



BLACKHEATH CATOR ESTATE



NEWSLETTER — WINTER 2021

Photo credit: The Blackheath Society

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

As winter sets in, we warmly welcome you to the latest edition of our Blackheath Cator Estate Residents (BCER) newsletter.

Last month we held our first face-to-face meeting with Board Members since the start of the pandemic and it was wonderful to see so many of the Board in person once again. Following this we are delighted to share with you a new programme of improvements to the Estate, which will be of benefit to residents. Our online Q&A with Shareholders back in September was also well attended and we look forward to seeing as many of you as possible in person at the AGM in March.

Jon Taylor — BCER CHAIR

DID YOU KNOW?

The Cator Estate roads are now 200 years old, having been laid down in the 1820's some years after the purchase of the land by John Cator in 1783. When Cator bought the Estate originally it also included a substantial mansion, Wicklemarsh House. Although later demolished, some foundations may still survive under the junction of Pond Road and Blackheath Park.



ESSENTIAL NEWS

Q&A WITH SHAREHOLDERS

The Board of Directors was joined by around 50 residents for an online Q&A in September. Subjects brought up included traffic control through the Estate, security and road improvements. Actions from the meeting include research into defibrillator provision and BT Fibre installation, alongside road improvements. Minutes from the meeting will be circulated to Shareholders prior to the AGM in early March.

ESTATE CHARGE

The Estate Charge for 2021, which will be invoiced in January 2022, is remaining flat at £8.80 + VAT per foot.

CHEQUES AND CASH

Owing to ongoing issues with the Post Office and Lloyds bank, the BCER office is hoping to eliminate cash and cheques in 2022 and is requesting that payments are made by BACS in future. We also request that Standing Orders are set up for Residents' Associations to pay their frontage charges in instalments.

ROAD IMPROVEMENTS & TRAFFIC CALMING

A subgroup of The Board is working alongside an engineer consultancy to ensure the best company is contracted to begin upgrading and repairing the Estate's roads next year. Once agreed, detailed information and a proposal will be circulated around The Estate.

COMMUTER PARKING CONTROLS

Patrols of Blackheath Park at the Lee Road end have resumed. Residents found parking repeatedly and for long periods of time will have their parking permits revoked.

AUTOMATED GATES

A subgroup of the Board is currently researching the idea of automated gates to reduce rat-running and consequentially wear and tear on the Estate roads. They are considering options and informally reaching out to residents to obtain views before putting it out for wider consultation.

AGM

A note to Shareholders: Covid 19 rules permitting, the 2022 Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday 8th March from 8pm at St Michaels Church Hall.

We hope you will be able to join us for a glass of wine afterwards.

CARBON NEUTRAL PLAN

Eddy Taylor, Head of Sustainability has reported "Royal Borough of Greenwich Council's Carbon Neutral Plan 2021-2030 went through Cabinet in October and is due for presentation for proposed adoption by Full Council, in December. After this point it will be published online." In response to this, a subgroup will be formed within the Board who will meet early next year to discuss how BCER can shape their own plan to take forward. If you would like to share your views, please do so at office@blackheathcatoestate.co.uk.

STREET LAMPS

The Royal Borough of Greenwich has informed us that the lanterns we have installed on The Estate have been discontinued. We hope to procure reclaimed lamps but, in the meantime, existing lanterns that are required may be temporarily infilled with a more modern streetlamp. Although not to everyone's taste, this is a safety measure required by the council.

WEBSITE

We hope to be launching a new website in 2022 which will be more user friendly for all. It will eventually include a shareholder's portal and the opportunity to pay Estate Charges and vehicle permits online. Look out for more news on this early next year!

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

News on conventional crime in the past few months has been encouraging, with very little to note on the Estate. The only burglary reported occurred in a house which was unoccupied for two days. There was an attempted break in at a house in Foxes Dale, but the would-be thief injured himself badly and had to go to hospital where he was subsequently arrested.

One theft of a motor vehicle occurred in October when the owner forgot to remove his keys, though that vehicle was recovered from just a few streets away. And one was stolen when advertised for sale and a purported purchaser made off with keys and car.

FRAUD

Residents should be on their guard for organised fraud and theft of mail in the Blackheath area. Instances include a thief asking for a replacement debit card in a resident's name, managing to intercept it in the post and use it repeatedly before the crime was discovered. An earlier case on the same lines from last summer has also been discovered.

In addition, there were two reported incidents in the summer of theft from the bank accounts of residents. The criminal phoned the bank (each of the two residents involved happened to bank with the same High Street bank) and requested a replacement bank card, and

Ideal Home — July 1995



SHOUT OUT

Are you a shareholder keen to join The BCER Board?

