

THE BRIXTON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

New Year issue, January 2019

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Distributed free to members.

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Let's keep Walking...

We are currently firming up arrangements for several guided walks for the summer months, so they can be included in the annual programme published by the Lambeth Local History Forum. This goes to print shortly so that distribution can start in the Spring.

If there are forgotten backwaters that we should explore, or if you would like us to repeat a walk that you missed last year, you have just a week left to tell us!

Please forward your requests or ideas to us at info@brixtonsociety.org.uk

Brixton Market Walks are already continuing on a monthly basis – if you receive a paper newsletter, a list of dates should be enclosed, or see page 2 overleaf for details.

Brixton Windmill Heritage Walks are put on by the Friends of Windmill Gardens and will resume in April to coincide with Sunday openings of the Windmill, the start and end point for the walks through the surrounding neighbourhood.

Tailor-made Walks are occasionally provided for visiting groups. We hosted a party of French students just before Christmas, and expect another contingent in February, in collaboration with the Brixton Pound.



*The old Loughborough Hotel, at the corner of Loughborough Road and Evandale Road.
(CR/August 2018, IMG8747)*

Friday 15 February: Loughborough Road – shops, pubs and people

7 pm at the San Mei Gallery,
formerly the Loughborough Hotel,
39 Loughborough Road, SW9 7TB
(doors open from 6-45 pm),

How have the local shops changed over the last 160 years? Who were the people who ran the shops and pubs? We will be sharing some of the stories from the LEAF tenants and residents association's heritage research project. If you have any more memories of Loughborough Road, we would love to hear them. This event is free but please e-mail leaftra@gmail.com to say you are coming.



Loughborough Road/ Brixton Road in the 1960s

Diary of Events, New Year 2019

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. Meetings are open to all members, but if you want to raise a specific issue, please tell the Secretary a week prior.

- 10 January
- 14 February
- 14 March
- 11 April.

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.

Wednesday 16 January – Vesta Tilley

Keith Fawkes and Richard Norman outline the life of Vesta Tilley (1864-1952) singer, male impersonator, and sometime Tulse Hill resident, and the Music Hall world in which she moved a century ago. Open 7 pm for 7-30 pm for 7-45 start, Herne Hill United Church Hall, c/o Herne Hill and Redpost Hill, SE24.
Herne Hill Society.

Thursday 17 January – Researching Local History through Books and magazines

A review of South London sources presented by Keith Holdaway.
8 pm at the Phoenix Centre, Westow Street, SE19.
South London Local History Group.

Monday 21 January – History of West Norwood Cemetery

A talk by Bob Flanagan, chair of the Friends of West Norwood Cemetery, featuring eminent former Clapham residents buried there. Open 7 pm for 8 pm start, at the former Clapham Library, now Omnibus, North Side SW4.
Clapham Society

Sunday 27 January – Brixton Vegan Market

The Vegan Market returns to Brixton Station Road after its post-Christmas break, located next to the established Farmers' Market. It will be open between 11 am and 4 pm, and weekly on the Sundays following. See also www.Facebook.com/BrixtonVeganMarket

Monday 18 February – South London on Film

Silent and sound film clips presented by Tony Fletcher, at 8 pm at Woodlawns, 16 Leigham Court Rd, SW16.
Streatham Society

Thursday 21 February – the History of Parks

Travis Elborough traces the history of the British park, based on his book "A Walk in the Park". 7-30 pm at Upper Norwood Library, Westow Hill SE19.
Norwood Society

Monday 4 March – Death on the Brighton Road

Places of execution in the 18th and 19th centuries, illustrated talk by John Newman, Lambeth Archivist, at 8 pm at Woodlawns, 16 Leigham Court Rd, SW16.
Streatham Society

Sunday 14 April – Car Boot Sale

First of the 2019 monthly car boot sales in the Lido car park (vehicles enter from Dulwich Road). Times etc expected to be as last year.
Friends of Brockwell Park

Amenities News

Friends of Windrush Square

The Friends have been active, frequently working jointly with the Friends of Tate Library. We persuaded Lambeth to scale back the Christmas Funfair on the Square to avoid the grass and the war memorial. A free batch of bulbs were obtained through the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association, to reinforce earlier planting. A wreath was laid on behalf of the Brixton Society on Remembrance Day at the African Caribbean War Memorial.

Back on 30 September, the Friends ran a stall in Myatt's Fields Park, selling vegetables, herbs and plants, which all sold out by 12-30! Another stall was run in the Brixton Station Road market on 8th December, this time art works and bric-a-brac, once again to build up some cash for events and enhancements.

