

THE BRIXTON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Autumn, October 2012

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

Welcome from the Editor

In less than 3 months since our previous issue, a lot has been going on, and we do our best to update you in these pages, but the limitations of the printed word, distributed by hand, mean there are stories developing even as I type this. Remember then that you can get more frequent updates from our website and – if you supply me with an e-mail address – occasional internet bulletins. Well worth it if there is a late change of a meeting venue, or we get wind of a crazy planning application!

By the way, if you missed an earlier issue, or are trying to trace an article we published a few years ago, we still keep in stock back numbers of most issues, which can be supplied for the cost of postage.

Space permitting, we try to feature local events and publish reminiscences or enquiries in our newsletter. The occasional colour supplement means that pictures are welcome too.

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 to the Secretary, Alan Piper, at 82 Mayall Road, SE24 0PJ, or by e-mail to APiperBrix@aol.com
Phone/ fax enquiries to (020) 7207 0347.



Today's Brixton Village started life as the Granville Arcade in 1938 – but was Brixton ever a village in the first place? Read more on page 4. (BTC-Chbr-M12-04.jpg)

Sunday 21st October

End of Season Guided Walks

The summer series draws to a close with a choice of two on the same day:

Brixton Mural Walk

The Brixton area has several survivors from a wave of large-scale street murals done in the 1970s and 1980s. Meet at **11 am** at Stockwell Tube Station for a guided walk organised by the *London Mural Preservation Society*.

Brockwell Park

Meet at **2 pm** by the clock tower in the centre of the park. Park Manager Paul Carter will lead a walk round this year's improvements, funded by HLF. *Friends of Brockwell Park*

Our own Market Walks will continue into December - details on the diary page overleaf.

Late Autumn Events Diary

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).

- **11 October**
- **8 November**

Rediscovering Brixton Market

To coincide with the **Makers' Market** on the second **Saturday** of each month, the Brixton Society conducts a guided walk through the market and arcades. Charge is £3 including the illustrated booklet of the route – tickets available on the day from our stall in Brixton Station Road, near the corner of Beehive Place. Walks set out from there at **2-30 pm** and take about an hour and a half.

- **13 October**
- **10 November**
- **8 December**

Brixton Windmill Openings

Friends of Windmill Gardens have just a few more tours in 2012, on:

- Saturday & Sunday 13/14 October,
- Sunday 28 October

Free, but prior booking needed for access to all levels. See their website for more details:

www.brixtonwindmill.org

Links with Other Groups

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

11 to 20 October – Herne Hill Music Festival

A mix of jazz, classical and light music, spread around 7 venues in SE24. For events and bookings, see website www.hernehillfestival.org

Saturday 20 October – Heritage of London

AGM of the Friends, plus a lecture by Diana Beattie, Director of the Heritage of London Trust, which aids the restoration of historic buildings in community use. **2-30 pm** at Chatsworth Baptist Church, entrance in Idmiston Road, SE27. *Friends of West Norwood Cemetery*

Tuesday 23 October – Lambeth Resolve “On Show Day”

Useful information plus entertainment for over-60s, free light refreshments, part of the Celebrating Age Festival through October. 10-30 to 3-30 pm, Lambeth ACCORD, 336 Brixton Road SW9 (opposite Villa Road/Peckford Place). *Age UK Lambeth*

Tuesday 13 November – Inter-War Architecture of Lambeth:

Talk by Edmund Bird of Urban Design London, 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.*

Wednesday 14 Nov. – A career in ruins

Local archaeologist John Maloney recounts his experiences on sites and with the Museum of London: 7-30 for 7-45 pm start, Herne Hill United Church Hall, c/o Redpost Hill and Herne Hill, SE24. *Herne Hill Society*

Monday 19 November – The Horniman Museum

Its history and collections described by Finnbar Whooley, 8 pm at Woodlawns, Streatham Darby & Joan Club, 16 Leigham Court Road, SW16. *The Streatham Society*

Wednesday 21 November – The Cinema Museum:

Martin Humphries will talk about the origins and development of the museum, which is now based in part of the old Lambeth Workhouse at Kennington. 7-30 for 8 pm start, at Clapham Manor Primary School, entrance in Belmont Road, SW4 0BZ. *Clapham Society*

Sunday 9th December – Winter Fair

11 am to 3 pm in Brockwell Hall, in the centre of Brockwell Park *Friends of Brockwell Park*

Brixton Supplementary Planning Document

The first phase in the preparation of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for Brixton Town Centre has now closed.

