

# THE BRIXTON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Summer, July 2011

No.202, Quarterly issue,  
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 appearance:

**Weekend 16 & 17 July**

**Lambeth Country Show**

11 am to 7 pm, Brockwell Park, SE24  
Look out for our stall in the usual part of the  
park – see page 3 for new postcards on sale!

**Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> September:  
Windmill Festival**

1 pm to 5 pm in Windmill Gardens,  
between Ramillies Close and Blenheim  
Gardens, Brixton Hill SW2. Postponed from  
June, it now coincides with **London Open  
House** weekend. For other sites opening over  
that weekend, the printed Guide book will be  
available from 8<sup>th</sup> August, or in the meantime  
see [www.open-city.org.uk](http://www.open-city.org.uk) and follow the links.

**Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> October:  
Lambeth Archives  
Open Day**

10 am to 5 pm at the Minet Library,  
Knatchbull Road, SE5.

Prompted by the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the  
Festival of Britain, this year's theme is  
Festivals and celebrations in Lambeth.



## **Helpers wanted**

We have found enough members to staff our  
stall through the Country Show weekend, but  
we welcome offers of help with the Autumn  
events at the Windmill Festival, Archives Open  
Day or the Stockwell Festival. If you can spare  
some time to help on our stall, please call  
Diana Linskey on (020) 7274 3835 or e-mail to  
[events@brixtonsociety.org.uk](mailto:events@brixtonsociety.org.uk)

## **Our next Summer Walks...**

If you mislaid (or missed) the full list of guided  
walks with our last issue, collect another from  
us at the Lambeth Country Show this month.  
NB – These two are both circular routes.

**Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> August  
Ferndale Ward**

Meet 2-30 pm outside Clapham North Tube  
Station, corner of Clapham Road and Bedford  
Road, SW4 for a walk led by Alan Piper taking  
in parts of Landor Road, Ferndale Road and  
Acre Lane.

*Bus routes P5, 88, 155, 322, 345.*

**Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> September  
Around Coldharbour Lane**

Meet 2-30 pm in front of the Tate Library on  
Windrush Square, SW2. A walk taking in a  
slice of the Town Centre, the impact of the  
railways on an up-market suburb and the front  
line of the 1981 Brixton Riots.

*Bus routes 2,3,35,45,59,109,118,133,159,196,  
333,345,415,432,P4,P5 all pass nearby.*

*Open Garden Squares Weekend  
colour supplement inside...*

# Diary of Events, Late Summer 2011

## 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 July,**
- **8 September,**
- 13 October
- 10 November

## Links with Other Groups

*For events listed here, check directly with the organisers if any queries over times or admission.*

### Saturday/ Sunday 16/17 July – Urban Art 2011

London's largest open air Arts Fair takes place from 10 am to 6 pm each day in Josephine Avenue, between Brixton Hill and Brixton Water Lane, SW2. Now in its 10<sup>th</sup> year, 150 artists are expected to display some 2000 pieces of work along the railings.

Enquiries to Tim Sutton on (020) 8674 1777 or [tim@urbanart.co.uk](mailto:tim@urbanart.co.uk) or see [www.urbanart.co.uk](http://www.urbanart.co.uk)

### Monday 18 July – Tomorrow's Railways:

A talk by John Stewart of Lambeth Public transport Group, 8 pm at Woodlawns, Streatham Darby & Joan Club, 16 Leigham Court Road, SW16.

*The Streatham Society*

### Thursday 21 July – Bygone Streatham:

An illustrated talk by John Brown of the Streatham Society, 8 pm at the Phoenix Centre, Westow Street, SE19.

*Norwood Society*

### Saturday 23 July to Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> August – Wind in the Willows

A promenade drama production in the Walled Garden of Brockwell Park, presented by Sixteen Feet Productions. Performance times vary – see website [www.sixteenfeet.co.uk](http://www.sixteenfeet.co.uk) or call 07 958 448 690

*Friends of Brockwell Park*

### Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> August – Brixton Splash

This free town centre event returns for its 6<sup>th</sup> year. Main stage on Windrush Square, plus Arts & Crafts zone in St. Matthew's Peace Garden and 4 sound systems in town centre streets, from 12 noon to 7 pm.

