

# NEWSLETTER

Summer issue, July 2006

No.182, Quarterly, distributed free to members

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

Website: [www.brixtonsociety.org.uk](http://www.brixtonsociety.org.uk)



## Our next appearance: Lambeth Country Show 15 & 16 July weekend

Once again we will be part of this big event in Brockwell Park, with the Society's stall in the usual area, forming a block with kindred groups covering different parts of Lambeth. (To be precise, we are on site J6.)

Do take the opportunity to check out our current publications, renew your membership and chat about your own interest in Brixton.

***If any member can spare an hour or two to help staff our stall, during this weekend or at the Archives Open Day, please speak with Glyn Kyle (Chair) on (020) 7326 5070.***



## ***Autumn highlights...***

### Sunday 10 September: House History Walk

Meet at 2-30 pm outside Herne Hill Station, Railton Road, for a guided walk led by Alan Piper. Based on our Brixton Heritage Trails 1 and 6, this will highlight key features of house design over the past 200 years.

*Regular readers should receive the full programme of Summer Walks with this issue, and a few more of these are highlighted overleaf.*

### Saturday 30 September: Lambeth Archives Open Day

This year's theme will be Émigrés and Immigrants. Open from 10 am to 5 pm at the Minet Library, at the corner of Burton and Knatchbull Roads, SE5. As usual there will be a series of short talks linked to displays and stalls run by amenity societies and history groups.

### Thursday 12 October: Revitalizing Brixton

Tim Cribbins from Lambeth Council will update us on the "Revitalize" package which has been taking shape over the past 2 years. We hope members will take the chance to comment and ask questions.

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

Further details in our Autumn issue.

### **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 for details.

- **13 July**
- **14 September**
- **12 October**
- **9 November**

### **Friends of Tate Library & Gardens**

Meetings are now held at **6-30 pm** on the same dates as our committee meetings, listed above, again at the Vida Walsh Centre.

### **Brixton Area Forum**

**Tuesday 18 July:**  
Brixton Hill group, 7-15 pm at Renton Close Community Centre, Brixton Hill, SW2.

**Wednesday 19 July:**  
Ferndale group, 7 pm at Pulross Area Play Assn., Pulross Road, SW9.

For other 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 late changes to events listed here. 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](mailto:APiperBrix@aol.com)*

### **Until 3<sup>rd</sup> September: Rembrandt & Co. Dealing in Masterpieces**

is the theme of this new exhibition at the Dulwich Picture Gallery, marking the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Rembrandt's birth. Usual gallery charges apply, £4 adults, £3 seniors. More details can be found at [www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk](http://www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk)

### **Friday 14 July to 30 August: Tradescant Inspiration:**

Botanical paintings by 5 living artists, inspired by 17<sup>th</sup> century plants, 10-30 to 5 pm daily at **Museum of Garden History**, Lambeth Palace Road, SE1. 20% of sale price supports the Museum. Enquiries to (020) 7401 8865.

### **Weds. 19 July: North Lambeth and Charlie Chaplin:**

Evening walk led by Tony Merrick, meet at **6-30 pm** at main gate of Lambeth Palace, SE1.  
*Vauxhall Society.*

### **Sunday 23 July: West Norwood**

Guided walk from Crystal Palace down to West Norwood. led by Jill Dudman & Rosemary Comber. Meet 2-30 pm outside the Blue Bottle, corner of Crystal Palace Parade & Westow Hill.  
*Norwood Society.*

### **Sunday 6 August: Cemetery Tour**

Meet 2-30 pm inside Cemetery main gate, corner of Norwood High Street and Robson Road, SE27. *Friends of West Norwood Cemetery.*

### **Saturday 12 August Herne Hill and the Silver Screen**

Meet at **2 pm** outside Carnegie Library, Herne Hill Road, SE24, for walk led by Jeff Doorn.  
*Herne Hill Society.*

### **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.*

### **Wednesday 16 August: Clapham**

Evening walk around historic sites led by David Perkin. Meet 6-30 pm by the clock tower outside Clapham Common Tube Station (Northern Line).  
*Clapham Society.*

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

London-wide, with many types of buildings open to the public - more news from mid-August at [www.openhouse.org.uk](http://www.openhouse.org.uk)

### **Sunday 24 Sept: Brockwell Park**

Autumn nature walk, starting **2 pm** from the Clock Tower in the centre of the Park.  
*Friends of Brockwell Park*

### **Sunday 8 October: South Norwood**

Walk to Selhurst led by Keith Holdaway & Ted Cossor. Meet at 2-30 pm at Station Road entrance to Norwood Junction Station, SE25.  
*Norwood Society.*

# The Brixton Society

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

## ANNUAL REPORT, 2006

### AIMS & ORGANISATION

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

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

**MANAGEMENT:** The Executive Committee elected in June 2005 consisted of Glyn Kyle (Chair), Alan Piper, Rosemary Honey, Doye Akinlade, Bill and Diana Linskey, Barbara Davies, Norma Williamson, James Fairweather, Phil Isaac, Ola Onilude, David Warner and Margaret Westcott. Eight committee meetings have been held since the previous AGM.