SPDs are part of a package of documents which set out Lambeth's planning policies and give planning guidance. Developers are advised to consult these documents at the earliest stages of considering a development proposal to ensure that their thinking is in line with the council's policies. In turn, the council's planning officers and the planning committee must judge any planning application against these policies.

The SPDs are particularly important because they deal with fairly small areas and get down to the nitty gritty. They include policies for specific sites such as, in the Brixton case, the future of the temporary ice rink site in Pope's Road.

The first phase has consisted of extensive public consultations by the council's consultants, Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners. These have been conducted in a very open-minded fashion and the Brixton Society has been able to make extensive contributions. The working draft produced thus far may be seen on the internet here: <http://tinyurl.com/8u4qgyw>. This version is now closed for consultation; more on what happens next later.

To take the ice rink site as an example of where we are, the draft envisages redevelopment including: "retail on lower floors with mixed residential development with private amenity space on upper floors." It also says: "The provision of public parking spaces is a particular priority, some of which will need to be allocated to meeting the needs of market traders", which is a very welcome statement given the way that the markets have suffered from the loss of the multi-storey car park.

It is all the more unfortunate then that the next section muddies the waters when it talks about the future of the recreation centre. Although it recognises what is good about the centre, the draft points out the high maintenance and

running costs. It opens up the possibility of it being replaced and states: "If a decision is taken to work towards securing a new replacement facility, the temporary ice rink site may be an appropriate location." The section continues with more "ifs" and "shoulds". This is where the draft is currently weak. Without clear policies, the danger is that the future will be decided by developers rather than the community and their council.

Another area of concern is where the draft has fine aspirations but fails to back them up with concrete policies. For example, it talks about the markets: the high street, the street markets and the arcades and says: "This mixed and vibrant retail environment is central to the special character of the town. Retention of this retail character is a priority...". Unfortunately, the retail environment of the two larger arcades, Brixton Village and Market Row, is being rapidly lost as retail usage is being pushed out by cafés and restaurants. The Friends of Brixton Market recently worked with us to survey these arcades and we made the frightening discovery that Brixton Village is now no more than about 60% retail and Market Row is even worse at 55%; both perilously close to the point where they cease to be predominantly retail markets. The fine words of the SPD need to be backed by specific policies to limit the extent of change of use away from retail.

The next step is for the council to consider the draft, hopefully reach some clear views such as on the future of the recreation centre, and then produce a draft to go out to statutory consultation. This will then give everyone the opportunity to have another say in the future of Brixton.

George IV Pub

The story of Tesco's plans to turn the George IV pub on Brixton Hill into a supermarket is a lesson in the limitation on local authorities' powers. Although Lambeth has a policy against the loss of pubs, national planning rules mean it cannot stop a pub being turned into a shop. Fortunately it can - and has - refused their application for a car park. Watch this space!

Local History Focus

Was there a Brixton Village?

We always try to have a stall at Lambeth Archives when they hold their Open Day, and we get an interesting selection of questions from people who are often attempting their own research. Our response to this one seemed worth wider circulation.

Brixton – or at least the modern town centre – was never a village in the traditional sense of a rural settlement with its own church, inns and shops. Until 200 years ago, most of the present centre was waste land, in the form of two commons – Stockwell Common on the west side of Brixton Road, and Rush Common on the east side, extending almost up to the top of Brixton Hill. The nearest small village was around Stockwell Green, which only obtained its own church or “chapel of ease” in 1767, though it already had a village green and the manor house of Stockwell. Clapham, Camberwell and Streatham were more substantial villages with their own parish churches, whilst Stockwell and Brixton were only outliers of Lambeth’s main settlement by the Thames.

For centuries, Brixton signified not a village but a rural district, the Brixton Hundred within the County of Surrey. This extended across the modern boroughs of Wandsworth, Lambeth and Southwark to New Cross, site of the manor of Hatcham. Around 1060 this manor was owned by a Saxon gentleman, Childe Brictsi, who must have been an influential member of the Hundred Moot, the regular gathering of the heads of the hundred or so families within the district. He erected a stone pillar to mark the meeting place of the Hundred Moot at the top of Brixton Hill, and henceforth “Brictsi’s Stone” became a local landmark, cited in the title deeds of the manor of Stockwell and the “perambulations” of the parish boundaries of Lambeth and Streatham. The exact spot is uncertain, but probably within the plot bounded by Brixton Hill, New Park Road and Morrish Road, SW2

The above is a summary from our History of Brixton, and also from “Brixton –the story of the name” and our Brixton Markets Heritage Walk.

