

NEWSLETTER

No. 174, July 2004

Quarterly issue, distributed free to all members.

Registered with the Civic Trust and the London Forum of Amenity Societies. Registered Charity No.1058103.

www.brixtonsociety.org.uk



Outdoor events, walks and visits account for most of the dates included in this issue, starting with these:

Lambeth Country Show weekend 17 & 18 July, Brockwell Park:

Open from 11 am to 6-30 pm each day, this big event continues on familiar lines so look for our stall in the usual area. A great opportunity to catch up with recent publications or renew your membership. If you can spare some time to help look after the stall on either day (or at the Archives Open Day in September) please contact the Chair, Glyn Kyle on (020) 7326 5070.

Stockwell Parks and Commons – Guided Walk, Sunday 8th August:

Tracking past and present green spaces around Stockwell, led by Alan Piper. Meet at 2-30 pm by the War Memorial Clock near Stockwell Tube Station.

Lambeth Palace, 12 August

A rare opportunity to visit Lambeth's old manor house, the London base of the Archbishops of Canterbury since 1197. Meet by 11 am on **Thursday 12 August** at the side gate on Lambeth Palace Road. Subject to the Archbishop's commitments, the tour will include the state rooms, chapels and grounds. There is a charge of £7 per head and numbers are limited so **prior booking is essential**. Please book with the Secretary, Alan Piper (contact details overleaf) enclosing payment if possible: cheques should be payable to The Brixton Society.

Also in this issue:

**Brixton Central Square Feedback,
New Lambeth Development Plan,
Annual Report,
Summer Walks highlights,
Brixton Postcards Offer...**



We appear at several events each year. This was our stall at Myatt's Fields Park Fair on Saturday 12 June, with (from left) Alan Piper, Doye Akinlade and Catherine O'Shea on duty.

Brixton Society meeting dates

In addition to the dates highlighted on the front page, our Executive Committee usually meets on the second Thursday of the month to plan events and activities, and agree our responses to local developments. All meetings at 7-30 pm: contact the Secretary to confirm venues.

- **8 July**
- **9 September**
- **14 October**
- **11 November.**

Links with other groups

Check with organisers first in case of changes since news reached us. Some events may be charged for, and most groups would welcome donations.

Future entries to Alan Piper (Secretary) at 82 Mayall Road, SE24 0PJ, tel/fax (020) 7207 0347 APiperBrix@aol.com

Sunday 11 July – Windmill Festival:

2 pm to 7 pm in Windmill Gardens, off Blenheim Gardens, Brixton Hill SW2, to promote the restoration of the mill and improvement of the public open space. *Friends of Windmill Gardens.*

Until 18 July: The Garden of Earthly Delights:

Exhibition of work by 20 artists, in the Walled Garden of Brockwell Park, dawn to dusk. www.thegardenofearthlydelights.com

Tuesday 20 July - Brixton Area Forum Traffic & Transport

7 pm at Lambeth Town Hall (antechamber). *For other meetings of the Forum and its working groups, contact the Town Centre office on (020) 7926 1077.*

Sunday 1st August: Central Streatham

Meet at Streatham Hill Station at 2-30 pm for a Guided Walk led by Brian Bloice. *Streatham Society.*



Thursday 5 August – Lecturettes:

Short talks by members on a variety of subjects, including reporting back from local forums. 7-30 pm at the Vida Walsh Centre, 2b Saltoun Road, SW2 (Effra Road end). *Lambethans' Society.*

Wednesday 18 August – Southside

A guided walk along the South Side of Clapham Common, led by Mary Coales. Meet at 6-45 pm at Clapham South Tube Station. *Clapham Society.*

Thursday 19 August – Upper Norwood walk:

Meet 7-45 pm outside the Phoenix Centre, Westow Street, SE19, for an evening walk led by Keith Holdaway. *Norwood Society.*

Sunday 22 August – Herne Hill's Heritage Trail:

Meet at 2 pm outside Herne Hill Station for a second instalment of the route covered by their recent book. *Herne Hill Society.*

Thursday 2nd Sept. Brain of Lambeth:

