



NEWSLETTER ■ WINTER 2019

KITES FUN DAY RETURNS TO BLACKHEATH AFTER 10 YEARS

A kite-flying family fun day will be returning to Blackheath in 2020 after an absence of more than 10 years.

The event, organised by the Blackheath Society, has been given the official go-ahead and a date set of Sunday 4 October.

The last kite festival was in June 2009 (*seen on the right*) and attracted thousands of visitors from far and wide over a weekend. It was funded on a generous scale by Lewisham Council and Transport for London. It also featured bikes and sports taster sessions.

The event next year will be on a more modest scale and, with local support, we plan to break even. The emphasis will be on the Blackheath community, aiming for fun and enjoyment for all and celebrating

the Heath's long association with flying kites.

Planning is already under way. So far we are looking at: demonstrations of expert kite flying; children's kite-making workshops; public kite-flying with enthusiasts on hand to help novices; music and perhaps some other entertainments.

There will be plenty of opportunities for businesses in Blackheath and other local organisations to participate in the event through sponsorship and by tying in their own offers and activities.

The Society has linked up with the Kent Kite Flyers, an enthusiasts' club, who have been generous with their advice and support. The club regularly takes part in kite days on the Kent coast and elsewhere, and they are looking forward to helping



us revive this traditional event on Blackheath. Their members will be present to help us and to offer their flying expertise. Their website can be found at www.kentkiteflyers.com

We are keen to hear from other kite flyers who use the Heath and would like to take part in the event, as well as those interested in acting as stewards and volunteers on the day.

To get in touch with offers of help, ideas and to discuss sponsorship opportunities, please contact office@blackheath.org.

HIGHLIGHTS

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TALBOT PLACE RENEWAL TOPS LOCAL RESIDENTS POLL



The redevelopment of derelict changing rooms on Blackheath for community use came top of the poll in a recent consultation of local residents carried out by Lewisham Council under its Commonplace initiative.

The changing rooms in Talbot Place, which are owned by Lewisham, were abandoned some years ago. They contain asbestos, are unsafe for the public to enter and currently are a dumping ground used by contractors to store large items of rubbish found on the Heath.

Ideas for redevelopment of the site suggested by residents in the recent consultation include: toilets for public use, a children's playground, new sports changing facilities, a café, and rooms that could be available for commercial and community hire.

Proposals for Talbot Place have been in the pipeline for more than four years but had apparently stalled. They have now been given fresh impetus by the results of this latest consultation.

Launched in September by Lewisham, this was an opportunity for residents to put forward their ideas on how funding from a levy on developers in the borough could be spent for community improvements, particularly to infrastructure. The consultation used the Commonplace online community consultation platform, which allowed residents to submit their priority projects on an interactive map.

The Society, which encouraged members to take part in the consultation, favours further investigation of reactivating the disused changing rooms and toilets, (*seen above looking desolate on a quiet Sunday morning*), especially in the context of an updated vision and strategy for the Heath as a whole.

The last thorough review of the Heath and surrounding environment was carried out in 2002 by the leading landscape architects Kim Wilkie Associates and covered proposals for the next 50 years. Describing the Talbot Place frontage, the report said the "car park and ugly

wall to the school changing block create a discordant gap in the perimeter pattern of domestic buildings".

Some of Wilkie's extensive recommendations for the Heath have been followed through, but there appears to have been no systematic review and updating of the report, nor any comprehensive, up-to-date document published setting out a Heath vision and strategy.

When the latest Lewisham Council consultation closed in October, the redevelopment of Talbot Place received by far the greatest support for any single project in the Blackheath ward. According to the Society's count, out of 82 project suggestions, 25 related to the site. Lewisham said that 191 individuals submitted, commented on or agreed with proposals for projects.

Other suggestions included road, streetscape and air quality improvements; better children's youth services and activities; open and green space improvements including tree planting; better community, health, sport and education services for all ages; and improvements to rubbish removal and street cleaning.

Top-ranking suggestions for Talbot Place were a children's playground and public toilets. Kirsty Lowe, founder of Blackheath Bumps, a local group of 150 pregnant women and mothers of young children, explains the need:

"We'd like to be able to make better use of the Heath. However we can't because of the lack of public toilets and good baby changing facilities. Our members often end up in Greenwich Park or Manor House Gardens simply because they have more easily accessible facilities. It seems crazy that residents of the Village have to hike to other green spaces when we have the Heath on our doorstep. We are grateful for the support from the council and hope a playground in Blackheath can become a reality."

