

BROCKLEY



SOCIETY

NEWS SHEET NO. 51 MAY 1988

DELIVERED FREE TO 3,000 HOUSEHOLDS
IN THE BROCKLEY CONSERVATION AREA

***** **Midsummer Fayre 88** *****

ROLL UP! ROLL UP! to HILLY FIELDS SATURDAY JULY 2nd 2.00pm

Each year our Summer Fayre gets bigger and better, 1988 is going to be no exception. Each year we find that we have to recruit willing volunteers to help make the day a success, once again this year is no exception.

We are looking for volunteers to help erect stalls and equipment, to run stalls and to help clear up on the day, we also need people to sell programmes and display posters. In fact whatever your talent or however much time you may have to spare you needn't worry BrocSoc will put it to excellent use.

Please help us, we are a friendly cheerful bunch, but — alas — small in numbers. Together we can make our Summer Fayre in 1988 one which we will remember and talk about for months.

We are also wishing to arrange a sports timetable and we would like to hear from anyone who would like to help with arrangements or enter individually or as a team.

As usual there will be a children's fancy dress competition and we need as many entrants as possible. Come on mums, get out the thinking caps and lets have some stunners this year.

Last year we sold out of cakes on our stall very quickly and not surprisingly so because the quality was excellent. This year we would like to supply more of the tempting home baking that many of you can do. Of course we wouldn't like anyone to be out of pocket so we will reimburse all expenses for the making of cakes/biscuits/sweets/pies etc.

Each year we have a very popular raffle and rely entirely on donations of prizes, we also run a tombola and once again we need donations. Have a dig around in your cupboards for all those things that we all hoard away unused. Anything will do from a tin of beans to a sports car!!! Sort out all your bric-a-brac we will arrange to pick it up.

Last but not least we need you, all the people in the area family and friends to come along on the day and support your local society it's always a wonderful and entertaining day with lots of games and bargains to be found. We are sure you will enjoy all the facilities provided and that you will return year after year.

Please telephone either of the following numbers to offer your help in any way: 691 9724 or 691 6977.

There will be a book stall, any contributions can be collected by Jonathan Swabey on 692 4797, or they will be very welcome on the field on the day.

LOCAL ARTS & CRAFTS

This year we will be displaying and selling local arts and crafts. We do however need many more exhibits and articles for sale. We are certain that hidden in our midst is an undiscovered Picasso or a budding fashion designer.

Whatever your talent cake decor/sewing/knitting/drawing/painting/woodwork/ flower displays/metalwork in fact anything at all, contact us we will arrange for your work to be displayed, sold or orders taken. Phone the same numbers for more information. *B.H.*

SEATS

A year ago the Council agreed to install a seat outside the P.O. Sorting Office in Brockley Road and to replace the two which had disappeared from the northern end of Tyrwhitt Road. After recent inquiries via Cllr. Goodyer we have been told that 'due to an input error . . . the order to supply a new seat was withdrawn' a new seat has now been installed in Brockley Road,

LIBRARIES

In our last issue we wrote of the plight of the library services in Lewisham as a result of possible staffing cuts. Our own local library in Lewisham Way was under threat of closure.

We are pleased to hear that Deptford library has been reprieved and will remain open but with minor changes to the opening times.

'TIDY BRITAIN'

We were invited by the Chair of the Environmental Services Committee to an introductory meeting about the possibility of setting up a 'Keep Britain Tidy' group.

Mrs Allen from Keep Britain Tidy nationally was to introduce the meeting, describing some of the work done by other groups. Discussion then was to centre on the possibility of setting up a local group.

Unfortunately only about eight representatives of the 100 or so (invited) organisations turned up, and Mrs Allen didn't!

However, the discussion was animated although it seemed to be mainly on the lines of how can we get Lewisham tidy before we try to keep it so, and blaming the Council for litter rather than the people who throw it!

The Council are prepared to help groups or individuals who are interested in this problem to get together to work out some schemes. These might include approaching schools, clubs and other groups.

Surely there are people in this area who would like to be put in touch with like-minded people?

If you are interested ring Miss Kessler of the Environmental Services on 695 6000 who is keen to help.

SELF-DEFENCE CLASSES

Although the first series of self-defence classes for women was well attended, the second time round they were closed through lack of support. Sixteen people registered, but only three came to the third lesson so the police instructors decided that to continue would be a waste of their time. The organiser lost over £15 on this venture as those who did not come did not pay the 50p fee per lesson, which had to be charged to cover the cost of hiring mats and the use of St Peter's Hall for eight weeks. If it is decided to run these classes again there will be a flat rate fee payable before any expenses are incurred.

Any women who are interested in learning how to defend themselves if attacked are asked to ring 692 6977 for further details of any future classes which may be held.

