

# THE BRIXTON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Autumn, October 2014

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

## Support for Restoring the Heart of Brixton

On 23 September the Heritage Lottery Fund confirmed a grant of £1.95 million towards the **Brixton Townscape Heritage Initiative**. Together with £650,000 pledged by Lambeth Council, this will enable the restoration of heritage features in the central area focussed on Electric Avenue, Atlantic Road and the western section of Coldharbour Lane. The total fund of £2.6 million does not pay for much building work at today's prices, so the number of properties that can be helped is subject to some strict priorities. Don't expect the cast iron and glass canopies to re-appear along Electric Avenue, but empty floors over the shops can be brought back into use by providing separate ground floor entrances. A key aim too is to ensure that new work is in keeping with the original designs. There is also a small fund for community initiatives, giving opportunities for educational and promotional projects supporting the main effort.

It's been a long process but with Wahaca now due to open on 16 October in the old Railway Hotel, we may be spared the controversy of it joining the queue for restoration funds!



*The Recreation Centre as seen from Brixton Railway Station (OGSW11-08.jpg)*

## Changes at Brixton Rec

### Saturday 25 October, 2 pm

BRUG, the Brixton Recreation Centre Users Group, is holding a Consultation Event in Studio 1 on the top floor of the Rec. Lambeth Council has committed to spend £10 million over a 10-year programme to upgrade the centre. Stride Treglown Architects have surveyed all the spaces and will be reporting what they found and early ideas about how to use or improve them. This is an opportunity to let them, the Council and GLL know the facilities and activities that you want in future. Includes an update on BRUG activities and election of BRUG committee for 2014/15. Enquiries to [recusergroup@btinternet.com](mailto:recusergroup@btinternet.com)

## Stockwell War Memorial

### Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> November

There are several Remembrance Day events around Lambeth, but for several years now the Society has laid a wreath, alongside other local organisations, at the Stockwell Clock Tower. Gather at 10-45 am for the 2-minute silence at 11 am.

In recent years, the Friends of Stockwell War Memorial and Gardens have championed the restoration of the site and researched the names inscribed on the memorial clock tower. For the latest news, see their website, [www.stockwellmemorialfriends.org.uk](http://www.stockwellmemorialfriends.org.uk)

# Diary of Events, Autumn 2014

## Society Meetings

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

- 9 October
- 13 November
- 8 January

## Market Walks

Our guided walks round the market area continue on the second **Saturday** of every month, at £3 including the illustrated booklet of the route. Tickets available via our website or after 12 noon on the day from our stall in Brixton Station Road. Walks start from there at **2-30 pm** and take about 90 minutes.

## Links with Other Groups

*Please check directly with the organisers if any queries over times or admission.*

### Sunday 12 October – Brockwell Park Walk

Starts at **2 pm** from the clock tower, with a nature theme.

*Friends of Brockwell Park*

### Sunday 12 October – Old Clapham

Meet outside Clapham High Street Station (London Overground) on Voltaire Road SW4, for a guided walk led by Alan Piper.

*Lambethans Society*

### Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> October – Fire Station to Theatre

Bob Callender will relate the history of West Norwood's original fire station, and its transformation into the current South London Theatre Centre.  
7-30 pm at Upper Norwood Library, Westow Hill, SE19.  
*Norwood Society*

### Saturday 18 October – Home Movie Day

Bring your old 8mm, 9.5mm or 16mm home movies for expert advice on how to preserve or digitise them – you can even have your films projected. Free event, from 10 am at the Cinema Museum, 2 Dugard Way, Kennington SE11.

*The Cinema Museum*

### Monday 20 October – Nigeria's Centenary

The modern country took its name from the River Niger in 1914, and Onyekachi Wambu reviews its development since. Starts at 8 pm (doors open 7 pm) at Omnibus, the old Clapham Library, 1 North Side, SW4.  
*Clapham Society*

### Tuesday 21 October – Brixton Astoria Tour

The O2 Academy is better remembered by older generations as the Astoria or Odeon, with its distinctive interior. Meet at 11 am at the entrance on Stockwell Road for a free tour.  
*Age UK Lambeth*

### Sunday 26 October – Hallowe'en at Windmill

Children's activities at Brixton Windmill, off

Blenheim Gardens SW2  
(sorry, no tours of the mill on this date):

### The Wiggly Wild Show

2 pm to 4 pm: Get up close to some creepy reptiles and giant bugs, learn about their habits and handle them if you're brave enough!