The results of the consultation were discussed at a Blackheath Assembly meeting at the end of October. Convened by Lewisham Council, it was attended by the Mayor, Damien Egan, Blackheath Councillors

Kevin Bonavia, Juliet Campbell and Amanda De Ryk, the Society and local residents and interested groups.

The Mayor and Councillors expressed support for the redevelopment of Talbot Place, and it is likely that plans will be further developed and consulted on early next year.

Lewisham has already carried out two public consultations on the redevelopment of the changing rooms, the first in early 2016 and the second in March 2018.

Architect Ian Chalk, a Society member, produced preliminary drawings, pro bono, for the second consultation, showing a range of options for the site.

The 2018 consultation results were: 96% of respondents either agreed, or strongly agreed, that the changing rooms should be redeveloped to provide facilities supporting the use of the Heath by the wider community

In the poll 57% wanted a children's play area; 54% toilets; 30% some sort of community space or a café; 29% changing rooms; 25% storage facilities; and 15% school provision.

ASSEMBLY HEARS CONCERNS

The Blackheath Assembly meeting was also an opportunity for residents to question the Mayor directly about issues of concern, writes *Nicholas Patton*. The problem of open drug dealing on several streets was raised by some and frustration was expressed that no action had apparently been taken.

Among other issues was the lack of an investment and upgrade plan for Lewisham Station. Entries and exits here rose over 70% over the last 10 years, from just over six million a year to nearly 11 million. It is so overcrowded at rush hour that Southeastern introduced a peak-hours one-way system a year ago to try to reduce congestion at bottlenecks.

Lewisham Council seems to be putting most of its public effort and publicity into promoting the Bakerloo Line Extension, which is at least 10 years away from becoming a reality.

Lewisham Station Users Group is pressing for parity and transparency of public effort by the Council to achieve urgent station improvements well before then for existing long-suffering station users, including those who change to and from the DLR and buses.

HEATH CLEANUP DAY BAGS LITTER DESPITE THE DRIZZLE



The Society had agreed with Lewisham Council that, this year, the annual Cleanup Day should be on the weekend after the fireworks display, which usually results in a lot of extra litter.

As it turned out there was not so much rubbish left behind and Glendale, the Lewisham contractors, and the in-house Greenwich team did a really good litter picking job during the week.

So, on Cleanup Day on Saturday November 9, the Heath looked in rather fine fettle and it was this, and the dubious weather forecast, which resulted in a low number of volunteers. However, a few brave souls turned out (*see picture above*) and they managed to fill over a dozen sacks with rubbish, mainly in the long grass areas and the Paragon verges. It did rain most of the afternoon, but not too much, and after an hour and a half on

the Heath we were back at Talbot Place for a welcome cup of hot tea and biscuits.

The Society was represented by Meg and Richard Dinkeldein, who told the *Newsletter*:

"We did have to search around for litter, however a fair amount was collected and the Heath looked a picture in the sunshine on Sunday morning".

SOCIETY STARTS 2020 WITH BUSY PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

As usual our events team has organised a busy calendar to start 2020. Here are the first planned events to start the year.

WEDNESDAY 15 JANUARY

Meet & Eat session at the Crown Pub. Come and join other members and friends from 12.30.

MONDAY 20 JANUARY

Walk & Talk guided tour of the High Courts of Justice (*below*), including the Grand Hall, courts corridors, Bear Garden and the costume display. You will hear various anecdotes about judges and lawyers and we will take lunch at Middle Temple. Places are limited, for more details please contact the office and to book go to www.eventbrite.com.



WEDNESDAY 12 FEBRUARY

Walk & Talk of the Docklands Museum (*seen above right*). Join a focused 45-minute tour led by a curator at 11.15. We will meet in the café from 10.45. The many interesting topics change from day to day, so we could see The Great Eastern, Sugar & Slavery, or Life on the Victorian Docks and we will take pot luck.

PLATFORM CRICKET SEEKS FUNDING TO HELP CHILDREN

Platform Cricket, which encourages primary school children to take up the game, has applied to Lewisham Council for funding and needs help to buy equipment for its Blackheath Honeybadgers Pop-Up Club.

