

THE BRIXTON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Autumn, October 2017

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How was it for you?

Here we are back in print after a longer interval than usual. Way back in June, we had to get our Summer issue out of the way, before getting involved in the Lambeth Country Show, and then all of September was taken up with the Lambeth Heritage Festival, plus the Brixton Design Trail later in the month.

Ideas are already being kicked around for next year's events, so before all these experiences fade from your memory, we would like to hear your comments and suggestions. Obviously it's frustrating when dates or times clash, but are there other venues that we could make more use of, to open up the programme? Were there neglected topics or places that we should try to include next time? Are there other people or groups that we should involve, in order to share the workload or offer extra events?

One possibility is to spread activities over a whole year, and Lambeth just happens to be one of the boroughs bidding to be **London Borough of Culture** for either 2018 or 2019, competing for a £1 million contribution from the Mayor. Some of us were recently involved in brainstorming ideas for this. Surely a borough that extends from the National Theatre to the Streatham Common Kite Festival has a good chance against the Hackney Oktoberfest or the Ealing Cheese Festival?

Alan Piper.



45 Electric Avenue, restored as part of the Townscape Heritage Initiative (2017.Sp22.btc.01)

Local Heroes event on 27 September

"A truly inspiring and important successful event."

- *Pastor Lorraine Jones, MBE*

See report on page 9 inside...

The last weekend...

A last-minute reminder that 14/15 October is the last weekend for tours of Brixton **Windmill** until Spring next year.

Sunday 15th is also the last of our Summer season of guided walks around different parts of the borough. Meet at 2-30 pm by the War Memorial clocktower near Stockwell Tube Station, for a walk taking in **Larkhall Park** and a less familiar Tate Library.

Market Walks will continue through the winter – more details on page 2 overleaf.

Diary of Events, Autumn 2017

Market Walks

Our guided walks around the markets area continue on the second **Saturday** of every month, at £3 including the illustrated booklet of the route. Tickets are best booked in advance via marketwalks@brixtonsociety.org.uk

Walks start from Brixton Station Road, corner of Beehive Place, at **2-30 pm** and take about 80 minutes.

Let's be Social!

Each year we like to devote one of our monthly meeting slots to a social get-together for our members, but in December there are too many clashes with other pre-Christmas events, and in January the weather can deter members from going out. For 2018 we plan to combine our social with the annual general meeting in June, which is a more suitable time of year.

Committee Dates

The second Thursday of the month is usually a meeting of the Executive Committee to plan activities and agree our response to current issues. Meetings are at the Vida Walsh Centre, 2b Saltoun Road SW2 (facing Windrush Square) at 7 pm. These meetings are open to all our members, but if you want to raise a specific issue, it helps if you can tell the Secretary beforehand.

- 9 November
- 14 December (tbc)
- 11 January.



Editorial Notice

Space permitting, we try to feature local events, issues and reminiscences 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

Events arranged by other groups

Please check directly with organisers if any queries over times or charges.

Monday 16 October – the Angel's Voice

Dr Alan Argent of Trinity Congregational Church, Brixton, presents extracts from a magazine for young men produced by the church in 1910-13 and recently republished. 8 pm at Woodlawns, 16 Leigham Court Road, SW16.
Streatham Society

Tuesday 17 October – Age UK Lambeth AGM

Annual meeting at We are 336, 336 Brixton Road SW9, 11 am to 1 pm, with guest speaker Jonathan Collier on the Age of No Retirement.
Age UK Lambeth

Thursday 16 November – South London on film

8 pm at the Phoenix Centre, Westow Street, SE19, for a second instalment of film views of South London.
South London Local History Group.

Saturday 21 October – Table Top Sale

12 noon to 2 pm at the Yellow Qube, 65 Christchurch Road SW2, admission 50p. Sellers can set up from 11 am, tables £7 – apply to pop@tulsehills.london
More sales on 4 & 18 Nov., 2 & 16 December.
Tulse Hill Forum

Saturday 18 November – the Music Hall Guild

The Music Hall Guild of Great Britain and America is one of the bodies which have helped fund restoration of relevant memorials in West Norwood Cemetery. Talk at 2-30 pm, Chatsworth Baptist Church (family centre entrance) Idmiston Road SE27.
Friends of West Norwood Cemetery.

