

# NEWSLETTER

Autumn issue, September 2005

No.179, Quarterly, distributed free to members

Registered with the Civic Trust and the London Forum of Amenity Societies, Registered Charity No.1058103

Website: [www.brixtonsociety.org.uk](http://www.brixtonsociety.org.uk)



## Our next appearance: Saturday 24 September: Lambeth Archives Open Day

Open from 10 am to 5 pm at the Minet Library, at the corner of Burton and Knatchbull Roads, SE5.

This year's theme is childhood in Lambeth, reflected in the series of short talks as well as the displays. As usual there will be bookstalls run by amenity societies and history groups.



*Plato Road, Brixton c.1962 (see p.4)*

## Sunday 25 September: Ferndale Walk

Meet at 2-30 pm outside Clapham North Underground Station for a guided walk around Ferndale Ward, led by Alan Piper. This will be a circular route, based loosely on Brixton Heritage Trail No.2 but also including new or topical material.

## Thursday 13 October: London Lives

Recent Archaeological discoveries in London, including Brixton area.

An illustrated talk by Sophie Jackson of the Museum of London, 7-30 pm at the Vida Walsh Centre, 2b Saltoun Road, SW2.

*See leaflet enclosed with this issue.*

## Tuesday 11 October: Tate Gardens Centenary

An afternoon commemorating the dedication of Tate Library Gardens, Brixton Oval on 11<sup>th</sup> October 1905.

For more details see the website [www.thebigdraw.org.uk](http://www.thebigdraw.org.uk) under events in Lambeth, or phone (020) 7733 8953.



*Next time we'll make sure the pointed end is at the top – bulb planting in the Gardens during the re-opening event on 23 April.*

## Also in this issue...

- Arts & Culture News
- Who was Henry Tate?
- Annual Report & accounts

## Brixton Society meeting dates

In addition to the dates highlighted on the front page, our Executive Committee usually meets on the second Thursday of the month to plan events and activities, and agree our responses to local developments.

All meetings at 7-30 pm at the Vida Walsh Centre (BSSS) 2b Saltoun Road, SW2 – near corner of Effra Road, facing Windrush Square.

Contact the Secretary to confirm arrangements.

- 10 November
- 12 January

## Editorial

Timing of our Autumn issue is always tricky - meetings and events come thick and fast after an August lull. Publishing early means we can warn you about more of them, or later issue allows us to report from the earlier ones. Yet somehow the most interesting seem to happen between closing for press and delivery to members!

This year our aim is to deliver before Lambeth's Archives Open Day while reporting the background to some of the other things which are already happening around us.

*Material for future issues should be sent to Alan Piper (Secretary) at 82 Mayall Road, SE24 0PJ, tel/fax (020) 7207 0347 [APiperBrix@aol.com](mailto:APiperBrix@aol.com)*

## Brixton Area Forum

For meetings of the Forum and its working groups, contact the Town Centre office on (020) 7926 1077.

## Links with other groups

*Check with organisers first in case of changes since news reached us. Some events may be charged for, and most groups would welcome donations.*

### Wednesday 21 September – Greig in London:

A musical evening with talk by Dr Lionel Carley on Edvard Grieg's visits to London, when he was a guest in Clapham. 8 pm at Clapham Manor Primary School, SW4. *The Clapham Society.*

### Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> Oct. Brain of Lambeth:

This year's general knowledge quiz will be run on a team basis, so why not join in? You can be confident that at least one of you will have an answer to those awkward sport or TV questions, while you deal with the history stuff - or vice versa! 7-30 pm at Lambeth Town Hall, Brixton Hill, SW2. *Lambethans' Society.*

### Friday 7<sup>th</sup> October: Celebrating Age

10-30 am to 4 pm in the Assembly Hall, Lambeth Town Hall. Exhibits and entertainment, part of a month's programme of events for over 60s – details from (020) 7733 0528. *Age Concern Lambeth*

### Saturday 15 Oct. Charles Spurgeon

Charles Haddon Spurgeon died in 1892, after a very active life as a Baptist preacher. Thousands

attended his funeral at Norwood Cemetery. Among many achievements he founded the Metropolitan Tabernacle at the Elephant & Castle, and the Stockwell Orphanage whose site is now occupied by Stockwell Park School. Talk on his life and times by Ian Randall, following the AGM at 2-30 pm, Chatsworth Baptist Church, Idmiston Road, SE27. *Friends of West Norwood Cemetery.*

### Thursday 20 Oct. Slide Tour of Southwark

Southwark Revisited, presented by John Beasley, based on his new book. 7-30 pm at Wilson Road annexe, Camberwell College of Art, Wilson Road SE5.

