Awards ceremony had let me down. The ad hoc catering may have been less than ideal but it did not spoil the evening!

This issue of the Magazine looks at the winner and two highly commended entrants in the Heritage category. Those in the Environment and Community

categories will be covered in the next two issues.

"We assessed all 67 of the entries as a team, which was an exhilarating task. We would like to thank all those who submitted such a wide range of inspiring nominations, in all three categories. We were particularly impressed by nominations which were innovative; reached out to the community; drew in and engaged volunteers; enhanced the attractiveness of Herne Hill; and were sustainable. Congratulations to all these finalists for their work in providing excellence in Heritage in Herne Hill."

Dorchester Court Residents Association – Winner

Dorchester Court is a Grade II-listed estate of eight mansion blocks designed by architects Kemp and Tasker, best known for their stylish cinemas, and built in moderne style in the mid-1930s. It contains many original features. However, it requires very extensive repair and restoration and is now on Historic England's Heritage at Risk register. The Residents' Association from Dorchester Court is campaigning and



Ben Archard accepting the award
from Helen Hayes MP

working with others to put right decades of neglect by the freehold owners and ensure the restoration of the buildings and the protection of the strong community made up by the residents. Residents have endured lengthy periods without heating or hot water; infestations of cockroaches and

other pests; carbon monoxide leaks; tap water containing dangerous levels of lead and – very obviously to anyone passing by – crumbling exterior concrete and windows in need of replacement. However, there

is a very strong sense of community at Dorchester Court, which has led to the creation of a database of listed features; a series of surveys; a succession of articles in the media, and initiatives such as open days, with food and music, to enable greater visibility of the residents' plight, and now a crowdfunding initiative to raise money for representation at a planning inquiry that will determine a controversial planning application refused permission by Lambeth. The residents could hardly have done more.

For leaseholder Ben Archard, winning the Award represented valuable recognition of the work of the leaseholders and tenants. The campaign to get the repairs done has had much ongoing support with 1000 objections received with reference to the planning enquiry. The publicity from receiving the Award will help to keep alive the story of the battle to improve the Estate and to encourage new supporters. Ben continued: "The dreadful state of the buildings is a huge injustice and the goodwill of the local community is crucial for our fightback against the damage that has been done to the estate. We are fundraising through GoFundMe and every new bit of support is hugely helpful."

The judges said: "Dorchester Court Residents Association are the overall winners of this category for their creative and tenacious campaign to get their homes repaired and restored. We wish them every success in their ongoing efforts to return the estate to its status as an iconic landmark at the top of Herne Hill."

The Dorchester Court crowdfunding page is at www.gofundme.com/f/save-dorchester-court

Lambeth Archives – Highly Commended

Lambeth Archives started life 133 years ago thanks to a keen local historian and landowner, William Minet. He donated a building near Myatt's Fields and funded the purchase of archive material and gave his own extensive collection to the archive. In 2024 Lambeth Archive moved to a brand new building on Brixton Hill with generous space on the ground floor and greatly increased storage capacity in the basement.

The Archive's manager, Jon Newman, who oversaw the complex move from Myatt's Fields, said: "We were intrigued when we found out we were nominated for an award. Our services are heavily used and we



care and protect for all the resources in the Archives. It is a unique service and we provide a welcome and guidance to all visitors. We were delighted to be Highly Commended for the Heritage award, as it is a real fillip for the whole team to be

recognised for providing such an important local service."

From closure to re-opening, it took 14 months for a team, many of them volunteers, to move from their old base at the Minet Library to their impressive new home near Brixton Town Hall. The task of transferring and making available a substantial archive such as this should not be underestimated. The new facilities for storage and display are a huge improvement and allow for future expansion in a safe and secure environment. Lambeth Archives are open to everyone, five days a week, including Saturdays.

The Archives contain a huge diversity of documentary and other material, including more than 30,000 images comprising watercolours, engravings and old photographs - without which the Herne Hill Society and other interested individuals would not be able to research the history of Herne Hill and its inhabitants. The illustrations selected by Archivist Jon Newman for *Sunset over Herne Hill*, the Society's book about John Ruskin, give some indication of the richness of this material.