Saturday 18 November – Home Movie Day

Bring your amateur cine film to the Free Film Clinic and see home movies on screen. Open 11 am to 4 pm, standard admission £10 (£7 concessions) or £8.50 in advance from www.billetto.co.uk
Cinema Museum, off Renfrew Road, SE11,
info@cinemamuseum.org.uk

Brixton News

AFRO-CARIBBEAN WAR MEMORIAL



Photo: Bill Linskey

The temporary railings around the memorial are there while its plinth is repaired. It has been damaged by skateboarders sliding along it, leaving scuffs and chips. Perhaps steps will now be taken to stop their dangerous antics in the square.

MURALS

Bellefields Road

This mural, on a house in Bellefields Road, is on its side wall in Stockwell Avenue.



Photo: London Mural Preservation Society

It has been covered by scaffolding recently to enable work to be carried out on the render. Areas have had to be stripped off and replaced.

Fortunately, the owners wish to restore the mural and have been in touch with the council.

Lambeth has involved us and called upon the expertise of the London Mural Preservation Society.

Steps are in hand to have it restored.

Nuclear Dawn

Great concern has been expressed at the appalling state of this - probably Brixton's most famous - mural. The bottom third has been completely covered in graffiti.

The mural is on the side wall of Carlton Mansions in Coldharbour Lane. The fact that Carlton Mansions has been left empty, unheated and unrepaired for so long, only adds to the concern. If the render has deteriorated, then the restoration will involve more than just repainting.

Commitments have been made to restore the locally-listed mural as part of the Oval House Theatre development, itself part of the larger Somerleyton Road redevelopment.

There seems no point in restoring the mural if it is only going to be covered in graffiti again. The restoration needs to be timed in conjunction with the theatre development. This should leave it within the forecourt of the new building - still in clear public view - but not accessible to vandals.

Mauleverer Road

This splendid mural, only a small part of which is shown in our photo, has been demolished as part of a redevelopment.



Photo: Bill Linskey

Sadly, this means that restoration as such is impossible. However, the developers have made a commitment to pay for the creation of a new mural in the vicinity.

One possible site which has been identified is the end wall of a house in Kildoran Road which overlooks the small play area on the corner of Kildoran Road and Lyham Road.

The local community will be fully involved in the redesign.

POST BOXES

We have had discussions with Royal Mail and Lambeth Planning about the lack of post boxes in central Brixton.

Electric Avenue

The unusual, square boxes in Electric Avenue were removed by Royal Mail to facilitate the resurfacing. They have been undergoing restoration.

However, they do not wish to reinstall them in Electric Avenue because of the difficulty in emptying them. Particularly in the early evening, a wall of buses could prevent their van from stopping. They plan to install the boxes on the pavement near the bicycle racks on the Effra Road frontage of Windrush Square.

Ferndale Road

When the old Post Office closed, we lost its posting boxes, accessible from the pavement, which were not replaced in the new Post Office. Even worse, Royal Mail did not know this was happening until it did! The Post Office and Royal Mail are now entirely different companies.

Royal Mail is hoping to install a new post box on the pavement near the new Post Office, but it seems to be taking a long time.

Return to Brixton Roots

by Alice Graysharp

Author of *The Keeping of Secrets*,
published Sept 2017

Acre Lane, Coldharbour Lane, Peckford Place, Water Lane, Brixton Hill, Bonham Road, Brockwell Park..... All triggers evoking childhood memories of beans on toast or three fish fingers at my grandparents', and over tea the reminiscing would begin of places I have no recollection of visiting as a child, but places that lived on in my family folklore.



My grandfather, my mother and my grandmother (holding Monty the dog). This photograph is dated August 1944 and I believe was taken in the back garden of the house in which they rented rooms at the time at 22 Bonham Road, Brixton Hill.

My grandparents moved away in 1947 on my grandfather's promotion to manager of Nevill's Bakery's Acton branch; my parents moved out of London to buy a home in 1955 and my great-grandmother, who lived out her last twenty one years in Strathleven Road, died in 1961.

