

NEWSLETTER

No. 230, July 2018

Quarterly issue, distributed free to members

Registered with the London Forum of Amenity Societies;
Registered Charity No.1058103

Website: www.brixtonsociety.org.uk



Weekend 21 & 22 July Lambeth Country Show

12 noon to 8 pm, Brockwell Park

This year there are only 2 entrances, so please allow extra time to queue to get in – last admission is at 6-30 pm.

Despite layout changes, we expect our stall to be in the same part of the park as last year – if you enter by the Herne Hill gate, look for us in the group to the right of the path up to Brockwell Hall.

Lambeth Heritage Festival

One again the Festival will be held through all of September and throughout Lambeth. There will be many events in or around Brixton. The printed guide will not be ready in time to issue with this newsletter, but it should be available from our stall at the Country Show. Libraries will have copies (though their supplies may run out quickly). We will also have copies at our August 9th committee meeting, and on our stall in Brixton Station Road on Saturday 11th (between 12-30 and 2-30 pm). An electronic version will be on our website from 23 July.

Details of two of our commitments during the festival are in the next column.



70 years ago: Brockwell Lido in 1948
(available from Lambeth Landmark).

Saturday 1st September: Local History Fair at Clapham Omnibus

in the former Clapham Library, on North Side opposite the Polygon in Old Town, SW4. If you can spare some time to help staff our stall, please call Bill Linskey on (020) 7274 3835 or e-mail to wjdcl@globalnet.co.uk

Thursday 13 September: Brixton History evening

The Evolution of **Windrush Square** and the buildings around it - 7 pm at the Vida Walsh Centre, 2b Saltoun Road SW2
So many uses - coach pull-in, graveyard, sheep pasture, fairground, civic centre, nuclear bunker, coffee stop, orchard and more...

Meanwhile, two more walks...

Sunday 15 July Between Brixton Hill and Clapham Park

Meet 2-30 pm at corner of Morrish Road and Brixton Hill, to explore the junction of three old parishes, and successive waves of rebuilding over 2 centuries. Walk led by Alan Piper.

Buses 45,59,133,109,159,250,333.

Sunday 19 August North Brixton

Meet at 2-30 pm inside the front gates of St.Mark's Church, Kennington – opposite Oval Tube station. A circular walk led by Alan Piper.

Buses 3,36,59,133,155,159,185,333,436.

Diary of Events, Late Summer 2018

Market Walks

Our guided walks around Brixton's markets 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.

Committee Dates

Our Executive Committee meets monthly, on the second Thursday, 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 a week prior.

- 9 August
- 11 October
- 8 November.

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.

Friday 27 July – In Other Words

An evening of classical music, song and spoken word, presented by Gida Live and Triple A, at 7pm at Longfield Hall, 50 Knatchbull Road SE5 (opposite Minet Library). Advance tickets £7, or £10 on the door. Enquiries to enquiry@longfieldhall.org.uk
Longfield Hall

Monday 6 August – Collectables & Antiques

Discover some of the fascinating things that members collect, at 8 pm at Woodlawns, 16 Leigham Court Rd, SW16.
Streatham Society

Thursday 16 August – Bygone Streatham

Another instalment of lost buildings and street scenes presented by John Brown. 8 pm at the Phoenix Centre, Westow Street, SE19.
South London Local History Group.

Wednesday 12 Sept. – for respectable tenants

Bob Reeves explores the early days of the Rosendale Road estate, opened by the Peabody Trust in 1902, east of Brockwell Park. 7-30 pm for 7-45 start, Herne Hill United Church Hall, c/o Herne Hill and Redpost Hill, SE24.
Herne Hill Society.

September Open Days: London Open House

weekend on **22 & 23** means hundreds of London buildings will open their doors for free – see www.open-city.org.uk

Prior to that, other sites beyond London, and in a couple of outer London boroughs, may open under the **Heritage Open Days** scheme during either 6-9 or 13-16 September – see www.heritageopendays.org.uk

Monday 17 September – Lost Lambeth Architecture

Illustrated talk by Edmund Bird, conservation adviser to TfL, at 8 pm at Woodlawns, 16 Leigham Court Rd, SW16.
Streatham Society

Monday 24 September – Vesta Tilley

Keith Fawkes and Richard Norman outline the life of Vesta Tilley (1864-1952) singer, male impersonator, and sometime Lambeth resident, and the Music Hall world in which she moved a century ago. Open 7 pm for 8 pm start, at the former Clapham Library, now Omnibus, North Side SW4.
Clapham Society

Sunday 14 October – Autumn Walk

Meet at **2 pm** by the clock tower in Brockwell Park, for a seasonal walk.
Friends of Brockwell Park

Library News

Lambeth's Town Centre Libraries, like ours in Brixton, aim to support children and young people through the long summer holidays. They aim to offer support to vulnerable people too, with more disability access and special courses on offer in our libraries. There is also a Food Poverty drive linking their offer with Brixton Soup Kitchen and offers of "in kind" sponsorship from Marks and Spencer towards providing meals.