[www.brixtonsplash.org](http://www.brixtonsplash.org)

### Sunday 14 August – Car Boot Sale

Fund-raising event in the car park next to Brockwell Lido (enter from Dulwich Road, SE24). Open from **9 am**, sellers set up from 7 am - £10 per car, £15 per van.

*Friends of Brockwell Park.*

### Wednesday 14 Sept. – Over the Boundary:

A postcard tour from Camberwell to Dulwich via Herne Hill on old postcards, presented by Ian McInnes of the Dulwich Society. 7-30 for 7-45 pm start, at Herne

Hill United Church Hall, c/o Redpost Hill and Herne Hill, SE24.

*Herne Hill Society.*

### 17-21 September – Herne Hill Festival:

A series of classical, jazz and lighter music over seven evenings (not Tuesday!) - for dates and details see website, [www.hernehillfestival.org](http://www.hernehillfestival.org)

*Herne Hill Forum*

### Wednesday 21 Sept. – Saving Energy in Traditional Buildings:

Iain McCaig from English Heritage explains how to improve the thermal performance of older houses whilst maintaining their original character. 7-30 for 8 pm start, at Clapham Manor Primary School, entrance in Belmont Road, SW4 0BZ.

*Clapham 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 interested in the Brixton area, so opinions expressed in these pages are not necessarily those of the Brixton Society.

All material should be sent before **10 September** 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 enquiries to (020) 7207 0347.

## Publications News

### NEW POSTCARDS

This year we have 4 new postcards of Edwardian Brixton and we have reprinted two favourites – the Brixton Astoria, now The Academy (BX17) and the original Greetings from Brixton card (BX14). The new cards include views in Stockwell for the first time.



Memorial.

The Swan, Stockwell (BX36) shows an earlier building than that of today with swans on the roof.



Electric Avenue from Atlantic Road (BX37) shows the famous canopies and shop windows full of goods.

Finally Brixton Road by Dorrell Place (BX38) is a view of Brixton Road showing a horse and cart, a tram, and the shops.



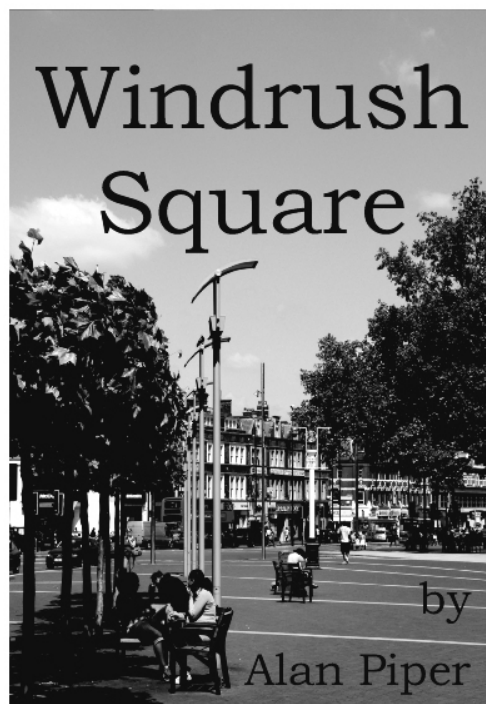
After maintaining our postcard prices for many years, we have had to increase prices this year to 50p each or any 5 for £2. I am pleased to say this did not seem to deter customers at the Windrush Square event last month where we sold over 300 cards.

### EFFRA: LAMBETH'S UNDERGROUND RIVER

This little book telling the story of Lambeth's river was first published in 1993 when, rather to our amazement, our stocks sold out in just a year. Sales have been steady through the years leading to reprinting in 2000 and again this year, 2011. It is great to have this book back in stock, it tells what we know about the Effra from its sources in Upper Norwood to it reaching the Thames near Vauxhall. It remains priced at £1.50.