### PROGRAMME & ACTIVITIES

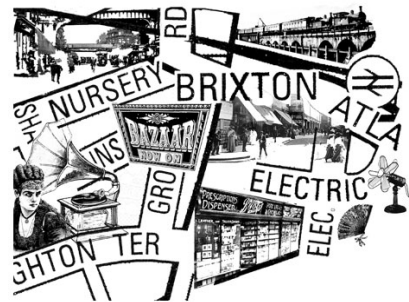
**EVENTS:** We have hosted occasional open meetings, of which the highlight last year was a presentation on local archaeology by Sophie Jackson from the Museum of London (and a local resident). We have supported a number of outdoor events in Tate Library Gardens, ably organised by Sarah Slater. We contributed guided walks to the Summer series jointly presented by member societies of the Lambeth Local History Forum.

**OUTREACH:** We were unable to take up all the opportunities offered to us, but we ran stalls at the re-opening of Tate Library Gardens in April 2005, at Windmill Gardens Festival and the Lambeth Country Show (July) and Lambeth Archives Open Day (September). We continue to respond as best we can to varied enquiries, which increasingly arrive via e-mail, triggered by our website, from students, media and family history researchers.

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

Community Consultative Group. We provide representatives on the boards of several projects, including Brixton On-Line, Lambeth Credit Union and LVAC.

For a second consecutive year, a major commitment has been supporting the development of the Friends of Tate Library & Gardens, by providing basic admin. support and access to funding channels. We have tried to encourage the work of several other community groups around Brixton, such as the Friends of Windmill Allotments.



**PLANNING:** It looks as if Brixton will now regain a higher priority for public sector development after Lambeth Council reverted to a Labour administration at the May 2006 local elections. One of our concerns is to ensure that changes benefit the area, instead of damaging it further.

Our responses to individual planning applications have been limited by other pressures but we have tried to support local residents' groups in fighting unsuitable proposals.

**PUBLICATIONS:** Ongoing commitments are our quarterly newsletter and maintaining our website. Several small booklets are in the pipeline but a reprint of the *History of Brixton* will be our major investment this year. The first edition continued to be our biggest earner, totalling £358 in 2005/06, followed by our Edwardian postcard reprints which brought in £183 during the same period.

### RESOURCES

**FINANCE:** Most income and expenditure items vary only slightly from year to year, and some differences are due to 2 payments occurring within the same accounting period, such as Cost

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of Meeting Room hire. The largest group of exceptional items are the grants attracted, some of which relate to expenditure on behalf of the Friends of Tate Library & Gardens. Much of this in turn is associated with the programme of events held in the Gardens (see below).

*The accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2006 are on the facing page.*

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

**MEMBERSHIP:** Our mailing list has been around 250 for several years. Subscriptions were down slightly in 2005/06 but the previous year's figure was boosted by chasing up arrears and lapsed members. It's been good to see growing interest from those now living further afield who want to keep in touch, but we want to match this with more support within the local community too.

*Alan Piper, Hon. Secretary.*



### Friends of Tate Library & Gardens

#### Organisation:

The Chair, Secretary and Treasurer are currently the same as the Brixton Society. Other committee members elected at last year's AGM consisted of Leon Kreitzman (Vice-Chair), Laura Morland, Sarah Slater, Ben Tunstall, Marilyn Rogers, Ali Warner, Paul Hill, Phil Isaac and Nicholas Weedon, with Joyce Bellamy (MPGA) and Laura Chrysostomou (Lambeth Libraries) as advisory members.

The mailing list has increased to 52 (in addition

to contacts in other Council departments), the great majority of them on e-mail.

#### Improving the Space:

A much-amended version of the grand "Central Square" concept may be re-launched soon, but during the past year we have sought small improvements to the open space, with some success. It is clear to us that just changing the paving will never be enough to make an attractive public space, and a more holistic approach is needed. Thus we have supported a series of events to bring a wider range of people and activities into the Gardens.

#### Programme of Events:

The Friends hosted 5 events between April 2005 and May 2006. These were fund-raised for and co-ordinated by Sarah Slater and Glyn Kyle (volunteers) and Laura Chrysostomou (Lambeth Libraries). The aim is to create a sense of community and ownership of the public space in front of the Tate Library.

