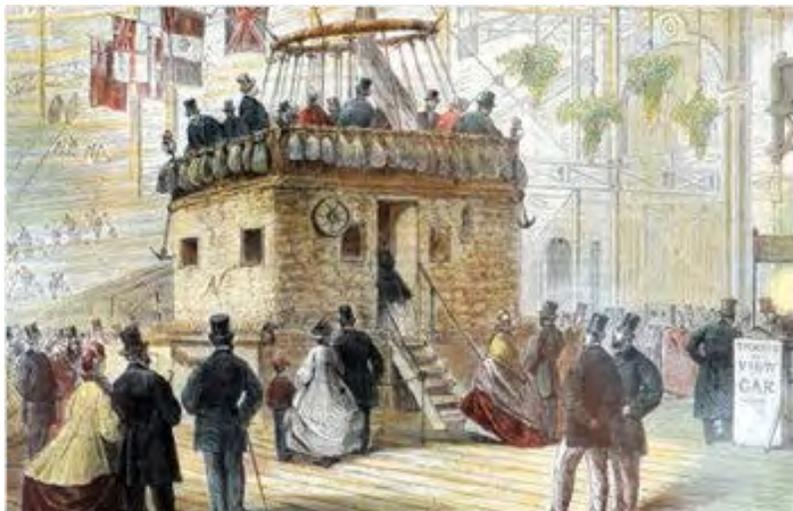


THE NORWOOD REVIEW



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Crystal Palace (continued)



No.210
AUTUMN
2015

Free to Members (£1 for sale)

www.norwoodsociety.co.uk

PROGRAMME OF LOCAL EVENTS

LOCAL HISTORY

Local History Talks are held on the 3rd Thursday of the month at 7.30 pm at the **Upper Norwood Library**, Westow Hill, SE19 1TJ.

Free entry including refreshments but donations are appreciated.

NORWOOD SOCIETY TALKS

October 15th	The Business of Funerals	With one of Britain's greatest cemeteries in our midst funerals are a common sight. Barbara Thomas will explore the history of undertakers and local firms.
November 19th	William Booth	It is 150 years since William Booth founded the Salvation Army. Tony Fletcher will reveal the life of the man who preached to thousands in the Crystal Palace.
December 17th		2015 Members Social Evening.

DULWICH DECORATIVE & FINE ARTS SOCIETY

From October 2015, DDFAS will hold its monthly lectures in the Golden Room at [Kingswood House](#), Seeley Drive, London SE21 8QR. Tea, coffee and biscuits will be served from 7.30pm in the Jacobean Room. All facilities are step-free and on the ground floor.

Kingswood has parking for 35 cars, with more in adjacent streets.

The nearest rail station is Sydenham Hill. Gipsy Hill station is a little further. Bus no. 3 stops nearby, as does bus no. 322, and bus no. 450 stops almost outside Kingswood House.

£7/£1 FOR STUDENTS

Lectures take place **the second Thursday of the month** from October to July at 8pm, with coffee & biscuits from 7.30pm, at Kingswood House (see [Where we meet](#)).

8 Oct 2015: Banks, Burgundy and Piracy - the 15th Century Artists of Bruges

12 Nov 2015: Goya - War and Peace, Revolution and Exile
Embassy in November 2015.

10 Dec 2015: The History of Christmas Cards, Valentines and Postcards

14 Jan 2016: Shakespeare - the Plays in Performance and Art, 1590-2000

THE NORWOOD REVIEW

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FRONT COVER ILLUSTRATION

“Le Géant” Balloon

THE NORWOOD REVIEW

The Norwood Review is published four times a year. In Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter. The deadline for each issue is one month earlier. The next edition of the Review will appear in December 2015.

Contributions should be sent, no later than 20th November 2015, to the Editorial Board, The Norwood Review, 47 Ross Road, London SE25 6SB or secretary@norwoodsociety.co.uk (020 8653 8768). Would contributors please give their ‘phone number, address and e-mail address.