Congratulations to all these finalists for their work in providing excellence in Heritage in Herne Hill. The judges said: "We congratulate the Archives team and Lambeth Council on giving the archives the home they deserve. The staff demonstrate a genuine commitment to public engagement through a programme of exhibitions and social media posting. Lambeth Archives really is a priceless resource."

www.lambeth.gov.uk/libraries-0/lambeth-archives

Grafton Dance Centre – Highly Commended

The Grafton Dance Centre is a building set back from Village Way near the junction with Half Moon Lane with a distinctive wooden colonnade leading from the street. It has been locally listed by Southwark. Built in 1910 it was originally intended to cater for a wide range of events, such as musical entertainment, lectures, receptions, badminton and whist drives. In 1942 it became a British Restaurant, with the purpose of educating local people in how to get by on wartime rations. After being used as a classroom, the building was left empty for years before re-opening in 1957 as a dance academy.



...and Paul Burbedge for
Grafton Dance Centre

Fifteen years ago, Paul Burbedge took over management of the Grafton. In addition to organising varied dance classes from flamenco to children's ballet, Paul looks after room hire and, crucially, the structure of the building. He has run a successful crowdfunding exercise to raise money to repair the roof and improve insulation.

Paul said: "We were delighted to be awarded Highly Commended for the Heritage aspects of our unique building. It provides us with recognition and shows we are valued. We have big plans going forward to continue with our labour of love to renew and preserve this

historical dance venue."

Numerous World, European and UK dance champions have performed at the Grafton over the last 50 years, and in 2020 it received a Southwark Blue Plaque in memory of Bob Burgess and Doreen Freeman, icons of British ballroom dancing, who used to run the Grafton.

The judges said: "The Grafton Ballroom has even been described as the Wimbledon of ballrooms! But you don't have to be a champion to enjoy its facilities. If you have never visited the Grafton, we encourage you to do so and take part in one of their social dance evenings. But if dancing is really not for you, there's also yoga, pilates and tai chi."

www.graftondancecentre.co.uk/

Rebecca Tee

SOUTH LONDON PRESS

CLOSES AFTER 160 YEARS

These days news seems to come at us from every side and every hour of the day. However, local news from the *South London Press* will no longer be part of this. In an age of multiple means of digital communication local newspapers have been suffering badly. A combination of high production costs, falling advertising revenue and readers preferring to read everything online and no longer on the printed page has forced the *South London Press* to close after 160 years' continuous production. It joins some 300 other local newspapers that have closed in the last 20 years.

The *South London Press* was the creation of the Scotsman James Henderson, born in Montrose in 1823, the son of a saddle-maker. At the age of 22 he launched his first newspaper, the *Glasgow Daily News*, the first daily penny newspaper in Britain. It did not succeed, but Henderson moved on to Manchester where his *Weekly Budget* flourished and spurred him to move with his family in 1864 to London. He started the *South London Press* the following year as well

Henderson's successful publishing ventures allowed him to build a large mansion on what is now Dawson's Hill (then Primrose Hill) at the southern end of Lordship Lane in Dulwich. He called the house Adon Mount, which, like almost all such Victorian mansions, did not survive London's expansion and was demolished in 1910. But the name survives in the current street name Mount Adon Park.



The very first issue 7 January 1865



*Outbreak of World War I is announced
(on inside page!)*

as launching several successful magazines, one of which, *Young Folks*, saw the first publication of *Treasure Island* and *Kidnapped* by the hitherto unknown Robert Louis Stevenson.

In the very first edition of 7 January 1865, densely set in small type across five columns with minimal headlines and no illustrations, Henderson set out his paper's aims: "Promises like pie-crusts are made to be broken; we therefore make none, but briefly state our object in starting the SOUTH LONDON PRESS. It is to give the inhabitants of this large and important district of the metropolis a first-class family paper, of liberal, but thoroughly independent principles, at a low price [it cost twopence]. In its columns will be found carefully edited reports of home and foreign intelligence, leading articles on social and political questions of permanent and general interest, reviews of current literature and, above all, full and impartial reports of local meetings, and local movements of every description ... with a fixed determination to see the public prevail over all private interests."

The detailed coverage of local government was a particularly striking feature of the paper, historically and into our own times. Many are concerned that the demise of so many local newspapers is seriously reducing the effective scrutiny of the actions of local authorities.

Laurence Marsh

Advertising in the Magazine

Do you want to promote your business to Herne Hill residents? We publish three issues each year. Our advertising rates are very competitive. All our members in Herne Hill get a magazine through their door. So target your advertising by placing an advert in the next issue of Herne Hill magazine, also published online. See inside the front cover for our rates, which start at only £60 for all three issues in one year. And you'll also be supporting the work of the Herne Hill Society.



ORDINARY PEOPLE

DOING EXTRAORDINARY THINGS

Tim Musgrave is a resident of Frankfurt Road, Herne Hill. Ukraine is rarely out of the news, yet it is somehow easy to forget the daily reality for the people of Ukraine. Tim wanted to do something practical to help and earlier this year joined a convoy taking vehicles and medical equipment to the country. This was his experience.

