



ANNUAL REPORT

2018 / 2019



WHAT DOES THE BLACKHEATH SOCIETY DO?

The Society can claim many achievements since its foundation in 1937. We work with local councils, residents, amenity groups, traders, police and national bodies - with everyone who can contribute to the enhancement of Blackheath

We aim to preserve and enhance for the benefit of the public the features of

Blackheath of particular beauty or historical and architectural interest; to protect its open spaces from disfigurement or encroachment, particularly the Heath; to encourage high standards of planning and architecture in its new buildings; to promote improvements to the amenities of the area and to encourage appreciation of its character and history.

BLACKHEATH VILLAGE

We work with other community organisations and local traders to enhance the Village and organise and support local events such as the Christmas lights and Village Day.

THE HEATH

We work to preserve the health and enjoyment of the Heath, but oppose commercial exploitation and damage from over-use.

TRAFFIC AND TRAVEL

We monitor major developments that have an effect on the traffic in Blackheath. We campaign for better railway and bus services and for station improvements.

PLANNING AND CONSERVATION

We encourage good modern design, while preserving our existing heritage. We scrutinise planning proposals, advise local councils and appear at public inquiries.

HISTORY AND EDUCATION / EVENTS

We maintain a unique archive of more than 15,000 images of Blackheath. We sponsor talks, exhibitions and publications about the history of the area, organise local walks and publish guides.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

JOIN THE SOCIETY

Keep up to date with local news and have a voice in future developments..

JOIN OUR ACTIVITIES

Whether you have expertise in our areas of interest or time to give practical help, along with other people involved in Village life.

For general information and advice on matters concerning the activities and work of The Society apply to:

The Secretary
The Blackheath Society,
Studio 2, The Old Bakehouse,
11 Blackheath Village,
London, SE3 9LA

📞 020 8297 1937
✉ office@blackheath.org
🌐 www.blackheath.org
📘 BlackheathSociety
🐦 @BlackheathSoc



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CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION

This is my first annual report as Chair of the Society, following my appointment in October 2018, and I would like to thank my predecessor Dame Helen Reeves for her hard work and dedication to the Society in her four years as Chair.

The Society has had another busy year, and an ongoing issue has been the number of shop closures in the Village. There has been some improvement and a reduction in the number of empty units, but this remains an area of concern and one that the Society continues to work on with the relevant stakeholders.

Our planning team has continued to show enthusiasm and dedication in reviewing the various planning matters that arise on both the Lewisham and Greenwich sides of the Heath.

Our work with the Blackheath Joint Working Party continues to cover, among other things, a review of the annual events programme on the Heath, the planting of new trees to replace those removed in 2017 and discussions about the future of the disused toilet block on the north side of the A2.

The Society has also had a bumper programme of events this year, including a talk on Mass Observation in October, regular Walks and Talks, and Meet and Eat events in a local pub, giving members more opportunities to meet informally to discuss areas of interest.

Many thanks to our hard-working volunteers, committee members and our Secretary, without whom the numerous activities of the Society would not be possible. *Paul Watts*



TREES ON THE HEATH



In response to concerns by Society members, an attractive variety of new trees are being planted in various places on the Heath to replace those which were in a bad condition and had to be removed (*see the two examples above*).

We are pleased that our call for volunteers to help us give adequate attention to planning developments involving trees in the Lewisham and Greenwich boroughs has resulted in two people coming forward, and we hope this will give a big boost to our efforts in this area.



DISUSED TOILET BLOCK

We continue to seek a resolution to the problem of the disused toilet block to the west of the pond on the north side of the A2 near Greenwich Park (*left*).

This building has been boarded up for over 20 years and we would like to see it either brought back into use, possibly as a shop or a café, or removed altogether.

EVENTS AND TALKS

The Society's Events Committee continues to organise social events to bring members together and to learn about a wide variety of topics. We have had a number of visits, including a sold-out trip to Two Temple Place (*below right*), William Astor's residence with its interesting collection of art, and to Severndroog Castle (*below*).

We ran guided walks around Lewisham and Greenwich, and further afield to Chelsea (*top right*), Westminster and Hampstead. A new initiative this year has been the Meet and Eat events at the Hare and Billet once every two months, a chance to have a chat, a drink or lunch with fellow members.



The Society's annual lecture was given by Kirsty Patrick of the Mass Observation Archives Department of the University of Sussex, when we heard Mass Observation started in Blackheath in the 20th century and it now continues at the University of Sussex.

Many more events are planned, so look for the dates on our website at www.blackheath.org and in our regular *Newsletters*. You will hear about them regularly if you also join our members' email list by contacting the office. We would welcome any suggestions from members for future visits and walks.

THE VILLAGE

The Society monitored the number of shop closures in the Village during the year as businesses suffered from the recession, and in May six premises were still unused. This remains an area of concern and we will continue to work in this area with stakeholders.