Alan Piper

Volunteer at the Windmill

The Friends of Windmill Gardens are keen to recruit more volunteers to help cover a busy programme of guided tours and events for 2013. The greatest need is for more guides and stewards to show people round the mill, because there are a lot of dates to cover and individuals may only be available on a limited number of weekends. Other tasks include staffing the bookstall or refreshment counter (or even baking cakes for it), or assisting with special events held in this “pocket” park.

If you can offer your services soon, you will be able to join in with training sessions organised during the winter to prepare for 2013 tours, likely to start at Easter. For more details, see the website www.brixtonwindmill.org

Enquiries to info@brixtonwindmill.org.uk or phone Jean Kerrigan (Chair) on 07 587 170 029.



Brixton Station today (OGSW-11-11.jpg)

150 years of rail links

This year is the 150th anniversary of rail services through Brixton, and the Society was represented on 25th August when our neighbours in the Herne Hill Society held a celebration and guided walk to mark the opening of their station.

Back in 1860, the London Chatham & Dover Railway obtained parliamentary approval to building two suburban London lines, one from Beckenham Junction to Victoria via Herne Hill, and the other a 4.5 mile extension from Herne Hill to Farringdon, known as the City branch. The first section to be completed, from Victoria to Herne Hill via Stewarts Lane and Brixton, opened on 25 August 1862. The line from Beckenham Junction reached Herne Hill from

Local History Focus

the south in July 1863, finally connecting Brixton to the LCDR's lines in Kent.

In the same year, Brixton gained a link to Farringdon with the construction of a branch alongside Brixton Station Road, with connections to Loughborough Road (later Junction) and Denmark Hill added in 1866. Another company, the London Brighton and South Coast Railway, then built a line over the top of Brixton Station in 1867. For many years this line provided a link between Victoria and London Bridge stations, but local access was over at East Brixton Station in Barrington Road (closed in 1976).

The City branch from Herne Hill as far as Elephant & Castle opened on 6th October 1863, via Camberwell and Walworth Road. (The relevant platforms at Loughborough Junction were not added until 1872.) By June 1864 the City branch had been extended to Blackfriars Bridge station, then on the south bank of the Thames. Construction of the railway bridge enabled Ludgate Hill to become the terminus on 1st June 1865. The opening of the Snow Hill tunnel extended services to Farringdon in January 1866. Herne Hill also benefitted from a spur completed in 1868 to connect with London Brighton & South Coast services from London Bridge to Sutton at Tulse Hill station.

Goods traffic was a major part of the early railway business, and Brixton soon gained coal sidings between Brixton Station Road and the high-level LB & SC viaduct, which survived until c.1960, with coal merchants' offices in small buildings fronting Pope's Road. There were similar small depots for coal or general freight adjacent to Denmark Road SE5 and Rosendale Road SE24. In 1884, lacking space for sorting goods wagons at Blackfriars Bridge, the LCDR bought 14 acres of land between Loughborough Junction and Herne Hill stations to lay out the Herne Hill Sorting Sidings. These lay between Shakespeare and Milkwood Roads but closed in 1966 and have since been reclaimed for housing and light industry.

Based on recent articles in the Herne Hill and Dulwich Society magazines.

Local History publications

These form an important income stream for the Society, enabling us to finance more books or postcards. Our definitive accounts for 2011/12 appear overleaf on page 7, with a breakdown of publications sales in that period.

Although we were unable to staff a stall at the Lambeth Country Show this year, takings at other events were encouraging. We took £156 at the Art Fair in July and £136 at Lambeth Archives Open Day in September (the latter £40 up on 2011).

“Back in the Day” Walks

We are always pleased to hear about other people's walks, particularly if they bring more visitors to Brixton. Barrie Greene worked in Brixton for 25 years and shares his local knowledge – tour fee £10 payable on the day. For dates and booking, see the website: www.backinthedaywalks.co.uk

Local History Networks

For many years the amenity societies, archives and specialist museums in Lambeth have been linked under the umbrella of the Lambeth Local History Forum. The Forum has now launched its own website, which is particularly helpful if you want to find other bodies interested in some aspect of Lambeth's history. In most cases there are links to their own websites. Just go to www.lambethlocalhistoryforum.org.uk

Visit to Cinema Museum

One of the Lambeth-based museums involved in the Local History Forum is the Cinema Museum, which kindly hosted the launch for the website. Now based in the former Master's House of the old Lambeth Workhouse in Kennington, it originated in Brixton with Ronald Grant's collection of cinema memorabilia stored on the top floor of Raleigh Hall. In addition to a programme of screenings and talks, the museum offers pre-arranged conducted tours, and we are looking to set up a date for Brixton Society members.

