

NEWSLETTER

Spring issue, April 2006

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Website: www.brixtonsociety.org.uk



Walk this Way...

The temperature is finally starting to climb and thoughts are turning to the summer season of guided heritage walks, presented jointly by Lambeth's amenity societies. We do not have the full list yet, but those we already know about are detailed inside. If that's not enough, may we mention some other providers?

Brixton Tours have been encouraging visitors to Brixton for the past 3 years. See website www.brixtontours.co.uk for more information, or phone Jay on 07 951 676 015 for bookings and prices.

The Original London Walks offer a wide selection of guided walks, mostly around Central London but occasionally venturing south of the river. Summer leaflet should be out by now, phone enquiries to (020) 7624 3978 or see www.walks.com

Active Walks are being promoted to get people off the sofa and taking gentle exercise in the company of others. Walk routes are mostly in local parks to highlight both heritage and the changing natural scene. Details on the Lambeth First website, www.lambethfirst.org.uk

The Five Parks Walk is being repeated this year, on 14 May, to raise funds for the Brockwell Park Heritage Lottery Appeal. This is a 7-mile self-guided route – see page 5 for details and contact.

More dates for other events inside!

Annual General Meeting Thursday 26 June

7-30 pm at the Vida Walsh Centre, 2b Saltoun Road, SW2 (Effra Road end, facing Windrush Square). An update on the issues we have pursued since last year, and a chance to tell us your views on what the Society's priorities should be for the year ahead.

How to contact us...

Editorial & Event Notices:

Material for the next issue should be sent by 11 June to the Secretary, Alan Piper, at 82 Mayall Road, SE24 0PJ, or e-mail to APiperBrix@aol.com or phone or fax to (020) 7207 0347.

We welcome news and comment from all interested in the Brixton area, so opinions expressed in these pages are not necessarily those of the Brixton Society.

Publications & Membership:

Publications orders, membership renewals and updates to the mailing list should all be sent to Diana Linskey, Membership Secretary, at 32 Stockwell Green, SW9 9HZ, or e-mail to wjdc1@globalnet.co.uk

Planning issues:

If you are concerned about a local planning application, contact David Warner at david@scriabin.force9.net or (020) 7924 0618, or write to him at 290 Coldharbour Lane, SW9 8SE.

23 May marks 200 years since the Act of Parliament which authorized the enclosure of Rush Common and other "waste" land in the Manor of Lambeth. A further Act in 1821 allowed a site for St. Mathew's Church, as seen below. More on page 6.



Brixton Society meeting dates

The following dates are for Executive Committee meetings, unless otherwise advised. All at 7-30 pm at the Vida Walsh Centre, 2b Saltoun Road, SW2. Contact the Secretary to check details.

- 13 April
- 11 May
- 13 July
- 14 September

Friends of Tate Library & Gardens

Meetings are normally held at 6 pm on the same dates as our committee meetings, listed above, again at the Vida Walsh Centre.

Brixton Area Forum

For meeting dates of the Forum and its working groups, contact the Town Centre office on (020) 7926 1077.

Links with other groups

We suggest checking with organisers in case of changes. Some events may be charged for, and most groups welcome donations in any case. Further entries to Alan Piper (Secretary) at 82 Mayall Road, SE24 0PJ, tel/fax (020) 7207 0347 APiperBrix@aol.com

Wednesday 12 April: Ballooning in South London:

An unusual slice of local history for an illustrated talk by Giles Camplin. 7-45 pm at Herne Hill URC Hall, c/o Redpost Hill and Herne Hill, SE24. *Herne Hill Society.*

Monday 17 April: Natural History of Streatham's Open Spaces

A talk by Dr Iain Boulton of Lambeth Environment Services. 8 pm at Woodlawns, Streatham Darby & Joan Club, 16 Leigham Court Road, SW16.

Streatham Society.

Wednesday 19 April: Clapham Merchants and their plant collecting

Ken Cozens of the Greenwich Maritime Institute on the botanical networks used by several Clapham businessmen in the 18th century.

7-30 for 8 pm at Clapham Manor Primary School, Belmont Road, SW4. *Clapham Society.*

Friday 21 April: Volunteering

Developing the blueprint for a volunteer centre for Lambeth, workshop day at YMCA, 40 Stockwell Road, SW9, 10-30 am to 4-30 pm. Bookings to kim@lambethvac.org.uk or Eli on 020 7737 9473. *Lambeth Voluntary Action Council.*



Sunday 23 April: Brockwell Park

Spring nature walk, starting 2-30 pm from the Clock Tower in the centre of the Park.