*Joint meeting of the Camberwell Society and the Peckham Society.*

### Saturday 29 Oct. Local Studies Fair

At Croydon Clocktower, 10 am to 4 pm in the Foyer, with publications on sale. *Croydon Local Studies Forum.*

### Monday 7 Nov. A History of Ballooning in South London:

A presentation by Giles Camplin, 8 pm at Streatham Darby & Joan Club, 16 Leigham Court Road, SW16. *Streatham Society (local history group).*

### Thursday 10 Nov. The Evening Economy:

Its impact and future trends reviewed at a conference in Central London – info from Sharon Coleman, (020) 7539 7909 or e-mail [scoleman@civictrust.org.uk](mailto:scoleman@civictrust.org.uk)

### **Who was Henry Tate?**

Henry Tate was born on 11 March 1819 in Lancashire, where he started work as a grocer's assistant. His rise to fame and fortune began when he took a job in a sugar refinery in Liverpool. There he recognised the potential of an invention which cut up sugar mechanically into small cubes. Hitherto, solid "sugar loaves" had had to be scraped or broken up to provide smaller portions of sugar for domestic use. He patented the invention and came to London to found his own business.

### **The Sugar Trade**

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century the main source of sugar was still cane plantations in the West Indies. Sugar beet from East Anglia only became significant during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, boosted by the need to develop alternative sources during the submarine blockades of the two World Wars.

In 1880 Tate set up his works at Silvertown, then an industrial district on the eastern fringes of London and close to the Royal Victoria & Albert Docks, allowing ready access for the raw material from the Caribbean. Silvertown continues to be the main works of the present Tate & Lyle Company, though the two original names only came together after Tate's death.

### **100 years ago...**

"The laying out of Brixton Oval, generously undertaken by Lady Tate, has added one more open space to South London, and what was once wasteland is now a pretty garden-like enclosure.

The gates will be open to the public when the memorial to Sir Henry is finished."

*Estates Gazette, 19 Aug. 1905*

### **Park Hill**

In 1884, with his business prospering, Tate moved into a large country house overlooking Streatham Common, Park Hill. This had been designed by J.B.Papworth in 1830 for the banker William Leaf. The original extensive grounds are now largely filled by modern housing but the old house survives, converted into apartments.

He used his growing wealth to fill the house with contemporary works of art, which ultimately formed the nucleus of the Tate Gallery's collection. He also supported cultural institutions in Liverpool and Lambeth.

### **The Libraries**

Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, public libraries were being introduced, with help from local benefactors, so perhaps it is not surprising that Henry funded the provision of a library for Streatham, opened in 1890

At this time, Streatham and Lambeth were

separate parishes, but the fact that Henry also financed libraries at Brixton and South Lambeth is probably due to local connections through his second wife Amy, daughter of Charles Hislop of Brixton Hill. The Tate Free Library in South Lambeth Road was actually the first to be opened, in 1888.

The Tate Library in Brixton Oval was opened by the Prince of Wales on 4<sup>th</sup> March 1893, with Henry Tate in attendance. This substantial building was for many years the Central Library for the Borough of Lambeth. The architect was Sydney R.J.Smith, who had also designed the South Lambeth Library, but this time the cost was some £15,000, compared with just under £6,000 for South Lambeth.

### **The Tate Gallery**

The gallery at Millbank (now Tate Britain) was an even more substantial donation, costing Tate £80,000. It was built on the site of the Millbank Penitentiary, to the designs (again) of Sidney R.J.Smith, and opened in 1897. Tate also offered to the nation his own collection of 67 paintings and 3 sculptures, which were mostly of Victorian date.

Art dealer Sir Joseph Duveen paid for a wing to house the works of J.M.W. Turner which previously

held at the National gallery, confirming the theme of the gallery's collection as British and (relatively) modern art.

In recognition of his generosity, Tate was created Sir Henry Tate, baronet, in 1898. Sir Henry died on 8 December 1899, aged 80, and is buried in West Norwood Cemetery, his tomb (near the crematorium chapel) being a substantial structure slightly reminiscent of his Brixton Library.