### WINDRUSH SQUARE

The latest addition to our Book publications is Windrush Square by Alan Piper. This 20 page, illustrated book with a colour cover was produced to promote the Square in conjunction with the Open Garden Squares weekend in June (see colour supplement). The book tells the story of the Square, its contents and many of the interesting buildings around it. The printing of the book formed part of the publicity for the Square funded by Big Lottery Fund and we gave away 500 copies on that weekend to visitors to the Square.



The Society retains the rest of the print run to sell to raise funds for future publications or events. Copies will be available at £1.00 each. However, we want all our members to have the opportunity to receive a free copy. Enclosed with this Newsletter you should find a voucher which may be exchanged for one free copy of the Windrush Square book at any of the events the Society attends in 2011. If you cannot visit one of our stalls, you can redeem the voucher by sending it with a stamp for return postage to the address in the voucher.

With this Newsletter you should have received a Membership and Order form which lists all the current publications we sell. Our new website will, we intend, have an on-line shop available in due course. Until then please visit the stall at the Country Show or place an order for postal sales.

**Diana Linskey**

# Annual Report 2011

*The following is an expanded version of the report presented at our Annual General Meeting in June.*

## AIMS & ORGANISATION

**STRUCTURE & MANAGEMENT:** The Society is a registered charity, constituted as an unincorporated association. The society's constitution was last revised at the 2008 AGM, to reflect current charity law.

The Executive Committee has met 9 times since the last AGM, consisting of Bill Linskey (Chair), Annick Alet, Doye Akinlade, Ray Bailey, John Cunningham, Barbara Davies, Tom Harle, Phil Isaac, Rosemary Honey, Diana Linskey, Alan Piper, Marilyn Rogers, Eileen Walkin, Norma Williamson, David Warner and Nicholas Weedon.

**AIMS & AFFILIATIONS:** We aim to encourage awareness and understanding of our surroundings, and to give local people a say in Brixton's future. Our area extends well beyond the Town Centre to include Myatt's Fields, much of Stockwell, and out to the South Circular Road.

The Society is registered with the London Forum of Amenity Societies, the British Association for Local History and Lambeth Voluntary Action Council, all of which provide useful support in our work.

## PROGRAMME & ACTIVITIES

**NETWORKING:** We are in touch with a wide range of community groups. We try to respond to a varied stream of e-mail enquiries from students, media and family historians.

We have participated in Brockwell Park's Management Advisory Committee, the Lambeth Police/ Community Consultative Group, Lambeth Local History Forum, Friends of Lambeth Libraries and Lambeth Parks Forum. We are now trying to re-establish a Brixton Forum to improve networking between local groups. We have been represented on the boards or committees of several local projects. The Friends of Windrush Square and the Friends of Tate Library currently operate as standing committees of the Brixton Society.



*Friends of Tate Library collecting signatures of support outside the library during National Save Libraries Day, 5<sup>th</sup> February.*

## PLANNING & REGENERATION:

We have worked with other amenity societies to set up the Lambeth Civic Forum to improve liaison over planning and conservation. We have been more active this year in commenting on planning applications, and we joined in efforts to resist the Streatham Tesco development which will put a temporary ice rink on the site of Brixton's multi-storey car park. We have also suggested buildings for inclusion in Lambeth's Local List.

However, it is probably a better use of our limited time if we focus on planning policy documents rather than individual planning applications. We expect another batch of documents to emerge soon as additions to Lambeth's Local Development Framework, and in the meantime the Government is making changes to the planning system overall. The London Forum of Amenity Societies is a great help in alerting us to proposed changes in London-wide and national policies.

**EVENTS:** We were involved in launch events for the remodelled Windrush Square in February 2010, and organised a "growing in Brixton" event in June 2010 for Open Garden Squares weekend. Other appearances in 2010 included Myatt's Fields Park, the Lambeth Country Show, Brixton Windmill Festival and Lambeth Archives Open Day. Once again we provided guided walks as part of the summer series organised by Lambeth Local History Forum. Arrangements are in hand for a similar pattern of activities this summer.



