

## **Lockdown News: October/November 2020**

I hope you have all been keeping well. When I look back to this time last year I cannot believe how different life was. At our November 2019 society meeting we were entertained by John Constable on the Winchester Geese, the story of Cross Bones Cemetery in Southwark which was attended by about 60 members. We were then an active, vibrant society looking forward to Christmas. That now seems such a long time ago.

We had a busy agenda at the beginning of 2020 with talks by Peter Daniels, Alan Medley and Simon McKeon. We had presented a very successful talk on the Queens Hospital in Sidcup Library. The Echo Project was busy with new banners (which went up in May) along with leaflets, Sidcup High Street photos suggested by us were placed on the hoardings around the old Blockbusters site and our designs for town signs were being considered. And then there was LOCKDOWN!

The committee decided to keep in contact with members as best we could. I think we should thank Philip Willson for his Lockdown Newsletters which have been very much appreciated. In July we held a safe distance committee meeting to plan for society meetings again.

We were fortunate enough to be able to hold a meeting in September with a talk by Imogen Corrigan on the Siren Seas. Sadly, restrictions became more specific and it became impossible to continue in that format. However, encouraged by our president Malcolm Barr Hamilton, he gave a talk on the history of Tower Hamlets via Zoom, which worked really well. We decided to postpone the AGM and the present committee will remain in office until such time that we can reconvene properly.

This is not an ideal situation but we have decided that Zoom gives more people the opportunity to appreciate the talks for the time being. We have also decided to suspend the membership fees until next year with the blessing of our treasurer Janet 'Rishi' Cooper. The Christmas social is on ice, not literally, but there are some plans afoot.

I had a suggestion from Janet to make a donation to British Legion as their funds are very low. They have been very supportive locally to us in our various activities. The committee agreed a sum of £100.

The committee is strong and we keep in regular contact, so we will be looking to return to meetings as soon as the opportunity arrives.

Take of yourselves and stay safe. Denise Baldwin, Chairman

**The next Society Meeting will be on 3<sup>rd</sup> November at 7.30p.m. and be delivered via Zoom** Following on from the success of the October Zoom meeting, Alan Medley has agreed to bring forward his next talk to this month.

### **Stagecoaches and Turnpikes An illustrated talk by Alan Medley**

“The stagecoach transformed travel in England in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Before that, the better off travelled on horseback, while the poor were limited to Shanks’s Pony. Roads were a mess, and very few had been built since the Romans left. Proper repairs and improvements only became possible when turnpiking of roads allowed money to be raised from road users.

“Footscray was on the main road from London to Maidstone, at the junction of two major turnpikes and was a busy stagecoach route. A few miles north, Welling was on the ancient, even busier trunk route between London and Dover.

“This talk explores the history of the turnpikes and stagecoaches of England, and especially those of Kent and the Bexley area.”

As last time, please would you let us know if you wish to join us on Zoom. Please email Jennifer [REDACTED]

## Buses and Bombs

Sidcup Bus Garage was in Footscray, opposite the Kolster Brandes factory. This would have been an important target for the Luftwaffe during the Blitz. In order to avoid the chaos that would result from the bus garage being hit, the buses were parked off site for a period. The little complex of roads off Sidcup Hill was an ideal location as it gave ready entry and exit for vehicles without reversing being required. The photo below shows a line of London Transport LT-type vehicles lined up in Oxford Road. Below that is a view of the same bit of road today, courtesy of Google Earth. The differences are obvious, although the houses have not really changed apart from the addition of a building at the Sidcup Hill end of the road.

