

# THE BRIXTON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Winter, December 2012

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Distributed free to members.

Registered with the London Forum of Amenity  
Societies, Registered Charity No.1058103,  
Website: [www.brixtonsociety.org.uk](http://www.brixtonsociety.org.uk)

Our next event:  
Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> January:

## Winter Social

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

Admission free to members, but to help  
our planning, please confirm if you are  
coming (and the sooner the better). Notify  
Bill Linskey on (020) 7274 3835 or by e-  
mail to [wjdc1@globalnet.co.uk](mailto:wjdc1@globalnet.co.uk)

## More dates inside...

We are trying to distribute this issue to  
members before Christmas, to give you ample  
notice of the Winter Social. However, we  
expect more 2013 dates to be firmed-up over  
the next month, so check our website then too.  
Meanwhile, seasonal greetings to you all...

## Brixton Green Milestone

Community project Brixton Green achieved a  
major milestone at the end of September by  
signing up its 1,000<sup>th</sup> shareholder. This means  
a lot of people who live or work in Brixton are  
now shareholders, putting the organisation in a  
stronger position to realise its community  
aspirations – see also [www.brixtongreen.org](http://www.brixtongreen.org)



*The Friends of Windmill Gardens have placed this illuminated model windmill in Windrush Square for the Christmas season, to highlight their latest appeal for funding to get the windmill machinery grinding flour again. The illumination was generously sponsored by Veolia and Emerson. Enquiries to [info@brixtonwindmill.org.uk](mailto:info@brixtonwindmill.org.uk)*

## Brixton's BID takes shape New Business Improvement District

Last month Lambeth Council gave the go-ahead for phase 2 of this project, which will involve consulting local businesses. Most will have to contribute towards a fund to improve conditions for local business. That could be collective promotional activity, more security measures, improving the shopping streets or other ideas. Consultation should be completed in March, followed by a ballot in July. If 60% of participants are in favour, the Brixton BID would take effect from September, steered by a board drawn from local businesses. Its area could be larger than the Town Centre area defined by Lambeth Planners, depending on the response from local businesses.

## Dates for Early 2013

### Society Meetings

The Executive Committee usually meets on the second Thursday of the month to plan activities and agree our responses to current issues. These meetings are at 7 pm at the Vida Walsh Centre, 2b Saltoun Road, SW2 (at the Effra Road end, facing Windrush Square).

- **14 February,**
- **14 March,**
- **11 April,**
- **9 May,**
- **13 June (AGM)**
- 11 July,
- 12 September,
- 10 October
- 14 November

### Guest

#### Appearances

We welcome opportunities to tell people about what we do, sign up new members and sell our local history publications. It's good to be involved in local events around Brixton, even if we sometimes have to miss out due to clashes of dates or key helpers being absent. So far we are likely to be involved with:

**Windmill Festival**, 6 May?

**London Open Garden Squares weekend** (see p.8)

**Lambeth Country Show**,  
Weekend 20 & 21 July?

**London Open House**  
weekend 21 & 22 Sept.

**Lambeth Archives Open Day**, Saturday 28 Sept.?

### Links with Other Groups

*Dates are still coming in for 2013, but please check directly with the organisers if any queries over times or admission.*

#### **Monday 7<sup>th</sup> January - Recent Discoveries in Local History:**

A round-up of research by various speakers, 8 pm at Woodlawns, Streatham Darby & Joan Club, 16 Leigham Court Rd., SW16  
*The Streatham Society*

#### **Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> January – Archaeology from the Thames Link Project:**

Speaker from Pre-Construct Archaeology: opens at 7 pm for 7-30 start, Housing Co-op Hall, 106 The Cut, SE1 (almost opposite the Old Vic Theatre).  
*Southwark & Lambeth Archaeological Society*

#### **Wednesday 16 January: How to make a million jobs – a charter for Social Enterprise:**

A talk by Colin Crooks, based on his recent book of the same title\*, 6-30 pm at Brixton Tate Library, SW2. Enquiries to Tim O'Dell at [to'dell@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:to'dell@lambeth.gov.uk)  
\*ISBN 978 09573530 08  
*Lambeth Libraries*