# Annual Report 2011

Our usual winter social took place successfully in January 2011. In recent years, we have only held occasional open meetings with guest speakers, but so far in 2011 we have had presentations from the Black Cultural Archives in February and from Brixton Green at our recent AGM.

**PUBLICATIONS:** Our priorities have been to redesign the website and ensure that our quarterly newsletter appears regularly. The River Effra booklet has been reprinted again and some new postcards have just been produced.

## RESOURCES

**FINANCE:** The annual accounts cover the year ended 31 March 2011. Independent examination had not been completed in time for the AGM, so a draft version was presented and the final accounts will appear in the next newsletter after approval by the executive committee. In the meantime, we can report that total income for the year was £3116, in addition to an opening balance of just under £861. Total expenditure was just over £1905, leaving a healthier balance of £2072 at the end of March.

Subscriptions were last revised at the 2010 AGM, and provided £1048 of the society's income. The other major contribution was publications sales at just under £1178. A grant from the Big Lottery Fund towards Open Garden Squares Weekend 2011 will appear in next year's accounts.



*At the official re-opening of Brixton Windmill, 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2011 (from left) Annick Alet and Norma Williamson from the Brixton Society, with Carol and Erica from the Vida Walsh Centre.*

Support "in kind" from individual members with newsletter deliveries, staffing stalls, reporting back from meetings of several bodies, and many other odd tasks are

valuable contributions to maintaining the Society's current level of activity.

**MEMBERSHIP:** At the beginning of June we had a core of 184 paid-up members, before counting honorary memberships and newsletters exchanged with kindred organisations. Whilst our membership includes some far-flung ex-residents of Brixton, our recent priority has been to attract new members locally at various events, gaining 46 in the past year. We are equally keen to keep existing members involved, and we are currently reminding them to renew this summer.

*Alan Piper, Hon. Secretary.*

## Society Website Upgraded

Over the past several months, our website has been redesigned in a new format which we hope you will find both easier to use and easier on the eye.

The new-style site is already operational, though it may take a few more weeks to flesh out all the intended features. A key feature is that several committee officers can add or amend event details or news, rather than wait for one person to do the occasional major update. Our special thanks are due to Tom Harle for leading on this.

## Art Gallery remembered

A whole series of posters from the former Brixton Art Gallery, through the 1980s, was displayed at our "Art in Brixton" day in Windrush Square. An art exhibition is now being planned for October-December at the 198 Gallery in Railton Road (near the Herne Hill end). For more information, including related community projects, look out for their stall at the Lambeth Country Show or see the website, [www.brixton50.co.uk](http://www.brixton50.co.uk) or the blog at [www.brixtoncallingproject.blogspot.com](http://www.brixtoncallingproject.blogspot.com) or e-mail to [postcards@brixtoncalling.org](mailto:postcards@brixtoncalling.org)

## Local History research

We ran out of time and pages, so some history material had to be held back from this issue. We also currently have several intriguing enquiries in the pending tray to be investigated, so the next issue should include the usual quota of reminiscences and revelations, to coincide with the Open Day at Lambeth Archives.

### **What the Localism Bill means for groups like us**

This is a major bill, expected to complete its passage through Parliament before the end of this year and take effect in stages after that. Some of its provisions could affect the character, appearance and economy of your neighbourhood or town centre.

The bill has over 200 clauses and 25 schedules, most of them technical or amending existing legislation. The bill is wide-ranging and some of the proposals appear to contradict each other, reflecting not only two parties in coalition but also inputs by different government agencies and lobbying groups. Some provisions continue the work of previous governments in discouraging Council housing, but a proposed Third Party Right of Appeal in Planning cases was quickly dropped.