Yet all these places and more were alive in my imagination, fired by stories of living through war time bombing in Brixton, of rationing, of shopping in Brixton market, of my mother's evacuation with St Martin-in-the-Fields school, of buzz bombs and of the Nazi threat (my grandfather pronouncing Nazi like Winston

Churchill). Tales that stretched back even further to my grandparents' childhood such as the installation of the electricity supply to my grandfather's school ("Of course, we were told not to touch the switches so guess who couldn't resist, and I well and truly copped it!"), and of my grandmother's first job in a laundry at the age of fourteen.

In the spring of 2011 I brought my mother in her failing years to a meeting of St Martin-in-the-Fields School's Old Girls' Association. As we drove through the streets of Brixton, my mother exclaiming, with a catch in her throat, "Oh, goodness, the cinema's still there, oh, and there's the junction of Effra Road and Water Lane where we'd hear the clank of the trams turning the corner, and how could I ever forget walking up Tulse Hill that early evacuation morning and my father coming down after his night's work to meet me and say goodbye," I realised how much for her this trip was a coming home to her roots, a re-visiting of her childhood memories, some good and some not so good, but all part of her early emotional and social development.

And I realised how much my family's reminiscences formed part of my *own* heritage, for I had even created my own mental pictures as a child, imagining Acre Lane an orchard-lined track and Brixton market a series of stalls lining a winding road. While there might have been a rather wide gap between my bucolic vision and the urban reality, the grandeur of Lambeth Town Hall (sometimes called Brixton Town Hall by my mother), the spaciousness of St Matthew's Church's surrounds and the elegance of the terraced-lined streets, were a revelation and I, too, felt a strange sense of coming home.

In the Autumn of 2011, realising no one was getting any younger, and inspired by our visit to Brixton, I sat down with my mother on a series of Sunday afternoon visits recording her recollections of her wartime experiences, some of which I wrote up as a narrative and which she approved for publication.

Publications News



Following her death I started a novelised memoir based on these recollections in her honour but soon realised that the character I invented for the story was not my mother but was rather a person with a life of her own and her own story to tell. So I wrote a novel instead, taking the storyline and the characters in it where I felt they would go, but nonetheless inspired by my parents' and grandparents' recollections.

In *The Keeping of Secrets* I have tried to be as historically and geographically accurate as possible in the descriptions of Brixton and the surrounding areas and of the events that shaped the lives of Brixton people during the War. One reviewer has written, "I really admired the author's knowledge of London, the descriptions of the area were so vivid I felt as though I was walking the streets or catching public transport."*

Lambeth's Victorian Architecture

This volume fills a major gap in the coverage of Lambeth buildings by Edmund Bird and Fiona Price. As with their previous volumes on 20th century architecture, many examples are shown in their original intended state as well as how they survive today. Much has been lost, even within living memory so nearly a quarter of the book is devoted to such buildings, which were underappreciated at the time. The main body of the book is organised by building types, and within those most surviving examples are grouped by District, starting at what was 150 years ago the populous north end of the borough. It used to be only Victorian churches that received any respect from historians, but now there's a fine selection of pubs and wide coverage of housing from detached villas to mansion flats, all photographed by Harry Oseni. Again this is a joint publication of Lambeth Archives and the Lambeth Local History Forum, and the price is still only £10 – copies available via Lambeth Archives, ISBN 978-0-9926695-4-6.

I am indebted to Alan Piper of the Brixton Society for pointing me in the direction of a photograph of the aftermath of the buzz bomb in Acre Lane opposite the Town Hall on 28th June 1944. My mother often told the story of her being in the dentist's chair two doors along when the bomb came down. Her description of the frantic scramble for the door and the shards of glass embedded in the chair always brought a chill to the spine. "My dear," she would declare, "I could have been *shredded!*"

I wish to thank the Brixton Society for their kind welcome at their meeting on 14th September.

The Keeping of Secrets published by Clink Street Publishing is available as a paperback £9.99 via amazon online or any good bookstore, or on Kindle.