WHAT IS CONSERVATION?

My dictionary states; 'preservation, especially of natural environment. But I am not sure that it means the same thing when applied to the Brockley Conservation Area or to conservation of trees locally. Here is a brief account of happenings at 2 Wickham Road during the last 2 to 3 years.

Many of you will remember that well-attended public meeting at Myatt Garden School when we learnt about those 'Guidelines for Mews Development' and that map displayed at the planning department showing that all the area along the mews was considered suitable for development. Yes — in our CONSERVATION area. We objected vociferously, and rather reluctantly the planners agreed to remove the map and consider new guidelines.

However, 2 Wickham had already been snapped up by a developer who could see the huge profit to be made by building houses in its back garden. As a near neighbour I was asked for my observations on the plans. I felt that the plans were completely out of character with the area, and that the large garden with its many trees was a great asset giving the mews a pleasant, almost rural feel. There is a particularly fine lime tree in the mews close to where they planned to build, so I was sure there must have been some mistake. No, the planners told us 'It is diseased!' (Three seasons later it is again in full leaf having survived the hurricane of October 1987. Next time you are walking past Manor Mews, stop, look and admire its beauty — try to find the disease. While you are there wander around the corner to the back, look at the two silver birches which the developer hopes to replace with houses. Perhaps you don't care — maybe you'll see the domestic waste and loads left by fly-tippers and wonder what all the fuss is about. I agree that the garden is a sorry sight now but I will explain how it became like that.)

Several plans were submitted, and each time neighbours were asked for observations. I was annoyed at having to write each time as I felt my observations could have carried forward and feared that planning permission might be granted because people would get fed up writing. Then the developer appealed to the Department Of The Environment, and we wrote yet another letter. The appeal was dismissed in August 1987, because: (i) the design of the houses was out of character and (ii) the loss of the strong sense of enclosure.

It seemed that the DOE inspector did understand CONSERVATION — we were pleased. It was short lived, in November more plans were submitted for 2 Wickham — much the same as before. Again I wrote to the planners.

During November most of the side wall disappeared. The site had been left unprotected and the inside of the house had been stripped. In the middle of December three men started to dismantle the rear wall, on instructions from the developer. They refused to stop even though I told them that planning permission was needed — they even continued after the enforcement officer from the planning department visited the site. The small section of wall that was left disappeared at the end of March and the pile of rubbish grows.

Meanwhile I heard nothing from the planning department and so was surprised to learn that the plans had been changed yet again. I was extremely annoyed and upset, since it appeared that we were no longer being given the right to express our views on the proposed development. My concern/anger was augmented because the site was about to be auctioned (May 3). However, an angry complaint brought the usual notification letter from the planning department — I have written yet another letter. Meanwhile I hear that the site has been withdrawn from auction, because they didn't have planning permission!

WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO CONSERVATION?

WHY IS PUBLIC OPINION, FORCIBLY EXPRESSED AT A PUBLIC MEETING AND IN A PETITION, BEING IGNORED BY THE PLANNERS?
WHAT CAN WE DO TO STOP THEM BUILDING POKEY HOUSES IN THE MEWS, THAT DON'T SEEM TO SELL ANYWAY?

HOLLY TREES

We received a letter from the Borough Engineer apologising for not informing the Borough Conservation Advisory Committee of their intention to fell the nine holly trees and the privet bushes which were at the corner of Breakspears Road and Lewisham Way.

The letter says that the trees were felled to "reduce the problem of loitering and possible assaults."

"It is proposed to replace these trees with laurel and evergreens which are more suitable to this location."

Our Comments

Replacing mature holly trees and privet bushes by laurel and privet will in a few years make that corner far more dense than previously and make more work for the council gardeners

PUTTING BROCKLEY ON THE MAP

A house-hunter's guide describes us thus:

"Brockley is one of the areas which grew upon the profits of the late Victorians, thrived until the depression and lapsed once more until the boom for period property arrived to rescue it from obscurity. It is still a little-known area because the major roads miss it.

However, the creation of a conservation area, ready access to shopping facilities in the better parts of south east London have made it a fast appreciating district. The small village type shops are friendly and the pubs more genuinely neighbourly than most."

Hilly Fields is mentioned as a fine open space which we share with Lewisham.

"If you are looking for a particular type of Victorian house you will find one somewhere in the Conservation Area, whether it be a two-bedroomed cottage or a triple-fronted detached villa."

From: "Where to Live In London"
Sidgwick & Jackson £6.95)

LIGHTING ON HILLY FIELDS

In our last issue we reported the fact that the Women's Committee of Lewisham Council were considering the possibility of spending £45,000 on lighting the main paths on Hilly Fields in the future. Through lack of space, our comment was necessarily brief and attracted some adverse comments both written and verbal. Here we amplify reasons for saying that this is not a worthwhile project.