It is also seeking up to £1,000 sponsorship from local groups and businesses to subsidise equipment, clothing and travel costs that may otherwise prevent many children from taking part. It aims to provide access to cricket for young people who are not usually able to play, and was founded by Kent cricketer Daniel Bell-Drummond and Sports Manager Chris Willetts.

Chris told the *Newsletter*: "As you can imagine, for

WEDNESDAY 11 MARCH

Meet & Eat. Come and join us at the Crown at 12.30 and enjoy a chat, food and a drink with friends.

TUESDAY 17 MARCH

A joint talk by Blake Morrison planned jointly with the Friends of the Halls about *Blackheath and Greenwich in Literature*. Tickets are available from the Halls Box Office at £12, including a glass of wine.



MONDAY 23 MARCH

Walk & Talk to the Dennis Severs House at 18 Folgate Street, Spitalfields. You can experience a house as an art work, as the building recalls different periods of history through décor, objects, smells, sounds, lighting. We meet there at 12.15 and entrance is £10.

TUESDAY 21 APRIL

Explore the changing landscape of Kings Cross in a Walk and Talk event led by Society member Paul Wright.

MONDAY 27 APRIL

A talk by Tim Keeler about Francis Dodd, RA, the forgotten artist from Blackheath at 7pm for 7.30 in the Bakehouse, Age Exchange. Tickets at £10 with a glass of wine on Eventbrite.

most of the children we are working with, how they look is a big thing but some of the equipment costs are beyond some of the families and we are therefore hoping to find a sponsor."

The Pop-Up Club includes children, some from disadvantaged backgrounds, from eight local schools. In the winter they hold indoor training sessions at St Matthew's Academy and in the summer outdoors on the Heath.

In 2019 the club worked with 4,682 children, mostly new to cricket, from 88 schools in four inner London boroughs.

Local companies and individuals who want to support them should contact Chris on chris.willetts@thysf.org.

PRINCE PHILIP MARITIME CENTRE STARS TITANIC TOY PIG

Liz Wright reports: We now have a most fascinating resource available locally next to the station in Kidbrooke, the Prince Philip Maritime Collection Centre, in buildings which have served as a store for the Greenwich Maritime Museum since 1972.

The wartime buildings of RAF Kidbrooke are used to store over 37,000 objects and are interesting in themselves, having been used to store London's barrage balloons in World War II.

A purpose-built Conservation and Collections Centre now occupies the site. It opened to the public in 2018 and a group of Society members visited in November.

We saw Queen Victoria's beautiful enamel stove from the Royal Yacht, cannons, a whaling pot, memorabilia produced to celebrate Nelson, paintings by local artists John Everett and Anne Christopherson, charts, flags, costumes and books.

What makes a visit special is hearing the stories behind many of the objects housed on the site. Collections Learning Producer Matthew Cahill, who led us round, has many tales to tell.

The Pig (*seen on the right*) forms part of their Titanic Tour. This small model covered in real pigskin belonged to high fashion designer Edith Rosenbaum who was one of the "Women and Children First" on the Titanic and found a place in a lifeboat.

The only object she could take with her was the pig. She and the other occupants of the lifeboat, including many children, had to wait six hours in freezing

conditions until the *Carpathia* rescued them.

We also saw the valuable and skilled work of the conservation teams in the art, textiles and paper departments. A midshipman's frock coat from 1748 was receiving attention. So far 200 hours have been spent repairing damage caused to it by moths.

The teams are specialist, dedicated and very approachable and they all answered many questions. The Centre also has space for meetings at no hire



charge. They welcome volunteers and I recommend you book a tour.

Full details of their general and specialist tours, suitable for all ages and varied interests, with many led by a curator, are on their website at www.rmg.co.uk/maritime-collections-centre/specialist-tours-and-talks.