Brixton-based heat for the annual general knowledge quiz, conducted by John Moore. 7-30 pm at the Vida Walsh Centre, 2b Saltoun Road, SW2. *Lambethans' Society.*

Sunday 5 Sept. – Brockwell Park Nature Walk:

Early Autumn walk within the Park, starting at 2 pm by the clock tower. *Friends of Brockwell Park.*

Saturday 18 & Sunday 19 Sept. – London Open House

A range of interesting or historic buildings open their doors to the public – details from (020) 7267 2070 or see: www.londonopenhouse.org

Saturday 25 Sept. – Lambeth Archives Open Day:

Exhibits, stalls and talks mainly on the theme of Women in Lambeth's history. 10 am to 5 pm at Minet Library and Michael Church, Burton Road, SW9. Programme available from Lambeth Archives from 19 July - enquiries to (020) 7926 0750.

Brixton Town Centre Focus

Brixton Central Square: Your Say on the Proposals

Up to fifty members and supporters took up the invitation to have their say on the proposals for Brixton Central Square at a public meeting held before the Society's Annual General Meeting on 10th June 2004.

Widespread Publicity for the Meeting

The meeting had been publicised not only through a mailing to members and on the Society's notice board in Brixton Library, but also through mailings via the Brixton Area Forum, for which thanks are due to Diane Burrige, the Brixton Town Centre Manager. Members of the Society had also completed a door-to-door leaflet drop in the streets near the Central Square. As a result, we had anticipated a good turnout, even though the meeting was being held on the evening of the London Mayoral and Assembly elections; but the Vida Walsh Centre was still packed.

Grand Central Square Proposals

Our friends heard the proposals for a grand Brixton Central Square, including the pedestrianisation of part of Effra Road, from Jo Negrini, former Town Centre Manager and now the Assistant Director, Community renewal. Jo explained that it was hoped that up to 70% of the anticipated £6 million cost of the scheme would be met from the London Mayor and Transport for London, and she emphasised the importance of the result of the local elections. She reported that she had received tenders from a number of international architects, which underlined the widespread interest in Brixton.

Brixton Library and Tate Gardens

Marcia Bogle-Mayne, Brixton Library Manager, explained the very difficult conditions experienced by library staff and users from the continued deterioration of the Tate Library Gardens and its use by such large numbers of street drinkers and drug dealers. She explained that she had taken part in the consultations on Brixton Central Square in 2000/2001 and now felt that action was long overdue.

Hilda Barclay got the greatest applause of the evening when she demanded that Council Officers take action to provide public conveniences for use by visitors to

Brixton and those using the public transport interchange.

Creation of a Friends Group

Halit Ece, from Lambeth's Environmental Services, Parks Department explained that parks, as a non-statutory service, had been subject to budget cuts over the years, and that as a result parks and open spaces had fallen well below acceptable standards. He advised members that as part of a strategy to improve standards, the Department had supported the creation of a Friends of Brixton Library and Tate Gardens group, which it was hoped would be able, not only to contribute to the development of redevelopment plans and ongoing maintenance, but also to the preparation of fund-raising bids without which any significant improvement would be impossible.

Immediate Improvements - Councillor Whelan's Intervention

Halit Ece reported to the meeting that, with the support of Councillor Clare Whelan, Executive Member for Environmental Services, plans were being developed for some simple environmental improvements designed to repair some of the long-term neglect and to reduce levels of anti-social behaviour. These plans included the replacement and repair of some of the existing structures, including the raised planters and benches, the provision of improved levels of lighting and signage together with works on the trees and other plants in the square.

Public Questions and Answers

In the public discussion which followed, it was agreed that it was important that whilst improvements should not preclude a grand scheme, simple environmental improvements designed to reduce levels of anti-social behaviour and improve the quality of the square for all users were an absolute necessity.

Devon Thomas of the Lambeth Small Business Growth Initiative commended Marcia Bogle-Mayne on the improvements she had brought to the library and backed the idea of further improvements, given the interest felt in Windrush Square and in the development of a Black Cultural Archive in Raleigh Hall. James Priestman, Community Safety Officer, publicised details of the new Red Card scheme.