We arrived in Lviv in our convoy of seven vehicles that had driven 33 hours through the night, covering six countries and 1,250 miles, only stopping every couple of hours to swap drivers and grab a coffee. Exhausted but exhilarated, we were delighted by the welcome we received, making every second of our discomfort worthwhile and making us realise how little we had suffered compared to the people on the front line or in the cities facing bombardment.

A friend from university, Simon Brake, had set up Mighty Convoy (www.mightyconvoy.org) at the beginning of the conflict and this was his 14th trip across, delivering now 61 vehicles. Each driving team had raised the funds through Go Fund Me to buy the vehicle that Simon sourced, thus spreading the financial load and the word of his inspiring project.

To start with he was sourcing decommissioned NHS ambulances and transporting those, full of donated medical equipment. But the Ukrainian military are now requesting four-wheel drive, flatbed "Utes" as they need fast, manoeuvrable vehicles to reach casualties across broken ground and then retreat fast as the medics are themselves being targeted by drones.

So, we had one van and six 4x4s in our convoy which made for a considerably more comfortable drive for us across Europe. Despite a puncture that needed

fixing before we even set off from Simon's house in Teddington at 7 am on Friday morning, we made the booked Channel Tunnel crossing and headed into Europe.

Equipped with walkie-talkies and with the fun of rolling around each other in the convoy, we drove smoothly through the day. Simon has the journey down pat now and knows where and when to stop. We could track all the other vehicles with pins on Google maps and we always had the destination of the next pit stop on our phones. The wonders of modern technology really helped create a sense of security and reduced the chance of losing any of our fellow travellers en route.

Each vehicle had two drivers so my fears about fatigue were unfounded as we stopped regularly enough to keep fresh and, even through the night, I was able to keep going without that dreaded "head nodding" feeling. We had one meal break in Germany in

the evening but otherwise we drove non-stop, hitting the dawn in Poland and the border to Ukraine mid-afternoon.

The border crossing could have been difficult, but Simon knows what is required to pass seamlessly through, with all the appropriate documentation translated into Polish and Ukrainian. Nothing was left to chance.

It was a thrill for the team, having bonded so closely during our shared experience, to be photographed at the Ukrainian border before our onward drive of an hour and a half to Lviv, arriving at 6pm on Saturday evening.

To be greeted in Lviv by Igor, the Head of the Medical Brigade literally with open arms, was truly humbling. This funny and gregarious man with a terrible burden of responsibility has somehow managed to maintain his humanity and humour in the face of daily horrors.



At the border, Tim Musgrave on right behind front row

None of the people we met were professional soldiers before the war but are simply ordinary people whose lives have been transformed by the invasion. There was no table thumping rhetoric, just a quiet, indomitable determination to defend their homeland. I hope that we would respond similarly if faced with the same threat. It is too easy to write off the "Tiktok generation" as lacking the patriotic spirit of their forefathers; I am confident that a fundamental threat to

home and family would be enough to stiffen our sinews should, heaven forbid, a similar response be required.

Lviv is a beautiful city and the people could not have been more welcoming. We enjoyed a few beers and a plate of ribs before crashing out at the end of a very long 40 hours.

This was a wonderful, life-affirming experience with a very worthwhile end result. The reaction I have had from friends and family was universally positive and so made the fundraising pretty straightforward. I had the time and the desire to do something practical, rather than cheer from the touchline and joining the convoy allowed me to do that. And it has given me a lifetime, heart-warming and rich memory to look back upon. All credit to Simon for starting and sustaining the wonderful Mighty Convoy which, depressingly, is now needed more than ever.

VE DAY 1945 – *Annie Gelly remembers*

I was born and bred in the city of Leicester and was seven years old when the war ended and my little sister three. Around 1943/44 we moved from the southern outskirts of Leicester (a few miles from an RAF base and a US airbase, making our area more vulnerable to



Annie Gelly in 1945

attack from enemy aircraft), to a fairly quiet 1930s suburb in the northern part of the city that was hardly affected by the Blitz, and we didn't have to endure awful nights in air raid shelters.

It was when I was in the top infants class at the local school our teacher told us that the war would end soon and, when it did, there would be a school holiday! Meanwhile all the neighbours in our street (and indeed right across the country) were busy trying to get things together for a street party. My Mum arranged for the local church hall to lend us their trestle tables to put on the street, and neighbours

brought out sheets to use as tablecloths. Everybody contributed things to eat and drink, like sandwiches, sausage rolls, lemonade, jellies and cakes – bearing in mind that most things were rationed. My mum was an ace cake maker, and she knew how to make cakes without eggs! For the party I wore my favourite frock. It was made of white muslin and had red spots and I wore a blue ribbon in my hair – patriotic colours

for the great day (8 May). It's the same dress as in the rather battered photograph, where I stand with my parents and little sister.