Alice has a number of paperback copies available to Brixton Society members at a reduced price of £9.49 + £1.50p&p, total £10.99. If anyone would like to obtain a copy via Alice please either email her direct at alicegraysharp@outlook.com or through the contacts page on her website, www.alicegraysharp.com, or if you do not have access to a computer please pass your name, address and telephone number to Alan Piper who will forward your details to Alice.

*Ali-The Dragon Slayer's blog 4th Sept. 2017

House History

Researching the history of your home

We are often asked about the origins of a particular street or block, but it's difficult to find the time to respond in much detail. However, in recent years I have given a few talks on how to investigate these matters for yourself, so let me share some of the sources and short-cuts for your future guidance.

If I had a couple more pages to spare, I would include some hints about dating buildings from their style, but reproducing period features has become easier in recent times, so some local buildings turn out to be modern replicas – compare 52 and 54 Acre Lane!

Local History overview

Start by looking at a local history of your area – even if your street is not named, you will at least see the overall pattern of development and when different parts were built up. The Survey of London series is very good, but coverage is patchy and the Lambeth volumes were compiled back in the 1950s. Heritage Trails will highlight landmark buildings but may also include details of some of the streets in-between.

Old Maps

Compare maps of different dates to get a rough idea of when your street appeared. The larger-scale Ordnance Survey maps at Lambeth Archives show building outlines and garden boundaries too. These were published in waves, around 1870, 1894, 1913, 1935 and 1950, though revised more frequently since the 1970s. A special case is the set of bomb damage maps prepared by the London County Council at the end of the Second World War, which help explain later buildings inserted into gaps in Victorian streets.

Property Records

Old-style title deeds and leases usually record the land-owners, the developers, their builders (and sometimes architects) as well as the person who bought or leased the individual property. Even if you do not have access to your own deeds, there is a good selection at Lambeth Archives from the times when the

Council was buying up property all over Brixton with a view to demolishing it. Notably among the records of the manors and estates that underlie the present street pattern, the Lambeth Manor Inclosure Award of 1810 is useful for listing all the manor's tenants and how much land each controlled, as well as the common land which was divided between them in proportion.



Stanford's Lambeth Parish Map, 1876.

Town Planning records

These are only useful for property built after the Second World War, effectively running from 1947. Lambeth has an on-line database of applications since c. 2000 including plans, though for earlier cases, only the decision letters can be found on-line.

Drainage Records

Lambeth Archives retains a good collection of drainage applications made between 1854 and c.1985, when responsibility passed to Thames Water. The earliest tend to be crude back-of-envelope sketches but by 1890 the quality had improved and true scale plans were often included. Be wary though that the dates on

House History

forms may be only for later repairs, not always the original construction date – and the plan may not exactly match what was eventually built.

Road naming or re-numbering

Before we go any further, have you got the right address? Original road names may have been changed to boost their value – who wants to live in Dragmire Lane? - or to reflect changing public opinion, such as the loss of German-sounding names during two world wars.

Several roads including Brixton Hill and Railton Road, have been re-numbered to include what were previously separate blocks or minor road-names. Lambeth Archives and the London Metropolitan Archives both hold records of these changes.

Local Directories

Directories of postal addresses were published in the 19th and early 20th centuries, both for London as a whole, and for local areas.

Addresses are usually listed alphabetically by surname, by streets and by trades for local firms.

In Victorian times, the shopkeeper's family lived over the shop, but nowadays many such properties are fully residential, or at least have separate access to the upper floors. Coverage is more thorough for businesses, which had a vested interest in being listed, but even they began to fall away in the mid-1930s when people began to rely more on telephone directories.

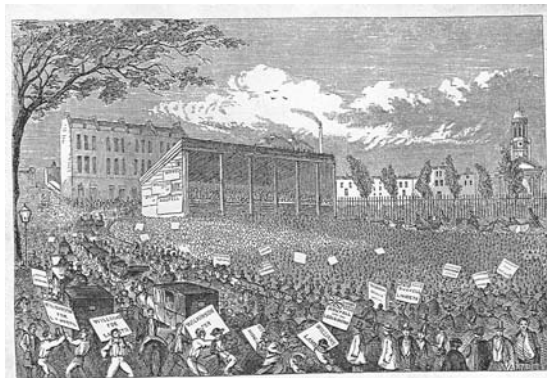
Census Records

Records of individual properties are embargoed for 100 years, so the most recent available are for 1911. At the top of the scale were the larger houses with live-in servants, such as on Tulse Hill, but the 1881 census reveals that many new streets around Brixton were multi-occupied houses almost from the outset.