### The Gardens

After Sir Henry's death in December 1899, his widow decided to commemorate his local philanthropy with a gift of her own and bought the Brixton Oval for £3,250 in 1904, presenting it to the Council as a public garden in 1905.

The ground was part of the original Rush Common, enclosed in 1810 but prohibited from being built on as it lay in front of the building lines laid down in the Inclosure Act. It was still being used for grazing just prior to the library being built, and its main use at the time Lady Tate purchased it was to provide advertising on its enclosing fence.

As originally laid out, the garden was surrounded by iron railings with two fine ornamental gates hung on stone piers surmounted by

seated lions. A bronze bust of Sir Henry by Thomas Brock was placed on a pedestal in a raised central flower bed.

In 1931 the Tate Library Garden was included as a Protected Square in the London Squares Preservation Act. In 1937 a small area of the garden was taken for road widening, and in 1966 it was remodelled to suit contemporary taste, losing its railings in favour of low walls in yellow brick. A further remodelling took place in 1988, the most distinctive change being that red bricks replaced the yellow. Modifications were made in Spring 2005 to open up the approach to the library and improve surveillance.

*Alan Piper.*

### Riots 25 Years on

Next April will be 25 years after the original Brixton Riots and Blast! Films are working on a TV programme for the occasion. If you remember the riots, whether you took part or just got caught up in the chaos of that weekend, they are looking for people to tell their stories. Please contact Simone on (020) 7485 6727 or [spennant@blastfilms.co.uk](mailto:spennant@blastfilms.co.uk)

The Riots were the theme of the winning entry from last year's Local History writing competition, by John Salway. It's now available as a pamphlet from Lambeth Archives at £4.95 (plus 50p if sent by post).

### Childhood Memories

Can we remind you that we stock three titles directly linked to the theme of this year's Archives Open Day?

Our *Brixton Abridged* series of leaflets includes "Games we played" by Dora Tack (30p) and "A Jamaican Girlhood" by the late Rapheleta Chambers (50p).

We also have some copies of Dora Tack's book "A Brixton Childhood" describing her early life in and around Brixton in the 1930s, at £9.99 each.

Ask at our stall during the Open Day, or order from the full list of titles on our website.

### Where are they now?



The photo above and on our front page came from Robert Mandale (above aged 11 in c.1963) a former resident of Plato Road, SW2. It's a long shot after 40+ years, but he would be glad to hear from anyone else who was in the neighbourhood, or attended Sudbourne School, in the early 1960s.

Robert is now at 6 Camsey Close, Longbenton Estate, Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE12 8YE, [RbMandale@aol.com](mailto:RbMandale@aol.com)

### **Art in Brixton**

Lambeth has a fine tradition of artists- Van Gogh Woz Ere (true).

'Urban Arts' is the umbrella organisation under which artists exhibited on Josephine Avenue on 16 & 17 July, the weekend of the Lambeth Country Show. A fine display of talent.

A contender for the most aesthetically fine-tuned street is Mervan Road SW2 with a particularly high ratio of artists to pavement. Matt Rugg, Sue Edwards, Marilyn, Stephen....seven at least at the last count.



At The Betty Morton Gallery on Atlantic Road, over 300 entries were received for the annual prize. The best of these will be exhibited from 1 – 24 Sept. The award ceremony takes place at the Ritzy on Sun 25 Sept. The evening celebration includes music by Basement Jaxx – who recently featured at the Hyde Park Live 8 Concert.

### **My Brixton** *Rebecca Thackray*

"I am resolved to spend the greatest part of the rest of my life for the winter and spring quarter about London". So said John Wynn, a squire from Gwydir, Wales when he fancied coming here 400 years ago in 1605.

Me too. I arrived in London by choice. I came from Huddersfield. Don't knock it. Great to grow up in but I always wanted to live here. Apart from a dark period when I fell on hard times and was forced to live in Penge, I have enjoyed the hospitality of Brixton since the mid 80's when it was still reeling from agitation and bad press. There was a tiny supermarket on Railton Road and a woman selling old furniture. I had milk supplies and a table; I was home and dry. Well, not quite. Because when the River Effra rose, let's just say Brockwell Lido became superfluous. The barrels in the cellars of Effra Tavern on Kellett Road bobbed about and we all stank like damp dogs.

I saw Gregory Isaacs at the Academy for a treat but my daily pep-up came from the woman playing the comb outside Brixton Station. I was fed by veg from the market, entertained by the Ritzy and transported with the help of Brixton Cycles.