My Dad was a bus driver for the Midland Red Bus Company, often having to do an early-morning shift taking miners to work in Coalville, which meant that he had the afternoons off, and on VE Day he managed to be home by teatime!

About 100 yards down our street was a crossroads, and a huge bonfire was prepared right in the middle, on top of which was placed an effigy of Hitler. In the evening the bonfire was lit and we all danced round it. When the fire had died down there was some more entertainment in the street. The bonfire was so fierce that it melted the tarmac underneath and left a big hole in the road, which was there for weeks before the council came to fix it.

But back to the entertainment in the street. A piano was wheeled out from a neighbour's house and two sisters brought out a board-like platform and did some tap dancing – much to everyone's delight.

After that everyone got merry and we all had a sing-song of popular songs of the day. Shortly after that momentous day the King and Queen went on a grand tour of all the towns and cities, and I recall seeing them pass through our city centre in an open top car and waving to everyone, accompanied by a military band and loud cheering from the crowds who had gathered to watch the royal procession.

As to the Victory Bell (pictured), this was given to me by my grandfather. These were made from the metal of shot-down enemy aircraft and sold in aid of the RAF Benevolent Fund. They show the heads of the leaders of the Allied powers: Churchill, Stalin and President Truman.



FANCY A PINT? – *Colin Wight did*

I can't imagine why the editor picked me for this assignment but, my vehement protests being waved away, I reluctantly caught the 42 bus to Sainsbury's and, eventually, found the right entrance to Dulwich Hamlet FC, this year's venue for the Dulwich Beer Festival. The £5 entrance fee included a good-quality, over-sized beer glass.

To my left were 50 to 60 people in the stand, apparently waiting for the football season to start and all nursing a pint. About the same number were milling around the serving area: not a bad turnout for a Thursday afternoon. As expected, there were some fairly eccentric-looking folk in attendance: CAMRA members from central casting, mostly chaps of retirement age in T-shirts, shorts and beards (as was I, come to think of it) with a few, a very few, women scattered amongst them.

And so to the beer. Behind a long counter were 50 different cask ales from 30 brewers, in addition to 25 ciders, all served straight from the barrel, as nature intended. I perused the brochure, borrowing a sharpie (so beloved by President Trump) to



add my own tasting notes. Where to start? "Memoirs of a Geezer"? "Karma Citra"? London - indeed Southwark - was, naturally, well represented but surely the point of the exercise, as if any were needed, was to try beers you might not easily come across. Thus I ended up shifting a fair bit of good Yorkshire ale. Yorkshire ale, as any Yorkshireman will tell thee, is best in t'world. Be that as it may,

"Six Little Ships" from Leigh-on-Sea received top marks from me. But I am no longer the insatiable boozier of my youth, so quite a few interesting-sounding brews remained untested. *Ars longa, vita brevis.* Mind you, the Festival was open 10 hours a day for three days, so, if I had had nothing better to do, I could have come back for more.

All the real ales I and my drinking partner (or bevvy mate, as we say in Birkenhead) sampled were in excellent condition. And at

£4.20 a pint we were quids-in after just a couple of pints, and still had the glasses to take home. Note to editor: my expenses claim is still outstanding.

CELEBRATING LOCAL ARTISTS

This is our third chapter in the series, featuring two more locally based painters who have a hinterland and an outreach beyond our local borders.

Pat Roberts reports

Camilla Gray

At the start of her professional career, though born in London (and of part-Danish parentage), Camilla trained for four years at the world-famous Glasgow School of Art – one of the world's leading creative institutions. She has exhibited in many London



galleries and regularly shows in the Dulwich Open House series. One of her paintings was shown (and sold) in the 2025 Royal Academy Summer Show. She lives in Lowden Road in Herne Hill.

Camilla Gray's paintings focus principally on landscapes: the infinite and eternal patterns of leaf, bark, sunlight and shade. They emerge from

close introspective study in nature, possibly in Sydenham Hill



stillness".

www.camillagraypaintings.com/

Instagram: @camillagray10

Wood and Dulwich Wood or the forests of Southern Denmark, sometimes provoking a drawing en plein air, then a light sketch in watercolour, followed by a period of thought and contemplation that allows the lightness, tranquillity and the calm energy of nature to be captured unhurriedly in oil colours, on smooth board or canvas. As she writes, "My paintings are a moment of

Jorge Sánchez

Jorge explains: he lives constantly with incomplete images fighting for space in his head – essentially impressionistic landscapes,

sometimes almost abstract Turner-esque visions – which he must bring to life.

