

NEWSLETTER

New Year issue 2006

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Website: www.brixtonsociety.org.uk



How to contact us...

Editorial & Event Notices:

Material for the next issue should be sent by 1st March 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.

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 wjdcl@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

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.

Winter Wonderland Walk

Sunday 15 January

Meet at 2 pm in Brockwell Park, by the Clocktower, for a Seasonal Nature Walk, led by Susy Hogarth.

Organised by Friends of Brockwell Park

More news of park improvements inside.

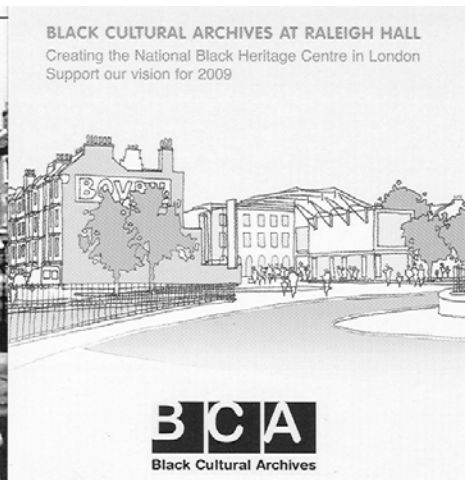
Our Winter Social -

Thursday 26 January

From 7 pm at the Vida Walsh Centre, 2b Saltoun Road, SW2 (Effra Road end, facing Windrush Square).

Admission free to members, but to help our planning, please confirm as soon as possible if you are coming, to Bill Linskey on (020) 7274 3835 or by e-mail to: wjdcl@globalnet.co.uk

More 2006 meetings and events dates overleaf and on the back page!



The Black Cultural Archives have launched an appeal to top up funding for adapting Raleigh Hall on Effra Road. Above left is the existing building, seen across Windrush Square, while on the right is the architect's sketch with a new wing at the corner. More details on p.4.

Brixton Society meeting dates

In addition to our special events and displays, 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 (near corner of Effra Road, facing Windrush Square): Contact the Secretary to confirm details.

- **12 January**
- **9 February**
- **9 March**
- **13 April**
- **11 May**
- **8 June (AGM)**
- **13 July**
- **14 September**
- **12 October**
- **9 November.**

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 since these details reached us. Some events may be charged for, and most groups welcome donations in any case.

Wednesday 11 Jan. – Sherlock Homes in Streatham:

Talk by John Brown of the Streatham Society, 7-45 pm at Herne Hill URC Hall, c/o Redpost Hill and Herne Hill, SE24. *Herne Hill Society.*

Monday 16th Jan. – Life and times of Charles Dickens:

An illustrated talk by Brian Bloice, 8 pm at Woodlawns, Streatham Darby & Joan Club, 16 Leigham Court Road, SW16. *Streatham Society.*

Thursday 18 Jan. – Clapham Park:

The Clapham Park Project is one of the largest regeneration schemes in London. Angus Johnson, its acting Chief Executive, will talk about the proposals. 7-30 for 8 pm at Clapham Manor Primary School, Belmont Road, SW4. *Clapham Society.*

Thursday 19 Jan. – Renewable Energy in practice:

Presentation by Cllr. Andrew Cooper of Kirklees Council on some recent renewable energy projects in Yorkshire. 7-30 pm at the Vida Walsh Centre, 2b Saltoun Road, SW2. Enquiries to: green@worldofbecca.com *Lambeth Green Party*

Thursday 19 Jan. – Digital Photos from Lambeth Archives:

Nilu York will talk about her recent work in putting thousands of pictures from Lambeth Archives

onto the Lambeth Landmark website. 8 pm at the Phoenix Centre, Westow Street, SE19. *Norwood Society (local history group).*

Monday 6th Feb. – East meets West – a family history:

A talk by Nilu York on her family history researches, 8 pm, Woodlawns, Streatham Darby & Joan Club, 16 Leigham Court Road, SW16. *Streatham Society (local history group).*

Saturday 11 Feb. – Lambeth Orchestra:

Concert featuring Elgar's Cello Concerto, Kamarinskaya by Glinka and Brahms' Second Symphony. 7-30 pm at St. Luke's Church, West Norwood, SE27. *The Lambeth Orchestra.*