The libraries have also been providing enlightenment through the recent **Readers and Writers Festival**. For example, Ben Okri led an amazing evening at Brixton Library of readings from his latest anthology: **'Like lions we rise, for the many'**, quoting from poems by Shelley, Blake, and Yeats, among others.



Spring Bazaar Grow Wild1.jpg

Our Spring and Summer Bazaars were greatly appreciated, with a fund-raising **children's book sale** particularly appreciated. Our next planned event will be another step in our Local Heroes Initiative. #brixtonlocalheroes is on 19th September as part of the **Lambeth Heritage Festival**, with a potential display included in the **Brixton Design Trail** (See #BDT18 and #Webelong.) To assist at these, or suggest other events, please contact: foftlbrixton@gmail.com

Friends of Tate Library Brixton try to keep in touch with the events and developments in our libraries and wider library campaigns, by going to Library Task Force conferences, attending Friends of Lambeth Libraries Forum (FoLL) and meetings with council representatives. Lambeth Council's Cabinet member thankfully remains Cllr. Sonia Winifred, who leads on Culture, Parks, Open Spaces and Sports as well as chairing Equalities.

Elsewhere, **Minet Library** is open again, but with a trained librarian on site for only 2 hours daily. The adjacent Lambeth Archive is open and fully staffed.

Defend the 10 maintain that, while the re-opening of Neighbourhood libraries, like Minet and Carnegie, after two years of closure is welcome, they are still not fully functioning libraries. Campaign news is to be found at <http://defendthe10-lambeth.org.uk/>

As Chair of **Friends of Lambeth Libraries**, Laura Swaffield continues to press for a re-evaluation of the Culture 2020 Plan.

Meanwhile, the Council are focussing on their **Town Centre Libraries**, with the remodelling of the New West Norwood Library in partnership with the Picture House cinema. We at Brixton are relatively well served with our library. However, staff shortages and overworking take their toll. We as a Friends group wish to support our local libraries to continue their sterling efforts in the current political climate.

Marilyn Rogers.

Windmill funding target met

Friends of Windmill Gardens are pleased to report that they exceeded their £12,000 target for their recent Crowdfunding appeal to equip the new Education Centre now being built alongside the Windmill. More news and events at www.brixtonwindmill.org

Grove Adventure Playground

Volunteers have been working to restore and re-open the adventure playground after 3 years of dereliction. Through Loughborough Junction Action Group, the People's Health Trust is funding it for 2 years, to open on Saturdays and in school holidays. Contact grovevolunteers@gmail.com to offer practical help, or donate towards future costs via www.loughboroughjunction.org

Music at Myatt's Fields Park

The bandstand in Myatt's Fields Park is hosting a series of performances alongside the Sunday market through July. You may get this in time to catch Peruvian band **Kausary** with singers from nearby Longfield Hall on 15th. For refugees from the Country Show, there's **Vinyl Memories** of the Windrush Generation and their children with Michelle Killington on 22nd, and then the **Lambeth Wind Orchestra** appear on 29th. Enquiries to enquiries@myattsfieldspark.info

Housing and Planning

Rented Housing guidance

For nearly 40 years, successive governments championed Home Ownership as the way forward. Even Lambeth Labour councillors fell out of love with the rented Council housing model. Twenty years ago they started to pass their estates to housing associations. But those associations had to take a more commercial approach once they stopped receiving public funds, so they have been selling old freehold houses and new leasehold flats to raise new funds.

In reality, home ownership has peaked because the graduates who were the backbone of the home-buying market now emerge from college with crippling debts, and the economy has been through 10 years of recession/austerity – even before “Euroblight” takes hold. Yet providing genuinely affordable rented housing by councils or housing associations remains only a trickle while the government refuses to commit funds.

That leaves private renting as the only option for a growing number of people. Institutional investors have held back from involvement for the past decade, waiting for a steer from an indecisive Central Government, while recent tax changes discouraged smaller landlords from staying in the business.

