

THE BRIXTON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Autumn, October 2011

No.203, Quarterly issue,
Distributed free to members.

Registered with the London Forum of Amenity
Societies, Registered Charity No.1058103,
Website: www.brixtonsociety.org.uk

Saturday 1st October:
Lambeth Archives
Open Day

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

The 60th anniversary of the 1951 Festival of
Britain inspired this year's event, but other
festivals and celebrations down the years are
also featured – you should find a leaflet
enclosed with this issue listing the talks and
films during the day. And of course we will be
there again with our own bookstall.

Friends of Tate Library

You may not all receive this in time, but a
final reminder that the Friends' next meet
on **Wednesday 28 September at 6 pm** in
the library.

Praveen Manghani, new head of Lambeth's
library service, is expected to attend, and there
will be an update on the current review of the
service, as well as firming up plans for the
poetry competition.

Make it, Grow it, Sell it...

Brixton Market's new feature is back again on
Saturday 8th October – see colour feature
inside or www.makeitgrowitsellit.com



View from The Brix across St. Matthew's Peace Garden.

Brixton bounces back!

*“Demolishing the multi-storey car park
was wrong on so many levels...”*

Despite looting and the loss of both our Town
Centre director and our car park, Brixton
residents and traders seem to be rallying
round to keep the centre going. The Brixton
Neighbourhood Forum was formally set up in
August (see *Newsletter 202, page 6*). Brixton
Market Traders' Federation is striving to revive
Brixton Station Road, and negotiating for some
temporary parking to make up for the loss of
the multi-storey.

As we go to press, plans are being firming up
for some promotional efforts in the run-up to
Christmas. Expect a Christmas Lights switch-
on event around the end of November. The
Society hopes to have its bookstall back in
Windrush Square for one Saturday in
December, and **Make it, Grow it, Sell it** will
make an extra appearance on Christmas Eve.

More event dates inside...

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).

- 13 October
- 10 November

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 3rd December to the Secretary, Alan Piper, at 82 Mayall Road, SE24 0PJ, or to APiperBrix@aol.com Phone/ fax (020) 7207 0347.

Links with Other Groups

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

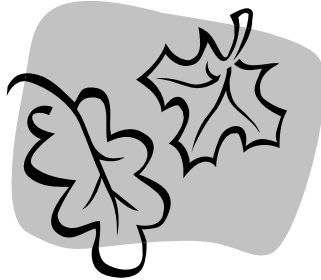
Thursday 6th October – Ghosts of the 1908

Olympics: White City
Guided walk in Shepherd's Bush tracing the 1908 games and exhibition site, led by Mike Moran. Meet at 11 am outside Goldhawk Road Tube Station

(Hammersmith & City Line). Fee £7.50 – you must pre-book on (020) 7332 3851 or ask.lma@cityoflondon.gov.uk
London Metropolitan Archives

Sunday 9th October – Autumn Walk

A seasonal walk in the park – meet at 2 pm by the clock tower near Brockwell Hall.
Friends of Brockwell Park.



Sunday 16 October – AGM of Friends of Brockwell Park

2 pm at Brockwell Hall, including discussion of ideas for future use of the Hall.
Friends of Brockwell Park

Sunday 16 October – History of Peckham

Its development in Georgian and Victorian times, talk by Stephen Humphrey at 3 pm at the Goose Green Centre, St.John's Church, East Dulwich Road, SE22.
The Peckham Society

Thursday 27 October – BRAIN OF LAMBETH

7-30 pm for 7-45 start, in Rooms 125/126, Lambeth Town Hall. Now run in a "pub quiz" format for teams of 4, including questions on Lambeth and London. Teams from local groups welcome but quizmaster John Moore would welcome

advance warning if you plan to bring a team – phone (020) 8677 6490 or e-mail moore309@fireflyuk.net
The Lambethans Society

Monday 7 November – Local History on Film

Presented by Tony Fletcher, 8 pm at Woodlawns, Streatham Darby & Joan Club, 16 Leigham Court Road, SW16.
The Streatham Society

Wednesday 9th Nov. – A Career in Ruins

John Maloney presents a light-hearted look at 35 years in archaeology, with the Museum of London and as a consultant. 7-30 for 7-45 pm start, at Herne Hill United Church Hall, c/o Redpost Hill and Herne Hill, SE24.
Herne Hill Society.