Friends of Brockwell Park

Sunday 30 April: Spring Plants & Gardens Fair

Plants on sale from 20+ specialist nurseries, from 10-30 am to 5 pm at the Museum of Garden History, Lambeth Palace Road, SE1. Admission £3 (concessions £2.50). *Museum of Garden History.*

Monday 1st May: Mayday Funday

Stalls and activities in Tate Library Gardens and Windrush Square for Bank Holiday Monday. Offers of stalls or activities to Sarah Slater at (020) 7652 3000 or FTLG@sarahslater.co.uk

Thursday 4th May: Animation Night

An evening of locally-made films, 7-30 for 8 pm, upstairs at the Crown & Greyhound, Dulwich Village, SE21. Admission £3 (concessions £2). Enquiries for this and other film evenings to doghatdavid@yahoo.com or (020) 8299 9918 or see www.village-film.co.uk *Dog & Hat Film Club.*

Sunday 7th May: Cemetery Tour

Meet 2-30 pm inside Cemetery main gate, corner of Norwood High Street and Robson Road, SE27. Tours repeated on 1st Sunday of Summer months. *Friends of West Norwood Cemetery.*

Tuesday 9th May: London's Tudor & Stuart Playhouses

Talk by Simon Blatherwick, 7-30 pm (refreshments served from 7 pm) at 106 The Cut, SE1 (almost opposite the Old Vic). £1 for non-members.

Southwark & Lambeth
Archaeological Society.

**Saturday 13 May:
Sir Henry Tate's
House & Garden**

An opportunity to see Sir Henry Tate's garden and the outside of his old home, Park Hill. Tours at 2-30 & 3-30 pm, meet at the lodge gates, Henry Tate Mews, Streatham Common North, SW16.
Streatham Society.

**Sunday 14 May:
Five Parks Walk**

Depart from outside Brockwell Hall in the centre of Brockwell Park at 10-30 am, taking in Ruskin and Dulwich Parks, Sydenham Hill Woods, Belair and back to Brockwell, 7 miles in all. Charge £5 (under 16, £2, under 10 free) in aid of Brockwell Park Heritage Lottery Appeal. Details from Andy Walker af.walker@ntlworld.com or 020 7274 5780.
Friends of Brockwell Park

**Sunday 14 May:
Lambeth's
Norwood Corner**

Beating the bounds of Lambeth on a guided walk led by Doreen Heath & Alan Piper. Meet at 2-30 pm outside Crystal Palace Park gates at the corner of Crystal Palace Parade and Anerley Hill.
Lambethans Society.

**Thursday 18 May:
Digging up the Past**

The story of London's archaeology, recounted by Brian Bloice. 8 pm at the Phoenix Centre, Westow Street, SE19.
Norwood Society (local history research group)

**Sunday 21 May:
Dulwich Local
History Walk**

Led by Brian Green, £3 charge. Meet at 2 pm at entrance to Cox's Walk, corner of Lordship Lane and Dulwich Common, SE21.
Dulwich Society (part of the Dulwich Festival).

**Saturday 10 June:
Open Squares Day**

Displays and activities in Tate Library Gardens and in Brixton Tate Library itself, as part of London Open Garden Squares Weekend. Activities outside will be 2 – 4 pm.
Friends of Tate Library & Gardens.

**Sunday 11 June:
Waterloo East**

Beating the bounds of Lambeth on a guided walk led by Alan Piper. Meet at 2-30 pm at the corner of Waterloo Road and The Cut, opposite the front of the Old Vic.
Lambethans Society.

**17 & 18 June:
South London
Green Fair**

Brockwell Park, including Midsummer Feast on Sunday at 1 pm (details from FoBP, PO Box 27810, SE24 9WN or see www.brockwellpark.com) Part of *London Sustainability Weeks.*

**8 & 9 July – Crystal
Palace Victorian
weekend:**

Traditional sideshows & stalls each day, sited near Thicket Road gate (Penge end of Crystal Palace Park).
The Crystal Palace Foundation.

**15 & 16 July -
Lambeth Country
Show**

Brockwell Park, 11 am to 6 pm daily (more details to follow).
Lambeth Council.

**Sunday 13 August:
Greenwich Walk**

Meet at 2-30 pm below Greenwich DLR station, Waller Way, off Greenwich High Road, SE10, for guided walk led by Alan Piper.
Lambethans Society.

