

Welcome to this edition of Heritage News, amongst other things it contains programme news, some useful links and a short article about St Nicholas at Deptford.

Bennett Park talk by Paul Wright. Although I could not attend this meeting I had some very positive feedback. Paul tells me he has a couple of other talks which might be suitable for our Heritage Group. These are:

1. The history and redevelopment of Lee New Town (the area to the N of Lee High Road comprising Boone, Lee Church and Fludyer Streets. Interesting history from 1824 to post WW2 redevelopment.
2. St Margaret's Churchyard - a talk about some of the very interesting figures who are buried in the old churchyard.

So, the question is which one of these would you prefer – drop me an email with your preference. I will then talk to Paul about fitting him and your preferred talk into the Autumn programme.

Paul is an active member of the Blackheath Society, and I promised him that I would publish details of membership in our next Newsletter. Their website is at [The Blackheath Society](#). Membership details are at [Become a member — The Blackheath Society](#) membership costs just £20 a year.

I am currently working on the Autumn programme and have just booked a speaker to talk about Trinity House. The safety of shipping and the well-being of seafarers have been the prime concerns of Trinity House since being incorporated by Royal Charter in 1514 in Deptford. So a real local connection.

Next a reminder of our next meetings, full details are on our webpage at [Heritage Group - South East London](#)

April 24th From Bedlam to Bethlem – 778 years of Bethlem Royal Hospital
a talk by Amy Moffat, Learning and Outreach Officer, Bethlem Museum of the Mind. This has been carried over as Amy was ill when she was scheduled last spring, but I am sure this will be well worth the wait.



Join Amy, to find out the fascinating story of Bethlem Royal Hospital, one of the oldest mental health institutions in the world and still running as part of the NHS in Beckenham today.

May 29th Bigamy, Abuse and Scandal by Lynne Dixon Most of you will have enjoyed Lynne's previous talks and this promises to be equally good. This new talk is based on her own family history.

June 26th Professor Caroline Derry - Legal precedents derived from cases that occurred in Deptford Caroline is a lawyer and Professor at the Open University, and she will talk about two criminal cases from early 20th century Deptford and explains how they shaped the criminal laws of today.

Friday July 31st Four Ten Minute Talks

This will be a varied meeting with something of interest to all members.

All of our meetings are open to all U3A SEL members and their guests. Refreshments will be available for £1. We meet in the Bowls Room at Horn Park at 10:15. See [Horn Park - South East London](#)

“Discovering History find the missing pieces” on page 64 of the current Spring edition of Third Age Matters

Did you read this article in Third Age Matters? It details a national U3A initiative to research local buildings. The suggestion is that existing groups or indeed new groups of members should get together and research a local listed building. I am not sure whether the Heritage Group would get involved but intend to sign up for the Project Launch event on Thursday 23rd April at 2 pm. See the article and then if you are interested sign up to attend. If there is sufficient interest, we could discuss how we might get involved after our next Heritage meeting. Needless to say, we are in an area where we have many listed buildings there are more than 20 in Woolwich Town Centre, another 20 in the Royal Arsenal, Lewisham has 368 listed buildings so we would not find it difficult to pick one to study.

Exploring Deptford

Over the last couple of months, I have been writing regularly about Deptford for the Facebook pages of Lewisham Local History Society and Greenwich Industrial History Society. I wonder whether I should also occasionally share them in Heritage News. Here is the latest one about St Nicholas Church Deptford. *If you think they might be of interest drop me an email and I will include some more from time to time.*

Memento Mori and St Nicholas Deptford



St Nicholas parish was created in 1730 and was mainly comprised of the Maritime area and the Dockyard at the northern end of Deptford. It is well known for the sculpture of skulls and bones on the top of the gateposts. These are known as Memento Mori which loosely translates from the Latin as “remember that you will die”. In effect they marked the boundary between the life of Deptford and the dead within the churchyard.

The photographs show the gatepost, the church itself and the Charnel House. The latter is a rare survivor having been built in 1697 to store bones as the graveyard ran out of space. Basically, bones were cleaned and stored to await resurrection. Historic England remarks, rather disparagingly *“Interior since cleared of bones and converted to community use, with no features of interest.”*



Christopher Marlowe was murdered close by in a building on Deptford Strand and then buried in a mass grave in the churchyard. The actual grave is lost in the mists of time but there is a commemorative plaque on the churchyard wall. See photo.

The church is normally closed but they are open for visits immediately after the Sunday service at about 11:30.

Incidentally they are not the only church to have mislaid a body / grave, St Mary's church at Rotherhithe has lost the grave of Christopher Jones – the master of the Mayflower Perhaps you know of some other lost graves in South East London in which case please email me