#### **Wednesday 13 Feb. – Interwar Architecture:**

Edmund Bird, Heritage adviser to the Mayor and GLA, appraises architecture in Lambeth from 1918-1939. 7-30 for 8 pm start, at

Clapham Manor Primary School, entrance in Belmont Road, SW4 0BZ.  
*Clapham Society*

#### **Wednesday 13 Feb. – Herne Hill and Dulwich on old postcards:**

A selection shown by Ian McInnes, 7-30 pm for 7-45 start, Herne Hill United Church Hall, c/o Redpost Hill and Herne Hill, SE24.  
*Herne Hill Society*

#### **16 & 17 February – The Listed Property Show:**

At Olympia, details and tickets from [www.lpoc.co.uk](http://www.lpoc.co.uk)

#### **Sunday 17 February – Recent Archaeology in Southwark:**

Recent discoveries presented by Dr Christopher Constable of Southwark Council, 3 pm at the Goose Green Centre, St. John's Church, East Dulwich.  
*The Peckham Society*

#### **Editorial Notice:**

Space permitting, we try to feature local events and publish reminiscences or enquiries in our newsletter. We welcome news and comments from all who are interested in the Brixton area, so opinions expressed in these pages are not necessarily those of the Brixton Society.

All material should be sent to the Secretary, Alan Piper, at 82 Mayall Road, SE24 0PJ, or by e-mail to [APiperBrix@aol.com](mailto:APiperBrix@aol.com)  
Phone/ fax (020) 7207 0347

## *Planning & Regeneration Round-up*

### Town Centre Plan Progress

The final Draft of the Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) should go to the Council's Cabinet this month and then be published for public comments or objections during January. There are lots of worthy statements in the SPD but we already have a few concerns:

**Clarity:** the main role of the SPD is to decide planning applications, large and small, so wording needs to be more precise, to prevent abuses but encourage good ideas.

**The Recreation Centre:** users are concerned at the ambiguity of the present wording, which might allow replacement with a reduced range of facilities, rather like the cheap ice rink next door.

**Tall Buildings:** A developer asked to replace the Rec would need to build very tall "luxury" flats, as at Vauxhall, in order to offset the cost. There is already local controversy over plans for a 16-storey tower which would overshadow Slade Gardens. There are some policies in the Mayor's London Plan and in Lambeth's own core strategy which we can use to resist over-ambitious tower block proposals in future, but it would be better to tie these in with the SPD also.

### "Town Hall plus" SW2 Enterprise Centre

It's not just 50-storey towers that may be revived from the 1971 Town Centre Plan – a "groundscraper" super Town Hall is now being pursued, to bring Council staff back to the centre of the borough. It looks likely that the original town hall building will be the public core, with new offices fronting Brixton Hill and Acre Lane. The package includes selling International House (behind the Rec) for conversion to private flats.

There is talk of offering space in the new complex to community organisations and small businesses, but an obvious obstacle is the cost of their renting any newly built office space. See [www.enterprise-sw2.com](http://www.enterprise-sw2.com)

### Relaxing the planning rules

Government ministers have been talking for some time about relaxing the rules so that building extensions and changes will not need planning permission. This may mean more owners will be able to do their own thing, regardless of SPDs or other local plans.

A draft appeared last month, and comments must be made by Christmas Eve. Refer to website: [www.gov.uk/government/consultations](http://www.gov.uk/government/consultations)

### Loughborough Junction Plans

Lambeth has appointed DSDHA Architects to prepare a Masterplan for the area between Brixton Town Centre and Camberwell.