### Spooky Story-telling,

4-30 pm –free event but bring your own pumpkin for carving – we'll light them up as the sun sets!

*Friends of Windmill Gardens*

### Tuesday 11 November – 125 years of Lambeth Archives

Jon Newman describes their work in preserving the past and collecting for the future. Doors open 7 pm for 7-30 start, at 106 The Cut, SE1, meeting room of the Co-op flats almost opposite the Old Vic.

*Southwark & Lambeth Archaeological Society*

### Wednesday 12 November – the Lupinos of Herne Hill

Martin Humphries describes the stage and screen family, 7-30 for 7-45 start, Herne Hill United Church Hall, c/o Redpost Hill and Herne Hill.  
*Herne Hill Society*

### Thursday 20 November – Local Entertainers

Illustrated talk by Tony Fletcher on performers from Lambeth, Norwood and roundabout: 8 pm at the Phoenix Centre, Westow Hill (by Sainsbury's), SE19  
*South London Local History Group.*

## *Our Latest Reproduction Postcards*



Ritzy Cinema & Brixton Theatre Entrance



Electric Avenue from Brixton Road



Brixton Theatre Entrance & Tate Library



Coldharbour Lane



Acre Lane – Hope & Anchor



Atlantic Road



Junction of Brixton Road & Acre Lane



Brixton Road opposite Bon Marché

**See next page for how to order**

## Latest Publications | Archbishop Romero

### Brixton Postcards

Eight new postcards in our series of Edwardian Reproductions pictured overleaf will sell at 50p each or 5 for £2. However as a special introductory offer to **members only** a complete set of 8 is available for £3 (incl P&P). This offer runs until the end of October only. Send a cheque for £3 made out to "The Brixton Society" to Diana Linskey, 32 Stockwell Green, London SW9 9HZ or email diana@linskey.org.uk for other payment options.

### Postcards/Map by Pam Williams

Local artist and member Pam Williams has produced a second Brixton series of postcards showing central Brixton scenes. This set of cards depicts The Railway Hotel/Brady's, the 02 Academy,



Atlantic Road and images from Brixton Splash and Brixton Market. These 5 postcards plus her Brixton Market map card are available from us at £4.50 + 60p p&p a set. Orders to Diana Linskey as above. More of her lively sketches have been on the side of Town Hall Parade, Brixton Hill, as part of Brixton Design Week.

### Brixton Markets – A Heritage Walk

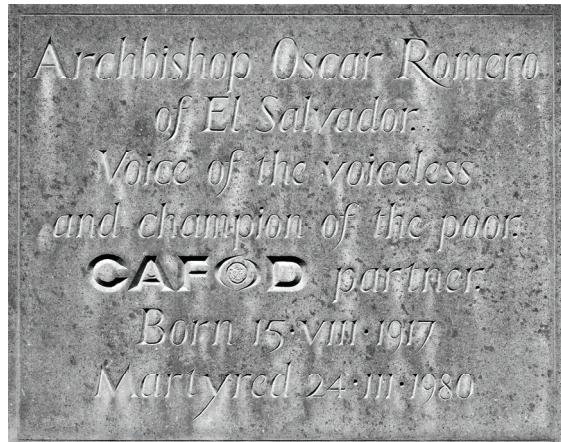
A milestone has been reached this month as the Second Edition of the Brixton Markets Heritage Walk Book has been published. This means that we have taken some 450 walkers around the markets since the monthly walks began at the end of 2011. Particularly popular walks have been as part of the Lambeth Heritage festivals in 2013 and 2014, and increasingly groups of overseas students are seeking Brixton walks. Two from this year have been South Koreans and Swiss. The book has been updated to reflect changes in the area of the walk. The price remains at £3 a copy with the walk or £2 (plus 60p p&p) without

### Archbishop Romero of El Salvador

I wonder if Romero Close is the shortest street in Lambeth? It is just a little way down Stockwell Road from Brixton; on the left, almost opposite Rumsey Road. It just runs into the private road which forms the entrance to Stockwell Primary School. But it has a much greater claim to fame than its length: it contains a privately installed plaque to commemorate Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador who was shot dead while celebrating Mass on 24th March 1980.