Brixton Town Centre Focus

On the downside, significant fears were expressed that the improvements should not be cosmetic and needed to be seen as part of an ordered progression towards sustainable improvements.

Next Steps

Offers of support to the proposals were made by a number of members including a landscape designer and builder. Halit Ece urged all interested supporters to attend the next public meeting of the Friends group, planned for **Thursday 15th July** at 6 pm in the same venue, the Vida Walsh Centre at 2(b) Saltoun Road.

GK

Guided Walk around Brixton and Streatham Cinemas

We have organised a visit to various cinemas in Brixton and Streatham on **Sunday, 12th September**. This has been organised in conjunction with the Cinema Theatre Association (CTA - see below) and our friends in the Streatham Society.

The visit is in two halves - Brixton in the morning and Streatham in the afternoon. Members are invited to join us for the whole day or for either half day. Meeting arrangements are:

10:30 am outside Brixton Underground
2:30 pm outside the Odeon Streatham

There is no charge to members of one of the 3 organisations but information will be on sale. For those doing the whole day, we will be making arrangements to stop somewhere for lunch (with everyone paying their own way).

The CTA was founded in 1967 when the magnificent movie palaces of the Twenties and Thirties were starting to disappear from our towns and cities. Since then, it has widened its horizons to encompass the study of all cinema buildings, however humble, as well as live theatres, music halls and those entertainment buildings now in use as bingo halls or for other purposes.

WL



The site of Windrush Square in Summer 1939 – occupied by the Orange Coach Station with Raleigh Hall at the rear of the site. (A composite picture from Lambeth Landmark, # 2274.)

Planning Act Changes the Rules...

The Government's new Planning Act is finally starting to come into effect. Surely printers will profit from producing new forms with updated references but otherwise it's difficult to identify the winners and losers.

Several sections come into effect in September, including a duty on local authorities to assess how their policies promote sustainable development. Local Development Plans will become Development Schemes, backed by Local Development Documents.

To guide Councils on Central Government preferences, a dozen updated Planning Policy Statements are due to emerge from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister by next Spring. Changes to Development Control procedures (the planning applications process) will be aired this Autumn and also take effect next Spring.

For further information see the ODPM website at www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_control/

Losing our Landmarks?

The Loughborough Hotel, a massive Victorian pub between the Angell and Myatt's Fields Estates, is the latest casualty of the unequal struggle between local amenities and market forces. Apparently it has been sold to developers, but we have seen no plans for the building yet.

In recent years it has become best known for the dance classes and salsa sessions hosted by Gill and Ze Indio, but its last night was Saturday 22 May. Apart from a couple of trial sessions at the nearby Bar Lorca on Brixton Road, a venue has yet to be found to replace it on a regular basis. For updates see: www.dancesalsa.co.uk

Another greedy housing development which we have objected to is a plan to build flats above the front part of the Iceland store in Brixton Road, obscuring the familiar view of the original Electric Avenue buildings which survive from 1888.

New Version of Lambeth Development Plan – at last!

The issues in the above article ought ideally to be addressed by the new Lambeth Unitary Development Plan which is being launched during July – but don't hold your breath!

This version has been amended in response to objections and comments made on the original draft over 2 years ago. Any further comments must be made by Wednesday **18 August**, and we are keen to co-operate with other local groups in preparing our response. If you have specific concerns, please contact Alan Piper urgently.

The Plan is explained in a report for the Council meetings on 14 April & 7 July, but at the time of

writing we have had difficulty reading the appendices with the full text of the changes, on the Council website at: www.lambeth.gov.uk

Community squeezed out of shaping the Community Plan

Lambeth First, the Local Strategic Partnership intended to bring together public authorities, business, and community interests, is undergoing a "Re-shaping" to prepare for the next stage of its Community Plan.

Cynics suggest this is just the Council trying to dilute representation from community and voluntary organisations, in case they might want to change the quaint old ways in which Town Hall departments operate. After 2 years, the Partnership is still merely "strategic" but Central Government does expect some results from its investment of NRF money, in the form of more effective local services.

