

TRIBUTE TO KEITH HOLDAWAY 91932-2020)

It is with great sadness we report the death of Keith Holdaway (London, Streatham) who passed away on November 20, 2020. His early childhood memory is of being in a pram, pushed around the Crystal Palace, before the building burnt down in 1936.

Keith was a founder member of the Local History Group of the Streatham Society, and for many years, the leader of the local history group of the Norwood Society, as well as belonging to many other history groups and organisations and establishing the South London Local History Group at the Phoenix Centre in Norwood in 2014, including Brian Bloice among others.

The enthusiasm of this keen and talented group led to a series of talks, seminars and exhibitions promoting the local history of the area. Today, such events are relatively commonplace, but in the early 1980's they were breaking new ground and, in many cases, the first to organise such local events,

Their activities probably reached their peak in 1999 when Keith and Brian, in association with the Norwood Society, the French Institute, and the Émile Zola Society, organised a special Zola weekend to mark the French author's association with Norwood. During this weekend an English Heritage blue plaque was unveiled on the Queen's Hotel and the Norwood Society in collaboration with the Émile Zola Society published a book of Zola's Norwood photographs from the collection of Jean-Claude Le Blond-Zola, grand-son of the author. Keith mounted his largest ever exhibition at the Phoenix Centre as part of the Programme and played a prominent role in organising the various event held over the weekend such as a coach tour 'In Émile Zola Footsteps'.

Keith's interests were not limited to local history. He had a vast knowledge of the history and development of all forms of transport. His library of rail and bus books was a valuable resource as well as his extensive collection of ephemera pictures. He constructed a model railway in his garden and a magnificent railway layout in his loft, weaving it way around the roof rafters.

Keith was keenly interested in church history and architecture. In 1974, in collaboration with M. D. Lambert, he published an excellent history of St Luke's Church (West Norwood). As churchwarden in St Luke's (1971-1973), he was associated for many years with St Thomas' Church in Telford Park, and St Peter's opposite his home in Leigham Court Road. Keith was also valued as a member of the Monday Church Watch at St Leonard's spending a couple of hours every week picking up litter in the graveyard.

Keith will be sadly missed by his local community and all the friends he made outside it.