**Sunday 10 Sept.
House History Walk**

A guided walk to show a range of house types from the past 200 years, led by Alan Piper. Meet 2-30 pm outside Herne Hill Station, Railton Road SE24.
The Brixton Society.

**16 & 17 September
- London Open
House weekend**

London-wide, with a wide variety of buildings open to the public (more details to follow).

**Saturday 30 Sept.
Archives Open Day**

(date & details to be confirmed) Annual open day at Lambeth Archives, Minet Library, Knatchbull Road, SE5.
Lambeth Archives.

**Sunday 8 October:
Old Richmond**

Walk led by blue badge guide Rosemary Honey. Meet at 2-30 pm at the entrance to Richmond Station (District Line & National Rail).
Lambethans Society.

LAMBETH SAVINGS AND CREDIT UNION

In October 2004, we published an article on the formation of a Credit Union in Lambeth. Since then, efforts have been geared towards registration of the Union with the Financial Services Authority (FSA). The Acts of Parliament, Credit Union Act 1979 and the Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1965 regulate all Credit Unions.

Contrary to the initial name of Lambeth Credit Union that we published then, the name has now changed to Lambeth Savings and Credit Union to reflect the activities of the Union.

I can now confirm that approval has been given to Lambeth Savings and Credit Union by the Financial Services Authority to start trading as a financial house accepting deposits and offering low cost loans to its members.

Lambeth Savings and Credit Union has now moved to its own premises. It opened its doors for business on February 7, 2006. The address is 244b Brixton Hill, SW2. This is just past New Park Road, between The Telegraph Pub and Apollo video rental shop.

The Press launch of the Lambeth Savings and Credit Union was held at the National Theatre, Waterloo, on March 23rd.

For further information and how to become a member, please visit the premises.

The telephone number is 020 3256 0000, E-mail; lscu@lscu.org.uk.

Remember, it is your money, it is your Credit Union!

Doye Akinlade.

Up Your Street?

Arlingford and Brailsford Roads are situated a few minutes away from Brixton Town Centre. Our streets contain a dense mix of people from diverse cultural backgrounds, social groups and age ranges. Arlingford and Brailsford have suffered from immense environmental deterioration and as a result have encountered problems of dumped cars, graffiti, broken paving, cracked paint-work and damaged fencing.

Working in partnership with Council bodies such as the Community Safety Team, Environmental Services and the local Neighbourhood Housing Office, ABRA were able to hold an event called "Operation Freshen-up". This event alleviated the problem for a few days and brought members of the local community closer together.

In ABRA's next phase to further develop community spirit and to give our streets an environmental face-lift, we held an event called "Streets in Bloom" on Sunday 10 April last year. This event was part of Lambeth's new initiative called Estates in Bloom. ABRA encouraged residents to take part. About 40 residents attended, taking free donations of pots, plants etc. Refreshments were also provided.

Following this event, ABRA have seen a 30% rise in the amount of plant decoration along the street, which adds a good sense of community spirit and encourages environmentally friendly attitudes. Our next planned event is a street party, where we look forward to meeting more local people.

*Marcia Cameron, Secretary,
Arlingford Brailsford Residents Assn.*

Marciacameron1@yahoo.co.uk

From Soweto to Brixton

Members of Soweto Small Business Executive Council met with members of the Brixton Business Forum on Friday 24th February.

Thirty years after the Soweto Uprising that initiated the final push that consigned Apartheid to the dustbin of history, twenty five years after the Brixton uprisings that set off a nation-wide upsurge that turned "coloured immigrants" into Black Britons, representatives of the two communities came together to discuss and compare their experiences, and looked forward to the prospects for the future and considered what plans and programmes could bring them into being.

Following in the footsteps of Nelson Mandela, they visited key sites and local landmarks such as Railton Road "Front-Line" where the 1981 troubles began, and Brixton's street market and arcades to meet local business people and residents and share experiences.

They were first welcomed to Brixton Tate Library and then an official welcome at Lambeth Town Hall by the Mayor, Daphne Marchant, and the chair of the Brixton Area Committee, Councillor Donatus Anyanwu. They then visited the Brixton Recreation Centre, the Karibu Education Centre and the Angell Town Community, all models of enterprise and community development. The day was rounded off with a reception and tour around the offices of the Gleaner/ Voice Media Group.

They displayed their products and services and had networking sessions with local small business owners and professionals from the creative industries. Tourism, entertainment, education, healthcare, construction, services and sports sectors. Many good contacts were cemented and

orders worth several thousand pounds were made.