We are always on the look-out for new Directors, so please get in touch with the Estate Office if you feel this could be an opportunity for you. We can offer more details about the role and arrange an informal chat with a Director.

office@blackheathcatoestate.co.uk

PIN. The letters were intercepted in the post and the criminal, armed with a bank card and PIN, was able to go on a spending spree. In one case, the criminal also procured a replacement driving licence from DVLA and substituted his own photo, to bolster his impersonation.

In all instances, the banks bore the loss.

TO NOTE

Any indication that a replacement bank card, or driving licence, has been sought without the knowledge of the individual concerned may well be an indicator of fraud and immediate contact with the bank is advised. As well as checking card transactions, frequent checking of emails (including items sent to "Junk") is also advisable to check for communications from your bank or the DVLA.

If any other residents have suffered from similar criminal activity, or know of other examples, it would be appreciated if they could contact office@blackheathcatoestate.co.uk with a description of what occurred and of any further action taken, so that the extent of the problem can be understood.

If you wish to keep up to date with the latest Neighbourhood Watch news, please visit the Facebook page 'Neighbourhood Watch On The Cator Estate' and click 'Join.'

LOST HOUSES ON THE CATOR ESTATE

LOCAL ARCHITECT AND CATOR ESTATE RESIDENT — ANA SUTHERLAND

If you venture all the way to the eastern end of Blackheath Park, you arrive at Parkend, a Span estate of 19 houses built between 1965 and 1967.

Parkend has replaced a lost house, which had two identities. Its last reiteration was 115 Blackheath Park, designed by the architect Patrick Gwynne in 1949, for local resident and Span managing director, Leslie Bilsby.

Patrick Gwynne's design was an extensive remodelling of a large early Victorian villa that had suffered extensive bomb damage. He retained much of the brick wall structure and window openings, but with a thoroughly modern makeover including removing the top storey and replacing the pitched roof with one in a novel wave-like form.

Gwynne subsequently built two further houses for Bilsby on the Cator Estate: one on Blackheath Park, with its sleek black frontage and circular entrance stairs (1969, Grade II listed), and another in the more secluded Parkgate, in plan a trio of octagons, for Bilsby's retirement.

I live in Parkend and during the course of renovating my own garden uncovered several tile fragments that must come from the original villa or subsequent Bilsby house.

The Friends of Blackheath Halls Architecture Group has moved to the Blackheath Society. Members of the Society will be able to enjoy a variety of events, including the new architectural programme, starting on 25th January with a visit to Kingston University's Town House, by Grafton Architects, which recently won the RIBA Stirling Prize.

On behalf of the Board
and BCER Ltd., we
would like to wish all our
residents an enjoyable
festive season and a
Happy New Year!

FAREWELL RAY!

Ray, the gatekeeper of Manor Way,
retired at the end of October. We would
like to thank him for all his hard work
and determination in keeping the rat
runners at bay! He will be missed.



Photo credit: BCER

HOUSES WITH HISTORY

French composer Charles Gounod, who wrote twelve operas including Faust (1859), stayed in this statuesque property on Morden Road in 1870. He and his family fled from Paris when the Prussians were advancing and came to be in Blackheath due to a friend of his mother in law. After sheltering with her temporarily, they subsequently rented at this Morden Road property before later heading to central London.

According to James Harding's biography of Gounod, published by George Allen and Unwin.

Do you have a house with history on the Cator Estate? We would love to hear from you and share your story. Please email the office at office@blackheathcatorestate.co.uk.

GET IN TOUCH

We'd love residents to be involved in the content of future editions. Please get in touch if there is anything in particular you would like to see at office@blackheathcatorestate.co.uk.

WITH THANKS TO

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The Blackheath Society — Sacha Bright

*Blackheath Cator Estate Residents
(BCER) is compliant with GDPR, please
see the [Privacy Policy](#) on our website for
more information.



LOST PONDS OF THE CATOR ESTATE

WORDS BY LOCAL HISTORIAN — NEIL RHIND, NOVEMBER 2021



Photo credit: The Blackheath Society
Brookway — 1936

Once upon a time there were four substantial waters on our Estate. Well, at least three because the first is just on the Heath and survives today as the Prince of Wales Pond – opposite Colonnade House, in South Row and the Princess of Wales Public House.

This flowed under the Heath, rising from a spring in Greenwich Park, and the basic pond we know now was developed as a drover's pond which later helped to provide water for the fountains for Wricklemarsh House.

The other three were all fed by various rivulets known for ease of identification as the Upper, Middle and Lower Kid brooks. They all, eventually, flowed through Lewisham into the Quaggy and then into the River Ravensbourne to the Deptford Creek and then the Thames.