Sunday 12 Feb. – Lambeth Industries

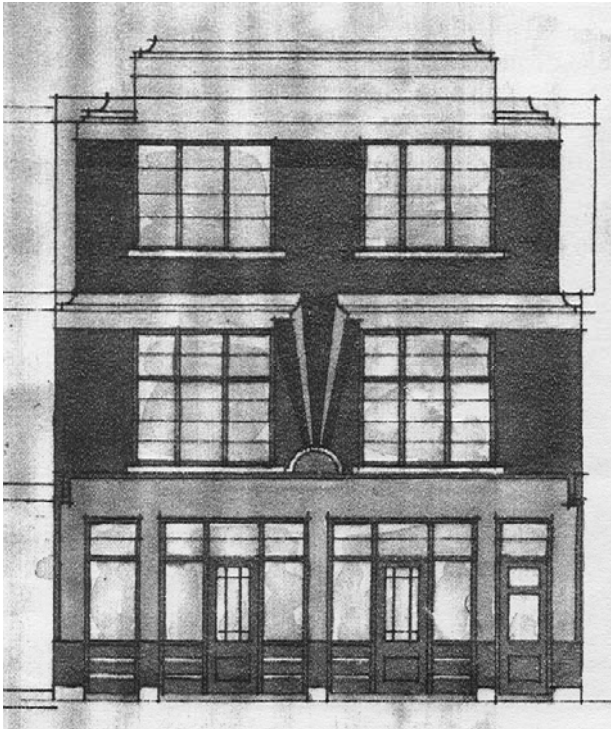
Alan Piper presents a slide survey of Lambeth's former industries and occupations. 2-30 pm at the Vida Walsh Centre, 2b Saltoun Road, SW2 *Lambethans' Society.*

Thursday 16th Feb. – the Crystal Palace Dinosaurs:

Talk by Michael Gilbert, 8 pm at the Phoenix Centre, Westow Street, SE19. *Norwood Society (local history group).*

Saturday 18 March – The London Maze:

London's local history day at The Guildhall, City of London: A host of bookstalls, displays and talks covering all areas and themes of London life. *City of London Corporation.*



A glimpse of (public) house history using two sources from Lambeth Archives. On the left is the front elevation drawing from among the plans deposited in the Drainage files in 1937, for rebuilding "The Sun" at 33 & 33a Effra Parade, SW2. It proved to have a short life, as the picture on the right shows it after the south-west half of the street was devastated by a V1 flying bomb on 19th June 1944. The photo, originally from Lambeth Civil Defence, is No.168 on the Lambeth Landmark website: www.lambethlandmark.com Note that there are some discrepancies between the drawing and the photo!

100 years ago...

A NOVEL IDEA has been carried into practical effect at Brixton. For the last three or four weeks the vicar and congregation of St. Paul's Church, Brixton, have been spring-cleaning their church—one of the largest in the parish. Funds would not permit of the employment of professional painters and whitewashers, so the vicar, the Rev. A. G. Welchman, decided that the congregation must do the work themselves. Accordingly he convened a meeting, and explained the situation. His idea was taken up with enthusiasm, and a labour league promptly formed to organize the work. Since then the work has been progressing steadily, and will shortly be completed. All the work, even the scrubbing, is being done by the gentlemen, but the lady members of this enthusiastic congregation take turns in making tea for the volunteer workmen. Even the vicar has done his share in scrubbing, and now jokingly declares that he has "housemaid's knee." This week he has been painting the railings outside the church. The curate, too, has been making himself generally useful by mixing paint and whitewash, holding ladders, and doing the general work appertaining to a day labourer. Whether of high or low degree, the members of the congregation have been working together with energy and great good humour. Stockbrokers and City clerks take turns with the whitewash brushes, and merchants and mechanics render such assistance as their abilities will permit. None are regarded as being too old at forty, and many grey-haired veterans have put in some hours' hard work.

Extract from "The Illustrated Carpenter & Builder" of 2nd June 1905

Recent Publications

Some recent books are valuable guides for people researching their own homes or family background...

Home Secrets – Tracing your Lambeth house history was published in September to coincide with London Open House weekend and a series of talks on house history at Lambeth libraries. The authors are Jon Newman (of the Archives department) and Michael Copeman, Conservation Officer in the Planning department. The book illustrates examples of each period of building common within the borough, and guides potential users through the main property records now held by the Archives department. This book is available from Lambeth Archives or main libraries at £4.95.

Researching London's Houses is relevant to houses anywhere in Greater London, and even for Lambeth examples its value is in describing a wider range of archive sources, in particular those of the London Metropolitan Archives. As the repository for a range of London bodies, public, voluntary and even commercial,

the LMA's records include estates built by the London County Council and GLC, old Middlesex property registers, and some fire insurance company records. The author, Colin Thom, works on the Survey of London, now administered by English Heritage. Cost is £13.95, copies from Phillimore & Co. or via bookshops, ISBN 1905286 00 7.