The centenary of the Gardens was celebrated in October 2005 as part of the Lottery-funded Big Draw. Marilyn Rogers and Sarah Slater worked with Sudbourne School to encourage the children to see the Gardens and the centre of Brixton in a 360 degree vision. The Camera Obscura was a brilliant aid to the children's understanding of the architectural scene. Jenny Jones (Green member of the London Assembly) kindly came to cut the cake, and a good time was had by all.

The turning-on of the Winter Lights was a collaboration with the Brixton Area Forum. Children from St.Jude's and St.Andrew's Schools worked on Christmas cards, sang carols in Electric Avenue and processed to the Gardens for further music in the Library. The Peace and Light Event started with a series of free lantern-making workshops held in the Library and at Brixton Arts Co-op. The night-time spectacular on the shortest day of the year allowed children to participate without being out too late.

The May Day event featured more entertainment – a steel band, street theatre, May-Pole dancing, percussion sculpture, plant stall, refreshments. This was the most successful event so far, with a wide mix of residents and passers-by responding positively and getting involved.



## 20<sup>th</sup> Century Estates – which way forward?



*This photo was taken c.1974, when it was the Victorian terraces like those in the foreground which were under threat of demolition. Now the focus has shifted to the big 20<sup>th</sup> century estates – and just as 30 years ago, different combinations of conservation, adaptation or rebuilding are possible, depending on your priorities. In the middle distance, the 1938 Guinness Trust estate in Loughborough Park is proposed for total rebuilding with a net loss of 142 social housing units in order to fit in 244 flats for the private market. To the right of the estate, the Shakespeare Road depot is due to be the site of a new secondary school or “Academy”. In the background, the white slab blocks mark the Loughborough Estate, where major improvements were supported by Brixton Challenge in the 1990s.*

### **Social Housing loses out in Guinness Trust plans**

Plans for the complete replacement of the Guinness Trust’s estate in Loughborough Park have been referred to a Public Inquiry to be held in September.

The estate was built in 1938-39 in a dense layout of 398 flats around an impressive community centre.

The Trust aim to provide a total of 500 new flats in 2 stages, but a community centre will not re-appear until Stage 2. Perversely the aim seems to be to profit from sales of 244 private flats by dispensing with 142 affordable rented flats.

To fit in the extra dwellings, most new blocks will have to rise higher above the surrounding houses, from 5 to 8 storeys. The Shakespeare Academy may be overshadowed. Space in

each new flat is also being cut down to fit all the extra flats into the existing site, so many flats will make do with internal kitchens and a single aspect.

The site is rather distant from public transport, apart from the limited P5 bus service. Despite the expected influx of trendy new private owners, on-site car parking space is actually to be reduced, which seems unrealistic given the increasing controls on parking in local streets. What may be the final straw is that the sewers in Loughborough Park already struggle to cope, even before the new Academy arrives.

The decision on this one will be a test of how much sustainable communities really matter.

*Alan Piper.*



## Bigger Blocks planned for Stockwell Park Estate

Both the Angell Town and Stockwell Park estates were built in the early 1970s to the same deck access design with basement parking. Angell Town has seen much of the original layout replaced by new blocks in recent years, at similar density but staying low rise.

Over in Stockwell Park, a series of modest changes were made to try to make the original layout safer and manageable. Many flats in the northern half of the estate have been upgraded in recent years.

Now outline planning permission is being sought for a bolder approach, taking in the 1960s estate to the north around the Wayland House tower block on Robsart Street. However, the older Waltham Estate at the corner of Stockwell Road and Robsart Street is not included in these proposals.

It is now proposed to demolish 185 dwellings (164 social rented and 21 leasehold) and build a total of 368 new homes. In this case at least, the social rented housing will be replaced by a similar number of dwellings, with 21 "fixed equity" intermediate homes. The gain will consist of 332 private market homes and 36 shared ownership homes.

The present sheltered housing in Albemarle House (47 bedsit flats) will be replaced by a new complex with 40 one-bedroom flats. 1290 square metres of existing business space will be demolished, including Brixton Cycles and the Stockwell Road housing office, but a total of 2000 sq.m. will be provided in the new layout. Part of this will come from adapting disused garages below Barrett House. Parking will be reduced by 122 car-spaces in all, but storage or parking will be provided for 557 extra bicycles.

The proposed increase in dwellings is largely to come from replacing blocks around the edge of the estates with taller buildings. Wayland House will be enlarged with a 15-storey side extension. There will be an 8-storey block at the east end of Robsart Street, and 2 more 6-storey blocks at the junction with the Stockwell Park conservation area.. Behind the skateboard park (which will remain) the new block will rise to 7 storeys.

The least successful feature is a new 11-storey tower block, planned for the corner of Brixton Road and Stockwell Park Walk, between the Town Centre and Brixton Road conservation areas. Apart from dominating the adjoining church, it will prevent adequate daylight and any morning sunlight reaching the Friendly Almshouses just to the rear.