The Census of 2001 showed that Brixton has a high number of people under 30. Young people tend to be quite a visible presence in any community, and come nightfall, the tube spills out youthful hordes who make for the clubs, pubs and restaurants. Hence Brixton's a lively place and it always provides something to watch. Its pace is fast and there's always something to intrigue me even if it's just a discarded toilet left on the pavement (and it was scooped up by some delighted opportunist within an hour).

### **Comedy**

The Dog Star on Electric Avenue has started holding comedy nights which is good news because the Brixton Comedy Club is dark till January 2006. However then the lights go on in style. This comedy venue at the Hobgoblin Pub on Brixton Water Lane has brought a broad smile to Sunday nights and gone from strength to strength, attracting loads of local and national talent, cramming in the acts whilst being the cheapest club for miles. Run by the much adored Ivor Dembina (see his show up at Hampstead) and Jez, it will be compered in January by the inimitable Perrier Comedy Award Winner, Daniel Kitson.

### **The Type Museum**

Tours can be arranged on the first Wednesday of the month – call (020) 7735 0055 or [jh@typemuseum.org](mailto:jh@typemuseum.org)

### **Family History Guide**

From the many enquiries we receive, it is clear that a growing number of people are researching their family history. News has just reached us of another source of help, not just for finding the raw data but also turning it all into a coherent story.

"Writing your Family History – a Practical Guide" has been written by Deborah Cass and published by Crowood Press (ISBN 1861267037) at £7.99 for 128 pages. Details can be viewed under "Writing" at [www.crowoodpress.co.uk](http://www.crowoodpress.co.uk)

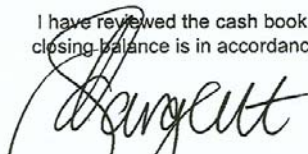


The Brixton Society - Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2005

	2004/5	2003/4
<b>Opening Balance</b>	<b>4,338.19</b>	<b>8,871.95</b>
<b>INCOME</b>		
<b>Award</b>		
Members' Subscriptions	660.00	465.50
Sale of Publications, etc	1,335.42	1,393.56
Donations	200.44	423.64
Refunds	-	-
Walks Funding	175.00	-
Misc	59.60	-
Postage	30.89	29.75
Bank Interest	11.56	6.95
Less outstanding Income	- 69.00	-
Sub-Total	2,403.91	2,319.40
Discounts	(229.54)	(276.43)
Receipts less discounts	2,174.37	2,042.97
<b>Opening Bal+Rec</b>	<b>6,512.56</b>	<b>10,914.92</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Photocopying	£2.00	2.05
Newsletter Prod	£420.70	305.40
Postage	£219.04	173.26
Stationery	£53.51	-
Publications - printing	£157.17	88.50
Posters/Leaflets	£0.00	3,356.10
Exhibition Costs	£141.32	51.00
Subscriptions	£171.00	133.00
Cost of Meetings	£768.00	224.50
Photo Printing	£620.60	-
Miscellaneous	£474.69	1,597.92
Crossword Prizes	-	645.00
Catering/Refreshments	£204.61	-
Walks Funding	£175.00	-
Refunds	-£36.05	-
Outstanding liability	-69.04	-
Bank charges	£5.00	-
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£3,307.55</b>	<b>6,576.73</b>
<b>Closing Balance</b>	<b>3,205.01</b>	<b>4,338.19</b>
<b>Details of Publications Sold</b>		
Town Trails	126	110.00
Memories	239.52	159.68
Unearthed	39.40	-
Brixton - Story of a name	18	13.00
Effra - Lambeth's Underground River	16.5	57.00
Publications sold on	20.49	12.99
Maps	31.2	31.20
Brixton Abridged	3.4	5.05
Postcards	282.45	168.35
History of Brixton	539.46	809.29
Brixton Market LT poster	19	27.00
Miscellaneous		
	1335.42	1,393.56
Less Discount	-229.54	- 276.43
	1105.88	1,117.13

**Statement by External Accountant**

I have reviewed the cash book and the totals of income and expenditure stated above are in accordance therewith and the closing balance is in accordance with the statements furnished by the Society's bankers

  
Natalie Sargent ACCA

# The Brixton Society - ANNUAL REPORT, 2005

Registered Charity No.1058103

## AIMS & ORGANISATION

**CHARITY STATUS:** This report covers the key points suggested by the Charity Commission, reflecting our charitable status since 1996.