The only small positive step is that the Government has published a series of booklets on How to Rent, to explain the basic rules of renting to landlords and tenants, to clarify rights and responsibilities. Particularly valuable is a guide for leaseholders of flats, a field with its own special challenges. How to Let reminds landlords of their obligations, How to Rent covers the basics for tenants, with How to Rent a Safe Home highlighting safety issues including fire, dampness and dodgy services. All 4 titles can be found via: www.gov.uk/government/collections/housing-how-to-guides

Somerleyton Road unravels

Lambeth has long been hostile to more creative housing options such as self-build or housing co-ops, and even the innovative Somerleyton Road scheme championed by

Brixton Green faces ongoing obstruction from senior Council officers, despite being funded and ready to start.

The latest twist is that the owner of the “fish factory” site (at No.16) – which the council forgot to CPO – is advancing his own plans for housing development. We thought his scheme was just a spoiler to get him a better price for the site, but he’s now followed up his planning consent with an application to build it in two stages (case ref. 18/02468/VOC).

How about Planning our Towns as if people mattered?

At a recent meeting of the London Forum of Amenity Societies, Hugh Ellis of the Town and Country Planning Association led a discussion of recent trends, and their contrast with what local communities would like to see. Some points from the discussion are quoted below:

The trend over the past decade has been to reduce both the powers and the resources which local councils have to make plans and scrutinise applications. Permitted development for residential use of former offices or commercial buildings results in sub-standard dwellings which evade inspection.

There has also been a trend to reduce the input of residents in regeneration and planning – in the case of Grenfell Tower, residents were excluded from the decision-making and their warnings were ignored before the fire. Access to information is more difficult in practice despite Freedom of Information legislation and the Internet. Conservation Area consultation arrangements are in decline across boroughs. Though developers are encouraged to carry out consultation exercises before making planning applications, they can too easily manipulate the results to suit themselves.

Councillors in general have less impact on behalf of their electors where power is concentrated in a cabinet system or the council itself is sharing in the development. Scrutiny committees too often fail to scrutinise effectively. Planners become too invested in a development after pre-application meetings with the developer, and fail to give objective advice where cases come to councillors for decision. *(Continued on page 9)*

Annual Report & Accounts

The Brixton Society

Registered Charity No.1058103

Annual Report 2017-18

AIMS & ORGANISATION

AIMS & AFFILIATIONS: We aim to encourage awareness and understanding of our surroundings, and to give local people a say in Brixton's future. Our area extends well beyond the Town Centre to include Myatt's Fields, much of Stockwell, and out to the South Circular Road. The Society is registered with the London Forum of Amenity Societies, the British Association for Local History and Archives for London.

STRUCTURE & MANAGEMENT: The Society is a registered charity and an unincorporated association. This report is compiled to cover core requirements of the Charity Commission. The society's constitution was last revised at the 2013 AGM, to better reflect current practice.

The Executive Committee has met 10 times since the last AGM in June 2017, consisting of Bill Linskey (Chair), Annick Alet, Doye Akinlade, John Cunningham, Barbara Davies, Rosemary Honey, Diana Linskey, Vivienne Lewis, Alan Piper, Marilyn Rogers, Jo Spilman, Eileen Walkin, David Warner and Nicholas Weedon.

PROGRAMME & ACTIVITIES

PLANNING & REGENERATION:

We share oversight of a high volume of local planning applications amongst our "virtual" planning sub-committee of 5 members with relevant experience.

The overall picture has been one of "densification" with bulkier replacements for earlier buildings, while the owners of smaller buildings are keen to expand outwards, upwards and downwards. One of our particular concerns is to safeguard a range of premises for local business uses. In the centre of Brixton, we have been looking critically at proposals for late-night uses which conflict with the rising number of flats being built or restored.

We occasionally suggest buildings for protection through listing, conservation areas or Lambeth's Local List.

We comment on wider planning policy changes as they arise. During the past year we sent in detailed comments for the review of the Lambeth Local Plan, and on the Mayor's London Plan.

To keep in touch with London-wide and national policies, we have benefitted from involvement with the London Forum and the London Sustainability Exchange.



Windrush commemoration event on Windrush Square, 23 June.