FROM THE SECRETARY

You may be interested to hear that the Upper Norwood Library Trust has come to an agreement with Lambeth Council to run a temporary pilot in the library in partnership with Eco Communities Ltd. The pilot will explore ways of supporting Upper Norwood Library's activities in the future as well as finding ways of working more closely with the local community. It will run between now and March 2016 on a temporary basis as Lambeth have yet to assess and report their culture consultation. Let us hope that this is a good omen and that we may continue our activities in the library.

Our committee continued its work during the summer. Barbara and Alun have purchased a new screen and projector. Meanwhile Stephen has written the first in a series of Walks booklets which is about to go to print. It covers the area south of All Saints.

I myself have not been so active and have spent the Summer taking it easy whilst recovering from a stroke. I am making excellent progress. Membership is steady. Inevitably we lose members, but we welcome the new members who have joined us recently.

Thank you all for your continued interest and support.

Anna Lines

LOCAL HISTORY NEWS

Our summer walks have been continuing successfully. The Anerley walk on the 28th June was attended by over 60, as it was part of the Overground Festival with its good publicity. We attracted some new members and received generous donations. Rambling along Beulah Hill on July 26th with Richard Lines, we were reminded of how this road, along the commanding ridge, attracted wealthy residents in the past. On August 16th we descended Knight's Hill with Jill Dudman, and were impressed by how much history can be packed into 1km of road. Equally surprising was the amount of history uncovered in the area to the west of South Norwood Hill, when Stephen Oxford led a walk on 30 August. This included many historic buildings with an interesting history which the 30 walkers enjoyed seeing. Stephen has written a booklet covering all we heard about on the walk, together with much more he did not have time to include. This will be available at our meetings.

Our stall at the Overground Festival attracted a lot of interest and this will be on display at the Lambeth Archives Open Day at Minet Library/Longfield Hall (Knatchbull Rd, SE5 9QY) on Saturday 26th September. This is part of the Lambeth Heritage Festival as is the exhibition 'Water Lambeth' at Morley Gallery, 61 Westminster bridge Road, SE1 7HT which continues until the end of October. The exhibition includes much about the River Effra which flows hidden through Norwood.

We look forward to our local history meetings starting on September 17th at the Upper Norwood Library when Stuart Hibberd will talk about the sporting legacy of Crystal Palace.

On a personal note I have been an active member of the Friends of West Norwood Cemetery for some long while and have participated in the monthly 'scrub clearance' work which Alun has more recently joined. One grave recently uncovered has been that of Thomas Newman Farquhar, secretary of the Crystal Palace Company.



The cemetery contains graves of many Norwood residents, and is a place of fascination and an oasis of peace. It is also a resource for both family and local history research. We urge you to visit, and also to find out about the Friends of West Norwood Cemetery.

Barbara Thomas



Following the course of the Effra

PLANNING NOTES

49-51 Beulah Hill

The Design and Access Statement referred to in the last Planning Notes was duly received and after studying carefully we decided to object to the application on the grounds that, although the current application represents a considerable improvement on the previous one which was refused, the design of the three blocks of flats is still uninspired and pedestrian and some of the rooms are small and poky. We also drew attention to the need for updated tree and ecological reports. We have just learned that the application has been refused, on the grounds that it provides insufficient affordable housing, that it would be detrimental to the visual amenity by reason of its bulk, height, massing and design, materials, prominence of refuse stores and dominance of car parking and hard standing, and adverse effect on its immediate neighbours. These are but a few of the nine separate reasons given for refusal!

3 Lancaster Road

This is a fine late Victorian house on three stories in a prominent position opposite the Goat House bridge. It has been the subject of two previous applications. The first was refused on the grounds that the owner was trying to cram six flats into a building suitable for only three. The second application, which reduced the number of flats but included two bedsitters, was withdrawn. The current application seeks to turn the property into seven bedsitters. We have objected on the grounds that use as a house in multiple occupation is inappropriate both for this house and for the area in which it is situated.