**AIMS & LINKS:** We aim to encourage awareness and understanding of our surroundings, and to give local people a say in Brixton's future. We cover a wide area of Central Lambeth, not just the "Town Centre" area recognised by the Council, but also much of Stockwell and Myatt's Fields.

The Society is registered with the Civic Trust, London Forum of Amenity Societies, Brixton Area Forum and Lambeth Voluntary Action Council.

**MANAGEMENT:** The Executive Committee during the past year consisted of Glyn Kyle (Chair), Alan Piper, Rosemary Honey, Doye Akinlade, Bill and Diana Linskey, Barbara Davies, Norma Williamson, James Fairweather, David Warner and Margaret Westcott. Emilce Rees resigned in July and Devon Thomas has been out of the area this year. Eight committee meetings were held in the year leading up to the AGM in June 2005.

## PROGRAMME & ACTIVITIES

**EVENTS:** In August 2004 we organised a rare visit to Lambeth Palace for our members, which was much appreciated. In September we hosted a morning's tour of Brixton's cinemas and ex-cinemas for members of the Cinema Theatre Association, followed by an afternoon session similarly hosted by our colleagues from the Streatham Society.

We have also hosted occasional open meetings, and contributed guided walks to the Summer series jointly presented by member societies of the Lambeth Local History Forum.

**NETWORKING:** We play an active part in several borough-wide or local organisations, including the Lambeth Local History Forum, the Lambeth Community Empowerment Network, the Brixton Area Forum and the Police/Community Consultative Group. We provide representatives on the boards of several projects, including Brixton On-Line, Lambeth Credit Union and LVAC.

A major commitment over the past year has been to foster the growth of the Friends of Tate Library & Gardens, by providing basic admin. support and access to funding channels.

**OUTREACH:** We were unable to take up all the opportunities offered to us, but in the course of 2004 we ran stalls at Myatts Fields Park Fair (June), Lambeth Country Show (July) and Lambeth Archives Open Day (September). We also appeared at the re-opening of Tate Library Gardens on 23 April 2005. We also respond as best we can to varied enquiries from students, media and family history researchers.

**PLANNING:** This is a field where we need further help to keep up with the present number of proposals being produced. Our responses to individual planning applications have been limited by other pressures but we have tried to support local residents' groups in fighting unsuitable proposals. We have also made limited inputs into the Public Inquiry phase of Lambeth's new Unitary Development Plan.

**PUBLICATIONS:** Ongoing commitments are our quarterly newsletter and maintaining our website. More Edwardian postcards were reprinted last summer and remain popular. Several small booklets are in the pipeline but a reprint or revision of the *History of Brixton* will be a major investment needed within the next year.

## RESOURCES

**FINANCE:** *Accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2005 are shown opposite.*

**SUPPORT "IN KIND":** With no premises or staff of our own, we are grateful to all members who assist by distributing newsletters, staffing our stall at various events, storing books, archives or equipment, and attending many meetings of other bodies on our behalf.

**MEMBERSHIP:** Subscriptions were increased at last year's AGM to cover the cost of producing and distributing our Newsletter. Our mailing list has been around 250 for several years. There has been increasing interest from those now living further afield who want to keep in touch, but we also want to involve more people within the local community.

*Alan Piper, Hon. Secretary.*

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## Inside the Environment Theme Partnership

### **Overview:**

Within Lambeth First, the local strategic partnership, this Theme Partnership has been meeting regularly for just over a year. Environment is a broad theme which takes in matters as diverse as parks, wildlife, street cleaning, road safety, town planning and energy saving.

### **Quick Results or Major Changes?**

This is the dilemma that faces all the Theme Partnerships. A lot of energy goes into progress reports and statistics, because the civil servants who administer the Neighbourhood Renewal programme are pushing Lambeth First to deliver early results from the money put into the whole Partnership concept. However, real improvements in the way services are provided will probably come only after the various partner organisations have got used to working with each other. For the Environment Theme Partnership, key players like Transport for London still need to be brought on board.

### **Bright Ideas:**

In May, the theme partnership invited ideas from Council departments, community groups and Town Centres. There is no big pot of money which the partnership can share out, but we are trying to follow through as many of the suggestions as possible. Money is not always the problem – some of the ideas are very cheap but face resistance because they involve a Council department doing things differently – or even two departments working together!