More at www.cinemamuseum.org.uk

Changing the Rules

There has been much recent publicity about Government proposals to “relax” planning rules, but the situation for those hoping to extend or change their buildings is more complex. The last major change to “Permitted Development” rights in 2008 threw up some anomalies, with certain forms of extension newly requiring permission in order to protect neighbours’ interests.

We have recently had a round of consultation on the Use Classes Order, which allows certain changes of use for buildings without the need for planning permission. The London Forum of Amenity Societies has submitted detailed comments on the proposals. These are particularly critical for different types of shops - most shopping parades have seen major changes in demand since the Order was last revised in 1987. This older version allows Tesco to take over the George IV on Brixton Hill, because changes from pub to retail have usually been considered acceptable.

The latest proposals are mainly about allowing larger extensions without the need for planning applications, but consultation has barely started and new rules are unlikely to come into effect before next April. Even then, it may be only a 3-year concession before reverting to the status quo - time enough to do damage but not enough for owners to make longer-term plans. There have already been adverse comments from the Liberal Democrats, the RIBA and Civic Voice, the national federation of amenity societies.

Townscape Heritage Bid – Initiative revived

Back in 2009 we supported a bid by the Prince’s Regeneration Trust and Brixton Community Trust for a Townscape Heritage Initiative. This would attract funding from English Heritage towards restoring historic facades within Brixton Town Centre. At the time Lambeth Council was dismissive but it sounds as if someone has rediscovered the old report behind a filing cabinet, because the idea is being revived. In some ways prospects are better now that Conservation Area policies

have been updated and work is well advanced on the Supplementary Planning Document for the Town Centre. We just hope that opportunities have not been missed while buildings have deteriorated or changed ownership.

Bright Ideas for Town Centres

The Association of Town Centre Management has put together a website listing 100 ways to help regenerate town centres – would any be worth trying here? See www.100ways.org.uk

Community Infrastructure Levy – draft for comment

The scheme flagged up in our previous newsletter is now out for comment. In brief, new homes, offices and leisure buildings mean more resident and visitors, placing greater demand on infrastructure, not just transport and drains but also schools, health services and parks. The concept is that new building projects pay a fair share towards the enhanced infrastructure which is needed. Unlike the old “planning gain” (Section 106) agreements, developers will pay set charges depending on the floorspace, location and use of their building. Smaller buildings will be exempt and some uses will pay no charge in certain parts of the borough.

Sounds good but zone boundaries and rates may discourage certain types of development. Remember that the Mayor already imposes his own CIL charge to help pay for CrossRail. Let us have your views so we can respond. The deadline for comments is 9th November, to lambethcilconsultation@lambeth.gov.uk

Recent Planning Cases

A revised application for the Harmony Bar at **82 Railton Road**, including extra flats above, was refused by the Planning Committee in September due to its bulk.

The latest example of “town cramming” is an application to replace the 15-storey Wayland House in **Robsart Street** by a 20-storey block with a larger footprint, overshadowing Slade Gardens and the Stockwell Park Conservation Area.