THE KENTISH INDEPENDENT

"Literary Institute (Martin House) Lecture - by the station - Schiller's Literary Work"

On 16 April 1859 at Three o'clock, will be delivered, at the above Hall, The Third of three lectures, On Schiller's Lyric and Dramatic Works and on Germany's Literary History From the Earliest to the Present Time. By G. Solling, Royal Military Academy, Woolwich. Of Schiller's poems the Lecturer will read or recite the following - 'Die Glocke', 'Die Ideale', 'Die Kunstler', 'Die Burgschaft', 'Der Taucher', 'Ritter Toggenburg'. Of Dramatic Works, extracts from - 'Wilhelm Tell'. 'Die Jungfrau von Orleans', 'Maria Stuart', 'Wallenstein'. In treating Germany's Literary History, extracts from the 'Nibelungenlied' and 'Gudrun', and he will dwell on the Legendary Eras on which these two celebrated Epic Poems and others of intrinsic literary merit are founded. In the last Lecture, he will give a critical summary of the remaining Literary Productions of SCHILLER, explain the great didactic Poem, 'Die Kunstler', draw a parallel between SCHILLER and GOETHE, and conclude with a Biographical Sketch of the former.

Tickets 5/-, Gallery 3/-. To be had of Mr. Martin, Library, Blackheath, and Mr. Jackson, Library, Woolwich.

MAYOR'S OFFICE APPROVES KIDBROOKE STATION SQUARE

We continue to have heartening success in respect of many of the planning issues on which we comment. However, we were disappointed in the outcome of two of the issues reported in our last *Newsletter*.

Kidbrooke Station Square: the proposal is to construct 615 units, including two 20-storey towers, on the very constricted site (owned by TfL) across the railway from the main Berkeley Homes Kidbrooke development.

We reported last time that the Greenwich Planning Board had supported all our objections and soundly rejected these plans, principally on the grounds of their extreme density. However, the scheme (*on the site below*) was called in for review by the London Mayor's office, which has the power to overrule local councils.



Objectors, including ourselves, repeated our objections in a hearing to the Deputy Mayor. But, to our dismay, the GLA approved the scheme, finding that a key attribute, its high affordable housing content, was enough to outweigh the acknowledged objections to its height, impact on views from Blackheath and serious concerns about air quality and infrastructure.

However, one of our demands was met: developers were able to present a new study showing

measurements of air quality on the site would be within legal limits, an input previously missing.

We have always been concerned that future residents would end up in a second class development, which is unfortunate for them, and about its impact on the Kidbrooke scheme already well under way across the railway. We hope we will be proved wrong.

The future of the Bowling Club: we reported that the Club was appealing against Greenwich's refusal of their plan to relocate from their constrained Brooklands Park site to a new site nearby in Blackheath Park. The Inspector found against the Club, citing an inadequately argued justification for developing the existing site, which has the status of "Community Open Space".

Jocelyn Rodin of the Bowls Club told the *Newsletter* the developer Steve Frost would review the proposal and hopes to submit a new scheme which addresses the Inspector's and Greenwich's concerns.

Another major scheme awaiting a final decision, this time from the Secretary of State, is the development proposed for the *Tesco site in Lewisham*, including its 34-storey tower. This has been pending for many months, following an Inquiry and Inspector's report. It has now been further delayed by the election purdah.

Also in Lewisham, efforts continue to enforce a Section 215 notice on the owner of the site at *8 The Glebe*: this is now the subject of further delay by the owner in the form of an appeal against the notice. And plans to modify a house at *13 Dartmouth Row* have engendered very significant opposition from neighbours. This proposal will now go to a neighbourhood consultation.

Two other issues with significant planning implications - possible ideas for Talbot Place on the Heath and the proposal for a Fanzone in Greenwich Park - are covered elsewhere in the *Newsletter*.



The Queen's House in Greenwich Park, seen above in the snow in this computer image, is featuring an ice rink this winter, described by the organisers as "a magical place to skate in Greenwich." It is open now until January 12 and is the only outdoor ice rink in south London.

BIODIVERSITY GROUP WORKS

A new group to encourage small community environment initiatives in south-east London has started its first biodiversity project in Blackheath and is seeking more local support and funding to develop its plans.

Greening SEL is the brainchild of new Society member Catherine Ashcroft and, with help from volunteers (*seen working below*) and Environment Agency staff, recently started clearing the land and planting behind Quaggy Walk recently on the Cator Estate.



They removed undergrowth and weeds, planted bluebell bulbs, snowdrop bulbs and wildflower seeds and 30 hedgerow saplings, and created an insect habitat in the woodland area to the west of the site.