Shops were forced to close because of higher rents and business rates. Blackheath followed the national trend as people moved to online shopping, but several new businesses have opened in the year and Selectric moved to new and larger premises (*see right*).



The Society identified some of the key issues that need attention as the mix of businesses, public signage and street furniture, cleanliness, planting, traffic, parking, air quality and the appearance and feel of the Village.



Our volunteers again worked hard throughout the year on improving the Village, as evidenced by the new garden (*above*) planted in Montpelier Vale.

We also organised and promoted the successful annual Village Day held on the first Saturday in December.

PLANNING

The Society is indebted to our group of volunteers who have tackled an even larger and more varied range of planning issues than usual.

The scope of our efforts has widened considerably as we wrestle with many issues inside the local Conservation Area and the complexity of major developments on our periphery, including Lewisham Town Centre, Kidbrooke and the proposed Greenwich International School.

Apart from the relevance of these to Blackheath, we are often the only major community organisation offering scrutiny in these cases.

In terms of local developments, we can be pleased that Lewisham and Greenwich by and large acknowledge and accept our views. In some cases, such as the ongoing dispute over unacceptable development issues at 8 The Glebe (*above right*). We are supporting the local residents in their cause.

We also hope in future to be much more active in preserving our tree heritage. And we are making a difference on schemes for major developments,



especially working with active local councillors, as evidenced by the changes to the Lewisham Gateway plans (*top left*) and the continuing debate around the Tesco site scheme (*top right*), now subject to an appeal.

We have been active in helping formulate and update planning policy in Greenwich and Lewisham, such as the overhaul of policy guidance in both boroughs on residential extensions, conversions and basements, and in the Heritage Strategy and Characterisation Study updates for Lewisham.

Our lobbying to ensure a fair and transparent policy for the use of its multi-million pound Community Infrastructure Levy funds will also be important in future.

TRANSPORT

We are delighted to report that Greenwich Council has proposed a remodeling of the area immediately outside the Blackheath Gate on the Heath to improve safety for cyclists.

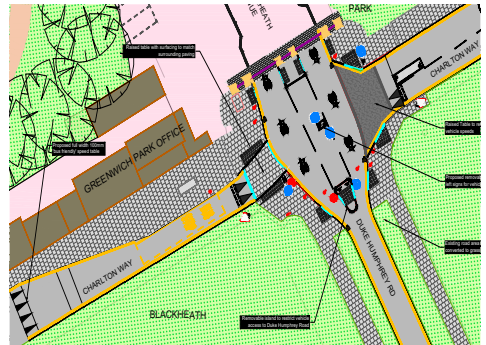
This will remove coaches (*below*) from the stub of Duke Humphrey Road and convert it into a three-metre cycle way with grass on each side and pedestrian paths (*see plan on the right*). The work is funded by Transport for London, suggesting it should have a high probability of proceeding, as it is being proposed as a cycling safety project



following a number of near misses between cyclists and vehicles at the present junction.

The Society has been pressing for this area to be returned to heath for some years but its cost as a landscape improvement project has previously prevented this.

Its re-emergence as a road safety project and the availability of TfL funding have changed its fortunes. Greenwich council is scheduling construction for early autumn after the August bank holiday fair on Circus Field and work is estimated to take four weeks.



BLACKHEATH SIGNAL BOX

A new signaling and cables system has been installed on the sidings by platform 1 at Blackheath station in a dark green box surrounded by green railings (*see right*).

This raised serious concerns about its size and the planning process. Almost all the vegetation along that stretch had to be removed and it cut right through the Society's proposal to install a wildlife garden there. We will re-open negotiations with Network Rail about a suitable planting scheme as soon as the signalling work has been completed.



ARCHIVE

There are now more than 5,500 images on the Society's archive site, accessible via www.blackheath.org/.

We have digitised and tagged a large number of images over the past year which are not yet available on the site, but we will be adding hundreds more over the coming months. We now have an average of 4,500 page views every year with 21 visitors each day.



Crowd watching damage from a 1917 zeppelin raid



Blackheath High School staff in 1905



Blackheath Cricket Club in 1905, photo by Wayland

In 2000 the Society started its Millennium Project to photograph every house in Blackheath and scan the photographs. This has now reached the halfway mark.

Many thanks again to our invaluable and ever-reliable volunteer team who, in addition to scanning, have responded to a diverse range of queries.

These range from Australian residents asking for information on where their ancestors lived to local pubs seeking images, and from the Royal Parks architect requesting specific views of Greenwich Park to questions about historical images of local mansard roofs.

22 ADVERTISEMENTS. 1852

M. LAMBERT,
CHEESEMONGER AND PORKMAN.

FICKLED AND DRIED TONGUES,
Fine Breakfast Bacon, fresh Eggs, &c.

DAIRY FED PORK,
German Sausages, &c.

FAMILIES SUPPLIED every morning with *Fresh & Dressed Butters,* Fine Dressed HAM, York & other Hams.