The council committee stated that the provision of lighting will assist in discouraging attacks in public open spaces, especially during the hours of darkness. We believe that it is the lack of other people and the isolation of a person that is likely to make him or her the victim of an attack, rather than the lack of lighting. On the contrary, lighting may well give one a false sense of security. Only the main paths would be lit, thus making vast areas outside the lighting appear even blacker and more able to conceal an assailant. Lighting would make one more vulnerable as a person could be seen from afar as a lone figure in an isolated place, a long way from help.

Many parks are traditionally locked at sundown, as was Hilly Fields before the enclosing railings were removed for the war effort. Perhaps the fact that it is impossible to police a large open space successfully at night led to night closures in the past.

We still think that Lewisham council can spend our money more wisely.
G.H.

TELEPHONE HOTLINE (24 hour answerphone)

2-8 Chalsey Road

From time to time in this newsletter we have had articles about these eight purpose-built flats which are now completely derelict.

1974 - Lewisham Council bought the leasehold of these dwellings

1978 - In July the properties were still partially tenanted, but were rapidly deteriorating.

1984 - Our next report in January showed that NO repair work had been done on the houses and they had been empty for almost six years. The developers of Bridge House, which backs onto these houses offered to buy and incorporate these eight flats into the site of the enlarged Bridge House, but Lewisham Council would not sell as a matter of political principle.

The Council said that the D.O.E. would not allow their costly rehabilitation scheme as the lease had only ten years to run, nor would it allow them to buy the freehold from the City of London.

1986 - We again contacted the Council, The Council this time said that they had been trying to buy the freehold, but that The City of London had sold it over their heads and they could not find out who the new freeholder was.

1987 - After more complaints the Borough Valuer verified that the Council owns the lease, and the Architects' Department was suggested as the place to contact next. The Architects' had no knowledge of these properties, and suggested the local housing office the local housing office had "up to the minute information on computer read out". They said that the homeless families unit was in charge of them. The homeless families unit admitted that they had had them on their books, but they had been handed back to the housing department. The housing department had no knowledge of these houses and suggested the valuer's as a place to start! at that point we gave up trying to get the Council's side of the story and contacted the City of London. They were most helpful, and explained the complicated story.

The hierarchy of land holding is: freeholder, head-leaseholder, under lease-holder, tenant. The freeholder was the City of London and the under-lease-holder is Lewisham Council. One of a group of companies is the head-lease-holder, but, many years ago this company was allowed to lapse,

Unfinished Scheme - Coulgate Street

We asked the Council in January whether the lighting scheme in Coulgate Street would be completed and the area cleaned up. We received the following reply from the Director of Environmental Services.

'I can inform you that there is not an unfinished streetlighting scheme in Coulgate Street, but rather an aborted environmental traffic scheme which was approved by the GLC before abolition. It is now felt that the scheme would no longer be viable, so it will be removed at the earliest opportunity.'

Although this is not in the Conservation area we do feel that approach to Brockley Station is very untidy and often dirty. We hope something will be done about it this year.

Derelict or abandoned cars

If you see a vehicle which in your opinion is abandoned or derelict on the public highway, contact the Environmental Services Dept on 692 1288 or the Refuse Hotline on 692 0316.

It is hoped that two inspectors will be appointed shortly. '7 day notices' will be put on as before but if it is necessary to remove cars, that will be done sooner.

For either Lewisham or the new freeholder to buy the head-lease, they had to be able to buy it from someone, so one way of resolving the problem was to re-register the company. The Registrar demanded accounts for all the intervening years, before he could comply. Obviously this was not possible so they were back to square one.

This report was written last October but we have not had space to print it until now.

At last most of the legal problems have been solved and one person now owns the leaseholds and the freehold. This should mean that a start can be made, but the Land Registry, which would normally take days to process the papers in its Croydon office, has sent these papers to Telford where it can well be six months before the properties are finally registered to one owner.

The good news is that a planning application has been made to restore the properties, so that other than the positions of the front doors, behind the archways, this terrace will look the same from Chalsey Road as it did when first built in 1895.

Planning Applications

From January 1988

Manor Avenue

20-Conversion to 1 two-bedroom and 3 one-bedroom flats.

52-Single storey extension at rear in connection with conversions.

116-Revised details for single storey day-care centre for up to 6 residents

Wickham Road

2-Revised plans for 4 houses with integral garages.

20-Demolition of garages at rear. Erection of 3 two storey one-bedroom houses with garages.

53-Demolition and rebuilding of chimney stacks.

25½-A porch incorporating a WC at side.