Key to this is setting up 6 Theme Groups to review priority service areas, but so far only Employment & Enterprise is operating. The structure for Health & Social Care is now being negotiated between the Council, Health authorities and voluntary agencies. Environment however seems to be one of the lowest priorities – or maybe it just lacks an active champion. Time to revive the Lambeth Environment Forum?

ADP

The Brixton Society

Understanding the Past, Looking to the Future
Registered Charity No.1058103, Registered with the Civic Trust and the London Forum.

ANNUAL REPORT, 2004

AIMS & ORGANISATION

CHARITY STATUS: This report covers the key points suggested by the Charity Commission, reflecting our charitable status since 1996.

AIMS & LINKS: We aim to encourage awareness and understanding of our surroundings, and to give local people a say in Brixton's future. We cover a wide area of Central Lambeth, not just the "Town Centre" area recognised by the Council, but also much of Stockwell and Myatt's Fields. The Society is registered with the Civic Trust, London Forum of Amenity Societies and Lambeth Voluntary Action Council.

MANAGEMENT: The Executive Committee during the past year consisted of Glyn Kyle (Chair), Alan Piper, Rosemary Honey, Doye Akinlade, Bill and Diana Linskey, Barbara Davies, Norma Williamson, David Warner and Emilce Rees. Louise Peachey stood down due to work commitments in October. 7 ordinary committee meetings have been held since the previous AGM.

PROGRAMME & ACTIVITIES

EVENTS: Our *Impressions of Brixton* competition was a major commitment, culminating in December 2003 in a well-attended presentations evening at Brixton Tate Library. Prizes were awarded for writing, poetry and art in addition to photography. We are planning another such competition for 2005. We have also hosted occasional open meetings, and contributed guided walks to the Summer series jointly presented by member societies of the Lambeth Local History Forum.

OUTREACH: We were unable to respond to all invitations received, but in the course of 2003 we ran stalls at Myatts Fields Park Fair (June), Lambeth Country Show (July) and Lambeth Archives Open Day (September). We also try to deal with varied enquiries from students, media and family history researchers.

NETWORKING: We play an active part in several borough-wide or local organisations, including the Lambeth Local History Forum, the Lambeth Community Empowerment Network, the Brixton Area Forum and the Police/Community Consultative Group.

We provide representatives on the boards of several projects, including Brixton On-Line and LVAC. We have been developing links with the Black Heritage group based at Lambeth Small Business Growth Initiative and two of our summer walks were included in the "Destination Brixton" programme.

PLANNING: Consultation on the Council's Planning or Environment policies has been minimal in the past year, though a revised draft Unitary Development Plan is overdue. Our responses to individual planning applications have been limited by other pressures but we have tried to support local residents' groups in fighting unsuitable proposals.

PUBLICATIONS: Ongoing commitments are our quarterly newsletter and maintaining our website, which attracted support from the Stockwell Partnership. Several small booklets are in the pipeline and we need to plan for a reprint or revision of the *History of Brixton* as stocks run down.

RESOURCES

FINANCE: The accounts for the financial year to 31 March 2004 are summarised on the opposite page. Subscriptions and publications sales were down slightly from the previous year but the main difference was the competition costs, partly met by a Lottery grant of £4,481 received in 2002/3.

SUPPORT "IN KIND": With no premises or staff of our own, we are grateful to members who provide help or facilities such as distributing newsletters, staffing our stall at various events, storing books, archives or equipment, and attending many meetings of other bodies on our behalf.

MEMBERSHIP: Our mailing list has been around 250 for several years, and growth has mainly been among those now living further afield who want to keep in touch. Subscriptions were last increased at the 1998 AGM, and the 2004 AGM agreed to some changes to ensure that we at least cover the cost of producing and distributing our Newsletters, including to overseas members.

Alan Piper, Hon. Secretary.

