

NEWSLETTER

Spring issue, April 2007

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Website: www.brixtonsociety.org.uk



Colour Supplement inside!

A souvenir is included with this issue, from our bicentenary event in Tate Library Gardens on Sunday 25 March.

Congratulations...

We are pleased to report that Sarah Slater is to receive one of Lambeth's Civic Awards, in recognition of her efforts in organizing the series of events in Tate Library Gardens over the last 2 years.

We are continuing to pursue funding for further events, and approval has just been received from Capital Community Foundation of a grant for after-school handicraft sessions for children at Brixton Tate Library.

On a more flippant note, we once again entered a team for the Mayor of Lambeth's Charity Quiz Night in February – and this time we actually won!

Spreading the Word

Producing and distributing a printed newsletter is a ponderous process when it's done in members' spare time, so it's always possible that an event has already happened by the time you read about it, or that arrangements have changed since we first heard about it.

Those of you with internet access have two ways to avoid this problem. You can check our website occasionally (address above) for any new events we hear about, or for advance news stories.

Secondly, if we know your e-mail address, we can alert you directly about any late changes or extra events. We have difficulty keeping pace with members e-mail addresses, so please remember to tell us if it changes.

Help us to keep you in the picture by e-mailing our Membership Secretary with your current or preferred e-address – to Diana Linskey, wjdc1@globalnet.co.uk

Open Garden Squares Weekend, 9/10 June:

Tate Library Gardens

Saturday 9th June, 2 pm to 5 pm

This will be a lively family event with free face-painting, refreshments, live music and lots of local colour. Contributions welcome for our plant stall, and volunteers will be wanted to help on the day – please contact Sarah Slater on (020) 7652 3000.

Tickets & guidebooks will also be on sale for the private squares around London which are opening during this weekend.

East Brixton Walk

Sunday 10 June, 2-30 pm

Meet outside Loughborough Junction Station, Coldharbour Lane, SW9/ SE5, for guided walk led by Alan Piper.

More walks dates inside...

Annual General Meeting

Thursday 14 June, 7-30 pm

7 pm for 7-30 at the Vida Walsh Centre, 2b Saltoun Road, SW2

We will bring you up to date with local developments and various community-led projects we have supported. And we are keen to hear all members' views on our priorities for the year ahead.

Lambeth Country Show

Weekend, 21/22 July

11 am to 7 pm daily in Brockwell Park.

As usual, we will have a stall – and as usual we are asking members to spare us an hour or two so we can staff it through the weekend. Offers to Glyn Kyle (Chair) on 020 7326 5070. In any case, we hope you will all stop off at our stall and renew your subscription!

Local Police Teams Established

There is now a dedicated local police team working in every council ward in the borough.

The Safer Neighbourhoods teams, which are made up of three police officers and three Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs), spend most of their time out on patrol and meeting local people.

The borough is divided into 21 council wards, and by having a team in each one it gives them a chance to respond to local concerns.

Your Safer Neighbourhoods team wants to hear from you. If your call is not answered, please do leave a telephone message or send them an email. A member of the team will get back to you.

Safer Neighbourhood teams are not there to provide a 24-hour response, as this is the role of response team officers. Remember in an emergency you should dial 999. If you wish to report a crime, contact your local police station. More information is available on the website at: www.met.police.uk/Lambeth

Contact details for the teams in our area:

Brixton Hill

Tel: 020 8721 2892 or 07881 510272
Email: BrixtonHill.snt@met.police.uk

Coldharbour

Tel: 020 8649 2008 or 07843 065917
Email: Coldharbour.snt@met.police.uk

Ferndale

Tel: 020 8721 2774 or 07766 990785
Email: Ferndale.snt@met.police.uk

Herne Hill

Tel: 0208 649 2007 or 07881 511386
Email: HerneHill.snt@met.police.uk

Tulse Hill

Tel: 020 8721 2624 or 07920 233838
Email: TulseHillsnt@met.police.uk

Vassall

Tel: 020 8721 3661 or 07843 065918
Email: Vassall.snt@met.police.uk

Larkhall

Tel: 020 8649 2522 or 07920 233837
Email: Larkhall.snt@met.police.uk

Stockwell

Tel: 020 8649 2533 or 07920 233836
Email: Stockwell.snt@met.police.uk

BRIXTON REC. FUTURE

After a few years of uncertainty, the Recreation Centre is being retained, albeit under new management – Greenwich Leisure took control this month, but first the Centre is closed for 3 months for long-overdue refurbishment. Consultation with user groups and residents has been on the traditional basis - very limited and left till after key decisions have been made.