Local improvements are being championed by the Loughborough Junction Action Group – see [www.loughboroughjunction.co.uk](http://www.loughboroughjunction.co.uk)

### Are we a Great Neighbourhood?

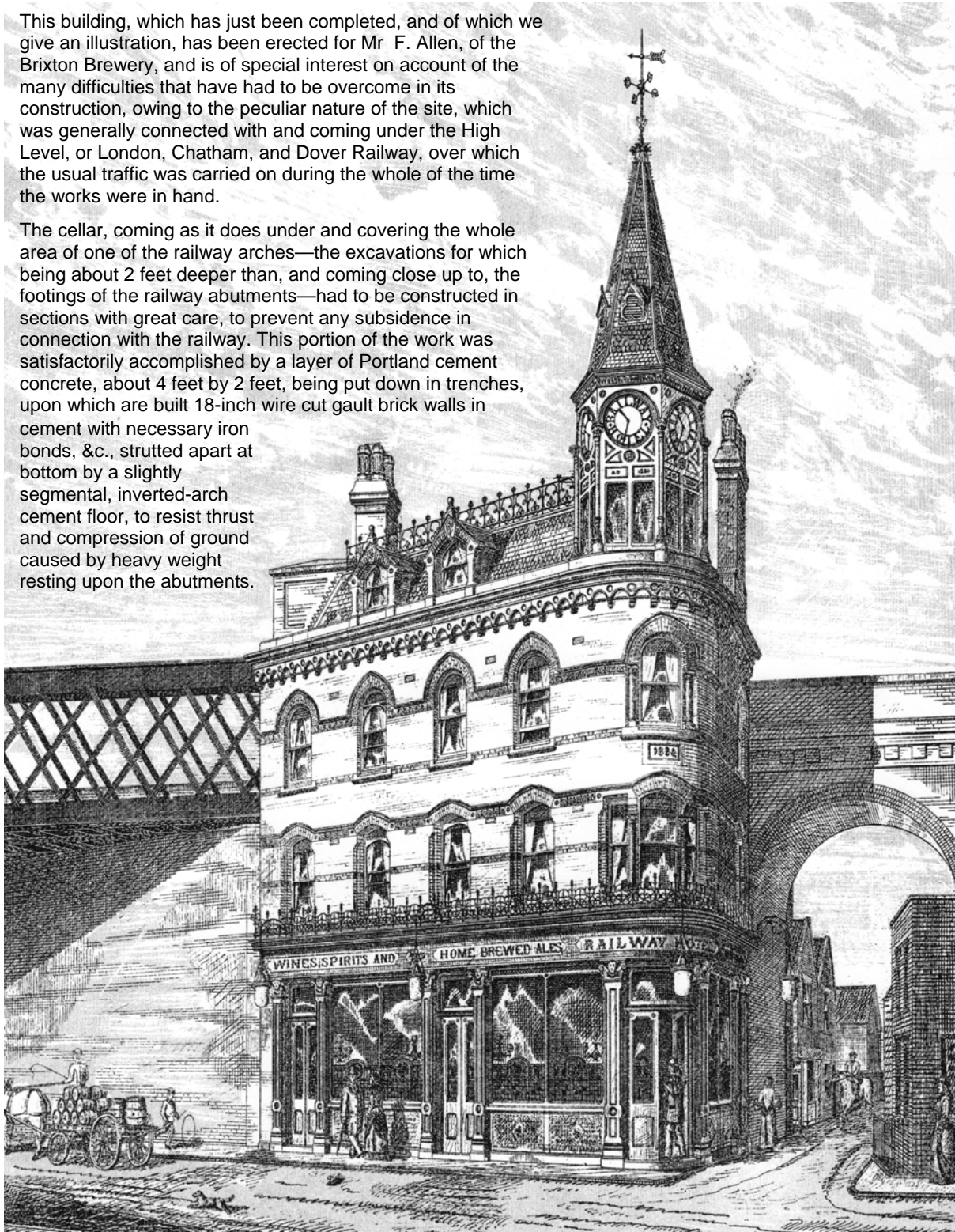
The Academy of Urbanism seems to think so, because last month it presented its Great Neighbourhood Award to Brixton – except that nobody from Brixton received it. Instead it was collected by Sue Foster, Lambeth's Director of housing, regeneration and environment. Strange, because it's difficult to find anything Council officers have contributed in recent years – except perhaps removing our car park, thwarting community plans for the Railway Hotel, dragging their feet over Brixton Green's ideas for Somerleyton Road and running down Town Centre management. But they did fill in the application form!