It was installed here by CAFOD (Catholic Agency for Overseas Development) which until recently occupied some of the adjacent shops.



The Archbishop was a leading light of South American "Liberation Theology" which focuses on the poor; and explains why CAFOD call him a martyr and the military dictatorship that ran El Salvador in 1980 saw him as a threat. In August, the new Pope, Francis, announced that the block to his beatification - in place because the Church regarded him as a Marxist - was lifted. It may be that before long we will have a plaque commemorating a Saint. For more information see: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-28845998](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-28845998). Bill Linskey

## Local History Resources

### Recalling a Brave New World, 1945-65

As part of last month's Lambeth Heritage Festival, the latest volume has appeared on 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings around the borough.

**Lambeth Architecture: a brave new world 1945-65** has been compiled by Edmund Bird and Fiona Price, with recent photographs taken by John East. It is part of the series published jointly by Lambeth Archives and the Lambeth Local History Forum, and retails at £10, though copies will also trickle out to local libraries in due course.

Confining itself to a 20-year time-span, few buildings of the period have escaped the authors' attention. More effort has been made this time to describe the context for many of the post-war developments, and to highlight later changes from the original designs to what we actually see in the modern street scene.

Brixton is well-represented and I have already used my review copy to flesh out the notes for last month's guided walk, which happened to take in the New Loughborough Estate (LCC 1953-57), Barrington Lodge (1958), Iveagh House (1953), Minet Library (rebuilt 1958) and Geoffrey Close, Lilford Road (1954). What is striking though is how much has already gone (Tulse Hill and Dick Sheppard Schools, South Island Place and Jeffries Road libraries, Brockwell and Fenstanton Schools) or will soon follow, such as Hambrook House (right).

The overall impression is of a time of transition and several competing approaches to design – though architects then would have been reluctant to admit they were designing in a particular "style". Clearly some of the older generation were continuing in a neo-Georgian tradition, while others developed the modern format which had begun to appear in the 1930s. Strikingly bold designs were rare until the mid-1960s, when "Swinging London" coincided with the shake-up of official architecture by the creation of larger London boroughs out of the old London County Council – but that's a story for the next volume

Alan Piper.



*The Brockwell Park Estate on Effra Parade, designed by Howard Lester & Partners for the LCC: the enthusiasm of 1951 since blunted by pitched roofs, plastic windows and crumbling concrete (C846-Sim-06.jpg)*



*Hambrook House, Brixton Hill, designed by D.E.Harrington and completed in 1962 for the ACE Machinery Co., whose factory stood on Tesco's Acre Lane car park (BTC-V09-06.jpg)*

### Hospitals of London

This title was published in August by Amberley Publishing of Stroud, at £14.99 in a format already common to most titles from the Local History Press or Sutton Publishing, but for once with a useful amount of text and an index, albeit basic.

Since 2007, Veronika and Fred Chambers have documented all the hospitals that operated in London during the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, over 1,000 institutions. Details are available through their "Lost Hospitals of London" website but curiously its exact web address is not quoted in the book - well, I suppose there's always Google! This book is essentially a selection from that database, grouped under the 4 Metropolitan Health

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Regions and with additional chapters devoted to specialist types of hospital. Each selected hospital receives a one-page profile including a good photo, usually historic, with a footnote briefly describing its fate, because many have been closed or absorbed into other health institutions.

While the individual monographs are often fascinating, I was disappointed that several Lambeth establishments did not make the authors' cut – King's College and St.Thomas are in as teaching hospitals, and also Dulwich, but no Belgrave Hospital for Children, no Lambeth Hospital, no South Western Fever Hospital, no Clapham Maternity Hospital, not even the pioneering South London Hospital for Women.

It would have been topical too to include some of the temporary military hospitals opened during the First World War, such as the No.1 General Hospital set up in St.Gabriel's College, Cormont Road, which soon had to expand into huts in Myatt's Fields Park. However, this aspect is only covered insofar as existing hospitals adapted to deal with military casualties.