### **Inward Investment:**

The Council actually needs partnership arrangements with community organisations in order to qualify for Lottery funding for improving public parks, for example. For several parks and open spaces, such proposals are well advanced,

with “Friends” groups or Management Advisory Committees playing a major role. These arrangements could be a model for other local services.

### **Sustainability:**

Better use of existing resources has to underlie the Community Strategy.

One of the issues the partnership has taken up is to get the Council to set an example by committing itself to actions which reduce the risk of climate change and generally reduce the impact which a quarter of a million people have on their environment. At present there are isolated champions but no unified approach.

In this field there is also potential to share knowledge with other Theme Partnerships, notably Housing.

### **Bio Diversity**

One specialist piece of work to emerge is a Bio-diversity Action Plan, in brief encouraging a wider range of wildlife and plants in our gardens, parks and squares, rather than just allowing the toughest weeds or pests to persist. Lambeth Parks & Greenspaces Forum, Lambeth Friends of the Earth and the Environment Agency have already given useful advice on this, but there is still scope for input before the official launch next February.

### **Working with Town Centres:**

An emerging issue is how the Community Strategy will be followed through within each of the 5 “Town Centres”. Practical problems are that the 5 Centres do not always match natural community areas, and parks (such as Larkhall) tend to lie on the boundaries, serving residents from more than one Centre. Community groups will need to get their views across at Town Centre forums and Area Committees as well as borough-wide through the CEN.

*Alan Piper, Lambeth CEN  
environment representative.*



### Spot the difference

A quick test to see if you qualify for our Town Planning group. These two recent photos in the Railton Road area show alternative ways of adding extra living space at roof level. Which version did Lambeth Planning Department reject?

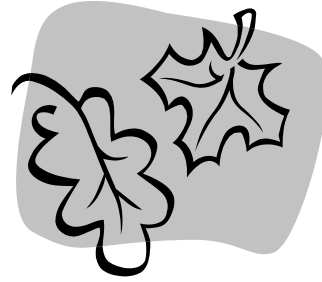


*Version A – the “big box” on the rear roof slope.*



*Version B – raised pitched roof with dormer windows.*

Think about it – answers overleaf.



### More on Bio-Diversity

Lambeth's new bio-diversity plan is in tune with the Government's recent issue of Planning Policy Statement 9, outlining how such plans should tie in with conditions on planning applications and identifying areas or habitats of special significance.

See [www.odpm.gov.uk](http://www.odpm.gov.uk) and [www.defraweb/wildlife-countryside/biodiversity/index.htm](http://www.defraweb/wildlife-countryside/biodiversity/index.htm)

### When is a Shop not a Shop?

Many of the planning applications notified to us are about the change of use of a building, including changes between different types of shop. Such matters are governed by the **Use Classes Order** which groups uses in broad categories. Most changes between these “use classes” require Planning Permission, with some relatively innocuous exceptions. Neighbours may be concerned about losing their local shops, but Town Planning rules do not prevent a baker being replaced by an internet cafe, because both now fall in Class A1 as ordinary retail shops. On the other hand, use for an estate agent or betting office is in a separate class, A2, so needs permission.

In April the Government changed the rules for pubs, restaurants and take-aways, which had previously been lumped together. These now form distinct classes:

**A3** – Restaurants and cafes where food and drink is consumed on the premises.

**A4** – Pubs, wine bars and other drinking establishments.

**A5** – Hot food take-aways.

(Note however that sandwich bars remain in Class A1 because there is no special ventilation need to remove cooking smells, which tend to be a cause of objections.)

*Based on a newsletter article from the London Forum of Amenity Societies.*

### Spot the difference?

*(Continued from previous page)*

Version A is normally allowed as “permitted development” provided the building is a single-family house, the height is no higher than the existing ridge and the added volume is within defined limits. In theory all changes to buildings need planning permission but the permitted development option was brought in years ago to prevent planning departments being swamped by minor applications. However it seems increasingly common for developers to add on as many permitted extras as possible to a large old house, and only then to make a planning application for conversion to flats (as in this case). The reason is that alterations to flats are subject to the full vagaries of Lambeth’s Supplementary Planning Guidance on Extensions, as well as wider planning policies affecting parking, refuse storage and space standards.