However there are still some impending changes to the Town Planning process. For a start, Town and Parish Councils (which exist outside London) and Neighbourhood Forums (of which more shortly) will be able to draw up Neighbourhood Plans. Although the previous government loved the word "Neighbourhood" they never bothered to define it, and this bill barely takes it further. It seems to be left to local people to put forward a preferred boundary and hope that someone in authority will agree. So far the government has agreed that neighbourhoods can straddle borough boundaries, like that covered by the Herne Hill Forum, but they cannot overlap in the casual way that sometimes happens between adjacent amenity societies.

If sufficient people in an area constitute themselves into a Neighbourhood Forum, they will be able to draw up a Neighbourhood Plan, based on their vision of what the area should be like, steering what kind of development can go ahead within the area. The local Council will be obliged to co-operate and to supply data and technical advice. However, any such Plan must conform to national and local planning policies and the London Plan, so there is little scope to frustrate these. This kind of local plan however could work in the same

way as past Brixton Town Centre Plans, to promote selected types of development on certain sites. Such a Plan will also have to be legally sound and approved by at least 50% of those voting in a local referendum – which is at least an advance on decisions by a small group of Councillors from other parts of the borough!

There are still some active Town Centre or Neighbourhood Forums around Lambeth, with council support, but Brixton's own Forum is defunct, and even the advisory Town Centre Forum convened by the Town Centre Director has lapsed. Recently, the Brixton Society has been working with other local groups to rebuild some form of Brixton Forum. We intend it to be capable of taking on the Neighbourhood Planning role, though we are not sure yet if we want to go that far. In the meantime, 3 pilot projects are underway in London to test the concept, in Chelsea, Bermondsey (Southwark) and Hackbridge (Sutton).

Other provisions in the bill include a Community Right to Manage, whereby a local group could take on management of an amenity that the council seemed unwilling or incapable of operating itself, and a Community Right to Challenge, where similarly a local group or forum could require the council to invite competitive bids for providing one of its current services or amenities. This opens the way to neighbourhood bodies or social enterprises taking on a local building, park or service and running it themselves, but also with the risk that the service may be more restricted if the income is inadequate.

*Alan Piper, with extra material from DCLG, the London Forum and the Clapham Society*

### **Recycling Progress**

Lambeth has introduced two new initiatives since the report in our April issue.

Recyclebank aims to promote recycling among the 51,000 households who live in flats – details from [www.recyclebank.com/lambeth](http://www.recyclebank.com/lambeth) or phone 0844 409 9490.

Also, special collection banks for small electrical goods have been placed on Acre Lane, Brixton Hill and Loughborough Road.

## Friends' Groups

### Friends of Tate Library Brixton

The Commission reviewing Lambeth's library service is due to report its initial findings to the Council's cabinet meeting on 25 July. The full report with proposals for a new model for the service, and a budget reduction of £750,000 by 2014, is due in November.

In background information to the work of the Commission the Council states that "low usage of Lambeth libraries has resulted in the highest cost per visit, combined with the lowest levels of user satisfaction, of any London borough". One of the aims of the review is to find ways of increasing the take up of library services.



*A display inside the library mounted by the Brixton Society in December 2009 aiming to recruit members to the Friends.*

Tate Library Brixton recorded 354,750 visitors last year. It's difficult to see how many more users could be accommodated without major changes to the way the library is currently arranged. Sometimes there's been so much demand for study space that people have had to sit on the floor. Downstairs it's frequently difficult to browse the adult fiction shelves without disturbing people using computers. Children's story telling sessions can often be heard by everyone on the ground floor.

These points were made to the Commission at its meeting with library

friends' groups in June. We also stressed that users value Tate Library as a place where they can feel part of the Brixton community and meet like-minded people in one of the few local public spaces free from commercial pressure.

The Chair of the Commission, Cllr Florence Nosegbe, made it clear that the level of savings required could not be achieved without major changes to the current service. She also said that the Council would be looking for a much closer and more productive relationship with library friends' groups.

**The next meeting of Friends of Tate Library Brixton will be on 27 July at 6 pm in the library.** One of the main items for discussion will be how we can organise ourselves to support the library in an uncertain future. Please send agenda items or comments for the meeting to [fotlbrixton@gmail.com](mailto:fotlbrixton@gmail.com).