LAST POST FOR SE24?

Rumours have been confirmed and the Sorting Office at Herne Hill is closing down this month. Residents will now have to collect any underpaid mail or bulky items from the SE5 sorting office in Camberwell Station Road – but the Station opposite the office closed 60 years ago, so you will have to take a bus ride instead!

Since your Secretary and Chair are both residents of SE24, can

we ask you to take extra care to put the correct postage on anything you send us – postal rates increased again from 2nd April – and to keep it to a size that will fit the letterbox if possible. Failure to do so means more of our time being taken up with longer trips to collect any stray post.

Now you know why we try to deliver most Newsletters in the local area by hand!

Renton Close, Brixton Hill

Renton Close Tenants & Residents Association are planning to celebrate the 100th anniversary of our small estate this year. Renton Close is situated on the corner of Jebb Avenue and Brixton Hill.

Having done some research we believe our buildings, now owned by Lambeth Housing, were built by the London County Council as artisans' dwellings and first occupied in 1907. Originally called Briscoe Buildings, the name was changed to Renton Close in the 1960s.

Our research so far at London Metropolitan Archives has found original architectural drawings, a wonderful photograph of residents outside the buildings taken in the summer of 1907, and also records of a dispute between the LCC and Lambeth Council over the space in front of the estate. This dispute is also recorded in records of Council meetings in 1905/06 in Lambeth Archives at the Minet Library.

Do any of your members have any more information about the buildings? We intend that most of our celebrations will take place over the summer months, and would welcome any further info, sources of photos or other help with our history that you can offer. We will be putting up a display in our community rooms on the estate as part of our celebrations.

We also plan to involve children and young people on the estate in researching our history.

*Jean Kerrigan,
Chair, Renton Close TRA
(020) 8674 9247
rentonclose@btopenworld.com*

It sounds as if Jean has already tapped into the main sources that we would suggest, but our April 2003 issue quoted the LCC's purchase of the site 100 years prior.

South London Murders

Peter de Loriol has sent us publication details for his book that we featured last time: price is £12.99, ISBN 978-07509-4426-7, published by Sutton Publishing (now part of NPI Media).



70 years of Brockwell Lido

This year sees the 70th anniversary of the opening of Brockwell Park's Lido on 10 July 1937. Brockwell Lido Users (BLU) are staging several events this summer to mark the anniversary, starting during the Lambeth Country Show weekend, when there will be a photo exhibition and interactive poetry in the Lido marquee.

Buildings and Memories

My name is Paula Naughton. I am an artist living in Brixton. I am currently studying for an MA in fine art at Central St.Martin's. I am working on a project about "Home" and what it means to us. It is about buildings that represent a past, often a forgotten past. The project involves informally chatting to people about their memories around their home.

I want this project to be based in Brixton. It is a wonderful area, diverse in its culture and history, that has become "Home" for many people from all walks of life. I would like to meet with a community group – or groups – who would be interested in telling me about their memories around Home. The project will be manifested through an exhibition show at Central St.Martin's in August.

See my website at www.pollywoggs.net for examples of previous work. I hope to hear from you soon.

*Paula Naughton,
Tel. 07 904 447 703 or e-mail:
pollywoggs@gmail.com*

Defending Electric Avenue shopfronts

When Index Books closed their shop in Electric Avenue, it was taken over for a wet fish shop. The new owners ripped out the old shopfronts, put in roller shutters instead and fixed air conditioning units above, all despite it being in a Conservation Area. Applying after the event, their planning permission was refused and we are pleased to report that an Appeal has also just been refused, so now they are obliged to reinstate the shopfront.

Alan Piper.

Brixton Society meeting dates

The Executive Committee usually meets on the second Thursday of the month to plan activities and agree our responses to local developments. All meetings 7-30 pm at the **Vida Walsh Centre** 2b Saltoun Road, SW2. Contact the Secretary to confirm details.

- **12 April**
- **10 May**
- **14 June (AGM)**
- **12 July**
- **13 September**
- **11 October**
(open meeting)
- **8 November.**

Friends of Tate Library & Gardens

Meetings are normally held at 6-30 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 or e-mail to: PAMathie@lambeth.gov.uk

Summer Walks Programme

Again Lambeth's amenity societies are putting on a series of guided walks in and around the borough, in effect now from Easter to October. Several of the nearer ones are listed here, and details of most others will go on our website as they become available. A printed list will also be available from libraries or via participating societies before the end of May.

Links with other groups

We suggest checking with organisers in case of changes since these details reached us. Some events may be charged for, and most groups welcome donations.