NETWORKING: We are in touch with a wide range of community groups. We support the Friends of Tate Library and the Friends of Windrush Square, which operate as sub-committees of the Society. We have participated in the Brixton Neighbourhood Forum, Brockwell Park Community Partners (the Management Advisory Committee), the Lambeth Local History Forum, Friends of Lambeth Libraries, and Lambeth Parks Forum. We have collaborated on projects to improve or promote Brixton, notably with Brixton's Business Improvement District, the Brixton Design Trail, Nubian Jak Foundation, Sleepless Brixton and the Market Traders' Federation. We also try to respond to frequent e-mail enquiries from students, media and family historians.



LCS17-03.jpg

EVENTS: Last year we put on displays or stalls at the Lambeth Country Show and Lambeth Local History Fair. We also had a regular presence in Brixton Market in support of our Brixton Market

Annual Report & Accounts

walks on the second Saturday of each month through the year. In addition we contributed some guided walks to the Lambeth Local History Forum's summer series, and put on a few "special" walks for other organisations.

For our own members, in February we laid on a visit to the Cinema Museum, currently in part of the former Lambeth Workhouse. As part of the Lambeth Heritage Festival in September, Sir Henry Tate, donor of local libraries and the original Tate Gallery, was the topic of our local history evening.

PUBLICATIONS: We distribute nearly 300 copies of our Newsletter quarterly, including to key groups and local councillors.

Recent research on Sir Henry Tate and Brixton Library will be the subject of our next book, to appear in September. Other topics are being pursued between other commitments, and if anyone has a local story worth publishing, we will try to assist.

After a long process of revision, the new version of our website is now going live, with additional material in the pipeline. It's been a vital channel for wider sales of our publications, and an analysis of sales is provided as a footnote to the accounts.

RESOURCES

MEMBERSHIP: There have been around 150 paid-up members for several years. Most subscriptions will be due for renewal in July, so members are encouraged to renew in person during the Lambeth Country Show.

Like many other charities, we have reviewed our database structure and privacy policy, of which the definitive version should be on our website by the time you read this.

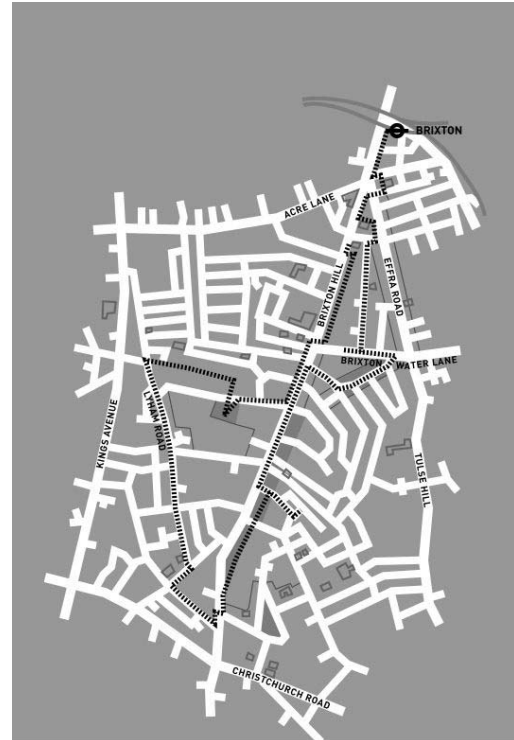
We are grateful for on-going support "in kind" from individual members, which includes delivering most of our newsletters, staffing stalls, reporting back from a wide range of meetings, and other tasks which all help maintain the Society's profile and level of activity.

FINANCE: The annual accounts cover the year ended 31 March 2018, and are set out on the facing page with the previous year's figures for comparison. Overall the position is stable, and this has been a

quiet year pending our next major event or publication. Subscriptions were last reviewed after the 2016 AGM.

The 2018 AGM approved the re-appointment of Andrew Thurburn as the Independent Examiner.

The above is an expanded version of the draft report presented at the AGM in June.



Special offer on self-guided walks book:

Brixton Heritage Trails was previously on sale at £4.50 a copy, but we recently cut the price to **£1.50** each to help shift the stock.

Based on our collective years of leading walks around Brixton, it details 6 walk routes radiating out from the Town Centre into the surrounding districts, such as Brixton Hill shown above. In practice, we have found half of each route is enough for an afternoon when leading a party around, so you could say we are really offering you 12 routes! That's just 12.5p each, at a time when our competitors are charging £5 upwards per walk!

Of course, Brixton is changing at a great rate nowadays so you may find part of a route rebuilt or diverted - but that's where you can help us, by reporting back what differences you found, so we can put updates on the website.