Voters' Lists

The quality of the information varies over time, from the 1816 edition which even records who each elector voted for, to post-1945 editions which finally include all adult women and

abandon property qualifications. Yet beware of under-representation of students and lodgers since the introduction of Council Tax!



Lambeth Election, Kennington, 1857.

Social Surveys

Charles Booth attempted to map deprivation and social class distinctions across Inner London in 1889, and again in 1899. It may be subjective but it records the social standing of your street at the time, though coverage was limited to the northern half of Brixton – further south was considered then too “gentrified” to need closer study.

There have been a number of later studies, mostly drawing on aggregate data from the census, with examples at Lambeth Archives. Probably the most significant was the Inner Area Study of 1977, based on North-West Brixton and Stockwell, which informed the Urban Programme which ran through the 1980s. This study is a good starting point for anyone trying to assess social changes in modern times. In addition, in recent years the Council has prepared “Ward profiles” based on block-level data from the last census.

Alan Piper.

Brixton Heritage Trails offer

Several years ago, we published a set of 6 walk routes radiating out from Brixton, which we continue to use as the basis of our own guided walks. Having covered the printing costs, we can now offer the complete volume at a much-reduced price of £1.50. You can even save postage by picking one up from our market stall on the second Saturday of the month, or else order the usual way.

Should Be Better Remembered

BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATION

Even in today's world of high definition digital photography, botanical illustration is still a very important craft. Craft? Yes, because it is an amalgam of art and science.

A photograph is taken from one position, with one set of lighting conditions. The botanical artist can look at, say, a flower from every angle and in different lights and capture what makes it unique in a single image.



Our illustration, in black and white, hardly does justice to the original with its vibrant colour. However, it may give some impression of the detail it captures.

In the late 19th century, the Orchid Committee of the Royal Horticultural Society realised that it had a problem in not having images of the orchids that were gaining its awards. If a "new" orchid came before it, was that too similar or even the same, as one they had given an award to some years previously?

In 1896 the Committee asked the Council of the RHS if they could hire an artist. Formal approval was given at the 1897 AGM by which time they had already found a young, self-

taught artist named Nellie Roberts.

NELLIE ROBERTS 1872-1959

Nelly Roberts was the first of four children of William and Rebecca Roberts. She was baptised as Nelly – with a "Y" – and that is how her name is spelt on official records. However, in the orchid world, she became "Nellie"; when and why seem to be unknown. What is known is how she was discovered.

William Roberts was a jeweller, originally from Norfolk. He had a clock, watch and repair shop at 72 Loughborough Road.



The shops have changed but it would have been at one of the windows in our photograph that Nellie toiled at her painting.

Painting was a typical pastime for a respectable Victorian young lady. It appears she became interested in orchids from the age of 17 simply as a result of seeing some in a florist's and started painting them in the style of established botanical artists.

We might never have heard of her but for happenstance. Her father urged her to display her work in his shop window; the shop was on the route home of the son of a major commercial flower grower; and the grower's gardener was on the RHS Orchid

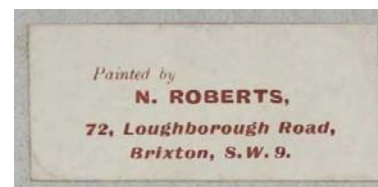
Committee. The rest, as they say, is history – and what a history.

Within three years of starting work recording every orchid given an award by the Committee, 415 in total by then, the quality of her work was rewarded with the RHS Gold Medal.

She continued in post for more than half a century, retiring in 1954 at the age of 81 with a gratuity of 25 guineas (which is only about £670 in today's money). By then, she had painted between 4,500 and 5,000 works for the RHS. She

also produced paintings as private commissions – often a second copy for the grower.

The RHS paintings are still part of their internationally important archive. Some of the private commissions have found their way onto the art market.



She lived above the shop for her whole life until she died in 1959.