The group has also planted a weeping cherry tree in front of St Peter's Church, Lee, and plans to place cherry trees in front of St Michael's Church on Blackheath Park. They need potting compost to give the saplings a good start and more UK or English bluebell and snowdrop bulbs.

Greening SEL is considering further local projects, such as creating a grass verge outside John Ball School, establishing vegetation at Lewisham and Blackheath stations and working in the gardens at Manor House Library and Riverston School.

To develop these ideas it would like some help to categorise the areas via Google maps; create grid references and photos; on research about who owns the land; and designing what to plant and where.

The group would also welcome anyone with expertise in researching funding opportunities and raising funds from potential donors, as well as longer-term planning and ways to measure its success.

Anyone interested should contact Catherine on Ashcroft.c@gmail.com or 07522 123074 to join the existing group of over 50 volunteers. Her Facebook page is www.facebook.com/GreeningSEL.

CHAIR'S YEAR-END MESSAGE

Paul Watts writes: As 2019 draws to a close it's a traditional time to review the past year and look ahead. The Society continues its work on a myriad of planning and licensing applications, transport and other local issues.

A new cloud-based IT system has helped us with managing the increasing levels of communication that these issues, the archive projects and office management require. The Village team has been busy with gardening projects, ensuring the Christmas lights still work, and arranging a Village Christmas tree and the entertainment on Village Day.

The Society has great plans for 2020, including new publications, a kite fun day on the Heath (*see front page*), more opportunities for members to meet at talks, and more Walk and Talk and Meet and Eat events, following a successful events programme this year.

We continue to work with local authorities and councillors on planning, licensing and other matters. A review of the cumulative impact zone of licensed premises in the Village is due early in 2020, and we are looking to increase cooperation with other societies.



There are early plans to revamp the annual cricket match and to consider other events with the Greenwich Society.

The future is not without challenges, as we seek to remain relevant to our members and the local community and to attract new members of all ages.

There is nothing better than a gift membership to the Society as a last minute present for your friends, neighbours and family. Please contact the office.

Thanks to all who are involved with the Society - our management committee, the many volunteers helping all aspects of our work from planning, archives, events, office help, social media, *Newsletter* delivery, gardening and other Village projects - not forgetting the excellent hard work of our secretary Sacha.

If you would like to get more involved please do let us know. Best wishes to all for a very happy Christmas and a successful New Year from all of us.

TRACIE THE BIRD LADY

Tracie Parsons, owner of the Blackbird Boutique in the Village, has an unusual hobby - she protects and preserves endangered birds and other animals at home and brings a small sparrow each day into her shop.

Tracie, 33, has two aviaries at her Hither Green home with up to 30 birds now, and this can rise to over 70 in the peak visiting season in the summer. She told the *Newsletter* that her love of animals and her instinct to save them started when she witnessed a lot of animal abuse growing up.

She leads a busy life, doing shifts from 0400 to 0800 at Sainsburys in Crayford and then running her shop during the day, sometimes with her small sparrow Neal (*below*) hiding in her hair.

She rescues abandoned animals from local vets and releases them once they have recovered. She has owned the shop since 2015 but has been rescuing animals, including foxes, goldfinches and a kestrel from Belmarsh Prison, for 20 years.



Tracie also hand-rears baby orphaned animals and releases or takes them to wildlife sanctuaries, such as Whitby, which took a fox she helped in Blackheath.

She lobbied Lewisham Council after geese had been run over at the Peter Pan pond on Bromley Road. The Council then placed a "Slow - Wildlife crossing" sign at the Prince of Wales pond in Blackheath, where Tracie has also collected orphan ducklings.



EURO 2020 FAN ZONE

Organisers of the Euro 2020 fan zone area in Greenwich Park next June have issued a public appeal for ideas on what community events they should hold during the tournament.

They want to know which themes people prefer, such as sports, health and well-being, arts and crafts, gardening, the environment and heritage.

Activities could include performances, workshops, talks, guided walks, sporting activity or citizen assemblies. Ideas please to Dr Ulrike Chouguley on: 07806 543163 or Ulrike.Chouguley.1@city.ac.uk.

Organisers will be holding two community consultation days on December 5 and 11 from 1330 to 1600 at Rothbury Hall, Mauritius Road Entrance, SE10 0EF for local groups who want to take part in the events.