Thursday 17 Nov. – After the Great Exhibition:

An illustrated talk by Brian Bloice on the post-1851 life of the Crystal Palace, 8 pm at the Phoenix Centre, Westow Street, SE19.
Norwood Society

Tuesday 13 December - Olympics and Olympians in Lambeth and Southwark

Talk by Len Reilly, Lambeth Archives Manager, following the AGM. Opens at 7 pm for 7-30 start, The Housing Co-op Hall, 106 The Cut, SE1 (almost opposite the Old Vic Theatre). *Southwark & Lambeth Archaeological Society.*

Our Latest Book

Our latest publication reprints 3 articles on local institutions from an early 19th century magazine. The Mirror appeared weekly between 1822 and 1849 with the strapline "Literature, Amusement and Instruction". Bill Linskey has selected their pieces on Brixton Prison, the Stockwell Grammar School and St. Anne's School (at the top of Brixton Hill). There are some good line engravings but we have had to slightly enlarge the original text to improve legibility, so the book is in A4 format, as used for this newsletter. Copies will be on sale at our stall at the Lambeth Archives Open Day or by post from Membership Secretary, 32 Stockwell Green, London SW9 9HZ price £1.20 + 50p postage & packing.

80 years ago...

FEB. 7, 1931—THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS



Just dropped in for tea? Another Brixton story found in an old magazine was this report of a plane crash behind houses in Gresham Road. It seems the aircraft was being used for some film work over South London when the engine stopped. The petrol tank above the cockpit was undamaged, so there was no fire. The cameraman jumped clear just before the impact, and both he and the pilot survived. The plane ended up in the back garden of No.60, which stood opposite the Brixton Telephone Exchange but in the 1970s was

replaced by Wychwood House. The aircraft is an Avro 504, many of which passed into civilian use after the First World War.

Under Windrush Square

Our recent booklet on Windrush Square concentrates on the features which can be seen in this open space today, but this small patch of ground has a complicated history. We were not able to include all the background, and indeed some further facts have since come to light.

A major constraint on many parts of the old Rush Common is the restriction in the 1806 Inclosure Act on any structures "above the surface of the earth" but there have been some ingenious attempts to evade this.

When Sir Henry Tate established the Brixton Library, he also hoped to lay out a small public garden on the open ground in front. Negotiations with the owner of the freehold, John Roycroft, had come to nothing by the time of Sir Henry's death in 1899. The project was however continued by Lambeth Council with the support of the Brixton Association, which seems to have been an early equivalent of the Brixton Society or Brixton Neighbourhood Forum.

It eventually emerged that Roycroft was planning to redevelop the site as an underground stables for an omnibus company. There was panic that this would inflict "attendant nuisance and unsightliness for all time" (motor buses were still ten years in the future). In response, Mr J. Burgoyne, the chief librarian at Brixton, persuaded Lady Tate to cover the £3250 that Roycroft was demanding.

In the event, John Roycroft died soon after, in May 1903, aged 88, so his proposals might have come to nothing anyway, though the land would likely have continued in some scruffy commercial use. Roycroft himself had been active in building some familiar Brixton streets following the opening of the railway station in 1863. He was responsible for Somerleyton and Geneva Roads, Dexter Road (now Montego Close), Vining Street and most of Atlantic Road. At the time of his death he was living in Brixton Hill, opposite St. Matthew's Church,

Local History Focus

though previously he had been in Brixton Road and then at Norway House in Lothian Road.

It was in response to Lady Tate's generosity that the bust of Sir Henry was placed by the Brixton Association, having been paid for by public subscription. It was unveiled by Lady Tate on 11 October 1905.

*Alan Piper, with additional information from **Public Sculpture in South London**, title deeds in Lambeth Archives and Mr Roycroft's obituary in the Brixtonian (published 15 May 1903).*

Do you remember the Model Village?

Once a popular feature of **Brockwell Park**, the village consisted of a series of model buildings standing just outside the entrance to the walled garden in Brockwell Park. They were made in concrete c.1943 by Mr Edgar Wilson (then aged 76) of Hamilton Road, West Norwood, but gradually disappeared in the face of vandalism and neglect. A matching set survives in Melbourne, Australia, having been presented to that city in recognition of food parcels sent to the people of Lambeth during the Second World War.