*Congratulations if you chose option A – your understanding of the system would be an advantage on our Planning Group!*

Option B may look more sympathetic but is actually inside a Conservation Area so that any extension on the roof requires planning permission. Lambeth’s SPG on extensions is quite hostile to dormers and anything resembling a mansard roof – in the Loughborough Park CA old dormers have been disappearing in favour of roof windows. In case B, permission was only granted on appeal, after pointing out the variety of roof forms in the area – which include an old “big box” extension two doors away!

*Congratulations if you chose option B – your sympathy for older buildings would be an asset to our Planning Group!*

The Brixton Society is notified of a dozen local planning applications every week. Most are small scale like those above, so do not go before the Planning Committee - but such piecemeal changes gradually transform the character of a street. Should we really leave these matters just to the whim of planning officers?

If you are willing to get involved, contact David Warner on (020) 7924 0618 or by e-mail to [david@scriabin.force9.net](mailto:david@scriabin.force9.net) or Alan Piper (contact details on p. 2).

### Schools Strategy

An important element of the Council’s “Revitalise” package has been provision for more secondary school places within the borough boundaries. Lambeth’s Executive Committee agreed in July how this issue should be dealt with. September 2004 saw a new Academy opened on the former Henry Thornton site in Clapham. A second Academy, with a capacity of 6 forms entry, will follow in the Brixton area, to be built on the ServiceTeam depot site between Shakespeare Road and Loughborough Park. A third new school, parent-led, will follow on the Elmcourt Road site in West Norwood.

The capacity of these 3 schools will be complemented by expansion of existing secondary schools, including Stockwell Park, which is already specializing in Business and Enterprise. The expansion is funded by the Government’s Building Schools for the Future programme. The Council is also relying on a forthcoming Pan-London survey of school-place planning to confirm that these measures will be enough to meet the demand.

Another parent-led school proposal, from the Nelson Mandela Foundation, was rejected because its site would need to be put together from several different uses, including the Windmill allotments and one of Brixton’s most active Black churches. The Council had also considered replacing the existing system-built Glenbrook Primary School in Clarence Avenue.

Meanwhile there are rumblings from Milkwood Road about the likelihood of part of the industrial land by the railway being used to relocate the dustcart fleet from Shakespeare Road.

We suspect that things are far from settled, and you can expect to hear more in future issues of this newsletter.

*Alan Piper.*



### **Charrettes - Enquiry by Design**

Major development is planned for the whole of Brixton. In the Moorlands Triangle the Guinness Trust Estate is up for regeneration, one of the secondary schools will be in Loughborough Park, Somerleyton Road is destined for new housing (or the re-siting of the Rec or the rubbish trucks), and redesign of Central Square affects all surrounding roads. Consultation has looked at each development in isolation. We feel there is a need to plan them together so there is some kind of harmony.

The Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment (whom we contacted as Prince Charles is patron of the Guinness Trust) taught a few members of the Moorlands Triangle community about the *Charrette* planning process (or *Enquiry by Design* as it is sometimes called).

A Charrette is a week-long planning workshop that aims to get **everybody around the table** to plan the area from the start; the community, council, schools, police, housing associations etc.

It is well researched and aims to answer questions on the spot. Reaching agreement at the start of planning about what works and what doesn't ultimately saves time. People tend to agree more often than you might think.

We feel a community-led Charrette would be of

much use in our area. We have the training and contacts to run one, The Council of European Urbanism will be helping with the organizing and expertise for the week long event and we have formed an advisory panel of relevant professionals.

We would like a Charrette so that **we can actually participate** in regeneration. This is a useful way to plan on a larger scale and is relevant to the Lambeth Revitalise consultation.

We will hold open meetings in the near future to discuss the Charrette. From there different groups will form such as health, housing, sustainability, education, waste minimization and transport to continue gathering relevant research/ information.

*For more information:*  
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### **Footloose Planners**

Following our report in Newsletter 177, the Planning Department is moving to Phoenix House, an office block at Vauxhall. This is due in November and while planning applications will still be available in the Brixton Tate Library, any follow-up could mean a trip north.

But will the Council fill all the desks in the new office? Most London boroughs now depend on temporary or agency staff because experienced

planners have gone to work for private consultants on behalf of developers. Fewer young people are entering planning or urban design professions, so the shortfall has largely been made up by taking on staff from overseas. Currently in Lambeth 50% of the Planning staff come from the southern hemisphere.