ISBN 978-1-4456-3809-6 or see  
[www.amberley-books.com](http://www.amberley-books.com)

### **Fading Glories**

The History Press send us regular e-mails about new titles or special offers. One that caught my eye recently was **Fading Ads of London** by Helen Cox. I have not had a chance to check the contents yet but that Bovril sign which overlooks Windrush Square is among half-a-dozen snapshots on the front cover.

The book illustrates 150 hand-painted signs in colour (though not as bold now as when they were new). Sadly we have found that such signs are almost impossible to safeguard, unless an enthusiastic owner is keen to protect an example, so this book is a timely record of a disappearing species.

ISBN 978-0-7524-9762-4, published 2014,  
[www.thehistorypress.co.uk](http://www.thehistorypress.co.uk)

## **Current Research**

### **Past Users of Raleigh Hall**

On behalf of the Black Cultural Archives, we are trying to fill gaps in the history of their building at 1 Windrush Square (formerly 1 & 3 Effra Road). Apart from the exact origin of the building, local trade directories cover most of the period through the 1800s until the 1930s, after which it becomes more muddled, until emerging in Council ownership c.30 years ago. We know a variety of small enterprises shared the building 40-50 years ago, so if you can recall any of these uses, we would be glad to hear from you

### **Victorian Schools**

Sacha Llewellyn is trying to find out about 3 local schools attended by daughters of Thomas Murby in the 1870s/80s: Miss Colville's in Fyfield Road, Gresham College in Gresham Road, and Vernon House in Brixton Road. Coincidentally the BCA's research on Raleigh Hall and Raleigh College has already identified Gresham College as a competitor, in the building known today as the Karibu Centre. That just leaves the two others to pinpoint by location and active dates.

### **Franklin's Antiques**

John Carter has been in touch from Australia to trace an ancestor's antiques shop which was bombed out during the Second World War. From a photo supplied, it appeared to be 250 Brixton Road, opposite the Old White Horse (now Jamm), but traded under other names until the mid-1930s, by which date postal directories were far less comprehensive due to being supplanted by telephone directories. There's an earlier photo (c.1912) reproduced as our postcard BX10, when the shop was still Michie, watch and clock maker.

### **And more...**

A reminder also that we still welcome responses to the enquiries reported in our July Newsletter – we would especially like to hear about past users of **Longfield Hall**, across the road from the Minet Library.

## Amenities News

### Lambeth Parks Investment Plan

One of the Friends groups for a local park has just reminded us that Lambeth have published their **Draft Lambeth Parks Capital Investment Plan**, with comments invited by 31<sup>st</sup> October.

The Plan tries to identify the spending priorities around the borough for the next 5 years, because funds are occasionally available for improvements or new facilities, either from levies on nearby building developments, or from lottery grants or trusts. The Plan puts parks into 5 neighbourhood groups and Brixton has a stake in two of these: the "Clapham" group includes Vassall, Stockwell and Ferndale wards, whilst Coldharbour, Herne Hill, Tulse Hill and Brixton Hill wards form the "Brixton" group. For the full text see [www.lambeth.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/consultations)



### Restoration of Brockwell Hall and the Stable Block

In July 2011 a feasibility study for the future use of Brockwell Hall and the Stable block was completed as part of the plan for the restoration of the Park. This aspect of the bid for HLF restoration funds was

omitted to allow landscape restoration to proceed without complications.

The aim of the study, by Land Use Consultants, was to find a more sustainable future for the park's historic buildings, in particular the Hall and Stable Block. LUC considered a number of options for their future use, but the Council's financial circumstances are now tougher and seem unlikely to improve.

Parks are a non-statutory service, so there is no legislative protection for their funding. Thus we have to consider using the Hall and Stable Block in some way that will generate income to support both them and the park in the future.