Myatt's Fields Market will be back in March.

PAPA's Park Facelift

The community playground in **Pulross Road** SW9 has recently re-opened after an extensive refit. New play equipment has been installed and the under-5s area has been extended. This comes after 6 years of fund-raising and lobbying. Thoughts are already turning to the next phases, to update the multi-purpose football/ basketball court and add a new purpose-designed building to enlarge the café and provide meeting space for hire, to generate future income, because the site receives no public funding.

More details, including how to contribute, on their website at www.papaspark.co.uk

Grove Adventure Playground

Another playground experiencing success is the Grove, tucked away behind the Marcus Lipton Youth Club in Gordon Grove, linking Minet Road and Eastlake Road. Locals are clearly having no problem finding it, as user figures for June/ November last year show. During the 6-week summer holiday season, 1207 young people attended, staying for an average of 4 hours each.

It's now available for private hire and events to help raise funds to keep the playground going. E-mail to groveapg@gmail.com

Children's Centres at risk

Lambeth Council is currently consulting on reducing the number of children's centres in the borough. These mostly cater for under-5s and most of the local sites are associated with primary schools – Stockwell Road, Jubilee School on Tulse Hill, Loughborough Road and Tree House at Holmewood, Upper Tulse Hill. The Effra early years centre looks more exposed since the adjacent Effra Parade School closed several years ago. Closing date for comments is 10 February – see the Consultations page on Lambeth's website.



2007 view with car park in background (Dbx.24.11)

Brixton Recreation Centre

BRUG, the users' group, inform us that various repair works are underway and due to complete in mid-April. These include a new fire alarm and emergency lighting, and refurbishing the pool ventilation system. A second phase of work to follow should include roof repairs, lifts and boiler replacement, and long-overdue improvements to shower and toilet areas.

Friends of Windmill Gardens

At last a start was made in December on the long-awaited education centre, with diggers levelling the ground, ready for the foundations to be laid. This rather hampered access to the mill, where Santa's Grotto had its busiest day ever. The first ever Festive Bake competition was won by Prilly Lewis, with an amazing cake in the form of a replica windmill.

Windmill openings will resume in April but in the meantime flour is still being milled by the 1902 machinery to keep up with demand. www.brixtonwindmill.org

Brixton BID renewed

The Business Improvement District has been endorsed by local businesses to continue for another 5-year term. 59% of businesses voted, of which 80% were in favour. Based on the rateable value of the votes cast, 84% were in favour. The Brixton BID has 4 current themes:

- Enhanced Environment, delivering a cleaner and greener BID area.
- Safer Day and Night, including the business crime reduction partnership and contributing to extra town centre policing.
- Better Business, offering training and cost-saving programmes.
- Distinctive Destination, promoting Brixton as a visitor destination through events and marketing.



Market Row, October 2018
(IMG8883.jpg)

We have been busy...

Over the last few months we have prepared responses to some major consultations by Lambeth Council and by London's Mayor. Taken together, they cover a wide range of policies and services, but there are a few key themes which run through our responses:

Over-Development:

We deplore the shared enthusiasm of the Council and developers for Town Cramming rather than Town Planning. Taller buildings and the loss of spaces between them are bad enough, but the provision of amenities and school places is not keeping up with increasing residential density. This is not a sustainable approach.

Defending local workspace

For the last 40 years new housing has been provided largely by displacing workspace and reducing scope for local employment. Where planners have insisted on some workspace being included in new developments, too often it has not met the needs of local businesses, enabling landlords to convert it to more flats when it fails to attract business tenants. We have called for the remaining sites to be safeguarded, and closer scrutiny of plans to ensure they are practical. We are encouraged to see developers starting to propose workspace as a major element in some recent schemes.

Quiet places needed too

"Densification" and commercial enthusiasm for a 24-hour economy make it more important than ever that residents can get some respite, not only at home, but also in public parks and other green spaces not far away.

Easier movement for all

There are some hopeful signs in declining car ownership and increased cycle use, but still pedestrians remain a low priority. We continue to champion re-opening of East Brixton station for access to London Overground services.

Following our comments on Lambeth's Local Plan summarised a year ago in Newsletter 228, we responded again in December to selected policy changes. Another draft of the Plan is expected in the Summer.

In Newsletter 229 we reported that we had commented on the Mayor's revisions to the London Plan. These are now undergoing an Examination in Public, where the London Forum is representing the views of amenity societies such as ours.

Alan Piper.