Now the Friends of Brockwell Park are exploring the possibility of restoring the village, with the help of Heritage Lottery funds. However, they are desperately seeking photos to work from. Even if you did not take a photo of the village as such, maybe one of the little buildings features in the background of a family snapshot taken pre-1990?

Indeed, if you have pictures of any other lost features from the park, or of activities that no longer take place, the Friends would be delighted to have a copy for their history of the park (as yet aspirational).

E-mail to Susy Hogarth at susy.hogarth@btopenworld.com or post to her c/o FoBP, PO Box 27810, London SE24 9WN. Susy is willing to collect original photos, scan them and return them if you do not have digital versions.

Black Cultural Archives Preview in Brockwell Park

In past newsletters we have reported on the proposals for the Black Cultural Archives to return to Brixton. Meanwhile there is a brief opportunity to see highlights from their collection on display at Brockwell Hall in the centre of the park. The exhibition will be open from 10 am to 4 pm daily from Wednesday 5th October until Sunday 9th October.

Marking 60 years of Stockwell Bus Garage

Back in June, we learnt from the Stockwell News website that architectural education charity Our Hut had secured a £49,400 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund for a project focussed on Stockwell Bus Garage. The garage lies between Lansdowne Way and Binfield Road. Completed in 1952, its concrete shell vaulted roof covered what was then the largest unsupported area under one roof in Europe.

The project is collaborating with the 20th Century Society, Stockwell Partnership, Go Ahead London and local schools, among others. It will culminate in a final event in Autumn 2012 to showcase artwork from local schools and colleges, together with oral histories from people involved with building the garage or working there.

The organisers are especially interested in hearing from former London Transport drivers and conductors who were based at Stockwell. A permanent archive of the material collected will be held at the London Transport Museum after the project.

Their next event is a Routemaster bus tour to Hampstead and back on **Saturday 15 October**, highlighting 20th century buildings along the 24 bus route. Departs from the 196 bus stop on Binfield Road (outside the nursery) at 1-45 pm but prior booking is essential, to ourhut@hotmail.com or phone 07 817 444 928. Returns about 4-30 pm.

Also see the website www.ourhut.co.uk

Remember the Astoria?

Currently known as the O2 Academy, the Astoria in Stockwell Road opened in 1929 just in time for the first talking pictures, but was also capable of hosting stage shows. Its Art Deco foyers and Italianate auditorium were restored several years ago, but are rarely seen unless you are in the business of making pop videos.

Age UK Lambeth are arranging a visit to see inside this rare survival from the golden age of cinemas. This is part of their Celebrating Age Festival which runs through October. Phone them on (020) 7733 0526 for date and details. Admission free – provided you are old enough to remember when it was still a cinema!

More Local Plaques



The search continues to track down plaques on local buildings that commemorate past residents or events. This one is in Mowll Street SW9, on the flank of Glenshaw Mansions near the north end of Brixton Road. Max Wall was one of many entertainers who lived in the Brixton area in the early 20th century.

More 20th Century Buildings

The book on Edwardian Buildings in Lambeth, by Edmund Bird and Fiona Price, has been very well received. Recently we heard from Fiona that research is underway on post-1914 buildings for a follow-up volume (or two). If you have any favourites that ought to feature – even if they have not survived – we will be happy to pass on your suggestions or any inside information you may have.

Trailing Henry

On 1st May, arts collective *They Are Here* hid a number of golden tickets in various books within Brixton's Tate Library. Posters were dotted around the library, inviting users to search for tickets. The first twelve people to find them became the core participants, exploring the philanthropic legacy of Sir Henry Tate through three Saturday day trips during the summer.

During these trips the group met with several experts to pick up information about the flow of money generated by Tate's sugar refineries to found the Tate libraries and Tate galleries that we know today. The visits took in Tate & Lyle's surviving sugar refinery at Silvertown, the Tate Britain Archive, and a final tour taking in the Brixton Tate Library, Windrush Square, Tate's old home at Park Hill in Streatham, and his mausoleum in west Norwood Cemetery.

The project culminated in an evening get-together and slide show at Tate Modern on Friday 5th August, also attended by Sir Henry's great-great grandchildren, David, Caroline and Nicholas.

They Are Here is a collaborative practice steered by Helen Walker and Harun Morrison since 2006 – see www.wearehere.net The project was supported by Tate Modern, Tate Regeneration & Community Partnerships, and Brixton Tate Library. Local input was provided by Alan Piper (Brixton Society) and Jill Dudman (Friends of West Norwood Cemetery).