The process? "I don't always have a clear image in mind. I start with my chosen colour palette, and once the brush or palette knife makes contact



with the canvas, it moves with its own energy and the image emerges as layer upon layer is applied or scraped away."

He knows there is an authenticity of brush, paints and canvas which triumphs even in a social media dominated world. People engage because they appreciate the calm and immersion that a tactile painted image of the natural world offers to both painter

and viewers – a style that Jorge now focuses on with marked success, after originally experimenting with abstracts, geometric figures and flower paintings.

Local shows, including the Jeannie Avent Gallery in East Dulwich and the annual Artists Open House feature of the Dulwich Festival, have built Jorge a very loyal following. And this autumn he will be showing pictures at the Untitled Art Fair at Chelsea Old Town Hall (5–7 September 2025) and at the Autumn Art Fair 2025 at the Landmark Arts Centre, Teddington (17–19 October 2025).

Jorge lives on Fawnbrake Avenue in Herne Hill.

www.sanchezart.co.uk/

Instagram: @jorge_sanchez_artist



WE LIVE IN TIME – Colin Wight takes a second look

We *Live in Time*, released in January, was partly filmed in Herne Hill (see *Starstruck* in Station Square, #160) — which is why I was dispatched by my editor to review it. If you missed it on its release at the beginning of this year it's now available on other platforms. This gave me an opportunity to see it a second time (and pay again for the privilege).

I don't object to watching a weepie now and again and it doesn't bother me to be almost the only man in the audience (though I never want to see another *Bridget Jones* movie).

Here's the plot - in part. An attractive young couple live in a lovely farmhouse in the idyllic Surrey countryside with their little girl, Ella. Lucky them! Almut (Florence Pugh) jogs back to the kitchen with her foraged ingredients and freshly-laid eggs to knock up the best-ever omelette for hubby Tobias (Andrew Garfield).

The story chops back and forth as it tells the story of their relationship. Almut invites him to the restaurant where she works (she is an ambitious chef whereas boring Tobias works for Weetabix). We see him arrive at Herne Hill Station. Jay Rayner gets a name check. The couple stroll around Brockwell Park, then pop into Lulu's. Herne Hill folk will recognise Dulwich Road, where they live in a flat with a gigantic kitchen. Pugh's character is potty-mouthed, driven and unpredictable. Garfield, who once starred as Spider-Man, is as introverted, geeky and mild-mannered as Clark Kent. This ill-matched couple are

deeply in love.

Another jump back in time explains how they met: Tobias, who is finalising his divorce, is accidentally run over by Almut as he crosses the main road, though no serious harm is done. I confess to finding this scene a bit corny, and it is hard not to think of Hugh Grant. (Did you know? Bits of *Love Actually* were also filmed in Herne Hill.) There are medical "issues" but baby Ella does arrive, albeit in unconventional circumstances, in uncredited Orpington. So far, so rom-com.



I won't go on in case you are thinking of seeing it. Those who remember *Love Story*, with Ryan O'Neal and Ali MacGraw, will get the idea. Much has been made of the chemistry between the two principals. Yes, they are both fine actors, capable of expressing a wide range of emotions, but I felt more gripped by the Bocuse d'Or cookery competition than the ups and downs of their relationship. Others will feel differently, of course. The film veers unconvincingly from farce to tragedy and I found the non-linear narrative annoying, though it does help to keep you alert as you try to work out what's going on and when. And what's with the ice-skating? It's by no means the worst film of 2025 but it didn't quite hit the mark for me.

We Live in Time (dir. John Crowley): certificate 15, 107 minutes. It is now being streamed on Netflix, where this summer, despite our reviewer's opinion of its merits, it has been in the top ten most-watched films. It is also available to purchase or rent on other platforms.



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RACHEL JONES: GATED CANYONS

Dulwich Picture Gallery's current exhibition is the first solo show by a contemporary artist in the main exhibition space. Rachel Jones (born 1991) has won acclaim for her striking use of colour and clever blending of abstract and figurative motifs. She believes art expresses things we feel in our bodies, especially the otherwise hidden and denied. She uses layers of oil paint, oil stick and pastel to express different emotional states.