Capacity of the fan zone, featuring giant screens, will be up to 5,000 people and activities will take place on the days when no matches are being shown. England will play their home games at Wembley on June 14 against Croatia, June 19 against a qualifier and on June 23 against the Czech Republic.

The website is www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/sports/euro-2020-greenwich-park-fan-zone-faqs

TROUGHS THEFT WARNING

Lewisham and Greenwich Councils have alerted the Society to two recent thefts of historic cattle troughs in the area, raising concerns about the horse troughs on Blackheath.

The cattle troughs were stolen from Bell Green and Penge in September. Joanna Ecclestone, Senior Conservation Officer for Strategic Planning in Lewisham, asked us to alert our members and local conservation and neighbourhood watch groups.

She said people should report any thefts to the police on 999 if a crime is under way, or on 101 if it is not an emergency, as these are regarded as heritage crimes.

More information is available on the Heritage England website at <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/caring-for-heritage/heritage-crime/report/>.

Rebecca Duncan, Conservation Policy Officer in the Greenwich Directorate of Regeneration, said:

"As we have a few across the Borough in prominent locations - including some horse troughs on Blackheath - I would be grateful if you would advise members to be vigilant."

BEXLEYHEATH LINE TO CLOSE FOR NINE DAYS IN FEBRUARY

Fewer off-peak trains will call at Blackheath station next February when Southeastern will close the Bexleyheath line for nine days.

The work is needed to shore up the bank along a 600-metre section, which collapsed earlier this year shutting down the service for a week.

The line will be closed between February 15 and 23 while work takes place between Kidbrooke and Crayford Creek and Slade Green Junctions, where the railway runs in a steep cutting prone to landslips.

The incline of the cutting (*right*) will be reduced and retaining walls built, with steel beams hammered six metres into the ground. The work will take place on both sides of the line in the Barnehurst station area.

Kidbrooke, Eltham, Falconwood, Welling, Barnehurst and Bexleyheath stations will close. The Sidcup and North Kent lines will remain open with extra capacity and bus replacements will run to alternative stations on the Sidcup and North Kent lines.

Southeastern has started a publicity campaign about the changes and Kimberley Joseph, its Stakeholder Engagement Manager, gave a presentation last month to representatives of local Societies and User Groups.

Mike Sparham, Convenor of Greenwich Line Users Group, said in an email to the Society: "The meeting became heated at some points as discussion ranged beyond the specific remit of the Barnehurst blockade. Network Rail and Southeastern told us the off-peak Charing Cross to Dartford service via Barnehurst will be diverted from Blackheath to run via Woolwich. Blackheath will have four trains an hour, off-peak, compared with the usual eight."

"We all stressed the need for good communication at stations and not relying on passengers checking on the website. Posters at stations should be prominent and be station specific."

The line will also be closed for preparatory work on the weekend of 11/12 January and there will be seven weekends of follow-up work spread over two years.

Joseph said: "We are investing a record £1.25 billion over the next five years to improve the railway in Kent and south east London and we will be replacing old equipment with new, reliable technology to improve journeys for passengers."

This includes replacing 429 kilometres of track costing over £201 million; £162 mln on new signalling; £21 mln to improve safety at level crossings; £170 mln on 560 switches at junctions where trains change tracks.

Another £170 mln will be spent on replacing or refurbishing 112 bridges, 23 footbridges and one tunnel, fencing will be renewed to prevent trespass,



and overgrown vegetation removed to prevent seasonal delays caused by fallen leaves and trees.

Joseph added that the railway in the affected area is among the busiest and most congested in the country, carrying well over 2,000 trains and 300,000 passengers every weekday. But the infrastructure is some of the oldest, making it more difficult to maintain and causing faults and delays for passengers. The Society continues to monitor these plans with interest and will keep members informed of developments.

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS

Payments are due on 1 January each year and can be paid by a direct bank transfer, cheque or cash. The amount is £20 per household which supports the Society's work to preserve and enhance the local environment for the benefit of all.

An online payment or a standing order can be made using the following details:

The Blackheath Society, sort code: 30-90-89, account no: 00905733. Give your surname and post code as a reference.

Please remember to give us your email address so that we can keep you up-to-date with our news. Thank you.