Thursday 19 April – Brockwell Park in Times Past:

A talk by Robert Holden, 8 pm at the Phoenix Centre, Westow Street, SE19. *Norwood Society (local history group).*

Sunday 22 April – Brockwell Park History Walk:

Meet at **2 pm** at the Clock Tower in the centre of the Park. *Friends of Brockwell Park.*

Wednesday 25 April – Tree House:

Will Anderson describes his experience building an "eco-house" around a large sycamore tree on a restricted site in Lyham Road, SW2. 7-30 for 8 pm start at Clapham Manor Primary School, Belmont Road, SW4. *Clapham Society.*

Saturday 28 April – Training for Tours:

To boost the number of guides able to show people over Brixton Windmill, the Friends are holding a training day at St.Saviour's Church Hall, off Blenheim Gardens, SW2. If interested, contact Adrian Garden (Chair) on (020) 8674 1610 or at: adriangarden@aol.com *Friends of Windmill Gardens.*

Tuesday 1st May – Community/ Police Consultative Group

6 pm at Lambeth Town Hall – confirm with CPCG office on (020) 7733 0878 or by e-mail to: admin@lambethcpcg.org.uk *Lambeth CPCG.*

Saturday 5th May – Henry Tate Gardens

Tours at 2-30 & 3-30 pm of the gardens of Park Hill, home of Sir Henry Tate from 1880 to 1899. Meet at entrance gate on Streatham Common North, near junction with Leigham Court Road, SW16. *Streatham Society.*

Sunday 6th May – Cemetery Tour

Guided tours of West Norwood cemetery take place on the 1st Sunday of the month during the summer, meet at 2-30 pm at the main gate in Norwood Road, SE27 (donations £1). *Friends of West Norwood Cemetery.*

Tuesday 8th May – St.George the Martyr, Southwark:

Bruce Watson reports on recent excavations around this 18th century church. 7 pm for 7-30 start at the Housing Co-op Hall, 106 The Cut, SE1 (almost opposite The Old Vic). *Southwark & Lambeth Archaeological Society.*

Sunday 13 May – Five Parks Walk:

Meet at 10 am by Brockwell Hall, Brockwell Park, for this self-guided 7-mile walk around local parks. Charge £5 (£2 under 16) in aid of the Park Lottery appeal. *Friends of Brockwell Park*

Wednesday 16 May – Brixton Business Forum AGM:

6-30 pm at Karibu Centre in Gresham Road, SW9. (details from Brixton Town Centre office).

Saturday 19 May – Lambeth Orchestra:

Concert comprising Bax's Tintagel overture, Frederic Cliffe's Violin Concerto and the 3rd Symphony by Rutland Boughton. 7-30 pm at St. Luke's Church. West Norwood, SE27. www.lambeth-orchestra.org.uk
The Lambeth Orchestra.

Monday 21 May – Natural History of Streatham's Open Spaces:

Illustrated talk by Dr Iain Boulton of Lambeth Environment Services, 8 pm at The Woodlawns Centre, 16 Leigham Court Road, Streatham SW16. *Streatham Society.*

22 May to 15 July – Artists' Self-Portraits

A collection ranging from Velazquez to Chagall, on loan from the Uffizi Gallery in Florence. Entry to gallery & special exhibition £8 (£7 seniors, children free), closed Mondays. *Dulwich Picture Gallery.*

Sunday 3rd June – Brockwell Park Trees Celebration:

Meet at 2 pm at the Clock Tower in the centre of the Park, for dedication of newly-planted trees. *Friends of Brockwell Park.*

Wednesday 27 June – Dulwich fields and woods:

Evening guided walk led by Brian Green, meet at 7 pm in Belair Park car park, Gallery Road SE21 (near W. Dulwich Station) *Dulwich Society.*

22 June to 1st July – South London Independent Film Festival:

The 3rd annual festival is growing out of its original Dulwich base – a new strand this year is Brixton Voices, a celebration and showcase of films made by and for people living in Brixton, reflecting their lives and experiences. The organisers are now inviting submissions of films to be shown during the Festival, and are also keen to hear from filmmakers, community projects and colleges who want to run events or workshops under the Festival banner. Details from Lisa Howells on 07 961 989 527 or at www.village-films.co.uk
Village Films.

Saturday 30 June & Sunday 1st July – Victorian Weekend

11 am to 5 pm each day in Crystal Palace Park, near the Penge gate. In past years we have been able to sell some of our publications here through co-operation with the Lambethans Society, so if you can help out on either day, please contact Alan Piper (see right). *Crystal Palace Foundation*

Later Events

We should have further details in our next issue, but please note the dates in your diary now:

Brixton Splash – Sunday 5 August, 12 to 7 pm around Coldharbour Lane/ Electric Avenue.