Tressillian Road

162-Conversion to 3 two-bedroom flats

39-Demolition of garages. Erection of 3 three-storey, three-bedroom houses with garages.

90 & 92-Continued use as home for 20 homeless girls and wardens flat and use of shed for Arts project.

Brockley Gardens

14-Demolition of shop and garage. Erection of a two-storey, two-bedroom house.

Breakspears Road

49-Conversion to 2 two-bedroom units and 2 one-bedroom flats.

177-Erection of extension at rear at 1st floor level.

Tyrwhitt Road

1-Demolition of coach house and erection of a three storey side extension in connection with conversion, including loft, for 6 two-bedroom, 2 one-bedroom flats, and 1 studio flat.

Front car park spaces and 5 garages

Brockley Cross

25-Revised drawings. Conversions to first and second floors.

Montague Avenue

27a-Conversion of roof space to 2 additional bedrooms.

3-Enlargement of rear addition and erection of two-storey addition above.

Rokeyby Road

29-Enlargement of rear addition in connection with conversion to 1 one-bedroom flat and 1 two-bedroom maisonette.

Drake Road, Land adjoining

1-Erection of a two storey three-bedroom house.

Upper Brockley Road

49-Conversion to 4 one-bedroom flats.

The Parade

10-Conversion of 1st and 2nd floors to 1 one-bedroom and 1 bedsitter.

Planning applications granted permission:

19 Wickham Road: 4 one-bedroom flats.

71 Tressillian Road: Extensions at rear for school.

14 Brockley Gardens: Erection of 2 storey house.

Planning applications refused permission:

27a Montague Avenue: Conversion of roof space.

19 Wickham Road: Conversion of loft area.

Rear of 20 Wickham Road.

Correction: Last newsletter printed 39 instead of 31 Cranfield Road.

RAILINGS

Part of the planning permission given recently for conversion of nos. 28, 30 and 37 Tyrwhitt Road included front garden railings. These have been installed at nos. 28 and 30 and look very impressive.

St Peter's Centre

The Main Hall has been redecorated, and Community Services helped with the lobby, stairs and mens toilets. Paladin bins were installed to keep the rubbish problem under control. A new gas heater in the kitchen, new tables (to replace those damaged by vandals), new locks on Games Room together with the various repairs.

Groups using the Centre include Guides, Brownies, Church groups, dog-training, band rehearsals, BrocSoc, and the self-defence club. Also weddings and parties have used the hall. A returnable deposit of £75 is required to cover possible damage.

The grant from Lewisham Council has been cut by £2,000 so that all rents and lettings are very important.

If you know of any groups who need accommodation for their particular interest, there are vacancies on the booking list. We have had to discontinue the Senior Citizen's club due to lack of help. If you are interested in starting this up again contact Mrs Brown.

For further information about bookings telephone: 691 2341

CIVIC FURNITURE

The local history department of the Borough libraries wrote to the Society recently, asking if we might have a use for certain items of civic furniture.

The items described were arm-chairs, chairs, sets of three linked seats and sections of decorated tables. Most of the items are inscribed with the Deptford Borough initials and all are made of oak.

With the agreement of the St Peter's Centre Management Committee, we contacted the Librarian and suggested that the Centre would be a suitable place to site the relics of Deptford's glorious past, as this part of Brockley was in the old Borough of Deptford.

Some restoration will be needed before they can be used and we ask *anyone with the skills and energy to help with such a task to contact us.*

ST. PETER'S CHURCH

A 'St Peter's Week' is planned to include June 29th—St Peter's Day Everyone is invited to join with us.

There will be a fair on Sat. 25th Morning Church Service—Sun. 26th Historical Evening—Mon. 27th Concert and Barbecue—Tues. 28th (£2/1.50 concessions)

Evening Communion Service —Wed. 29th

Parents and Toddlers Outing—Thurs. 30th

Barn Dance—Fri. 1st July (£2/1.50 concessions)

More information from the Church and notices displayed in the area

G van der Weegen

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● BROCSOC MEETINGS ●

These are held in St Peter's Centre on the first WEDNESDAY in each month. The next meeting July 6th

LONDON PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Representatives of the Brockley Society were invited to attend a conference on 16th February 1988 by Lewisham Council's Environmental Services Committee as part of a programme of local consultation for community groups, local organisations and Lewisham residents to canvas views on what should be included in London Planning Advisory Committee's (LPAC) advice to the Minister of State for the Environment on strategic planning guidance for London.

The LPAC was set up by the Government, supported by the London Boroughs, to deal with major planning and development affecting London after the abolition of the GLC. This conference was only one of many taking place throughout London.

Brockley Society representatives joined in the groups discussing housing, traffic and transportation, shopping and the open spaces and the environment, the economy and employment.

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