Alan Piper


Annual Accounts 2011/12

The Brixton Society - Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2012

	2011/2012	2010/2011
Opening Balance	2,071.66	860.88
GRANTS/AWARDS	7,495.00	0.00
Members' Subscriptions	858.00	1,048.00
Sale of Publications, etc	1,391.51	1,177.59
Donations	1,007.57	720.90
Postage	36.70	23.70
Bank Interest	0.48	0.48
Miscellaneous	121.51	181.20
Sub-Total	3,415.77	3,151.87
Discounts	-104.01	-35.96
Receipts less discounts	3,311.76	3,115.91
Opening Bal+Rec	12,878.42	3,976.79
Payment		
Photocopying	18.00	0.00
Newsletter Prod	525.00	506.50
Postage	464.95	184.51
Stationery	77.72	0.00
Publications - purchase	90.00	155.57
Publications - printing	1,124.20	0.00
Posters/Leaflets/Banner	27.54	0.00
Insurance Cost	58.00	58.00
Subscriptions	80.00	70.00
Cost of Meetings	290.00	300.00
Miscellaneous	169.75	50.50
Equipment/Stall	52.99	109.92
Open Square Weekend	5,820.56	0.00
Catering/Refreshments	283.03	90.13
Website hosting	180.00	0.00
Events	65.00	380.00
Bank Charges	0.00	0.00
Total Payment	9,326.74	1,905.13
Balance	3,551.68	2,071.66
Closing Balance	3,551.68	2,071.66
Details of Publications Sold		
Town Trails	112.50	102.00
Memories	19.96	34.93
Windrush Square	21.00	0.00
Unearthed	0.00	19.80
Brixton - Story of a name	7.00	11.00
Effra - Lambeth's Underground River	75.00	34.50
Home Secrets	4.95	34.65
Maps	67.40	95.80
Brixton Abridged	1.25	4.95
Postcards	332.00	299.55
History of Brixton	299.70	299.70
Brixton Market LT poster	36.00	24.00
Brixton Boy WWII	54.78	44.82
Black British Celebration	110.00	67.50
Lambeth Edwardian	26.80	77.00
Synagogue	32.37	27.39
Market Walk Tickets	12.00	0.00
Market Walk Books	156.00	0.00
Brixton & Stockwell in The Mirror	22.80	0.00
	1,391.51	1,177.59
Less Discount	-104.01	-35.96
	1,310.30	1,141.63

Statement by External Examiner

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 accordance therewith and the closing balance in accordance with the statements furnished by the Society's bankers.


 Maish Ernst 10.9.2012

Notes & News

Restoring Rail Links?

Another branch is soon to be added to London Overground services, linking the old East London tube line with Clapham Junction. The route crosses Brixton Road on the high-level rail bridge but Transport for London has no firm plans to stop here, though it remains one of Lambeth Council's aspirations. One of our committee members, Nick Weedon, took this up with TfL, who responded as follows:

To include a scheme in a strategy, even a long term one, it generally has to pass various tests such as:

Does it meet stakeholders/ passengers' wishes needs and requirements, and is it consistent with wider strategic aims set out in the London Plan, local development frameworks etc.?

Can it plausibly be afforded?

Is it value for money?

An additional station at Brixton and/or Loughborough Junction on the Overground route between Surrey Quays and Clapham Junction only meets some of these tests. It definitely meets the first. With regard to the second, the engineering challenges at either site mean that the stations have been costed at around £50 million. A station in Brixton town centre has to deal with issues arising from the height, curvature and gradient of the viaduct there. The Loughborough Junction option would require additional land to make room for platforms at this four-track location.

Most new stations are a fraction of this cost, often in the range £5 to £10 million. As a result, Brixton and Loughborough Junction simply don't offer value for public money, given that there are obviously scarce resources and many competing projects. This is the case even taking into account not just benefits to the wider catchment but also the broader improvement in connectivity from the interchange opportunities. Therefore they don't appear in strategy documents.

I can though assure you that these potential new stations have been actively considered, rather than ignored, along with other variants. You are right that they fit with wider strategy in many ways. However, no means has yet been

found to get the costs down so that they become demonstrably value for money to tax and fare-payers, the ultimate sources of funding. I hope this explains the situation.

Yours sincerely, Geoff Hobbs, TfL

Brain of Lambeth Quiz

Thursday 25 October

7-30 pm for 7-45 start, Lambeth Town Hall
Run by the Lambethans Society in a "pub quiz" format for teams of 4, with rounds of questions on general knowledge topics including Lambeth and London.

If you are thinking of entering a team, whether on behalf of a group or as a family, telling the quizmaster in advance helps things run smoothly on the night – call John Moore on (020) 8677 6490 or ideally by e-mail to moore309@hotmail.com

Some 5 years ago a Brixton Society team won the Mayor's Charity Quiz in a similar format – how about joining in a repeat appearance?

African Food Hall Launch

Saturday 10 November

7-30 pm at Brixton Tate Library – launch of the Afrikan Food Hall feasibility group for Brixton, with South London's sharpest poets, soulful singers and West African drummers.

To register for free tickets e-mail to progress@theafrikanfamilyworks.net or phone Sundjata on 07 783 188 100.

Stockwell War Memorial

Sunday 11 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.

This is one of 5 war memorials in Lambeth where the Council has pledged some funds for restoration. Meanwhile, the Friends of Stockwell War Memorial and Gardens have also been raising funds. For their latest news, see the website,

www.stockwellmemorialfriends.org.uk