Clapham Park & Brixton Hill Walk, Sunday 9th September.

London Open House w/e – 15/16 September,

Lambeth Archives Open Day – Saturday 29 September.

Christmas Lights switch-on – Friday evening, 30 November.

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 phone or fax to (020) 7207 0347, or e-mail to: APiperBrix@aol.com
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 go 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 on (020) 7924 0618 or by post to 290 Coldharbour Lane, SW9 8SE or to: david@scriabin.force9.net

How can we help with... Managing your Community Project

The Society is currently represented on a wide range of organizations, including official consultation bodies and a variety of management committees and steering groups.

In some cases, this is because we are anxious to influence official policy or proposals. More often, we have been invited in order to share past experience or strengthen the credibility of a community initiative.

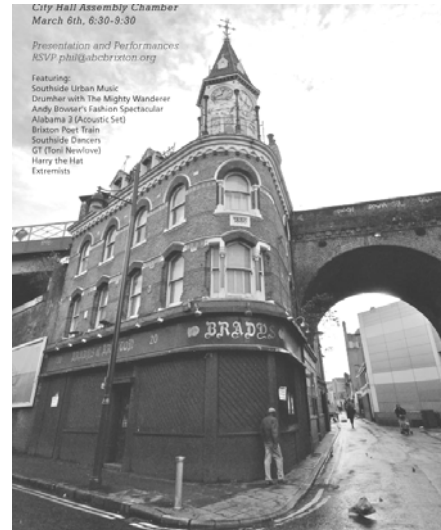
We cannot always contribute as fully as we would like to all these bodies, and some deserving projects have had only fleeting attention.

Our representatives are drawn from our own committee members. We try to maintain continuity, but it is necessary to share the workload and the Chair or Secretary cannot be available for every meeting.

A substantial part of each of our own committee meetings is normally devoted to reporting back from the various meetings and bodies that we have been involved with. This allows representatives to share matters of concern and seek guidance if required.

To inform our wider membership and invite their comments, this Newsletter will occasionally carry progress reports from projects - typically when a milestone is achieved or new proposals are unveiled - and most likely, when the group provides the article!

We are keen to encourage efforts by local communities to improve their surroundings and amenities. We will try to pass on relevant contacts and share experience. We will urge you to build links and alliances with other local groups, rather than compete for resources.



How supportive any of us can be will also depend on being kept informed of the current issues facing the organization. We know that distributing minutes and papers is a major task in itself, but having some background information before your meeting allows each of us to contribute more to the cause.

Remember that our representatives are not committed to follow a particular "party" line and you should not rely on us to support a particular individual or faction without question.

Each of us brings different skills and experience, and viewpoints often reflect where in the wider Brixton area we live, and what local amenities or services we use. Sometimes we can contribute professional skills or suggest ideas that we have seen elsewhere.

Our interests give us a longer historical perspective, and the Society itself has been around for over 30 years, so sometimes we see the same proposals coming round again.

Sometimes too, it falls to community representatives on public bodies to point out when the Emperor has no clothes – it may not be welcomed but if we did not, there would be no point in being there!

Alan Piper.

Brixton Pubs - a brief guide

For a major transport interchange and busy shopping centre, Brixton has fewer pubs than might be expected, but these include two of great quality, though somewhat different characters.

One is the **Beehive**, a Wetherspoon pub in the main street, providing an interesting range of beers at a reasonable price. Unusually for this chain, it has piped music, installed at the customers' request.

In contrast, the **Trinity Arms** in Trinity Gardens, a Young's house, has no speaker system, and on a recent visit, even the television set was not in use. Once a three-bar pub, the Trinity is now an open-plan saloon surrounding a central serving area. In addition to Young's beers, it serves Bombardier bitter from the Charles Wells brewery in Bedford, where the two companies now operate as a joint venture, following the recent closure of the Young's brewery in Wandsworth.

The largest pub in Brixton is the **Goose**, once part of the Firkin chain, sited in the narrow part of Brixton Road, just north of the railway bridge. Televised sport is dominant here, and on a recent visit, the handpumps normally serving draught beer were out of use, indicating some mismatch between demand and supply. Could try harder, one might say.

Looking further afield, but still within Brixton Society territory, the **Landor** in Landor Road (near Clapham North tube station) has an upstairs theatre and a function room. It stocks guest beers as well as Fuller's London Pride and Greene King IPA.