Herne Hill History

Our neighbours at the Herne Hill Society have published a *Short History of Herne Hill* with 44 pages outlining the development of the area, the origins of its name and its transport links and attractions.

Purchase from their stall at the Archives Open Day, or send a cheque for £4.50 (inc p & p) to HHS Publications, PO Box 27845, London SE24 9XA.

(Cheques payable to the Herne Hill Society)

National Planning changes

In our last issue, we outlined measures in the Localism Bill, and referred to coming changes in the Town Planning system. These are now starting to bite, with the Government's publication of a National Planning Policy Framework. The effect on "green belt" and country areas was first to hit the headlines but in a recent letter to the South London Press, our Chair, Bill Linskey, pointed out the adverse effects for urban areas also:

There is no doubt that the Government's proposed National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) will do great harm to the country side, as was flagged up by your correspondent Sarah Hornsey (SLP Letters, 9th September). However, that is not the end of the story: the urban environment is just as much at risk from the proposals.

Developers will be able to force through totally inappropriate schemes against the wishes of local communities. Councils will be loath to refuse applications in the face of the NPPF's presumption in favour of development, knowing full well that if they do so, the developer will appeal and seek costs against the council for acting against national policy.

The Government's arguments for the NPPF are entirely spurious. One claim is that planning rules are adding to the housing crisis by making life difficult for the developers. In fact, all the large house-builders have plenty of land with planning permission. They are not building because people cannot get mortgages.

The new policy will not help economic growth. In a planning free-for-all, offices and other places of employment will be ripe for cheap conversions into flats. How will that help unemployment and growth?

More information, including how people can submit comments to the Government's current consultation, will be on our website shortly.

Bill Linskey, Chair.

The Local Framework

Lambeth's counterpart to the NPPF is the **Local Development Framework**. This consists of several documents, some of which are still in preparation. To date, the council has adopted a **Core Strategy** and invited comments on proposals for major sites around the borough. In the meantime, many policies from the former **Unitary Development Plan** still apply. A number of **Supplementary Planning Documents** give more guidance on particular building types or areas. We also have the **Future Brixton Master-plan**, though its current status is uncertain.

It's when such local policies are out of date, vague or not fully adopted that the NPPF comes into play as the default position for deciding on planning appeals.

Tracking Planning Applications

We try to keep an eye on proposals affecting our catchment area, but there's lots of them and most are innocuous. Occasionally though, something comes along that's too intrusive or crass to ignore, or which removes a valued amenity. Clearly we don't want to miss these, because there is a tight deadline to submit objections or comments before Lambeth gives planning permission – and if it's something that impacts on your home or neighbourhood, you would want early notice too.

Lambeth no longer issues a weekly list of all planning applications. Instead, the Planning Department aims to notify the immediate neighbours and local amenity groups by post, but we have found this to be erratic. Once we hear about a significant proposal, we will try to flag it up on our website.

Certain types of application have to be advertised in the local press, and Lambeth is now using the **Lambeth Weekender** for this. Typically there will be a 2-page spread of planning and other public notices in each issue. Unlike the old Lambeth Life, it's not delivered door to door, though it is available at pick-up points around the borough. We would like more such points locally, but failing that, we noticed it is also available electronically. Those with e-mail can have a link sent to their in-box every fortnight – see their website www.myweekender.co.uk