The Ship, 55 High Street, South Norwood

In April we objected to an application for this property on a number of grounds, including the lack of amenity space for the occupants of the proposed flats. Although this application was refused by Croydon Council the owners proceed to commence building works regardless of the refusal. A fresh application has been submitted which proposes to retain the use of the building as a pub. This is a welcome improvement on the first application,

but is still unacceptable on several grounds, notably that the proposed “Mansard” roof is out of keeping with the building and its surroundings, and that there is a lack of amenity space for the residents of the proposed new flats. We understand that a local group of residents have submitted an application to Croydon Council for the designation of the building as an Asset of Community Value, and that this is currently under consideration.

72 High Street, South Norwood

The application is to turn the basement area under the fish and chip shop, currently in use for storage, into a two-bedroom flat. There would be no natural light at all in either of the bedrooms and very little in the combined kitchen/dining/sitting room. We have objected on the grounds that the accommodation so provided would be sub-standard.

16 Highfield Hill

This was an application for a three storey block of eight flats on open ground to the rear of one of the fine large houses in Highfield Hill. We expressed concerns about the scale and massing of the proposed building and the visual impact on neighbours, as well as the access arrangements and the possible threat to a number of protected trees. The application has been withdrawn.

19-21 Chapel Road

This is an application relating to a derelict industrial site off Knight’s Hill, for a change of use to residential, comprising 40 flats with 29 parking spaces. Lambeth Council’s Local Plan Policy is to permit use of sites in this particular area only, broadly speaking, for business, industrial, storage or waste management purposes. Change to residential use would involve the loss of a site used for providing employment. We have made Lambeth aware of our concerns that the Design Statement accompanying the application does not contain sufficient information to enable an informed decision for a change to residential use to be made.

West Norwood Library

We have expressed to Lambeth Council our approval of the plans for the redevelopment of the library, which include the provision of a four

screen cinema together with a cafe and bar. This new cultural hub will be a welcome addition to West Norwood and will be of significant benefit to local residents. The design of the new extension and use of materials are sympathetic to the existing building and complement the West Norwood Conservation Area.

94 The Woodlands

This is a fine Art Deco block of flats in the Beulah Hill Conservation Area. Like many large Art Deco buildings it is characterised by windows containing curved sheets of glass in metal frames. The latter have a natural tendency to expand and contract with the weather, a feature which eventually damages the glass; they also rust, which means that they have a limited life span. They can be replaced by specialist firms but they are not cheap. The application included the replacement of one such window in upvc instead of metal and with flat instead of curved glass. We objected on the grounds that for such an important building in a conservation area the owners should be prepared to pay whatever it costs to maintain the integrity of the building. Sadly Croydon Council have granted the applicants permission for the inappropriate replacement windows.

126 Church Road

The application is to carry out repairs and alterations to an early nineteenth century Grade II listed building in the Church Road Conservation Area. The proposed alterations are for the most part innocuous but they include the insertion of Velux windows in the roof slope, which we regard as unacceptable in such a building. We have therefore objected to this aspect of the proposals.

28 Ryecroft Road

We have objected to the proposals to add an overlarge extension and a dormer in the rear roof slope which would extend the full width of the existing property.

The Portmanor Public House

We objected strongly to the application for the redevelopment of this important building in the South Norwood Conservation Area into a block

of nine flats on a large number of grounds, including the size and massing of the proposed new extension, inadequacy of the lighting to bedrooms of flats in the basement, and inadequate amenity space for the occupants of all the flats. The application has been refused, on similar grounds to those we put forward in our submission.

2 Church Road (formerly the Cambridge Public House)

We objected to a retrospective application for the installation of replacement upvc window frames in this building instead of the timber sashes for which permission had originally been given. We are happy to report that the retrospective application has been refused.

THE CRYSTAL PALACE SUBWAY – IT’S SAFE !