Wartime Bomb Damage Maps collated by the London County Council across the boroughs have recently been published as a single volume by the London Topographical Society. This large format book costs c.£50, but can be readily consulted at Lambeth Archives. The maps show cumulative damage at the end of World War Two but individual hits by V1s and V2s are also identified.

What to do when the air raid siren sounds – life in Lambeth during World War Two is a compendium of personal memories from some 45 residents, woven together by Jon Newman and Nilu York of Lambeth Archives department. This book was only launched on 3rd December with a presentation at the NFT attended by many of the contributors. Production was supported by the Home Front Recall Project of the Big Lottery Fund. Format is similar to "Home Secrets" but with 106 pages and 2 pull-out charts the cover price is £9.99.



Liquid Assets is a historical record of British Lidos, past and present, with 27 case studies and some great photos. Our own Brockwell Lido (seen above in 1948) gets 4 pages. Sadly many from the 1930s boom have closed or even disappeared since the 1980s. This book is written by Janet Smith and published by English Heritage at £14.99 (ISBN 0954744 50 0).



Cabinet of Memories

To coincide with a series of reminiscence and history events during October, full use was made of our display cabinet in the Brixton Tate Library to show a variety of ephemera and souvenirs from Brixton's past.

Thanks to Bill Linskey for compiling the display, seen above.

Black Cultural Archives

Another milestone has been achieved in the move of the Black Cultural Archives to better premises at Raleigh Hall, fronting onto Windrush Square. Lambeth Council has agreed to grant a 99-year peppercorn lease to BCA, which will then be better placed to seek support from the Heritage Lottery Fund and other funders. The familiar premises on the corner of Coldharbour Lane and Atlantic Road have already been vacated and sold for use as a restaurant, and BCA is temporarily based at 1 Othello Close, SE11 4RE (the former Kennington Day Centre).

A reception was held at the Town Hall on Wednesday 8th December to report progress and launch the next stage. Raleigh Hall has been unused for 10 years, and despite interim external repairs a few years ago, total internal renovation is required. There will also be a new wing at the corner. BCA's design team consists of Lambeth-based architects Pringle Richards Sharratt, with Trace Architecture, ABL Consulting (project development) and Ralph Applebaum Associates (exhibition design). They and BCA will submit the first stage of a capital bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund in late summer 2006.

Subject to support from HLF and LDA, BCA will still need to find £1 million in private and commercial contributions, towards total project costs of £4.5 million.

Enquiries to BCA on (020) 7582 8516, info@bcaheritage.org.uk

Archives Closure

Lambeth Archives is such a major resource for local research that we should remind you all that it will be closed for stocktaking from **Monday 30 January to Saturday 11 February** inclusive. The Minet lending library will remain open as normal.

Independent Church

I'm doing research into my grandmother's family and have discovered that a niece was married at Brixton Independent Church, Brixton Road, in June 1932. I can't find any recent reference to this church – would I be right in thinking it no longer exists?

Chris Hicks, High Wycombe.

The institution itself did not survive the Second World War, when the church building was damaged and lost its spire. However the building was restored to use postwar as The Rosary Roman Catholic Church and still stands in Brixton Road just north of the Town Centre, opposite Villa Road and Max Roach Park. The old spire appears in the background of our postcard BX11.

Alan Piper.

Remembering Sudbourne School

My name is Bill Joscelyne and I now live in South Ockendon, Essex. During my childhood and in my youth after World War II, I lived at 17 Kildoran Road, Brixton SW2. I can still remember the names of the lads and lassies that were my friends and lived in Kildoran, Glenelg and Strathleven Roads. It would give me great pleasure to hear from anyone who remembers me from that time. Particularly two lads who were evacuated with me from Sudbourne Road School to live with Mr & Mrs Moore at Bevendene Crescent, Brighton. My phone number is 01708 856932 – there is an answering service if I am away.



Brockwell Park News

This 1911 postcard view of the clock-tower was e-mailed by Robin Sharp, who discovered that it included his grandmother Lucy Delworth (2nd on right) on her day off from service in a house in Sanderstead.

Preparing the Restoration bid for a park as large and complex as Brockwell required more time to resolve all the details, so submission is now intended for March 2006. The Park's Management Advisory Committee had several meetings in the Autumn with Land Use Consultants, revising the plans in the light of public feedback during the Summer.