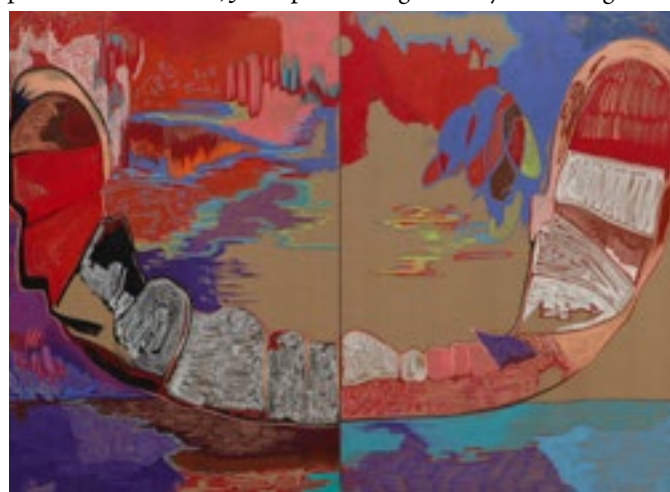
The first of the four thematically arranged rooms is titled



Comic Abstraction and presents three double-height paintings, referencing the exaggeration of cartoons, featuring the motif of bricks. The concept of building and separating, enclosing and opening up is expressed in the juxtaposition of these recognisable elements within fantasy settings. The overall title of the exhibition and of

many of the paintings is the ironic notion of *Gated Canyons*.

Room 2, *Expansion and Containment*, plays with size and scale, using irregularly shaped canvasses with uneven edges to give a feeling of not being restricted or held in. The 13 paintings include some works done over the past seven years as well as others created as part of the special commission. Inspired by the Flemish artist Pieter Boel's 1660-65 *Head of a Hound* from the Gallery's permanent collection, Jones paints a dog that may be snarling



or smiling. This taps into a recurring motif of the mouth. One painting has a mouth with teeth as part of the landscape; another is of large lips and teeth like mountains and standing rocks. In one

canvas a yellow-eyed dog looks out at us; above its head shapes may be ears or a hat. Elsewhere, large lips without teeth form a



gap smile. There is hollow-looking brickwork and a hint of a face possibly returning to the dog-head image.

Room 3 further develops the theme of *The Mouth as Landscape*. Jones sees mouths as portals to our inner selves linked with ways we interact, interpret and express ourselves. These fantasy landscapes explore the distance between inner feeling and outer expression. Two huge diptychs evoke tombstones, water and distant mountains, canoe-like shapes and psychedelic experience; while one mini-sized painting of closed lips indicates holding back, keeping silent or secret.

Room 4's theme is *The Language of Colour*. To draw out the intensity of colour, Jones allows parts of the linen canvas to show through, often in large sections. Her expanded palette includes candied tones and washes alongside neon accents. More muted areas in richer colours represent quieter feelings contrasted with "high octane" emotions. Here are two large diptychs, one double height. One gets the impression of something being built but as yet unfinished. At the same time, one can read the sky over earth or sand or a wild, exotic garden springing from the soil. The more one looks, the more the shapes and colours begin to tell a story.

This show has been three years in the making. The Gallery's commission has inspired the artist to make pictures specifically for the space, drawing on her response to pieces in the permanent collection. The result is fresh eyes on historic art, showing the interconnection and timelessness of art.

To go along with the show, a family trail has been created with a local school, the gallery is installing a sculpture garden and even the café has prepared a special menu with splashes of bright red in response to the paintings.

Jeffrey Doorn

Rachel Jones: *Gated Canyons* opened 10 June and runs until 19 October. Entry £20.00 (with donation), including admission to the permanent collection. Concessions available.

HERNE HILL, ALAN RICKMAN AND ME

– Robert Holden recalls an incident from over 50 years ago

When the Society published its Herne Hill Personalities almost 20 years ago a condition for all entries was that the personality could no longer be alive. Had there been no such condition then surely the book would have had to include Robert Holden, a personality with Herne Hill running through him like a stick of Blackpool rock. Last year Robert hit the milestone of eight decades, all as a resident of Herne Hill. And for many of those decades Robert has shared his love and enthusiasm for our area and its history by conducting a series of guided walks (and in doing so making sure to promote this Society). But this year Robert has decided, with regret, that the walks he is taking this September must be his last. We would like to thank Robert for his many contributions to the joy of living in Herne Hill and in this spirit we are delighted to publish the story that follows.