This event is part of a programme to build business and institutional links between communities for the purpose of mutual development. Delegations will be visiting South Africa later this year, and a trade fair and expo is planned for 2007. This initiative was pioneered by North-West London Chamber of Commerce, supported by Harrow and Brent Councils. Brixton Business Forum have been invited to become partners and Lambeth Council are considering supporting it. For more information, contact Devon Thomas on 07 931 485 896 or e-mail Devon.thomas@btinternet.com

*Devon Thomas,
adapted from BBF Press Release.*



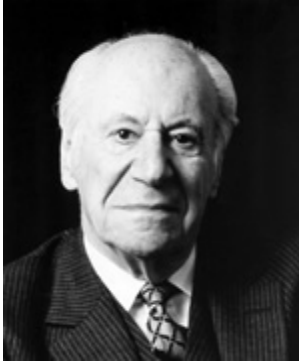
The second edition of the Wallzine will be out this month. Issue 1 drew its style and ideas from the 19th century and related Urbanism to Victorian events – there was a lot to read.

Issue 2 takes the bait from our creative predecessors between the two World Wars. Critical of complacency and full of ideas that still resonate, they have inspired the Wallzine's second poster page. This contains elements of chance, reversal and anomaly, often represented in collage. It features clamorous workers, industrial production and a perpetually fragile future – there are a lot of pictures.

You can order a free copy at the website being developed at www.thewallzine.com, or by e-mail to editrice@thewallzine.com Or you can get the next 2 issues by sending a £5 cheque to "Apt Associations" at 9 Hereford House, Rushcroft Road, London SW2 1LQ.

Lord Mishcon

1915 - 2006



*Lord Mishcon QC
Founder, Mishcon de Reya*

Victor Mishcon, was born in Brixton, on August 14 1915 ten years after his father became Rabbi of the Brixton Synagogue. He went to Dulwich College Preparatory School and then attended the City of London School. He qualified as a solicitor and in 1937 established his own firm, Victor Mishcon & Co, in Brixton.

He was one of the lawyers who represented Ruth Ellis, the last woman to be hanged in Britain (in 1955), supporting the campaign to have her death sentence reversed.

In 1988 Victor Mishcon & Co merged with Bartletts de Reya and became Mishcon de Reya.

Created a Labour life peer in 1978, Lord Mishcon combined a successful career in the law with over

60 years of public service. His work in local government in London included the chairmanship of the LCC in 1954 followed by service on the GLC as member for Lambeth. In the 1960s he was a member of the ILEA.

In the House of Lords, he rose to be opposition spokesman on home affairs (1983 – 1990) and on legal affairs, in effect shadow Lord Chancellor, (1983-1992). He sat on many distinguished House of Lords committees.

His numerous contributions to public policy included serving on the Wolfenden Committee, which led to the decriminalisation of homosexuality. He sat on the board of the National Theatre and the London Orchestra Board. He served on the governing bodies of many schools and Jewish organisations.

Lord Victor Mishcon of Lambeth (a donor to the Brixton Society) died on 27 January 2006.

Norma Williamson (based on Mishcon de Reya Website, Daily Telegraph)

Rush Common 1806-2006

The 18th and 19th centuries saw many areas of common or waste land being enclosed in the name of "Improvement", usually at the initiative of the Lord of the Manor, who would seek authority by a private Act of Parliament. The "Inclosure Act" for the Manor of

Lambeth would have been the same as many others, except that special provisions were included for laying out new roads and for preventing buildings encroaching too close to certain roads, including the Turnpike Road to Croydon, now known as Brixton Road and Brixton Hill.

The Building Lines laid down in the Act have continued to apply and as a result have greatly influenced the layout of both Brixton Town Centre and the roads leading south from it. Within the restricted areas, any "erections above the surface of the earth" require express permission. In general this has resulted in green corridors of long front gardens alongside Brixton Hill, Effra Road etc. but during the rapid development of Brixton in the last quarter of the 19th century, some landowners succeeded in evading the restrictions, with lasting effects.

In 1947 the London County Council obtained powers to enforce the Act, and this is now administered by Lambeth Council as part of the Town Planning process. Most of the "proscribed" land is still privately owned and there is no public right of access, but over the past 50 years public authorities have bought sections and laid them out as public open space. In Central Brixton this process began 100 years ago with Lady Tate buying the plot in front of the Library and presenting it to the care of the Council, which also took on the care

Local History Focus

of St. Matthew's Church-yard in the late 1930s.