The total cost of all aspirations runs into more millions than the Heritage Lottery Fund or Lambeth Council could find, so items have been prioritized and the work divided into phases. This means asking for enough money to restore most of the Landscape and Infrastructure in a Stage 1 bid for £5m., then putting in a "Stage 1 phase 2" bid for £2m. to cover the restoration of the Hall and Stable block at the same time as the Stage 2 application for Landscape and Infrastructure. However, money will have to be raised from other sources for sports and leisure facilities, which are outside the scope of HLF.

The next step will be for the MAC to agree the final form of the bid during January, for LUC to submit by end of February.



The Wallzine is an innovative quarterly poster/magazine produced by local artists and writers under the editorship of Bridget Hugo. You may by now have seen a flyer, or even the launch Victorian issue displayed somewhere in Brixton. For your own copy, send your name and address by e-mail to: thewallzine@gmail.com or if you want to contribute to future issues, contact the editor on (020) 7207 3464.

Revitalise Update

In November, Lambeth Council issued another progress report on its wide-ranging Revitalise Programme. For major sites in Brixton such as the Recreation Centre and adjacent Popes Road Car Park, further local consultation is promised during 2006, with a draft Master Plan to appear in September. Three alternative sites are being considered for sports facilities as well as scope for refurbishing the old Recreation Centre.

One of the Council's big ideas is for Joint Service Centres, for local contact with a range of public services. Current plans are to adapt the Ground Floor of Olive Morris House on Brixton Hill (now the Council Tax office) as Brixton's JSC.

Our last issue reported the plans for Schools, and more details have since been announced about the Shakespeare Depot site. The original depot and about a third of the former BT site will be used for the proposed Academy while the rest of the site will be retained for the bus fleet which ferries children to and from special schools. The ServiceTeam dustcart fleet is to be based in adapted buildings in part of the Mahatma Gandhi Industrial Estate on the other side of the railway, in Milkwood Road.

Further updates should appear on the Council website at www.lambeth.gov.uk/revitalise

Brixton Town Centre Focus

The turning of the year seems a good time to review the issues facing our Town Centre.

Attracting New Shops

We have lost another valued shop in the form of Index Books – but bookshops seem to be an endangered species, with Words Worth about to close at Camberwell too. On the other hand, there are up-and-coming shops interested in coming to Brixton, if only somebody would go out and bring them in – surely a role for a Town Centre Manager?

It's no secret who these firms are – they advertise their needs in the *Estates Gazette* in case local estate agents can offer them a spare shop. Phones 4U, Topps Tiles and LA Fitness have named Brixton among their wish list of new sites. Other names seen recently include Julian Graves (specialist foods), the Peacock Group (with their two other national chains, Bon Marche and the Fragrance Shop), the Pizza Express group, Subway, Flight Centre travel agency and Machine Mart tool hire. (I have ignored those seeking far more parking space than any local site can offer.)

Some readers have said that just attracting the national brands turns Brixton into another "clone town". Better that than a ghost town perhaps, but we do need to think how we can encourage the one-offs

that give a place its own character.

Welcoming Visitors

A clutch of entertainment venues have kept people coming to Brixton after it dropped off the scale of significant shopping centres, but the Council has failed to provide facilities to suit, such as public toilets or even clear signposting. No-one has taken responsibility for encouraging visitors to Brixton, or making them welcome when they get here.

Creative Industries

In addition to supporting entertainment and leisure this can also include wider design and craft-based activities. The LDA and other business support agencies now acknowledge this sector's employment potential but practical help is slow in coming. The biggest threat is displacement of cheaper business space by private housing development, for which land values are so much higher.

A "local enterprise growth initiative" will be launched at the end of January and efforts are being made to revive Brixton's own Business Forum.

Linking Transport

This should be Brixton's strength, with the number of bus routes and rail lines passing through the Centre, but it's never been pulled together. The Tram service looks a distant prospect while TfL is busy with putting tracks down the Uxbridge Road first. Meanwhile the Council is trying hard to discourage people from visiting Brixton by car, by

intensive enforcement and threats to close the sole multi-storey car park.

Community Links

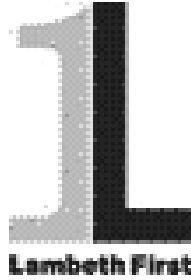
The Brixton Area Forum could play a valuable role, but in recent months we have found its various working groups to be poorly co-ordinated and their meetings happening at short notice which makes participation more difficult. Some of this may be due to a climate of uncertainty while the Council reviews its Town Centre Forums generally – closing date for comments on this is 20 January.

Alan Piper.