TRANQUIL VALE,
Adjoining the Railway Station,
BLACKHEATH.

Families waited on Daily for Orders, and supplied with Goods of the very best quality, on terms as low as any London House.

Delicatessen next to railway station car park in 1852

TREASURER'S REPORT

YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2018

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The summary accounts on the next two pages show the Society's statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 December 2018 and the balance sheet.

The Society had a net decrease in total funds of £43,155 for the year (2017: increase £32,347), mainly from a revaluation of our investments in The Equities Investment Fund for Charities (Charifund), held as fixed assets.

There was a deficit on our ordinary activities of £4,009, represented by our unrestricted funds, which arose mainly from a donation to the Blackheath Halls to support their recent refurbishment project.

Membership was consistent at 848 households (2017: 849) but has since increased to 863, in spite of the rise in fees from £15 to £20 per year from the start of 2018.

The Society's annual income, mainly from membership fees and investment income, covers routine office and other overheads. Expenditure on additional projects and activities is generally



funded by reserves or from donations and other sources.

The Society again helped organise the Village Day in December and paid to purchase the Christmas lights and for certain other non-recurring projects, such as the storyboards for the Heath. Funds received to support these projects and relevant expenditure is shown under our restricted funds in the accounts.

Our investment portfolio comprises funds held in the Charifund and a property investment asset, the freehold of Tranquil Hall in Blackheath Village, which was revalued in 2017, and

this continues to be held at £390,000 in the accounts.

The Society's total funds were £564,099 at 31 December 2018 (2017: £607,254) and we remain in a strong financial provision.

The Society's full 2018 financial statements have been reported on by our external accountants Field Sullivan Limited and they include details of our reserves policy, risk management, investment policy and other matters.

Copies are available for members on request from the Secretary.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2018

	Unrestricted Funds (£)	Restricted Funds (£)	Total Funds 2018	Total Funds 2017
INCOMING RESOURCES				
Incoming resources from generated funds				
Voluntary income	17,000	1,000	18,000	28,826
Activities for generating funds	1,360	-	1,360	2,822
Investment income	29,050	-	29,050	40,260
Other incoming resources	870	-	870	542
Total incoming resources	48,280	1,000	72,450	72,450
RESOURCES EXPENDED				
Costs of generating funds				
Fundraising trading: cost of goods sold and other costs	-	-	-	178
Charitable activities	47,489	19,941	67,430	69,153
Total resources expended	47,489	19,941	67,430	69,331
Net (outgoing)/incoming resources before transfers	791	(18,941)	(18,150)	3,119
TRANSFERS				
Gross transfers between funds	(4,800)	4,800	-	-
Net (outgoing)/incoming resources before other recognised gains and losses	(4,009)	(14,141)	(18,150)	3,119
OTHER RECOGNISED GAINS/LOSSES				
(Losses)/gains on investment assets	(25,005)	-	(25,005)	(29,228)
Net movements in funds	(29,014)	(14,141)	(43,155)	32,347
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS				
Total funds brought forward	593,113	14,141	607,254	574,907
Total funds carried forward	564,099	-	564,099	607,254

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2018

	2018 (£)	2017 (£)
FIXED ASSETS		
Investments	552,853	577,857
CURRENT ASSETS		
Stocks and work in progress	2,000	2,500
Debtors	4,232	4,668
Cash at bank and in hand	18,175	34,244
	<u>24,407</u>	<u>41,412</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	<u>(11,642)</u>	<u>(10,416)</u>
Net current assets	12,765	30,996
Total assets less current liabilities	565,618	608,853
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	<u>(1,519)</u>	<u>(1,599)</u>
Net assets	<u>564,099</u>	<u>607,254</u>
THE FUNDS OF THE CHARITY:		
Restricted funds	-	14,141
Unrestricted funds		
Revaluation reserve	4,853	29,858
Unrestricted income funds	559,246	563,255
Total unrestricted funds	<u>564,099</u>	<u>593,113</u>
Total charity funds	<u>564,099</u>	<u>607,254</u>



SOCIETY MANAGEMENT

PRESIDENT

Neil Rhind MBE

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

CHAIR

Paul Watts

VICE-CHAIR

Dame Helen Reeves

TREASURER

Andrew Westbrook FCA

John Bartram

Nicola Peers

Diane Summers

Allan Griffin

John Schofield

David Walker

Sarah Mansfield

Alex Schweitzer

Liz Wright

Nick Patton

Howard Shields

Helma Zebregs

SECRETARY

Sacha Bright

PHOTO CREDITS

The Society would like to thank our member Tim Keeler for the cover photograph of the Hare and Billet pond and for several other photographs used in this year's annual report.

Thanks also to the following people for permission to reproduce photographs: John Bartram, Pippa Stanton, David Walker, Paul Watts and Liz Wright. All the historical photographs come from the Society's archive collection. The report was produced by John Bartram and designed by Pippa Stanton.



The Heath Riding Field in 1905