Collect a copy from our stall at the Country Show, or order through the usual channels.

Annual Report & Accounts

BRIXTON SOCIETY STATEMENT OF ACCOUNT 1st APRIL 2017 - 31st MARCH 2018

	2017/2018	2016/2017		Publications Sold	2018/2017	2016/2017
<u>INCOME</u>			Town Trails		55.00	85.50
Grants/Awards	0.00	500.00	Memories		35.94	24.95
Members' Subscriptions	1,056.00	992.00	Windrush Square		7.00	10.00
Sale of Publications, etc	1,393.35	1,424.97	Brixton - Story of a name		4.00	6.00
Donations	303.69	356.18	Effra - Underground River		6.00	34.50
Postage	54.75	71.93	Greeting cards		1.20	7.00
Bank Interest	0.61	1.14	Maps		27.50	12.50
Miscellaneous	50.00	-0.50	Brixton Abridged		0.00	0.00
Sub-Total	£2,858.40	£3,345.72	Postcards		147.00	216.00
Refunds		-1.10	History of Brixton		309.69	239.76
Discounts	-33.30	0.00	Brixton Market LT poster		20.00	0.00
Ebay/Paypal fees	-68.03	-88.67	Brixton Boy WWII		9.96	49.80
Receipts less discounts/refunds	£2,757.07	£3,255.95	Black British Celebration		80.00	86.00
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>			Synagogue		34.86	34.86
Friends of Tate Library	228.24	343.63	Market Walk Tickets		245.00	180.00
Friends of Windrush Square	38.22	325.05	Market Walk Books		404.00	422.00
Photocopying	0.00	0.00	Brixton & Stockwell Mirror		1.20	3.60
Newsletter Prod	429.00	545.18	Brixton MPs		5.00	12.50
Postage	209.10	277.10			£1,393.35	£1,424.97
Stationery	30.11	88.33	Less Discount		-33.30	0.00
Publications - purchase	0.00	0.00			£1,360.05	£1,424.97
Publications - printing	1.60	423.00				
Posters/Laeflets/Banner	71.86	75.40				
Insurance Cost (general)	75.00	65.00				
Subscriptions	68.00	63.00				
Cost of Meetings	350.00	455.00				
Website development	260.00	50.00				
Equipment/Stall	0.00	20.00				
Events	67.00	81.32				
Catering/Refreshments	70.55	184.50				
Website hosting	£115.18	£72.00				
Refund	0.00	0				
TOTAL	£2,013.86	£3,068.51				
Surplus	£743.21	£187.44				

Net Paypal income from subscriptions/publications was £518.29

<u>Balance sheet</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2017</u>
Opening Balance	£4,608.48	£4,421.04
Surplus for year	£743.21	£187.44
Closing balance	£5,351.69	£4,608.48

Represented by:		
Closing balances		
Current a/c	£3,410.03	£2,649.14
Dep A/C	£1,817.99	£1,817.38
Paypal	£123.67	£141.96
	£5,351.69	£4,608.48

Accounts prepared by

D. W. W.

David Warner
Hon Treasurer

Statement by External Examiner

I have reviewed the cash book and the totals of receipts and payments stated above are in accordance therewith and correspond to the balances shown in the society's bank statements.

Richard Smith

Andrew Thurburn FCA - Examiner

Brixton Society Account 2017-18.jpg

Our New Website

We have been busy...

... completely redesigning our website. It is still at

www.brixtonsociety.org.uk.

It was launched at our AGM last month.

Our site was rebuilt with professional help from Write Expression, specialists in WordPress websites for sole traders, community groups and small companies; but, of course, we had to provide the content.

Some things have not changed

You can still find out about our events, walks and meetings; buy our publications; and, of course, join the society or renew your membership. Hopefully, it is all clearer and easier to do than before.

Our News postings are highlighted on the front page with images.

Friends sub-committees

Our two sub-committees...

- Friends of Tate Library, and
- Friends of Windrush Square

... have more space to publicise the excellent work they do.

Planning...

...is a major concern and has its own page. This contains our planning policies against which we judge planning applications and links to external sources of information.

We will post information on significant planning applications or proposed policy changes as we find out about them. There is no news there as I write, simply because nothing new has come in since our re-launch.