The following account is taken from a comprehensive article about the Crystal Palace and its Subway by Stephen Oxford and Sue Giovanni and published in “The Subterranea” (Issue 36, August 2014). In 1970 it was decided to make sure that the structure of the subway could cope with heavy lorries, in particular because it had been closed for some years and may have been weakened by damp and neglect.

“In 1997 a survey of the subway was carried out by Bullen Consultants on behalf of the London Borough of Bromley. This was part of the national bridge load assessment programme to check capacity for 40 ton lorries. As they could find no records of the subway’s construction an intrusive investigation was carried out. Ground radar was not precise enough and as there was concern about the damage coring might cause, it was decided to investigate first from above with a trial hole. As such substructures rely on the dead load of fill on top of them it was decided that an excavation represented a risk of disturbance and movement, consequently scaffolding was set up underneath instrumented with dial gauges. Unfortunately the site chosen for the 2m by 1m trial hole was obstructed by concrete and uncharted iron ducts. The concrete was broken out and although vibration could be felt inside the subway the lack of movement on the instruments showed how



strong the structure is. The columns supporting it within the subway moved apart laterally by only 20 thousandths of an inch.

The structure was revealed including part of one of the octagonal columns. The columns continued higher than the stone rings that appear on top of them from inside the subway. Waterproofing was found to be black pitch, small patches of which were broken away, revealing the joint pattern of the brickwork. It was found that the top surface was almost a direct reflection of the fan structure beneath. The masonry surrounding the gas roses was only one brick thick, with a second layer overlain to form a roof with an average thickness of 350mm. They found no traces of any other supporting structures. The findings were to be subjected to analysis by computer programmes to determine whether the structure might fail or would need protecting by an overlying bridge.

Bullen consultants were later engaged to examine the subway retaining walls and report on any proposed interim measures that might be necessitated. It was determined that the effect of live load pressures from traffic are small in magnitude compared to the in situ soil pressures. It was determined that the walls would fail at some time in the future due to the soil pressure.

Various proposals for supporting the walls were considered. These included scaffolding, a raking shore option and a portal frame option. It was recommended that scaffolding be erected to shore up the walls and help to prevent future collapse. The scaffolding would require a concrete slab to prop the scaffolding against and due consideration would need to be given to avoiding disturbance or deterioration of the wall – fortunately this never happened. The condition of the subway has continued to be monitored and today that is carried by AECOM.”

Since then of course, and following a feasibility study, the subway has been opened to the public. The organisations Friends of Crystal Palace Subway (FoCPS) and the Crystal Palace Foundation deserve great credit and thanks for their efforts over the years to have the subway refurbished and opened up for the public to see the ornamental brickwork columns. The Palace may have gone, but the subway is a living reminder of its majesty.

Stephen Oxford



Balloons & Aeroplanes at the Crystal Palace (continued)

British Association for the Advancement of Science -

Observations in the Higher Atmosphere. Coxwell & Glaisher - 28 Balloon Flights 1862-1866.

- (1) to determine the temperature of the dew--point by Daniel's and Regnault's hygrometers, as well as by the dry and wet bulb thermometers, and to compare the results;*
- (2) to compare the readings of an aneroid barometer with those of a mercurial barometer up to the height of 5 miles;*
- (3) to determine the electrical state of the air;*
- (4) to establish the oxygenic condition of the atmosphere;*
- (5) to note the time of vibration of a magnet;*
- (6) to collect air at different elevations;*
- (7) to note the height and kind of clouds, their density and thickness;*
- (8) to determine the rate and direction of different currents in the atmosphere;*
- (9) to make observations on sound;*
- (10) to record the physiological effects.*