Perhaps the greatest tribute to her occurred in 1952 and 1953, when two orchids were named after her (as Nellie!)

Local Heroes

Local Heroes Evening

Many warm thanks to all who attended our Local Heroes event on Wednesday 27th. We are grateful to you for braving the elements and selecting **Local Heroes** among the many wonderful Festival events around that time.

Among the audience were friends and relatives of some nominated Heroes: Pastor Lorraine Jones (Dwayne Simpson's mother), Liam Bullen (son of Teri Bullen, co-founder of Brixton Artists' Collective), Alison Buchanan (long-term friend of Lloyd Newton, and Pegasus Opera Art Director) and Simon Clarke with actress Adjoa Andoh (friends of Sian Daniels, singer and sing-writer) to name but a few. This added to the great privilege of witnessing the sensitive atmosphere in the fine Brixton Library setting, as we went through the different sections of this important evening for our local history.

With its display having already been part of the successful Brixton Design Trail for the previous week, the event truly brought the community together, with appearances by Susanna Barnes (Head of Lambeth Libraries), Bill Linskey (Chair of the Brixton Society and of Lambeth Local History Forum), Michael Smith (Director of Brixton BID) and Councillor Rachel Heywood (Coldharbour Ward).

A few invited guests were unable to attend, but we had the great honour to welcome the Mayor of Lambeth, Councillor Marcia Cameron, for most of the evening, despite a heavy schedule. She described the presentation as moving, educational and inspirational, whilst overcoming us all through presenting friends and relatives of the nominated local heroes, and members of hard-working Brixton organisations, with the Lambeth Medal.

Hard to believe that more was to come, but so it did as shortly after the Mayor's departure, James Fairweather quietly entered the room and took a seat in the back row. A great help to Claudia Jones – already nominated as a Local Hero – while she struggled in the 1950s to sustain her publication, the West Indian Gazette, James had come to the event to support the nomination by Helen Hayes MP of

his old school friend, Sam King, as another Local Hero. Additionally however, it was a pleasure to present this WWII veteran and staunch supporter of Brixton to the audience, who warmly applauded him.



Claudia Jones (2004-04-02.jpg)

Eye-opening, thought-provoking and worth pursuing were some of the descriptions you gave our exciting evening, so thank you once again for being such a great and positive audience. Local Heroes was kindly endorsed by Brixton Library and Lambeth Archives, and we are grateful to both institutions and the Brixton Society for their support.

We trust that, with the library's assistance, the Powerpoint presentation will soon be available on-line and on-site, as people requested. If you have any photographs or further comments you would like to share with us, please don't hesitate to get in touch. In the meantime, we look forward to receiving more nominations, as we are still applying for funding to various bodies to continue the project and cover the Local Heroes Workshops already planned with some local schools.

Please contact Marilyn Rogers with any query, and watch out for announcements about the forthcoming Roll of Honour in Brixton Library, ahead of the warmly expected artwork from local artist Pam Williams, representing Norma Williamson.

With grateful thanks and warm regards,

*Marilyn Rogers, Friends of Tate Library
Brixton, foftlbrixton@gmail.com*

*Annick Alet, Friends of Windrush Square,
info@windrushsquare.org.uk*

Planning the Future of Lambeth Archives

If you came to the Local History Fair last month, you probably picked up a flyer giving some background information about finding a new home for Lambeth's Archives. In brief, there have been long-standing ambitions for a larger purpose-designed building to house the growing collection, not just from the Council and its predecessors, but also from many local organisations, networks and businesses. Most of the collection is in a Victorian basement under a 1950s library with relatively basic services, in a backwater between Brixton and Camberwell.

In 2016 Lambeth appointed a consultancy called Creative Cultures to review the archive service and in particular, its future location. Our Chair, Bill Linskey, represented the Lambeth Local History Forum on the panel which appointed and briefed the consultants. Many amenity groups and local historians sent in proposals and comments. The report was delivered to Lambeth in February this year, but not made public until 24 July, after pressure from the Forum. Lambeth grudgingly allowed until 18 August for further comments, which many interested parties submitted. The haste was to allow the report to be presented to the Council's Cabinet meeting on 2nd October.