The big round pond in, appropriately, Pond Road, survived long enough for some of the older residents to remember it, albeit much spoiled by rubbish. When the LCC decided to compulsorily purchase the ground at the rear of The Paragon and the pond, it was recommended by County Hall that the pond was filled in for safety reasons.

It was filled from the Upper Kid brook and when the lake was drained and the stream put into a humble pipe, flowing towards the Village. In due course some of the cellars in Blackheath Grove flooded. The stream, now in a conduit, flows down the station yard and under the car park. So now we have a large circle of grass and the surviving willow trees have all died. During the cold winters of the early 20th century the Cator trustees allowed ice skating here for which you made a 6d (2.5 pence) donation to charity.

The one survivor is the pond on the Casterbridge Estate with the remains of the bridge over what was once a larger water on both sides of Brooklands Park. This Kid brook originally flowed into a larger oblong lake (two and a half acres when in full size) known as Lays Pond.

With the building of Brooklands House in 1827 – by and for architect George Smith – and the upgrading of the cart track towards Manor Way the pond was split. The Brooklands House ground included the western section of the pond, by then no longer an exact oblong; the other section was part of the pleasure ground of a house called Elmsdale and, later, Casterbridge. It was the home of the Rev. Joseph Fenn, first incumbent of the Cator parish church, now called St Michael's & All Angels, from the late 1820s. It was another design by George Smith when in his Swiss chalet mode.

The ornamental water here was retained when the London County Council developed the huge garden of Casterbridge for a municipal estate. It installed the concrete effigy of the river god, not of great antiquity but especially made for pre-war municipal estates and moved here in the early 1950s.

The remains of Lays Pond at the end of the Brooklands House lengthy garden lost its regular shape over the years but the water was big enough to allow a small boat to be rowed across and around it. Alas, the sale of Brooklands House, for conversion into flats, in the 1920s, led developers to look hungrily at its huge garden, stretching down to Manor Way.

The Cator Trustees encouraged building and by the mid-1930s Brooklands Park, Manor Way and Brookway were all filled with middle class suburban villas.

The end of Lays Pond came in January 1936 when contractors channelled its flow into a three-foot brick conduit, within a 15ft diameter trench. Thus, it disappeared not to emerge in the open until it reached the back gardens of a few houses in Parkgate and the west end of Manor Way. It can be seen flowing on the south side of the garden of No 77 Lee Road.

Neil's latest book, 'Blackheath Village and Environs: Volume 3' is available to buy from the Age Exchange Café, Bookshop on the Heath, The Blackheath Bookshop (Waterstones) and The Blackheath Society.

CATOR ESTATE MEMORIES — HERE & NOW

“The magnificent cedar in the middle of Meadowbank is emblematic of the entire Cator Estate for me. It conveys the impression of living amongst the mature and beautiful trees that form the backdrop to our daily lives. Before I was old enough to appreciate its beauty, the cedar was a major landmark in my childhood. The moment I acquired my first bicycle, I raced off to Meadowbank to whizz past on the wrong side of the tree. Having survived it once, it became a daily thrill until a resident busy-body reported it to my mother. I did the same thing again the moment I passed my driving test – but only once, and I confirm that the urge is now out of my system. I won’t ask for a show of hands, but surely I can’t be the only reckless fool on the Cator Estate?”

— SHEILA MARKHAM, CATOR ESTATE RESIDENT



Photo credit: BCER

We would love to feature more stories from residents in our next issue. If you have any anecdotes to share about your time living on the Estate, please email office@blackheathcatorestate.co.uk.

JOIN US

We publish two Residents Newsletters a year, with occasional updates by email in between. If you would like to be added to our database*, please contact The Estate Office at office@blackheathcatorestate.co.uk.

*Blackheath Cator Estate Residents (BCER) is compliant with GDPR, please see the Privacy Policy on our website for more information.

REMINDERS

- Although bins are being emptied more frequently, if you find a bin full, please do take your rubbish home with you. Otherwise, we are finding that the crows can easily pick the rubbish out and scatter it.
- Overnight parking of any commercial vehicle, caravan or mobile home is not permitted at any time. Residents who are owners of such vehicles are entitled to gate passes only.
- Any Resident undertaking substantial construction work that requires Planning Consent will be required to enter into a Development Deed and pay the relevant Development Charge to BCER.
- Please ensure contractors (which includes gardeners and landscapers) adhere to the guidelines set out on the website, such as limiting working hours and not working at weekends. Contractors should also not be parking on footpaths and will be issued with a Parking Control Notice (PCN) if they continue to do so.
- A reminder that the Disabled Bays at the Lee Road end of Blackheath Park are for Residents who are Blue Badge Holders only.