Alan Warwick writes that out of Professor Glaisher's balloon ascents with Coxwell at the Crystal Palace and elsewhere was kindled the idea which became the Aeronautical Society of Great Britain - now known as the Royal Aeronautical Society. Coxwell and Glaisher made many more ascents together until 1864 when their balloon is torn to shreds by crowds in Leicester - and for a time the people of Leicester were known as 'balloonatics.' Meanwhile there were other balloon flights. Many of the thousands of balloon ascents made from the Crystal Palace passed without incident - but many of the greater populace never saw a balloon - or even heard of them. The Bromley Record of August 1st 1863 records how shouts of 'a balloon' by youngsters in Bromley brought the 'oldsters' out to see what was up. A balloon piloted by Henry Coxwell and another gentleman ascended from the Crystal Palace in the presence of the Prince of Wales. The descent, which took place in a field near Bickley, was described in the Record as follows:

In the short space of a quarter of an hour there could not have been fewer than 500 people present, the fair sex being fairly represented. Of course among such

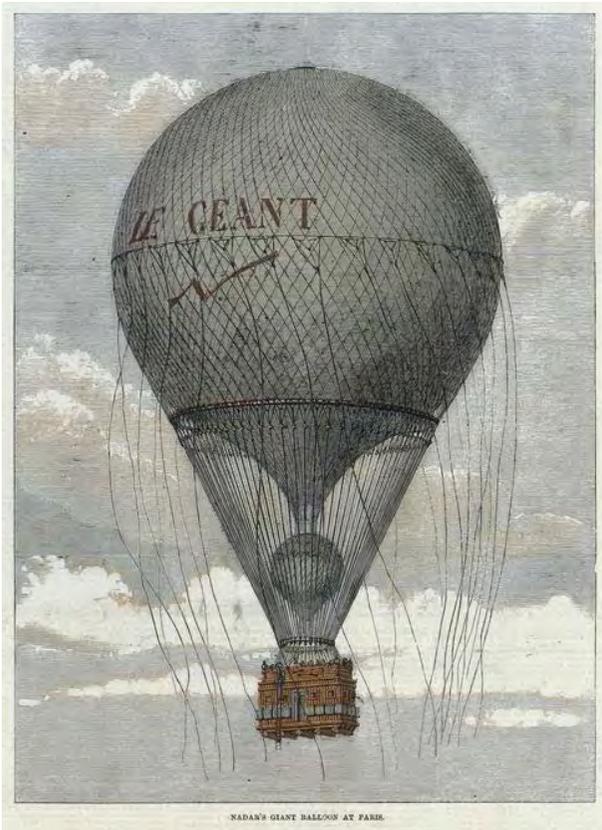
a motley group every variety of fashion was exhibited, the most remarkable being a sunshade of brown paper worn on a black silk bonnet. Very few of them had any bonnet at all, and as most of them had run away from their wash tubs without stopping to dress for company, they were not over-burdened with drapery. The remarks made about the balloon were no doubt highly amusing to the experienced owner, although some of them were not very flattering. "Drat the critter and them what's in it" said one lady. "They aint no business to go bringen a thing like that here, frightnen people. I'm sure what with the fright and the runnen together I shan't get over it for a week."

Another old lady, who was pointed out to us as the oldest inhabitant having lived nearly 90 years in this world without ever seeing a balloon, or having the slightest idea to its resemblance, was naturally very much horrified when the monster plumped down almost at her door. But finding that when it was down it was perfectly quiet and harmless, she plucked up sufficient courage to go near and examine it, exclaiming: "Dear lawk, dear lawk whatever will they do with it?" (What they did with it was pack the balloon up in a van belonging to the field's owner, a Mr Pawley, and take it back to the Crystal Palace.)