[www.brixtonblog.com/brixton-named-countrys-greatest-neighbourhood-by-urbanism-awards/8274](http://www.brixtonblog.com/brixton-named-countrys-greatest-neighbourhood-by-urbanism-awards/8274)

## Local History Focus

This building, which has just been completed, and of which we give an illustration, has been erected for Mr F. Allen, of the Brixton Brewery, and is of special interest on account of the many difficulties that have had to be overcome in its construction, owing to the peculiar nature of the site, which was generally connected with and coming under the High Level, or London, Chatham, and Dover Railway, over which the usual traffic was carried on during the whole of the time the works were in hand.

The cellar, coming as it does under and covering the whole area of one of the railway arches—the excavations for which being about 2 feet deeper than, and coming close up to, the footings of the railway abutments—had to be constructed in sections with great care, to prevent any subsidence in connection with the railway. This portion of the work was satisfactorily accomplished by a layer of Portland cement concrete, about 4 feet by 2 feet, being put down in trenches, upon which are built 18-inch wire cut gault brick walls in cement with necessary iron bonds, &c., strutted apart at bottom by a slightly segmental, inverted-arch cement floor, to resist thrust and compression of ground caused by heavy weight resting upon the abutments.



The first floor comprises the dining-room, wholly sheathed in diagonal framed pitch pine, with waggon-head ceiling having moulded ribs, the separate iron spiral staircase to this room being enclosed with 2-inch pitch pine framing, with lead tinted glazed panels having figure subjects; also sitting and still rooms, kitchen and offices; and the second and third floors, bed, bath, and clock rooms, &c.

The works have been satisfactorily carried out, so that, notwithstanding the connection with, and constant vibration of, the railway, no settlement has occurred; Mr John Macey of Atlantic Road, Brixton, being the general contractor, the stonework having been executed by Mr W. Plows, of Shepherd's Lane, Brixton.

The heavy ironwork, comprising girders, joists, columns, &c., were supplied by Messrs H. Young & Co., of Hale Foundry, Nine Elms; and the lighter castings generally, including the cast-iron clock turret (which forms an important feature in the design, and which has been well executed), by Messrs Andrew McLaren & Co., of Glasgow and London.

The whole of the works have been carried out under the superintendence of the architect, Mr R. Cruwys, of Bank Chambers, 451 Brixton Road, S.W., at a cost of about £5,000.

## Local History Focus

### The Railway Hotel, lately Brady's, Atlantic Road

The engraving and overlaid text opposite are from *The Architect* journal of 30<sup>th</sup> April 1881. We were prompted to show readers this magnificent building in its original pomp by the fact that a photograph of it in its current sorry state dominated the front page of the Brixton edition of *The South London Press* (SLP) on 16 November 2012. Standing in front of it in the SLP photo were Alan Piper, Paul Hill and Stuart Horwood in their roles as trustees of the Brixton Community Trust (BCT). The BCT has been working hard for many years to find a way to bring the building back into use as a bar and a community space. Unfortunately, Lambeth Council - which has owned the building and done nothing with it since compulsorily purchasing it in 2005 - chose to sell it from under the BCT at the end of last year. We wait to see what the new owners make of it.



Our photograph (left) of the interior of the Railway Hotel is from a postcard posted in 1917

### A Different Pub Puzzle

Some scenes of the film *Alfie*, starring Michael Caine, were shot in Brixton. The urban75.org website has stills from the film showing Caine in Atlantic Road and Brixton Station Road.

The press photograph (right) was taken on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1965 and shows Michael Caine between two actresses, Andre Cameron (left) and Marilyn Gothard. The photo was taken in a Brixton pub where another scene was shot.

Does anyone know which pub? And what about the small face on the right – an actor in the film or a local extra?



## Local History Miscellany



*Further to the article in our Spring issue (205) a plaque was recently placed on Fred Karno's former "Fun Factory" in Southwell Road, SE5, by the Music Hall Guild. (C820-Nv12-13)*

### Publications News

Most of our publications are now available to buy through our eBay shop. These items are linked through our website and after only a month up on eBay have already proved very popular. Whilst Paypal takes a fee for transactions, eBay for charity reimburses us for listing fees. We are also selling advance tickets for the monthly Market Walk this way. Joining or renewing membership has been available through the website for some while and brings in new members every month. Thanks are due to Tom Harle for helping set us up so we can offer sales to people who prefer to buy on-line as well as to folk who are happy to visit our stalls or buy by post. We have just added a new postcard to our range – a card showing 14 full colour views of Brixton today. Photographs are by David Hankin and we can offer this at 50p each or 5 for £2 alongside our Edwardian views (plus 70p p&p). The black and white view in this newsletter does not do it justice!