Brixton NET

Brixton NET is a new information initiative aiming to keep you up to date and informed about local issues and health opportunities. It is an area-based network providing information from the Brixton Town Centre Office and the Lambeth Primary Care Trust. Local initiatives to be covered include events and festivals, smoking cessation and healthy living opportunities, crime and safety campaigns and environmental improvements.

Registering with Brixton NET is free and open to groups and individuals resident or working in the Brixton Town Centre. Complete the form online at www.lambeth.gov.uk or contact the Town Centre office on (020) 7926 1077.



Mainstream or Backwater?

The long-term aim of local strategic partnerships like Lambeth First has always been to improve the way public services are delivered, not by “add-on” funding for special measures, but by better co-ordination of all the different agencies, or “mainstreaming” of new methods, as Government likes to call it.

Political reality though is that there are also short-term pressures for early results and “good news”. It’s been suggested that theme groups should be merged to reflect funding patterns from Central Government. The CEN too is under pressure to sharpen up its act, though resources are barely adequate.

The test now for Lambeth First is how well it can resist these pressures and stay focussed on the core strategy. Funding – from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund – is only about £4.5m spread across all services. As an example, the share for Housing is not enough to provide for even one extra home, so it’s been used mostly to support the specialist partnership meetings on housing issues. For Environment, NRF funds have mostly

been used for one-off improvements for parks and road safety.

Restructuring of Lambeth First a year ago meant delays in getting to grips with the practical issues. In recent months the theme partnerships for Housing and for Environment have begun to gel, with constructive discussions among the different interests taking part.

It would be a great waste of everyone’s time to cut all this short in favour of some wider grouping from which only vague generalities can emerge.

*Alan Piper,
Environment rep. for
Lambeth Community
Empowerment Network.*

Seeking Planning Applications?

Although the Planning Department left Acre Lane by 29 November, its weekly list of planning applications continued to direct visitors to the old address for another month – perhaps they don’t want to be found? We can reveal that the new office, Phoenix House, is part of the gross new development upstream of Vauxhall Bridge – doors are midway between the bridge approach and the old Brunswick House.

If you prefer to see plans at the Library instead, remember it will not always be Brixton – new drawings for 2 sites on the eastern boundary of Brockwell Park were sent to West Norwood Library!

Seasonally Affected Depression Issue



It seems that the debris has no sooner been cleared away from the last event than some bright spark says "Let's do it again next year!" or worse still, "Let's do something for National Gutters Day!" or some other ill-timed campaign. Well, it's hard to say no when your mission statement goes on about raising public awareness, protecting the local environment and supporting community initiatives etc. In short, we have already been persuaded to sign up to several events for the year ahead, so maybe you should make a start on filling in that shiny new diary – fuller details will follow later.

The London Maze (Saturday 18 March) is a bigger London-wide version of our local Archives Open Day (see p.2). Lambeth's amenity societies and local history groups are combining to run a bookstall.

London's Open Garden Squares Weekend (10/11 June) has been suggested for another event in Tate Library Gardens, and perhaps even something for Trinity Gardens nearby, a more traditional residential square.

Lambeth Country Show will be on the weekend 15/16 July in Brockwell Park.

Summer Sunday Walks dates are being lined up, including two "beating the bounds" of Lambeth in Norwood (14 May) and Waterloo (11 June). There's a house history walk on our home patch on 10 September.

By request, there will be two outside the borough, in Greenwich (13 Aug.) and Richmond (provisionally 8 Oct.).

London Open House weekend is already lined up for 16/17 September. **Lambeth Archives Open Day** is likely to be on Saturday 30 September.

October brings both Black History Month and Age Concern's "Celebrating Age" Festival, so look out for news of related local events nearer the time.



Pictures at an Exhibition

Dulwich Picture Gallery (above) work hard at promoting their events, which maybe is why they were recently voted "Small Visitor Attraction of the Year". But even if you're a taller visitor, time is running out if you have not yet seen their **Beatrix Potter** exhibition – it continues only until Sunday 22 January. Their next special exhibition will be of the work of the American artist **Winslow Homer** (1836-1910) best known for his seascapes. This will run from Wednesday 22 February until 21 May.

Bus P4 from Brixton passes the gallery, otherwise it's a brisk walk or cycle ride from Herne Hill or North Dulwich stations. For further details and opening times, contact the gallery on (020) 8693 5254 or see their website:

www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk

We also now receive e-mailings from the Tate Galleries (maybe they saw the biography in our last issue) but it would be good to hear from galleries on our home turf - perhaps for next time?