The consultants had examined a variety of alternative sites, some of which were no longer available by the time the report was published. Nevertheless there were two good contenders, either sharing the new Oval Theatre building in Coldharbour Lane, Brixton, or a stand-alone building at 301 Kennington Lane. You may be surprised that we preferred the Kennington site, but we were concerned that redesign of the Oval Theatre might delay its arrival in Brixton. We also urged avoiding split-site arrangements or temporary relocations.

We are pleased to report that the Cabinet members agreed and endorsed the Kennington site. Now funds have been committed to a feasibility study to ensure that all required facilities can be included, before moving to a detailed building design.

We should make it clear that new facilities are still some way off, with plans for the new site to be completed in December next year, and March 2022 as a tentative opening date.

Implications for Libraries

As an interim measure, the Cabinet also agreed to re-open the public library service at the **Minet Library** while the Archives remain on site. This had been mothballed since April last year, and even now will only have limited staffing. The proposed insertion of gym use under the Council's "dodgy deal" with GLL seems to have been quietly forgotten.

The Carnegie Library was considered as a possible location for the Archives but did not score much higher than Minet on public transport access, given that researchers can come from a much wider area than our own borough. Future viability as a community building, with or without a library function, is deeply compromised by the gym facility being carved out for the benefit of GLL, including enlarging the basement. The self-appointed Carnegie Community Trust, despite being favoured over the bid led by the Friends of Carnegie Library, are finding the Council can still be evasive in negotiating the building's future. Don't expect any progress soon!

Alan Piper.

Parks News in brief

The Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Brockwell Park will be on Sunday **29 October** at 11 am upstairs in Brockwell Hall.

Nominations for election to the committee should be submitted by Monday 23 October to the Secretary, Noshir Patel, noshir.patel@btinternet.com

The Brockwell Park Autumn Walk has been re-arranged to Sunday **12 November**. Meet by the clocktower at 2 pm, when the focus of the walk will be the varied birds of the park.

In Myatt's Fields Park, planning permission was recently granted for remodelling and extending the depot buildings on Cormont Road, to provide more and better space for the present food, craft and growing activities.

Neighbourhood Plans

So far, the process of drawing up Neighbourhood Plans around Lambeth has lacked any co-ordination, with local groups too often failing to speak to each other. Finally, Kennington, Oval & Vauxhall Forum hosted a meeting of interested forums last month, to compare experiences. Although a couple of plans are well advanced in the north of the borough, the consensus was that Lambeth planners have been unhelpful. Norwood Forum was more upbeat, perhaps because they have identified clear priorities and got on with the job without being over-awed by the Council or consultants. Proposals closer to home are reported below:

Herne Hill ambitions

Proposals for designating a huge area for a Herne Hill Plan appeared on Lambeth's website during the summer holiday period, with 2nd September as the deadline for comments. For some of us, this was the first intimation that we were included, and the lack of prior consultation meant objections were inevitable. On the Brixton side the promoters want to include not only Mayall and Railton Roads, but also Effra Parade, Barnwell Road and part of Brixton Water Lane, all in SW2. This area would take in two of our present committee members and a former chair.

Further north, they have claimed Ruskin Park (despite the views of its Friends group) and offended the Loughborough Junction Action Group by including its favourite watering hole, the Cambria Arms. Nothing is yet known of the promoters' intentions, but it does not bode well that they have claimed control over the Herne Hill Velodrome and the Shakespeare Road waste transfer depot, but excluded the residents outside the gates who would be most affected by any change of use. Curiously they have excluded more obvious sites like the Peabody Estate in Rosendale Road, and only taken in part of the Southwark Council estate on Denmark Hill, yet claimed the lower half of Trinity Rise, which was historically part of the Tulse Hill Estate of the Cressingham family.

The proposed area straddles the borough boundary, so both Lambeth and Southwark

Councils are obliged to determine the final boundary by Christmas. If you could be affected, please keep in touch.

Tulse Hill back on track?

It's nearly two years since proposals for a Tulse Hill Plan burst onto the scene (see Newsletter 220) but since then, nothing much has happened. Two consultation events advertised this summer failed to materialise, but at last the Forum is getting its act together and planning new events as follows:

Saturday 4 November: 2 pm to 6 pm at the Rotunda Hall on Cressingham Gardens Estate, Tulse Hill SW2; key themes – vision and housing.