Notes and News

Annual Accounts, Summary for year ended 31 March 2004

	2003/4	2002/3
Opening Balance:	£8871.95	£3959.80
INCOME		
Members' subscriptions:	465.50	521.00
Publications sales:	1393.56	1574.47
Donations:	423.64	69.65
Miscellaneous:	-	36.10
Postage on orders:	29.75	33.19
Bank interest:	6.95	7.43
Less Sales discounts:	(276.43)	(336.32)
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Sub-Total:	£2042.97	£ 6386.52
Opening Balance + income:	10914.92	10346.32
EXPENDITURE		
Photocopying:	2.05	4.20
Newsletter production:	305.40	376.30
Postage:	173.26	215.17
Stationery:	-	2.00
Printing publications:	88.50	-
Posters & leaflets:	3356.10	18.40
Exhibition & display costs:	51.00	157.50
Subscriptions & affiliations:	133.00	217.00
Meetings costs:	224.50	220.00
Photo printing:	-	127.75
Catering & Miscellaneous:	1597.92	116.05
Prizes:	645.00	20.00
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Total Expenditure:	£6576.73	£1474.37
Closing Balance:	£4338.19	£8871.95

Brixton Open Art Exhibition

The deadline is fast approaching for entries for the third year of the Brixton Open, promoted by the Bettie Morton Gallery – forms must reach the gallery at 62 Atlantic Road SW9 by 24 July. Art works can be delivered on 25, 27 or 28th, for selection on 31 July.

The aim is to provide a showcase for local artistic talent and promote the Brixton art scene on a national scale. The Exhibition itself runs from **1st to 30th September** at the Gallery (closed on Sunday am and Mondays). Further details from Anna Ochagavia, co-ordinator, on (020) 7733 5874.

Editorial Reminder

Opinions expressed in these pages are not necessarily those of the Brixton Society. Material for the Autumn issue should reach the Secretary by **1st September**.

Brockwell Park Update

Following the presentation to our meeting on 8th April, the next step was to be endorsement of the bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund by the Park's Management Advisory Committee on 30 July. In particular, a vision statement, working agreement and consultant's brief have all been worked out.

Brockwell Lido Barbie Night?

Arrangements for this summer's swimming have been tentative, but essentially the Lido is still being managed by Paddy and Casey until Fusion take over in the Autumn for the major revamp.

We have been trying to plan a member's get-together evening at the Lido for this summer, but due to the impending changes we were unable to confirm the date before going to press. We expect it to be a **Friday evening** early in **August**, probable cost £5. We should know details by the Country Show weekend, so you can ask in person on our stall, or e-mail to committee member Emilce Rees on emilcerees@hotmail.com

New Postcards on Sale at Lambeth Country Show

It has been a few years since we have added any new cards to our very popular range of reprinted Edwardian postcards. We are happy to announce that four new cards will be on sale at the Lambeth Country Show.



BX31 Opening of
Lambeth Town Hall

The first of these shows the opening of the Lambeth Town Hall in 1908. Many cards were produced showing this important event. The streets were full of bunting and when the Prince and Princess of Wales (the future King George V and Queen Mary) arrived to open the Town Hall in an open horse-drawn carriage, the streets were absolutely packed with people. Even the trams had to stop!



BX32 Five Views of Brockwell Park

Views of Brockwell Park are always popular; so why not five on one card?

We hope this "Greetings" card will prove a hit.

The photograph on our third card could well have been taken standing on the steps of the Town Hall. Electric Avenue runs between the tall buildings on the left. The rest of the buildings have all been replaced, on a building line much further forward than the one here. Of course, we still have a Prince of Wales pub, no longer right on the corner, but just slightly down Coldharbour Lane.



BX33 Brixton Road:
Prince of Wales Corner



BX34 Five Views of Brixton

Our last card is also a "Greetings" card. We already have a "Greetings from Brixton" card on our list (BX14), which has been so popular it is almost sold out. This is a different card showing five views of the Brixton town centre. Ideal to send to friends - but first, do take a walk through town and compare these images with the present day.

SPECIAL OFFER: all of our postcards cost 35p each or 3 for £1, plus 30p postage and packing if ordered by post. The above 4 cards are available by post for £1.50p (including P&P) if ordered before the end of August 2004. Send your cheque or postal order, made payable to "The Brixton Society" to 32 Stockwell Green, London, SW9 9HZ