Many years ago I trained as an actor at the Webber Douglas Academy of Dramatic Art and at the Drama Studio in Ealing. Two highlights of my career were the 16 months I spent as actor/tour guide at the Museum of The Moving Image (which occupied part of the present BFI Southbank building), and the two years I spent as actor/tour guide at the Cinema Museum, in the guise of Mr Morris Hardcastle, Cinema Commissionaire. Of course you know the Cinema Museum well, and you may recognise me as I appeared on the cover of the famous Cinema Museum campaign brochure of 2018. I am the one in the uniform.

In the 1970s I was a keen drama student and actor, and I went to a great deal of theatre. One popular venue was the Vanbrugh Theatre at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA), where they put on plays that were sometimes oddly cast but always superbly acted. They put on unusual plays, and plays that were not put on elsewhere in London, sometimes because they needed a large cast.

In November 1973 I saw a production of *Uncle Vanya* at the Vanbrugh Theatre (I know the date as I still have the programme), and I can say now, without fear of contradiction, that one actor in the production caught my attention: his name was Alan Rickman.

Once seen, never forgotten.

What happened next?

Shortly afterwards I was taking my dog, Trixie, for a walk in Herne Hill. I walked along Norwood Road, and I saw in the

laundrette someone whom I thought I recognised, but could not place. I walked Trixie round Brockwell Park, took her home, and suddenly remembered where I had seen that person before. I went down to the laundrette, and the person was still there. I went in and I said to him: "It's Uncle Vanya, isn't it?" Alan was delighted that someone from downtown Herne Hill in south London had seen him in a student production, recognised



Alan Rickman with Lindsay Duncan in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, 1976

him, and wanted to praise him for his excellent performance. It transpired that there was a RADA flat in Dalkeith Road, not far away, so it is possible that a number of actors who went on to have successful careers in British theatre did their laundry in the same laundrette.

Alan came to see me in my last performance as an amateur actor,

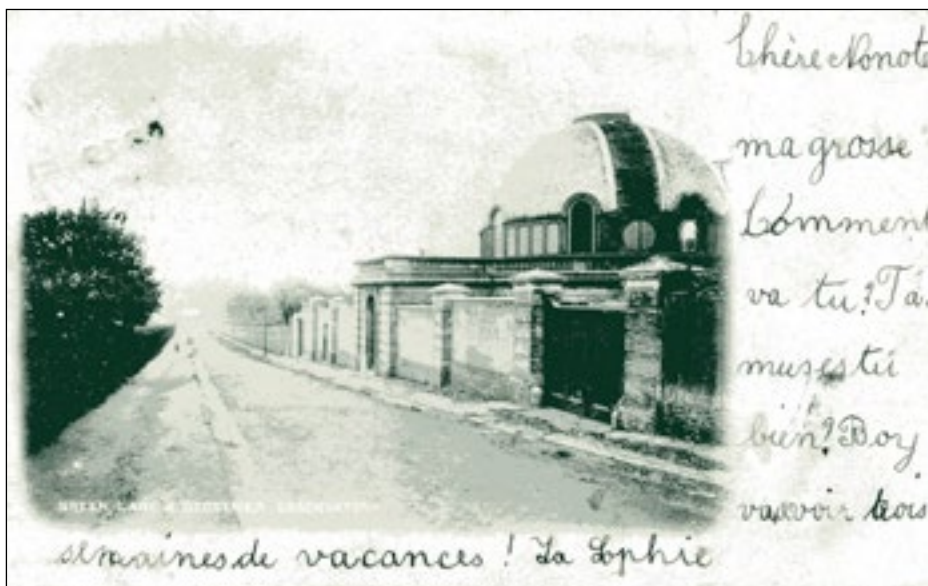
when I played Malcolm in *Little Malcolm and his Struggle against the Eunuchs* at the South London Theatre Centre in West Norwood. I invited Alan and a number of his fellow students at RADA to the concert at the Royal Festival Hall, when Marvin Hamlisch introduced the music of Scott Joplin to the people of London.

At RADA I saw Alan as Angelo in *Measure for Measure*, and as Captain Warrington in *Little Mary Sunshine*, in which I do believe he sang. Thereafter I followed his career with great interest, including his debut season at Stratford-on-Avon, when he was Ferdinand in *The Tempest*.

What can I add to what has already been said about Alan? I call to mind his lively personality, his great intelligence, his remarkable career, and his many, many memorable performances on stage and screen.

A SIMPLE POSTCARD REVEALS MORE THAN YOU MIGHT EXPECT

We like to include in the Magazine old postcards with local interest, but it is rare that a single card has so much to tell. Firstly, it shows what was once a true wonder of Herne Hill, the observatory built by Henry Bessemer to house what is said to have been at the time the second largest telescope in the world, although it seems to have had technical problems that remained unresolved when Bessemer died in 1898 and was never fully functional. The observatory stood at the edge of the 40-acre Bessemer Estate, bounded by Green Lane (today Green Dale). The site is now covered by housing on Dylways.