SOCIETY RECEIVES GIFT OF HASTED'S 1886 HISTORY OF KENT

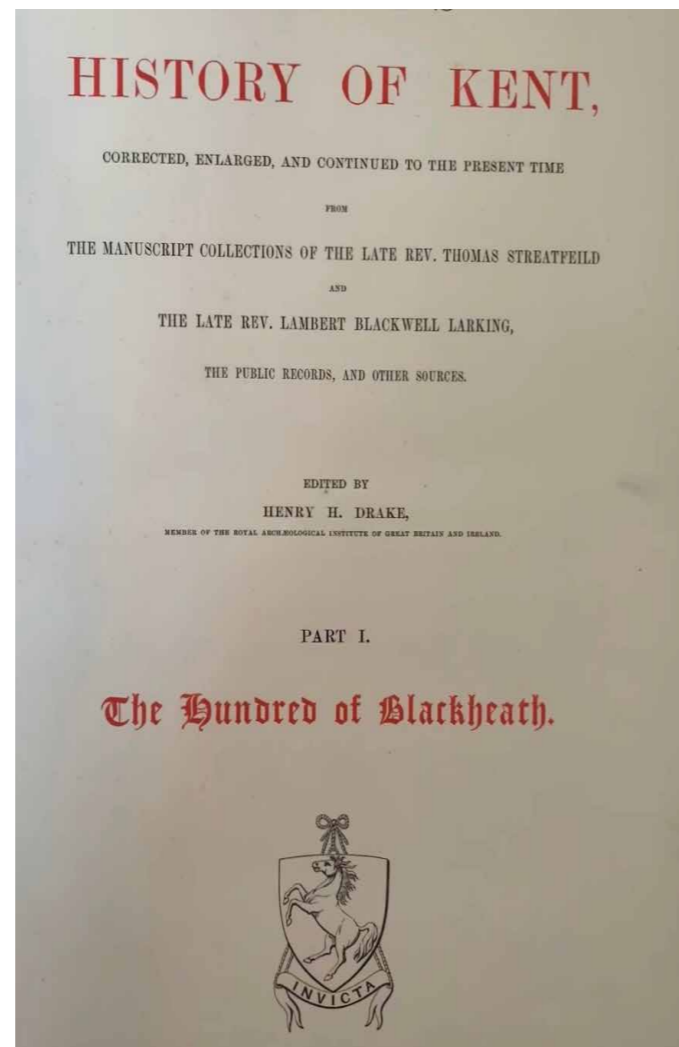
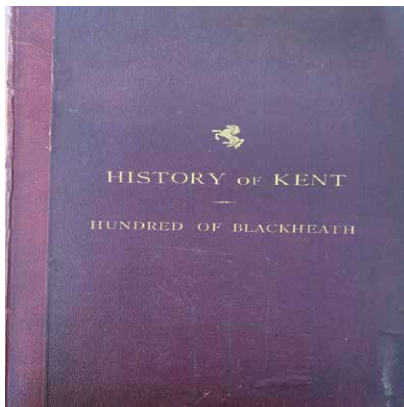
The Society is delighted to thank Mary Wilson for her kind donation to the Archives of an 1886 copy of *Hasted's History of Kent - The Hundred of Blackheath*.

Mary was born in Macartney House, which was converted into apartments by her grandfather in the early 1920s.

The book belonged to her father, Stewart Roberts, and we are very grateful to her for the gift.

Mary's gift is a reminder of the value of such historical works of painstaking research and of their local significance. Having a copy in the office underlines the wealth and depth of historical research which has been carried out by others.

We hope to print extracts from Hasted, published in 1778, in future editions of the *Newsletter*.



KENTISH GAZETTE TUESDAY 5 DECEMBER 1756 "Two Highwaymen"

Tuesday evening a gentleman was attacked on Blackheath by two highwaymen; but on their demanding his money, he clapped spurs to his horse and rode away from them, they both fired their pistols, but happily missed him. On Wednesday evening, near the same place, a gentleman was also stopped in a post-chaise by two highwaymen, to whom he gave a guinea, a Shilling, and three-halfpence; they afterwards spoke to the boy, and then rode off. The gentleman accused the boy of being connected with them; but he declared he knew nothing of them, and that they only gave him a shilling because he stopped immediately as they called to him. The lad, when he alighted at the inn, put his hand in his pocket, and to his agreeable surprize, found they had given him the guinea instead of the shilling so that the poor fellows had risked their lives for thirteenpence halfpenny! which though a trifling consideration, will enable them to discharge the last debt they may perhaps contract.