Saturday 18 November: 2 pm to 6 pm at Glows, 1b Greenleaf Close, SW2 2 HB; key themes – business and amenities.

Saturday 2 December: 2 pm to 6 pm at a venue to be confirmed; key themes - environment and transport.

Enquiries to hello@tulsehill.london



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Other Planning matters

In the wake of the Heritage Festival, local history topics dominate this issue, but we have been continuing to respond to local planning applications and appeals. In most cases there is a very brief window in which to comment, and the Council is not reliable in telling us of all cases within our area. Therefore it is vital that you **tell us right away** if you hear of a proposal which you are not happy with – and tell us why – and we will try to help. Regrettably, once a plan has been approved, we have no right of appeal and we can only hope the developer goes bust before the damage is done! Please e-mail to planning@brixtonsociety.org.uk

Alan Piper.

Sleepless in Brixton

Sleepless Brixton is a group of long-term residents of Brixton Town Centre who want to be able to sleep again.

The Town Centre at the heart of Brixton is a diverse community. It's a place where people live, work, shop, raise their children and grow old. We love this place and many of us have been here for decades, without a problem. We have had fun here and we like the way other people come to Brixton to have fun too. But in the last year or two, things have changed and are now so bad that we can no longer sleep. From Thursday night to Monday morning, there is an influx of people and ever-louder amplified noise. The visitors are shouting, screaming and peeing their way around our streets until the early morning – late-night revellers who just don't realise we live here.

Residents are becoming ill. We don't feel safe and happy in our homes. Often, we dread coming home on the weekends. The streets we live in are being treated as a party venue and a public toilet. If you want to keep Brixton as a place where people of all ages and backgrounds can live, then please get in touch. Let's stop Brixton becoming a theme park for the worst kind of drunken tourism.

Karin Christiansen

See our websites:

www.facebook.com/SleeplessBrix/ and <https://goo.gl/forms/KJzUomFvsNtWn2dC2> or Twitter @sleeplessbrix

This has been a growing problem because of the Council's complete failure to plan for the implications of more late-night entertainment uses in the Town Centre. For too long it has been spineless about licensing bars, and has dragged its feet over adopting suitable by-laws or the Mayor's Busking Code. It cut back noise control just as more apartments over the shops were being brought back into use. It raised our hopes over re-opening the Rushcroft Road toilets, but then walked away from a good offer from the Brixton Business Improvement District. More discussions in the pipeline as we go to press – see our website for updates.

When to call it a day?

With completion of the works around the **Stockwell War Memorial** earlier this year, the Friends group feel that they have achieved their objectives and plan to stand down. The core members are already active with other local causes and feel this campaign has run its course, unless new enthusiasts want to take it up. Offers or enquiries to stockwellmemorialfriends@gmail.com will still get a response for the time being.

The Lambethans Society originated in 1949 as the Lambeth Civic Society, but once Lambeth was enlarged in 1965 to include Clapham and Streatham, people began to identify with local areas and a network of societies for each of these areas developed through the 1970s. As the core membership has aged, they have shown limited interest in the planning causes taken up by other societies, and have not really found a niche in changing times. On Thursday **30 November** the annual general meeting (7-30 pm at the Vida Walsh Centre) will consider a motion to wind up.

Look out for old railings

The setting of many Victorian buildings was permanently changed by a scrap metal drive in World War II which removed their iron railings. Even 1930s estates of London County Council flats lost bronze handrails and iron railings. However, at the end of the war the LCC tried to reinstate their estate boundaries by adapting old ARP stretchers as fencing. These had been made of tubular steel and welded mesh so they could easily be hosed down in case of a gas attack.

Most of these "make-do" railings have since been replaced when estates have been refurbished, so not many examples survive. The nearest we could find were on the far side of the South Circular Road, around Angus and Cotton Houses on the **Clapham Park Estate** (so strictly on the Streatham Society's patch). If you know of any survivors closer to Brixton let us know. There is even a Stretcher Railing Society trying to map examples across Greater London – see <https://www.stretcherrailings.com>