We also have a few copies of the recent publication from Lambeth Archives "Lambeth Architecture 1914-1939" by Edmund Bird and Fiona Price (price £9 plus £1.60 P&P) the companion to the previous book "Lambeth's Edwardian Splendour" (£7 + £1.60 p&p) by the same authors.

Please contact Diana Linskey, 32 Stockwell Green, London SW9 9HZ to order any of the above. Cheques should be payable to The Brixton Society.

### Lambeth Archives update

Please note that the Archives will close for their annual stocktaking at the end of January – closure is from Monday 28 January to Saturday 9 February inclusive. The Minet lending library will continue to open as usual. The full service will resume from **Monday 11<sup>th</sup> February**.

### Remembrance in Stockwell



At the annual Remembrance Day ceremony, the Society's wreath was laid by Doye Akinlade, supported by Diana & Bill Linskey.

The Friends of Stockwell War Memorial and Garden are planning an exhibition for Autumn 2013. At their prompting, work has begun on restoration of the memorial and garden area.

### A wartime Christmas in Stockwell

The Imperial War Museum at Kennington currently has a free exhibition telling the story of the Allpress family living in Priory Grove, Stockwell during the Second World War. The exhibition includes their recreated Anderson shelter and a range of material on life in wartime Britain.

Please note that the Museum will be closed from 2<sup>nd</sup> January until at least July, for major refurbishment. See [www.iwm.org.uk](http://www.iwm.org.uk)



### Friends of Tate Library

Since 2010 a small dedicated group have kept the Library's Friends group going, through consultations on the future of libraries in Lambeth, through large public meetings and several local meetings in the Brixton Tate Library. If this library is to be a "Town Centre Super Library" in a Co-operative Council, as in Lambeth's vision, will this mean a super library such as the new glossy high street Clapham 1, open 7 days a week, or just a small-scale refurbishment? The future is still open for discussion.

Meetings of the Friends of Lambeth Libraries are ongoing – one is taking place this month in Brixton Tate Library. What is clear is that the Friends of Tate Library Brixton need to be part of the future, to achieve a considered plan that ensures the heritage of the site is not compromised, and that the library still functions as our local library and is a safe environment remaining free to the public, as was the intention of Tate when it was dedicated. Thanks to the support of the Brixton Society, we are still a recognised voice for libraries in Lambeth.

*Marilyn Rogers.*



The NHS Blood & Transplant Service wants to recruit 100,000 new donors this winter to protect future blood stocks. Every year new donors are needed to replace existing donors who drop out of the system. This year, the need is more urgent following a dramatic decline in the number of younger donors signing up.

Young people are vital to the blood service, with **17-24 year olds** accounting for around **40%** of new donors each year. Of the **19,200** donors needed from the South East, **approximately 7,680** are expected to be in this age bracket. But the number of young donors registering has been falling steadily; by **20%** over the last **10 years** and this year has seen a particularly sharp decline, with a **50%**

drop in the number of **17-18** year olds registering compared to **2011**.

Blood donations are a vital resource to help treat health conditions including cancer and long term illnesses, people involved in accidents and in maternity care. Hospitals across England need 7,000 units of blood every day and each unit saves or improves the lives of up to three people. Over a lifetime, some blood donors help more than 500 people through their donations.

To find out if you are eligible to become a blood donor and make a date to donate, visit [www.blood.co.uk](http://www.blood.co.uk) or call us on 0300 123 23 23. You can also follow us on [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#)

*Alpana Patel, NHS Blood & Transplant*

### Lambeth Sustainability Forum

Transition Town Brixton and other local groups have re-launched this forum to bring together "green" interests within the borough. Meetings are monthly, and that on 28<sup>th</sup> November focussed on the programme of refurbishment for Lambeth Council housing estates which is just getting underway. The aim is to pool knowledge and help steer works towards more durable and energy-efficient outcomes which also have less impact on the wider world.