The Bessemer Observatory on Green Lane (today Green Dale)

But who is the Sophie who wrote the card postmarked East Dulwich 29 March 1902? Sophie was a prolific writer of postcards to friends and family in this period and by using the evidence gleaned from other cards that have survived it is possible to say with certainty that the writer was Sophie Charlotte Kleinwort (1898-1974), the daughter of Herman Greverus Kleinwort of the Kleinwort banking dynasty. The Kleinworts were just one of the many families of German origin who over the course of the 19th century made their homes in the area comprising Denmark Hill, Champion Hill and Herne Hill. In 1902 Herman and his wife Marguerite lived with their seven daughters and a vast entourage of servants at The Platanes on Champion Hill, a building that survives today, now part of King's

great-grandson of John Gregory Crace, the pre-eminent interior decorator of the Victorian age and a resident of Herne Hill at Springfield Lodge, Half Moon Lane.

Sophie's card was addressed to Eléonore Comtesse de Beaufort at Wallnerstrasse 1, Vienne, Autriche. This street lies at the heart of old Vienna. It seems the house at No.1 no longer survives, but the Esterhazy Palace in the same street does and one must imagine Joseph Haydn hard at work in the Palace, as the Kapellmeister to Prince Nikolaus Esterhazy, whose vast wealth was matched by his unbridled extravagance. Sophie's aristocratic friend Eléonore, born in 1891, was the daughter of the 4th Duke of Beaufort-Spontin, a family with estates once in the Austrian Netherlands (in the area of Namur, today Belgium) and in Bohemia (now the Czech Republic) and links to European history that, for reasons of space, cannot be elaborated here!

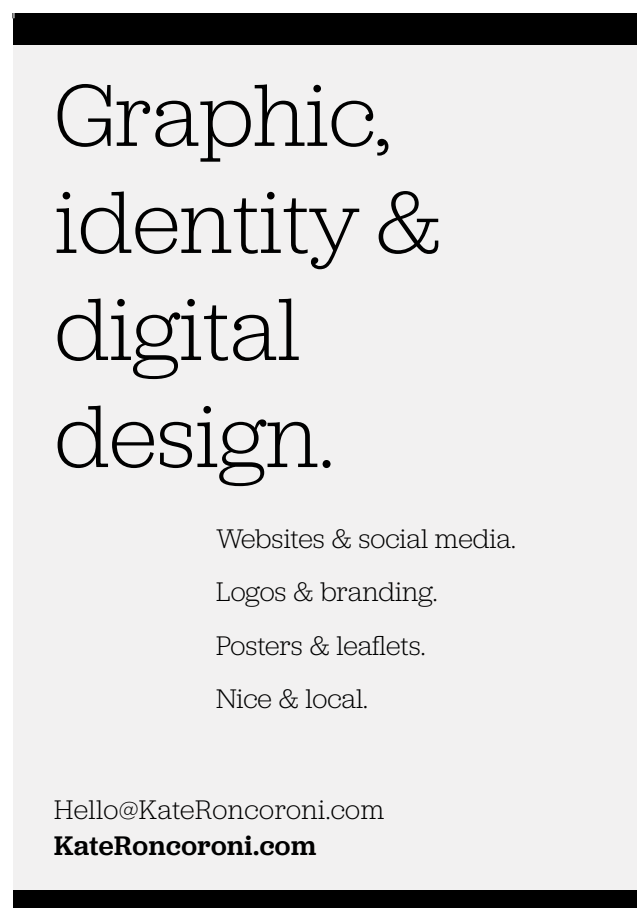
The postcard also reveals one further line of enquiry. It was forwarded from Vienna to the "Heilanstalt Helsing, Gögingen bei Augsburg, Bayern". This was a sanatorium renowned for its pioneering orthopaedic work, the creation of Friedrich Helsing, who developed from his skills in making organs and harmoniums an even greater skill in making artificial limbs. At the small town of Gögingen in Bavaria an extensive medical centre developed. It remains an important centre for orthopaedic medicine to this day.

Why Eléonore Countess of Beaufort needed to visit the sanatorium is something this simple postcard cannot tell us, but what it can reveal (for a few pounds on eBay) seems to me sufficient reward.



College. Sophie went on to marry Martin Renner, a German-born diplomat, in 1914. Their daughter Rosemary in turn married John Crace, son of Admiral Sir John Gregory Crace, and

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