OLIVE AMOS OF BLACKHEATH

The Society is very sad to report the death last June of Olive Amos (nee Snapes), aged 98. Born in Blackheath in 1920, she lived her entire life in two Blackheath streets - Collins Street and Camden Row.

She was well known in the Village for more than 20 years as the co-owner of the Amos greengrocer's shop, at the top of the village in premises now occupied by Hortus. She ran the shop with her husband, Bill, whom she met on bonfire night on the Heath when she was 14 and he was 17.

Born in Collins Street, Olive went to All Saints School and left at 14 to work as a hairdresser. She married Bill in All Saints church six years later on August 11, 1940, just before Bill was called up to serve in the Navy in the Battle of the Atlantic.

They held their wedding reception in Tranquil Hall and renewed their vows after 50 years of marriage at All Saints in 1990. Following his demob in 1945 Bill found a job with Fenner's the greengrocer in the centre of the Village. The couple set up their own in the shop at 26 Blackheath Village in 1961.

Bill and Olive grew up when Blackheath was a real Village which supplied all its residents with the basics of living. Olive had many fond memories of life in the 1930s and 1940s and recalled clearly the dairies, ironmongers and grocers that made up the Village in premises that are now restaurants and estate agents.

Her memories of life in the Village live on through a series of interviews she gave in the early 2000s to Pam Schweitzer, MBE, founder of Age Exchange.

Temporarily lost, they have now been restored and form the basis for a few short films which will soon be available on the Society's website at www.blackheatharchive.org. Olive's memories can also be accessed through Pam's Reminiscence Theatre Archive at www.reminiscencetheatrearchive.org.uk (Productions/Memory Lane).

Olive was predeceased by Bill and her son Gary, and is survived by her daughter, Annette.

Allan Griffin



JANET GRILLET, ARCHIVIST

We were very sorry to learn this autumn of the death at the good age of 92 of Janet Grillet, late of Greyladies Gardens, one of a handful of Honorary Members of the Society.

In the year 2000 the Committee decided that the Society should mark the Millennium with a photographic survey of every building - domestic, commercial and otherwise - within its catchment area. Members of the Committee volunteered to take pictures in their own specific area: the Cator Estate, Lee, Westcombe Park, Kidbrooke and so on.

The task was enormous and we needed someone to organise the results, as well as writing captions and general management, and to research a suitable filing system. Janet, then recently retired from publisher Marshall Cavendish, stepped forward, took one look at the task, volunteered, and was enrolled.



And a magnificent job she made of it all. Many thousands of images, all mounted professionally on black card, captioned, labelled and filed in plastic sleeves - area by area, street by street in 41 Ergogrip binders and indexed - were all specified by Janet.

Although a few pictures had to be re-shot, the job was done, and 19 years later the extraordinary record is proving most valuable.

This is especially true of the Village, where shops have changed out of all recognition and old and much-respected names have disappeared.

Without Janet there would have been a much less useful record and we remain ever grateful for her applied professionalism to the Blackheath Society's benefit.

Times move on and, because coloured photographic prints fade, these are now being digitising, largely by another volunteer: John Sabido, a former Committee member.

Neil Rhind

SOCIETY CHRISTMAS CARDS FEATURE LOCAL ARTISTS



This year's Christmas cards feature Skaters on the Heath by Tim Keeler (above) and Snowy Blackheath by Anthony Young. They are available from the Society Office priced at £5 for a pack of 10 cards and from Selectric in the Village.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Csilla Bitay
Gabrielle Burne
Mr Simon Hall
Dr Jutta Huesmann
Patrick Murphy
Kevin O'Brien

EVENTS DIARY - FULL DETAILS PAGE 4

15 JANUARY & 11 MARCH
Meet and Eat at the Crown

MONDAY 20 JANUARY
Tour of the High Courts

WEDNESDAY 12 FEBRUARY
Visit Docklands Museum

TUESDAY 17 MARCH
Blake Morrison literary talk

MONDAY 23 MARCH
Visit Dennis Severs house
in Spitalfields

TUESDAY 21 APRIL
Walk through the changing
landscape of Kings Cross

MONDAY 27 APRIL
Talk about artist Francis
Dodd by Tim Keeler

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