Other topics are being lined up for future meetings – enquiries to [info@transitiontownbrixton.org](mailto:info@transitiontownbrixton.org) or see the website [www.transitiontownbrixton.org](http://www.transitiontownbrixton.org)

### What happens to your rubbish?

We all seem to generate more at this time of year, so it's worth noting some recent changes in where your household rubbish goes. Instead of filling a hole somewhere in Essex, general rubbish from your wheely bin now goes to an incinerator in Bexley where it is burnt to generate electricity – so don't feel guilty if shredded paper finds its way into your bin! With this exception, the range of items that can go into orange recycling sacks has increased to include most metal, glass and plastic containers, and even Tetrapak cartons, but still not the aluminium foil that used to be the stalwart of salvage drives 60 years ago!

## *Forward Planning for the Year Ahead*

### **Open Garden Squares**

#### **Weekend: 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> June**

For the 4<sup>th</sup> year running, the Society is entering Windrush Square into Open Garden Squares Weekend. We are organising two events. On Saturday, **Growing in Brixton** will celebrate urban gardening in the area. It will encourage the growing of flowers, fruit, herbs, vegetables and trees, in everything from window boxes to gardens and allotments. Public sector, charitable and commercial organisations will be invited to set up stalls in the square for the day to promote all things horticultural. On Sunday, **Art in Brixton** will give an opportunity for local artists to show their work, and there will be an exciting programme of hands-on workshops for people to learn and create for themselves.

### **Guided Walks:**

In a typical year, I conduct at least three guided walks around the Brixton Society's area, as part of the Summer Sunday series presented by the Lambeth Local History Forum. I try to set meeting points close to public transport, and usually finish at or near the starting point. To co-ordinate with other societies, our dates are normally the second Sunday of the month.

Over the years, several routes have featured, as listed below. Routes are loosely based on those in our Heritage Trails published in 2001, but updated to pick up any topical issues or threatened buildings.

To help plan our programme for 2013, please tell me if you would like any of these routes repeated OR if there are other neighbourhoods that we should explore instead.

*Alan Piper.*

#### **Brixton Hill (upper section)**

Meet at the corner of New Park Road and Brixton Hill, SW2, to explore where the old parishes of Clapham, Lambeth and Streatham intersect.

Based on Brixton Heritage Trail No.1, but the route can be adapted to cover parts of Clapham Park OR Upper Tulse Hill, if desired.

#### **Brixton Town Centre**

Meet outside Brixton Tate Library, Windrush Square. Based on Brixton Heritage Trail No.5, this is a wider circuit than our **Brixton Market Walks** - which will continue in 2013 on the second **Saturday** of each month.

#### **Ferndale Walk**

Meet outside Clapham North Station (Northern Line) to explore the area between Clapham Road and Acre Lane.

Based on Brixton Heritage Trails 2 & 3

#### **Larkhall**

Meet by the War Memorial clock opposite Stockwell Tube Station. A variation on our Stockwell route but focussed on the area between Clapham and Wandsworth Roads.

#### **Loughborough to Myatt's Fields**

Meet outside Loughborough Junction Station for a walk through old farming estates on the Camberwell border.

Based on Brixton Heritage Trails 4 & 5

#### **North Brixton**

Meet at the gates of St.Mark's Church, opposite Oval Tube Station (Northern Line). Based on Brixton Heritage Trail No.4

#### **Rediscovering Rush Common**

Meet outside Brixton Tate Library, Brixton Oval/ Windrush Square. Based on Heritage Trails 1 & 6, this covers the northern half of Rush Common, up to Josephine Avenue.

#### **Old Stockwell**

Meet by the War Memorial clock opposite Stockwell Tube Station. A circular route, based on Brixton Heritage Trail No.3.

#### **Tulse Hill**

Not included for several years because remaining historic features are widely-spaced, but suggestions of sites or routes are welcome. Brockwell Park is usually covered by a couple of walks by its Friends group.

Ideas or enquiries to [APiperBrix@aol.com](mailto:APiperBrix@aol.com) or phone (020) 7207 0347.