Now the Home Office has decided to cut the length of "working holiday" visas from 2 years to one for citizens of Australia, South Africa and New Zealand. Agencies estimate this will mean a 30% cut in the number of such workers – who will be leaving by the time they get to know their way around the borough!

*Sources: Planning in  
London, Estates Gazette.*

### **Herne Hill Junction**

Last year a consensus had been reached on a package of improvements to the busy junction by Herne Hill station. Sadly Lambeth later changed tack and offended local opinion with a different layout which is more dangerous for pedestrians and undermines local traders. The Herne Hill Forum organized a petition in support of the original plans (which you may have seen on our stall at the Lambeth Country Show).

We have since heard that the Council has agreed to drop one of the contentious features, the proposed "bus gate" at the end of Railton Road. There will be an update at the next meeting of the Herne Hill Forum on **Thursday 29 September**, at 7 pm at the Methodist Church Hall, Half Moon Lane (c/o Beckwith Road) SE24.

*ADP/HHS.*

### **Events in the Square...**

Dear All,

I'm sorry to say that the bright future we were planning for the Tate Gardens and Windrush Square is not to be. After 8 months negotiation with the Metropolitan police, and even after Superintendent Andy Tarrant ([atarrant@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:atarrant@lambeth.gov.uk)) was seconded to the "Town Centre Team" i.e. his area of remit being the Tate Gardens, Windrush Square and its ongoing issues, Lambeth Council's Faith Boardman decided to give the funding £20,000 to the Faith Groups and Kau Belleh ([Kbelleh@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:Kbelleh@lambeth.gov.uk)) to support Peace Week.

**As this money was a large part of establishing the area as a social space for families and children, this has had a very negative impact on the project.**

We are however having a small event on the 11<sup>th</sup> October for the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Tate legacy.

Then hopefully The Peace and Light celebration will take place in December. We are being offered support from the Brixton Area Forum's Chair - however being a long term Lambeth resident, I'll wait and see..... I've included the email addresses if anyone wants to find out what the money was actually spent on, as Peace Week is 11<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> September, and so far I've haven't seen any details of events.

*As ever yours, Sarah Slater.*

### **ABC Brixton Event**

Saturday September 3<sup>rd</sup> saw an event in Windrush Square hosted by local charity *ABC Brixton*, known colloquially as the *Brixton Urban Movement*.

Many local poets, rappers and singers appeared throughout the day. Whippersnappers brought in young performers and Brixton Bicycle Art held a bike painting workshop for kids. Although a difficult environment to work in, we managed to keep the dealers out and the kids in for several hours. This event was held without funding and managed entirely by volunteers from the community.

ABC brings together local groups and communities to facilitate involvement in regeneration. It is currently seeking a

pragmatic solution to the problems of Central Brixton and greater community involvement in Brockwell Park.

It promotes *Enquiry by Design* (also known as a Charette, see p.11) as the preferred method of consultation and town planning. It is applying for funding to hold a community-led Charette, initially focussing on the Moorlands Triangle. We are planning a series of events in community centres and on estates around Brixton, to promote our aims. The next event will be a "Sunday Social" to be held on **20<sup>th</sup> November** in the Loughborough Park community centre, to include presentations on sustainability topics plus the usual entertainment.

*For more information, contact ABC's secretary, Phil Isaac, [abcbrixton@gmail.com](mailto:abcbrixton@gmail.com)*

### **Why libraries need Friends**

One of the most frequent complaints that we hear from Friends groups – and indeed from library users in general – is that there are too few books remaining in our libraries.

It's been easy to blame the small budget left for new book purchases after paying for staff and buildings. Or prices for specialist books rising faster than inflation for the past 20 years. Or the numerous Heads of Libraries in quick succession in the same period. Or the policies of Culture Supremo and local MP Jessie Towell...

No, it seems our members have been sticking pins into wax effigies of the wrong people (so apologies to all those senior librarians who have had to take early retirement due to ill health!). Someone let slip at the last meeting of the Lambeth Local History Forum that the ODPM – John Prescott's mega-ministry which oversees local government – has as one of its "indicators" to judge the performance of public library services the number of books which are withdrawn each year.

Never mind that there is not enough money to buy new editions at a similar rate, nor that some are out of print and so irreplaceable, it seems the waste must go on, to maintain the Council's "performance rating" in league tables of local authorities. The inevitable result is book stocks declining in both quantity and quality, and library visitors falling off as there is less chance of finding the books you want.

*Alan Piper.*