Local History

This is the section with the most changes and new material. Current pages are:

- **FAQs**
- **Brixton murals**
- **Plaques – blue and otherwise**
- **Projects**
- **War Memorials**

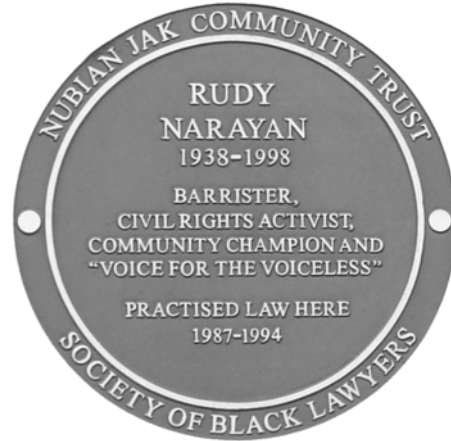
We plan much more to come within those pages and with new pages.

- **Murals**

We are attempting to record murals because many locally are already historically significant (Nuclear Dawn and David Bowie for instance) and who knows what may be important tomorrow.

- **Plaques – blue and otherwise**

English Heritage blue plaques are already easy to find on-line on their website. We do list them but we have also been recording other plaques in the area, such as:



- **Projects**

We list two current local history projects:

- Local Heroes
- Loughborough Road, its residents, shops and pubs.

Do have a look, you may be able to help; and, if you are interested in starting a local history project of your own, please get in touch.

- **War Memorials**

Some are in public places; some are not. We are trying to list them all and get access to photograph the hidden ones, such as:



which is inside Brixton police station (photo by kind permission of the Borough Commander).

Any comments or questions about the site email:

webmaster@brixtonsociety.org.uk



Brixton's Oldest House?

We have mentioned before that there is half a house remaining from the original Brixton Place, a terrace built c.1800 on the east side of Brixton Road between Coldharbour Lane and Beehive Place. It sits above Reliance Arcade and can only be seen from the upper floors of some nearby buildings. Most of the original houses were lost with the general rebuilding of this side of Brixton Road in the late 1930s.

This view is across Electric Avenue, with the old house squeezed between the hotel and an isolated piece of the 1888 Electric Avenue.

Housing and Planning

Continued from page 4:

London Boroughs generally are seeing increases in residential density. Large-scale redevelopment of mid-20th century estates is a particular concern because of disruption of communities and the loss of public open space included in the original layouts.

Another adverse development has been to take "major infrastructure" developments out of local authority control, so the Government can support favoured industries or interests.

Although the system is still plan-led in name, this is poorly applied in practice. We need a system that gives people control over their immediate environment. TCPA expect to publish proposals in the Autumn for reform of the system, to restore resident involvement and even introduce a third party right of appeal for major developments which depart from existing plans.

Alan Piper.

Glimpses into the past

Brixton stories sometimes turn up out of the blue, from different sources, and we sample a few in these pages...

From Turkish Baths to Sheds

Following on from the piece on the left, another of the premises within Brixton Place was a Turkish Baths, demolished in the 1930s rebuilding. From some family history research that was sent to us, we discovered that the proprietor then bought into a firm making portable buildings, which he unimaginatively renamed T.Bath & Sons. The firm had several sites across South London for manufacturing and distribution, including what is now Ruach Ministries' revivalist church on Brixton Hill, together with an annexe opening onto Blenheim Gardens. There was another small workshop in Trinity Gardens, at the back of the present BHF furniture store. Just outside our area, they had a yard and several railway arches behind the shops at the Herne Hill end of Norwood Road, facing Brockwell Park.

In the 1950s the firm was sold on to new owners, who retitled it Bath's Portable Buildings. The Norwood Road site is now used by lots of different firms, though the sign over the gate rather misleadingly calls it the Bath Factory, whereas it really made sheds and fencing in its heyday.

Windrush Stories

With the furore over the immigration status of the children of the Windrush generation, we thought it topical to tell the story of Oswald "Columbus" Denniston (1913-2000), who was in the first batch of workers who boarded the Empire Windrush and landed at Tilbury Docks on 22 June 1948. He was joined by about 500 other workers from the West Indies brought to England as a response to labour shortages and the need to rebuild war-torn Britain. When they landed the Colonial Office was forced into short-term measures to house them, and some 200 men spent the night in the Clapham South air raid shelter. Denniston was appointed to hand out rations in the catering marquee set up on the Common, and to act as watchman. As such he became one of the first men to get

Heritage Focus

a job, which the Daily Express picked up on and did a special article on him.