Then there are two gems in Stockwell, although the immediate

area around the tube station is a beer desert, dominated by the enormous **Swan**, which now consists of a windowless ground floor bar and an upstairs music room, usually hosting sessions by "tribute groups".

Those who explore past the bus garage towards the Wandsworth Road are rewarded by the welcome sight of the **Priory Arms** at 83 Lansdowne Way, a genuine free house offering a range of traditional beers as well as Harveys bitter from Lewes, Adnames from Southwold and Summer Lightning from the Hop Back brewery in Salisbury. Meals are served at lunchtime and in the evening.

A few minutes walk further on from the Priory is the **Surprise**, a Young's house in Southville, just off the Wandsworth Road. A small pub of great character, it's at the end of a cul-de-sac which leads straight into Larkhall Park, providing an outdoor drinking area. The Surprise is also free from piped music.

Of the pubs listed above, all but the Goose are in the current edition of the Good Beer Guide, published annually by the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) and most appear regularly in the guide. The Priory Arms has been in every edition since 1992 and the Trinity Arms in every one since 2000.

On the negative side, the former **Railway Hotel** in Atlantic Road (subsequently Brady's, shown on left above) which closed in 1999, remains boarded up, as reported in the Newsletter last September. A sad state of affairs, to put it mildly.

Rod Prince.

We hear that the campaign to re-open the Railway Hotel is continuing and getting some positive signals from Lambeth Council – enquiries to: info@abcbrixton.org

Climate Change Way to go?

In the case of Lambeth there is still a long way to go in making the borough "green" in the widest sense, but the issues have at least moved up the political agenda. For several years Lambeth has held a Green Fair to showcase good practice but traditionally it's been conducted in semi-secrecy. Early last year the Council adopted the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change, and this February held a well-attended mini-conference in addition to the usual exhibits in the Town Hall.

This coincided with the launch of London-wide green initiatives by the Mayor, as reported by local Assembly member Val Shawcross and GLA experts. We also heard how the Co-op and Veolia (the Council's new environment services contractor) had made their businesses greener. In a rather over-heated Town Hall though, there was little about what the Council itself is doing, and local enthusiasm is short of expert guidance as to what actually makes a difference.

Alan Piper.

Trinity Gardens gets go-ahead

Planning permission was given last month for an upgrading of the small open space in the centre of Trinity Gardens, SW9. The work is being carried out by Groundwork Lambeth & Southwark.

Organic Fruit & Veg at the Sun and Doves

The Sun and Doves has teamed up with Eostre Organics to launch a new weekly organic fruit and vegetable market near the Camberwell end of Coldharbour Lane. It's been open 10 am to 3 pm each Sunday since mid-March.

Eostre supply the freshest, tastiest, most nutritious organic produce possible. Local crops are cut to order – mostly going on sale less than 24 hours after harvesting. They aim to offer a complete "green" grocery alternative. Things they can't grow (like, er, bananas!) are ethically sourced from producer partners in the UK, Europe and beyond. By selling directly to customers or community markets in London they offer great value for the finest produce.

Eostre have an active policy to avoid air freight and continually strive for the most ethical and sustainable source of supply – it's always organic and whenever possible fair-trade certified. As a co-op all proceeds are returned to grower members which helps ensure their survival and enable sustainable farming practices to continue and develop. You can find out more about Eostre's ethical charter on their website: www.eostreorganics.co.uk/charter.htm - or even better come and visit The Sun and Doves this Sunday between 10 am

and 3pm to see for yourselves.

Mark Dodds
The Sun and Doves,
61-63 Coldharbour Lane,
SE5 9 NS,
www.sunanddoves.co.uk

The Family School

We are an innovative small school due to open in the Clapham North area this September. The school will be in a new eco-building on a tree-filled site near Larkhall Rise, SW4. The Family School will be a place which is a home from home for children and families, offering space and time for all to work, play and learn together. A place where learning is active, participatory and purposeful, and where engagement with nature is part of daily life. We will open for ages 3-7 initially, later up to age 11.

Currently we are looking for an inspirational teacher to work with our first group of 10 or so 6-8 year-olds, and then becoming involved with the kindergarten group of 3-5 year-olds. This will be a part-time post (4 days a week). There is more information about the school and its ethos on our website, or you can contact one of the founder parents by e-mail or phone.

Polly Griffiths,
The Family School at
Larkhall
www.familyschool.pbwiki.com
or e-mail to:
familyschoolster@googlemail.com
or phone
(020) 8671 0420.