### Friends of Windrush Square

The Friends of Windrush Square is - like the Friends of Tate Library - constituted for the moment as a sub-group of the Brixton Society. This enabled both groups to get up-and-running straight away as part of a long-established registered charity. There has not been a meeting of the Friends of Windrush Square for quite some time as there did not seem to be any policy issues to discuss. However, now that the cuts will affect the Square as much as any other park (and it IS a park administered by Lambeth's parks department) and the issue has arisen of the Ritzy being allowed to encamp on the Square, the time has come to get the group active again.

**There will be a meeting of the Friends of Windrush Square on Thursday, 11 August at 7:00pm, venue to be advised.**

All members are welcome at either or both Friends' Group activities. If you have not previously expressed an interest in either group but would like to do so now, please email: [membership@brixtonsociety.org.uk](mailto:membership@brixtonsociety.org.uk) or telephone 020 7274 3835 and leave a message.

## Notes and News

### Plaques - Blue and Otherwise

#### UPDATES

In our last Newsletter I appealed for help in drawing up a comprehensive list of commemorative plaques in or around Brixton.

The first (and so far, the only) person to respond was Duncan Rimmer who reported two plaques:

Edward Thomas, 14 Lansdowne Gardens

Arthur Rackman, artist Albert Square



*photo: Duncan Rimmer*

Many thanks to Duncan. There must be other plaques around so do please look for them when you are out-and-about and let me know, including the address of the property it is on and the name of the person it commemorates. Either email me ([bill@linskey.org.uk](mailto:bill@linskey.org.uk)) or telephone 020 7274 3835.

I should add to the list of English Heritage Blue Plaques in our last Newsletter:

VAN GOGH, Vincent (1853-1890)  
Hackford Road, South Lambeth, SW9 0RE

Other interesting names fairly nearby include:

MONTGOMERY, Bernard Law, Viscount  
Montgomery of Alamein (1887-1976)  
Oval House, 52-54 Kennington, Kennington  
Oval, SE11 5SW

ROHMER, Sax (1883-1959)  
51 Herne Hill, Herne Hill, SE24 9NE

Sax Rohmer was the creator of Dr. Fu Manchu a criminal mastermind who featured in many books and films and became a stereotype and then was parodied.

**Bill Linskey**

### Membership – time to renew

You will find a membership (and order) form delivered with this Newsletter. If you joined/renewed last year then your membership is now due for renewal. (The Society's year runs from July to July). Your subscriptions are vital to keeping the Society running and it helps me a lot to get these in over the summer. If you are visiting the Lambeth Country Show do take the opportunity to renew at our stall.

Some members have asked if Direct Debits are available – I am afraid not. But bank transfers into the account over the internet can be made – please ask me for bank account details. A facility is now available through the new website to pay by Paypal. If you have any queries on membership please contact me at: [diana@linskey.org.uk](mailto:diana@linskey.org.uk) or on 0207 274 3835.

### Make It Grow It Sell It Brixton Makers & Growers Event

The Brixton Market Traders Federation will be putting on an exciting event for local makers/growers & artists in early September. The date will be confirmed shortly.

The event is aimed at Lambeth's creative and entrepreneurial population. The idea is to provide a showcase for the talents of people who grow their own produce and those that make and/or design their own products.

For further information and details please contact Lisa Watson via e-mail on [lisa@tbnproductions.com](mailto:lisa@tbnproductions.com).

### Bussin' It

#### A Summer's Young event

#### presented by Truth about Youth

Set in the heart of Brixton inside a real Double Decker bus, this new piece written by the Oval House Theatre Young Writers' Company explores growing up and learning to make adult decisions. But when are we old enough to make informed life choices – or more importantly, "are we eva"?!

Oval House Theatre will be bringing their play in a bus to Windrush Square on Wednesday to Saturday, 20<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2011. Full details on their website: [www.ovalhouse.com](http://www.ovalhouse.com).