During his first few weeks, Denniston, then aged 35, met his future wife and they spent the rest of their lives together in South London. A sign-painter by trade, Denniston had an entrepreneurial streak and tapped into the rock'n roll boom of the 1950s by opening a juke box coffee bar in Coldharbour Lane. He later opened a shop selling fabrics, dresses and remnants in what was then still the Granville Arcade, and became the first African-Caribbean trader in what is now Brixton Village. A keen cyclist, he was the first black person to join the Herne Hill Cycling Club. He passed away in 2000 and is buried in West Norwood Cemetery.

From Norwood Forum's Newsletter, 7/18.

Brixton's Fire Station

This month's newsletter from the London Fire Brigade Museum reminds us that the present Brixton Fire Station opened on 26 July 1906, replacing the previous one in Ferndale Road, at a cost of £9,626. The new station was much larger, with 5 stories instead of two, plus a drill tower. The appliances consisted of one steam fire engine, a horse-drawn escape ladder, 3 manual escape ladders and a hose cart. There were stables at the rear for four horses.

The station was opened by the Chairman of the LCC Fire Brigade Committee. Today Brixton Fire Station attends an average of 1320 incidents per year, including fires, floods and lift releases.

Brixton Society postcard BX23 shows the horse-drawn appliances at the station entrance in Gresham Road soon after the opening.

The Brixton Orphanage

We have long been intrigued by the former Brixton Orphanage for Fatherless Girls, which consisted of 3 old houses linked together on Barrington Road, a school block to the rear, and a cottage on Millbrook Road at the side. Fortunately we recently discovered two websites which tell the story between them. Firstly, there were several orphanages and similar institutions around Brixton at the end of

the 19th century, so for an overview with basic data, see www.childrenshomes.org.uk/BrixtonOrphanage

A more detailed history is at

www.brixtonorphanage.co.uk

This institution flourished between 1876 and 1936, and the buildings were later used as an annexe by the Brixton School of Building. It is now used for residential flats as College Green Court. Despite the name, the orphanage was not intended for children born out of wedlock but rather for those where the "paterfamilias" had died or decamped.

Building the Minet Estate

The bare bones of the estate development were set out in the 1950s Survey of London, but a more detailed account has now been published in **Mobilising Housing Histories** (RIBA Publishing 2017) forming Chapter 1 by David Kroll. This focuses on the period 1870 to 1910, when its market gardens made way for houses and flats. In itself a useful primer for anyone researching a late 19th century house, but other chapters cover the early days of housing trusts like Peabody, and later house-building initiatives, so altogether essential reading for a wider view of what's been tried in the past, with lessons for the future.

For those more interested in the French Protestant background of families like the Minets, October is **Huguenot Month** – see www.huguenotsofspitalfields.org

Researching London Churches?

John Blythe Smart has advised us of his series on London Churches, in 6 volumes. City, North-East, North-West and South already appear on Kindle, and will be followed by Suburbs North and Suburbs South later this year. Each covers the churches by geographical area including their architecture, history, and famous or significant historical residents. Each is fully illustrated, including selected extracts from parish registers. The aim is to follow up with printed versions also.

For more information see the website www.blythesmartpublications.com or enquiries to gsmart@postmaster.co.uk

A Brixton Market Family

Mangans of Brixton

In recent years, several people researching their family histories have shared details with us about firms and traders who used to be active in and around Brixton. The story below was researched by Jane Barder and forwarded by her sister Sally Hows, who still lives on the Clapham edge of Brixton.



Atlantic Road c.1910 on Brixton Society postcard BX28

My grandparents, Thomas Cornwell and Alice Woodcock, married at St. John's Church, Angell Town, on Christmas Day 1899. Tom, then age 28, of 3 Sussex Road, gave his occupation as greengrocer. Like his younger brothers, William and Henry, he had been struggling to establish himself trading from a barrow in the busy shopping centre that Brixton had become. Alice had started at 12 or 13 selling mint and beetroot under the railway arches in Brixton.

Their first married home was 15 Clarewood Mews, off Coldharbour Lane near Sussex Road, and as the name implies, small rooms above stables. The 1871 Census shows 118 people living in 14 properties.

Kelly's Directory for 1900 shows Edward Mangan as running a greengrocery business from 15 Clarewood Mews. Presumably he kept his barrow or stall in the stable below their home. He was already in his 50s and working as a "general dealer in fruit and vegetables" which meant selling from a barrow with no fixed pitch when the young Cornwells arrived on the scene. There was no regulated market at this time – market traders literally fought for popular pitches early each morning, and were at constant risk of being moved on by the police.