On October 19th 1863 the Geant balloon crashed in Hanover. This giant balloon was built by Godard for the French photographer and aeronaut, Felix Tournachon (1820-1910), better known as 'Nadar'. Named 'Le Geant', it stood 196 feet tall and had a capacity of 212,000 cubic feet. The balloon car was even more remarkable. It was 13 feet long with a ballustrated balcony and was divided into six separate compartments, which included a lavatory and a room for Nadar's photography equipment. The longest flight made by the balloon was on its second voyage on 18 October 1863, when it flew 400 miles (644 km) from Paris to Germany. After damage sustained during this flight had been repaired, Nadar brought the balloon to England and exhibited it at the Crystal Palace. It was suspended in the central transept of the Crystal Palace but never ascended from the grounds. Henry Coxwell, in his book *'My Life and Balloon Experiences'* recalls: "I was on the point of going into Scotland, when a telegram arrived from Paris about the disastrous descent in Hanover, and requested that my next ascent from the Crystal Palace might be carried out according to previous arrangement, as the Giant balloon would not be in a condition to eclipse the Mammoth balloon, at any rate, not quite so soon as expected. It was to appear, however, at the Crystal Palace at no distant period, even if it was there blown out with atmospheric air. Of course this additional information came by letter; the programme, however, so far as the 'blowing out' went, was literally fulfilled, as the finely formed "Geant" was duly mended, and I remember gazing at it with admiration when it was suspended in the Central Transept. At the same time, I could not stifle a firm conviction that another mishap was in store for it, and that something would surely happen ere 12 hours had elapsed".

This fear was, as may be supposed, put down to professional jealousy. "I was asked to go beneath it, to gaze upon its vast dimensions as it hung over head. 'On no account whatever' I replied. 'Why not?'" "Because it will come tumbling down before many hours have passed." "At least, that was my settled opinion and having openly stated it I was not surprised next morning when Mr. Henry Thompson telegraphed to say that M. Nadar's balloon had come down by the run during the night, just as I had predicted, and then, after the prophecy had been fulfilled, everybody wanted to know how it was I felt so certain as to the event taking place. 'It was simply self-evident' I replied. 'The balloon had been hoisted up, and the net-work, instead of being allowed to embrace the lower part and thereby sustain the weight, was left hanging down and added two or three hundredweight to the silk, which was merely suspended by the valve.' I really thought it would come



down before it did, and I could at once perceive that the true principles of practical aeronautics were either not understood or wantonly defied in this affair” Subsequently it was suspended in a more ship-shape fashion, and attracted, for a time, considerable interest, but it did not extinguish the Mammoth balloon, as it never really ascended from the Palace grounds “Some two or three years later it passed into other hands, and was ultimately wrecked at Cremorne Gardens.”

In 1868 the Aeronautical Society of Great Britain organised the first-ever aeronautical exhibition at

the Crystal Palace. Opening on June 25th for 11 days it becomes an enormous success. It’s also notable for two separate claims - one by John Stringfellow that he had actually designed a flying machine 20 years earlier - and the other by Charles Green Spencer, son of Edward Spencer and named after Charles Green, that a glider had carried a man in mid-air. (see *The Phoenix Suburb* pages 190 to 103). Stringfellow’s engine became the first object in the National Space Museum and is on display in the early flight gallery of what is now the National Air & Space Museum, Washington, D. C.

One person who was not enamoured by the Aeronautical Society was Henry Coxwell “What I find fault with is that a body of scientific men should come forward to introduce a new era in aerostation when it was soon evident they could

not even manage ballooning” He feared the main reason for the Aeronautical Society was to suppress professional aeronauts and establish a sort of balloon company.

Alan Warwick in The Phoenix Suburb says “Despite the offence taken at the time by Mr Coxwell, who felt himself slighted, the fact clearly emerges in retrospect that the Crystal Palace aeronautical exhibition marked the first step forward in the long and painful progress towards a scientific understanding of the problem of mechanical flight.

But it was an historic event.

Jerry Green

(To be continued)

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THE NORWOOD SOCIETY

The Heritage Society for Norwood

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The
NORWOOD
SOCIETY

Represents the interests of the people who live or work in Norwood to local authorities and government agencies.

Researches the history of Norwood, publishes literature and sponsors publications about its history and culture.

Communicates informations through talks, exhibitions and the Norwood Review, our quarterly journal.

Although the Norwood Society cannot provide expert advice on planning, transport, trees and open spaces, it takes a close interest in these matters, and would welcome information about them in the Norwood area. It may not be able to become directly involved in all of them, but would be able to advise on suitable sources of help and possible strategies.