It should be remembered that the original Commons had a different purpose to our modern parks and open spaces. In 1806, the whole of Brixton Road ran through a rural district, and tenants of the manor would have used Rush Common, Norwood Common (and various odd pieces of grass verge in between) for grazing their animals and gathering firewood, and only incidentally for sports or their children's play. Use was limited to the manor's own tenants – if you lived on the west side of Brixton Hill, you were meant to use Stockwell Common. If your cow was found on another manor's common, it could be impounded until a fine was paid (not unlike modern parking controls!).

When the land was enclosed, it was divided between the lord and his tenants in proportion to the amount of land that they already held from the manor. So enclosure was probably harder for the tenant of a small cottage who might no longer have enough land to keep a cow.

However, a valuable record survives from the enclosure process in the form of a large map identifying every field in the manor, who owned it and which bits of the common land were passed to them. It is clear though that there must have been a lot of rapid exchanges and sales of the odd little triangles of land in order to create proper

building plots for the first developments which took place from about 1810 onwards.

We will be displaying some more material on the history of Rush Common during the Open Garden Squares weekend in June, and on our stall at other events later in the year.

Alan Piper.



Freemans Site

New proposals are to be launched shortly for the large Freemans Mail Order warehouse on Clapham Road. A new developer, Garbe, is now working with the German owners of Otto UK, the parent company of Freemans. Squire & Partners are their new architects, tasked with overcoming previous objections around parking, traffic, building height and privacy, security and the mix of uses within this large site. Their draft ideas were the subject of an exhibition in the 1930s section of the complex for 3 evenings in March.

For years English Heritage have been keen to retain the 200-year old house at the north end of the main road frontage, and earlier plans were based on keeping most of the late

Victorian industrial building that dominates the frontage. The later extensions at the rear would be replaced by new residential buildings, and sadly the little 1930s link block looks threatened too – not quite old enough to have any champions yet?

The first floor front room of the 1930s block, 137 Clapham Road (shown on the left) will be the venue for exhibiting the new design in **MAY**.

The Architect's presentation will be 6 pm to 8 pm on Tuesday 9th, with the design on view until Saturday 13th. Times are 12 noon to 8 pm on Wednesday & Thursday, 6 pm closure on Friday, and 10 am to 1 pm Saturday.

Revitalise?

At present the Council is busy with the proposals for Clapham Manor Pool and options for Mary Seacole House in Clapham Road, all squarely in the territory of the Clapham Society. We understand that attention is likely to turn to Brixton - and in particular the Recreation Centre – around July or later, and we will try to keep you informed.

Due to pressure on space this time, we have held back some other history material for the July issue.

Missing something?

Back Numbers of most Newsletters in the past decade are still available – contact the Secretary (as on front page).

STOCKWELL VILLAGE ASSOCIATION

The recently-formed Stockwell Village Association is a residents' group for the historic heart of Stockwell: the green and the surrounding area. Its objectives might well be summed up by American lyricist Jonny Mercer's famous phrase, "accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative". Sadly, there are too many negatives, such as fly-tipping, causing local concern which they hope to address. However, the Association also wants to take a positive role in fostering a community spirit, building on the many good things about living in the area.

On the 16th March it organised an open evening in Hammerton Hall which was a great success. The would-be developers of the Quadrant Site (see below) attended, as did local councillors, Lambeth's Conservation Officer and the Director of the Stockwell Partnership. The



Brixton Society helped fund the event and mounted a display about the Society and the Stockwell area. The Association provided refreshments and an "issues board" for people to post up their concerns. This was the first real opportunity for people to join the new Association and many did so. Further information from treasurer@stockwellvillage.org.uk

THE QUADRANT SITE

One impetus for the formation of a local group was the proposal to re-develop the Quadrant Site. This is on the corner of Stockwell Green and Lingham Street and is the site



of the former Stockwell Brewery. The proposal involves building nearly 300 flats together with some retail and light industrial units. The developers explained their proposals to local people using both display boards and a model. Naturally, such a large-scale development has raised many concerns; parking and traffic being not the least of them. However, there has been a positive response overall with most people being in favour of the idea of re-developing the existing site which does nothing for the area. Therefore

the Association is not opposing the planning application but is asking for a number of important safeguards to be incorporated in the planning consent.

GOOGLE EARTH

At the Association's event, many people were interested to see a detailed, aerial view of the Quadrant Site. This was obtained from Google Earth, an amazing piece of free software available from Google at: <http://earth.google.com/>. Once downloaded and installed, it could not be easier to use. Simply put your postcode into the "Fly to" box and sit back and be amazed.



Bill Linskey