My grandparents, in co-operation with the older and probably less agile Edward Mangan, aimed for the two prime pitches where Popes Road met Atlantic Road. That is where Edward Mangan opened his first shop in one of the railway arches at 31 Atlantic Road in 1917. When the market was finally authorised in 1922, my grandparents were among the first licenced stall-holders, gaining the licences for the two stalls just inside Popes Road, with access into the back of 31 Atlantic Road, where among things, I remember the beetroots being boiled. From then on there were no stalls allowed in Atlantic Road.

Not only did my grandparents work with Mr Mangan, but so did the four young Cornwell boys as they grew up. I remember my father telling us about going to the Borough Market from age 12 at 4 am most mornings before going to school, driving a horse-drawn cart. And I remember my mother telling me how in the 1920s and 30s, the food shops and stalls never closed in the evenings until everything had been sold. This meant my father and his brothers, once grown-up, were often working until 9 or 10 pm, having been up since early dawn. There were no Shop Acts in those days, and you could not afford to close while your competitors were still open.

The last task each day was pushing the stalls back to 329 Coldharbour Lane, the house where Mr Mangan and the Cornwells moved around 1920. It was not only a good big family house, but it had ample storage at the rear for stalls, lorries, boxes and all that was needed for an expanding business which required long hours of work from all the Cornwell family.

Other shops in Reliance Arcade, Market Row and in Eltham were only opened after Mr Mangan's death in 1933. He would have been about 73 when he died, a good age for those days, and he had become increasingly reliant on the Cornwells, who had been his working partners since the start of the century.

My grandfather, Tom Cornwell, died in 1938. My mother, his daughter-in-law, described him as wearing for special occasions a white silk scarf - apparently a coster's best dress. On Sundays he used to go out into Kent to catch

A Brixton Market Family

birds, which he kept in cages hung from hooks around the kitchen wall in Coldharbour Lane, before selling them on. He was also in demand to bite off the tails of pedigree dogs! He died in 1938.

My grandmother, known to all in the market as Mrs Mangan, was very much the dominant matriarch, running 329, all aspects of the business and all members of the family. She died in 1952. Her funeral stopped the traffic along Brixton Road, and there were crowds along both sides of the road.

None of her 4 sons, Tom, Sid, Fred and John, made old bones – I don't think any of them reached 65. My father Fred, the third son, was called up and spent 4 years of the Second World War in the Middle East, fighting at Tobruk and El Alamein before being demobbed from Palestine in April 1946. He died in 1966 at 59, at the same age as Uncle Tom, the eldest.

Sid's sons were the twins, John and David. As Cornwells we were all used to being known as Mangan. The units in the covered markets were closed in 1969, but the twins kept on the stall in Pope's Road until well into the 1990s.



Station Road stall, 2018 (Bx-Jn18-12.jpg)

Tom's younger brothers, William and Henry, also made a life-long living in the market. William was listed in Kelly's Directory as a greengrocer at 9 Canterbury Mews as early as 1901, and Henry was listed as a fishmonger at 10 Canterbury Mews in 1910. They both died in the 1940s. I remember Henry as my Uncle

Dodger with a fish stall in Market Row in the 1940s.

I remember the decline of the Popes Road part of the market as setting in with the arrival of the barrow boys in Electric Avenue in the 1950s, eventually legalised as stall-holders. Shoppers would reach them from the buses on the High Road before they got round to Pope's Road or Station Road. I can also remember my father complaining about M & S starting to sell potatoes. It was downhill all the way from the early 1950s I think.

Jane Barder, November 2015.

YOUR NEWSLETTER

We hope you enjoy this latest edition of our newsletter.

When you found it on your doormat, was it in an envelope with a stamp? Probably not, if you live in central Brixton. We are very lucky to have a small group of distributors who deliver by hand to the streets near where they live. We are very grateful to these, largely unsung, volunteers because they save us a considerable amount of money. It costs more to post a newsletter than it does to print it! That's how expensive the post has become.

We do have to post some newsletters - some members live outside the area, or some local members have difficult-to-access letterboxes. We still warmly welcome such members and would not want to lose them.

However, if your newsletter did arrive with a stamp, would you be willing and able to have an electronic copy sent to you instead of a paper one? All we need is your email address and we will send your newsletter in future as a pdf attachment to an email via MailChimp.

If this would suit you, please send your email address to chair@brixton society.org.uk
Thanks.