*Alan Piper.*



## Thinking Globally Wednesday 20 September: Coping with Climate Change

Alex Nickson, the Mayor's adviser on climate change, will talk about its long-term effects on the historic environment. 7-30 for 8 pm start at Clapham Manor Primary School, SW4.  
*The Clapham Society.*

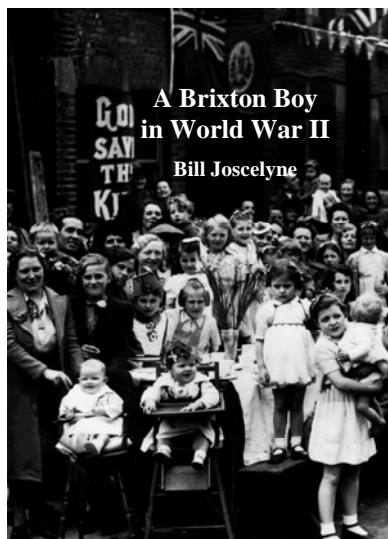
## It's Alive! - Bio-Diversity Action Plan launched

The Plan has been put before a series of groups and official bodies in the last couple of years, but has now made it into a full printed version, which was officially launched on 21<sup>st</sup> June. It identifies a series of habitat types with their own particular conservation issues. It also highlights certain species – plants, insects, fish, birds – whose survival in the borough will indicate whether the Plan is working. For further advice see:

[www.lambeth.gov.uk/Services/Environment/ParksGreenSpaces](http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/Services/Environment/ParksGreenSpaces)

and [www.london.gov.uk/wildweb](http://www.london.gov.uk/wildweb)

## Local History Focus



*A Brixton Boy in World War II* by Bill Joscelyne is the Society's latest publication. Bill's memoir tells of his growing up in the Second World War when he was evacuated from Brixton, not once, but three times. Despite three evacuations, he still experienced the London Blitz.

This small book will be on sale at the Lambeth Country Show. 20 pages A5 with illustrations for **£2.49**. If you cannot visit our stall at the Show, order from the enclosed leaflet or from our website: [www.brixtonsociety.org.uk](http://www.brixtonsociety.org.uk)

### Untold London

*From Katie Smith:*

I came across the Brixton Society website and thought I would drop you a line about mine, [www.untoldlondon.org.uk](http://www.untoldlondon.org.uk)

We're based at the Museum of London. The site describes where Londoners of all cultural groups can find their histories in the capital. It's mostly based around race and religion at the moment, though it's likely to expand to include other London communities soon, for example sexuality or disability. If the Brixton Society is running any events

or projects that are relevant, we'd be glad to carry the details and highlight your organisation.

*Kate-Louise Smith, Untold London website manager, London Museums Hub, 150 London Wall, EC2Y 5HN, (020) 7814 5782, [klsmith@museumoflondon.org.uk](mailto:klsmith@museumoflondon.org.uk)*

### Writing Competition

**31 July** is the deadline for entries for the third year of the Local History pamphlets writing competition run by **Lambeth Archives**. Entries should be between 4000 and 10,000 words. Entry fee is £10 but prize is £300 plus publication of the work. Last year's winner was Peter Bradley for "Ways into Brockwell Park" launched on 21 May following the AGM of the Friends of Brockwell Park.

### Another Plaque on the Wall

Many readers will remember the comedian Max Wall, who died in 1990. Max was born in 1908 near the north end of Brixton Road, at Glenshaw Mansions. A plaque on the side of the building, facing Christ Church, was unveiled by the actor Simon Callow on Sunday 12 March, before guests including Sir Donald Sinden, Tim West and Prunella Scales.

### The Bermondsey Basement Bookstore

Peter Marcan is well-known among local historians as a source of books and prints on London and its many aspects. If the Internet is too limiting – or beyond your grasp – you can still contact him to order or search for real books on your preferred topic. Write to him at PO Box 3158, London SE1 4RA, or phone on (020) 7357 0368 to discuss your needs or arrange a visit (by appointment only).



### How to contact us...

#### Editorial & Event Notices:

Material for the next issue should be sent by 19 August to the Secretary, Alan Piper, at 82 Mayall Road, SE24 0PJ, or by e-mail to [APiperBrix@aol.com](mailto: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 [wjdcl@globalnet.co.uk](mailto:wjdcl@globalnet.co.uk)

#### Planning issues:

If you are concerned about a local planning application, contact David Warner – e-mail to [david@scriabin.force9.net](mailto:david@scriabin.force9.net) or tel. (020) 7924 0618, or write to him at 290 Coldharbour Lane, SW9 8SE.

#### Earlier Newsletters:

Many spare copies from the past year or two are given away at events for promotional purposes, but if you are trying to track down a particular issue, contact Alan Piper in case we still have a copy. Recent editions can also be seen on our website.