The Brixton Society - Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2011

	2010/2011	2009/10
Opening Balance	860.88	777.54
Held Funds		
GRANTS/AWARDS*		
Members' Subscriptions	1,048.00	601.00
Sale of Publications, etc.	1,177.59	1,059.39
Donations	720.90	335.30
Refunds	0.00	0.00
Postage	23.70	21.30
Bank Interest	0.48	1.05
Miscellaneous	181.20	0
Sub-Total	3,151.87	2,018.04
Discounts	-35.96	-139.46
Receipts less discounts	3,115.91	1,878.58
Opening Bal+Rec	3,976.79	2,656.12
Payment		
Photocopying	0.00	3.26
Newsletter Prod	506.50	502.00
Postage	184.51	173.70
Stationery	0.00	39.64
Publications - purchase	155.57	0.00
Publications - printing	0.00	0.00
Posters/Leaflets/Banner	0.00	47.51
Insurance Cost	58.00	58.00
Subscriptions	70.00	70.00
Cost of Meetings	300.00	275.00
Miscellaneous	50.50	81.00
Equipment	109.92	0.00
Open Square Weekend	0.00	169.67
Catering/Refreshments	90.13	191.95
Website hosting	0.00	180.00
Events	380.00	0.00
Bank Charges	0.00	3.51
Total Payment	1,905.13	1,795.24
Balance	2,071.66	860.88
Closing Balance	2,071.66	860.88
Details of Publications Sold		
Town Trails	102.00	90.00
Memories	34.93	19.96
Unearthed	19.80	39.60
Brixton - Story of a name	11.00	26.00
Effra - Lambeth's Underground River	34.50	51.00
Home Secrets	34.65	29.70
Maps	95.80	68.75
Brixton Abridged	4.95	2.60
Postcards	299.55	213.60
History of Brixton	299.70	269.73
Brixton Market LT poster	24.00	26.00
Brixton Boy WWII	44.82	79.68
Black British Celebration	67.50	85.50
Lambeth Edwardian	77.00	0.00
Synagogue	27.39	57.27
	1,177.59	1,059.39
Less Discount	-35.96	-139.46
	1,141.63	919.93

Statement by External Accountant

Subject to the matters raised in my report I have reviewed the cash book and the totals of receipts and payments stated above are in accord and the closing balance is in accordance with the statements furnished by the Society's bankers

Ben Bennett - CPFA
30 June 2011

Railton Road 20mph zone

Lambeth Council and TfL are proposing a 20 mph zone for Railton Road and roads off it. Several streets already have traffic calming measures of some kind but the four "Poets" roads currently depend on parked cars to slow the traffic down. That works only too well on Railton Road on a Saturday afternoon, when it's crowded with shoppers' cars, but at other times the empty street is a temptation for drivers to speed up. Any queries or comments by **2nd October** to Genstacia Bull at Blue Star House, tel. (020) 7926 8989 or gbull@lambeth.gov.uk

Friends of Stockwell War Memorial formed

This has been set up to help safeguard the war memorial which stands on a remnant of South Lambeth Common between South Lambeth Road and Clapham Road. A stone clock tower was unveiled here on 3rd May 1922 to commemorate the dead of the First World War. Now it shares the site with a relic of the Second World War in the form of the entrance to the deep air raid shelter which lies just above the Northern Line tube tunnels. For more details see www.stockwellwarmemorial.co.uk/friends

Health & Social Care

Lambeth LINK was set up in 2008 as an independent "Local Involvement Network" of groups and individuals concerned with health and social care issues within Lambeth. It aims to involve and consult local people and organisations so as to influence how health and care services are provided and run.

Major changes are coming, both nationally and locally, so Lambeth LINK is keen to keep in touch with a wide range of interests to ensure that it can reflect the views of the community as a whole. Further details are available from Wai Ha Lam, community engagement officer, phone (020) 7274 8522 or waiha@ageuklambeth.org.uk

Also see the website, www.lambethlink.org.uk

Website Upgraded

In case you haven't noticed, our website has had a makeover in recent months, so try to check it out regularly because we will add (or correct!) details of coming events and local issues as they arise. Our thanks are due to committee member Tom Harle for his work on this.

Are we the Champions?

It's very flattering that more people are looking to the Society as champions of the local heritage. We have recently been asked to endorse or assist with:

- the restoration of the Bristowe bust at the main entrance to Brockwell Park;
 - restoring a 1980s mural in Lyham Road;
 - Heritage tours of Brixton Town Centre;
 - an arts and entertainment theme trail along Brixton Road;
- plus our long association with the windmill.

Licensing Applications

Although we check out a lot of planning applications, it's quite rare for us to get involved in licensing cases. However we came across an unusual application this summer, to run a home-delivery service for alcoholic drinks from a small unit within the self-storage depot on **Acre Lane**. This raised issues of whether the sale took place at the unit, at the customer's doorstep or within the virtual world of the internet.

It was interesting to see differences from the planning application process, where council officers present their recommendations for councillors to agree. For licensing cases, a panel of councillors considers applications then thrashes out any limitations or conditions on the night, so that applicants and objectors go away with full knowledge of the decision. The downside of this approach is that they do well to get through 3 or 4 cases in an evening, so we had a late night because ours was last on the agenda. It turned out that recent changes in legislation had enabled this type of use, with little scope for the council to refuse, so in the end it was approved subject to some basic safeguards.