BPCP, as the body which brings together the park's various user interests, has started discussing the implications of using the Hall and Stable Block to raise revenue, because this will have an impact on people's experience of the park and may change its character. The Brockwell Hall Steering Group has already identified some key questions, based on the existing vision statement for the park:

#### Impact on the Park

*How important is it for uses of the Hall to be both appropriate and complementary to the Park? How far should any proposal that compromises or subsumes any function or use of the Park or its historic context be tolerated?*

Brockwell Hall presents a particular challenge because the historic house is in the middle and there is no edge access. The criteria for access need to be considered. Whilst seeking

increased use and revenue, no proposal should prevent any current use or activity of the park.

### Community Access

*Past proposals for the Hall have included community access and use. This is presumed still to be the case. Outright sale of the Hall was suggested by the first consultant. To what extent would we consider this?*

The Vision document for the Hall maintains the principle of community access to the Hall, something that has not always been accepted by the Borough. Outright sale of the Hall or outright public exclusion is rejected.

### Management

*As Brockwell Hall is a central feature of the Park could it be independently managed (in whole or in part) or should it be subject to the management of the Park as a whole?*

In line with the agreed Vision Document for Brockwell Park, the Hall must be managed as an essential part of the whole park, along with other park buildings.

### Park Opening Times & Lighting

*Since its opening in 1892, Brockwell has been a 'dawn to dusk' park i.e. closed during the hours of darkness. Proposals may involve use outside these hours and the consequent introduction of lighting to access routes and parking areas.*

Any lighting options should be strictly temporary; we know this is possible from the after-dark events that have been managed in the

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park by the MAD committee. Any agreement about after-dark use should be reviewed annually in a way that allows the management of the Hall to be responsive to the experience of park users and management.

### Security

*What are the implications of extended opening times for the security of the Park as a whole?*

Event costs would need to factor in a local security provider, with vehicle and people access to be controlled by licence.

### Vehicle Access

*Increased use of the Hall may involve an increase in vehicle access and parking. How should this be managed?*

*Should vehicle access be occasional or continual? How will any parking be accommodated and controlled?*

By using our own internal transport system for events that require transport, the impact of vehicle access can be effectively controlled. All vehicle access will continue to require a permit and parking inside the park does not need to be extensive. The same review process would apply to vehicle access as to lighting.

### CONSULTATION

The Council is about to appoint a consultant to develop content-driven outline proposals for a variety of options, with their implications for revenue and capital costs.

Feedback from the BPCP discussions will be fed into the Consultation Process.

*Condensed from papers provided by Brockwell Park Community Partners*

### Art & Craft Workshops at Tate Library

There will be two more workshop sessions on the first Saturday of the month, 2 pm to 4 pm at Brixton Tate Library:

**1<sup>st</sup> November: Laminated Books**

**6<sup>th</sup> December: Pop-up Cards**

Free sessions but come early to ensure a place. Minimum age 8 but under 12s should come with an adult.

*Organised by Friends of Tate Library with support from Community First funds for Coldharbour Ward.*



*Making plaques, September*

### Editorial Notice:

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

All material should be sent to the Secretary, Alan Piper, 82 Mayall Road, SE24 0PJ, or by e-mail to

[APiperBrix@aol.com](mailto:APiperBrix@aol.com)

Phone/ fax (020) 7207 0347

### Sample the flavours of Brixton

**Sunday 26 October**

An innovative event to promote the variety of eating places within Brixton Town Centre, running from 11 am to 7-30 pm. One £15 ticket gives a choice from at least 21 local venues, providing 15 flavour tokens to spend and special discounts.

Participating eateries are in Brixton Village, Market Row, Coldharbour Lane and Atlantic Road - see map on their website, [www.brixtonflavours.com](http://www.brixtonflavours.com) Book tickets via this website or over the counter at Kaff in Atlantic Road, or the Ritzie Cafe.

### Celebrating Age Information Fair

**Friday 31 October**

Age UK Lambeth is running a series of events through the month of October, culminating in a daytime event in the **Assembly Hall, Lambeth Town Hall**, open from 10-30 am to 3 pm.

Over 30 organisations working in the borough will have stalls with information about their services and the help they can offer. There will also be raffles, free refreshments and activities throughout the day.

Enquiries (020) 7733 0528 or [info@ageuklambeth.org.uk](mailto:info@ageuklambeth.org.uk) or see [www.ageuk.org/lambeth](http://www.ageuk.org/lambeth)