Enforcing the Plans

However fine-sounding the planning policies may be, the weakness has always been in enforcing them. To begin with, Community Infrastructure Levy or other planning gains give the Council a vested interest in larger scale proposals going ahead anyway.

Regeneration & Planning News

Even then, developers try to evade conditions imposed on planning permission, or to build something different to the approved design. On smaller projects, there are owners who just go ahead, in the hope that nobody will notice. Nevertheless there is a small team in Lambeth Planning Department following up these cases, and we recently received details of some local examples.

Premier Inn, Coldharbour Lane: After refusal of a retrospective planning application, the entrance was modified to revert to the design originally approved.

Coldharbour Lane (East): Negotiations resulted in stopping unauthorised use of a flat roof on a residential property as a terrace, to prevent overlooking and disturbance of neighbours.

Josephine Avenue: After negotiations, an unauthorised fenced patio was removed and a less intrusive design was approved.

Deronda Road: A large and incongruous rear roof extension was removed after negotiations.

Brixton Hill: An air-conditioning unit on the front forecourt of a shop was removed after other alterations left it exposed as an eyesore and trip hazard.

Another property on Brixton Hill has been served with a breach of condition notice after its new rear extension was finished in painted render instead of the approved brickwork.

Brixton Road: A planning enforcement notice has been served for removal of unsuitable roller shutters from a shop-front.

209 Clapham Road, Stockwell: Prosecution in hand following the owner's failure to tackle the poor condition of the rear of the property, in response to a Section 215 (land tidying) notice.

Cases tend to move slowly because owners can take the heat off by making new planning applications. However at **164 Brixton Road** the Council's "light touch" approach has failed to stimulate proposals from the freeholder which are good enough for a Listed Building.

The Council publishes a Planning Enforcement Protocol (recently updated), detailing what the enforcement team investigates, how to report issues and how breaches of planning control are dealt with. See

www.lambeth.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control

As we have said before, don't fight alone, but tell us of problems on our patch in case we can lend support:

planning@brixtonsociety.org.uk

Lambeth Estates Redevelopment

Frankly, it's been strangely quiet lately. Brixton Green are continuing negotiating with Lambeth to get some movement on **Somerleyton Road**.

At **Cressingham Gardens** survey and design work is proceeding very slowly – after all, the consultants have been given £6 million to spend before a brick is laid, which should keep a lot of people employed for a couple of years yet. An independent adviser has been appointed to deal with residents' casework, Edward.ogundele@publicvoice.london. Meanwhile, a ballot has endorsed day-to-day management of the estate being devolved to a Residents Management Co-operative, though Lambeth were quick to point out this will not affect their aim to demolish the estate.

At **Fenwick Estate**, on Landor Road, clearance of the site for Phase 1 or Fenwick South, alongside the railway, should finish this month for building work to start in the Spring. The tenants' hall is remaining for now. The definitive planning application for the main body of the estate is not expected for another year, with an estimated start of construction at the end of 2021.

Listed Buildings corner

The Listed Property Show takes place again at Olympia on **9 & 10 February**.

The Listed Property Owners Club continues to campaign for a reduction in the VAT charged on repair and renovation, while new housing is exempt. More details of both their petition and the show at www.lpoc.co.uk

Who Put The Bricks In Brixton?

Who Put the Bricks in Brixton?

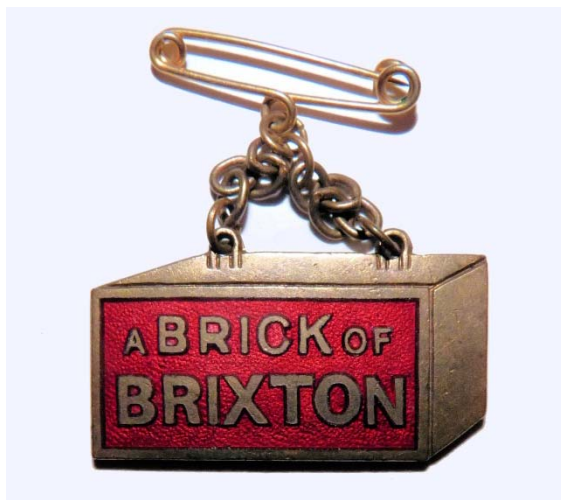
When London Transport (as was) built the Victoria Line, it commissioned a variety of artists to design motifs for each station to be executed in tile work; each to represent the identity of the station.

The design for Stockwell represents a swan, a nod to the famous pub opposite the station. The designer for Brixton, Hans Unger (1915-1975) a well-known poster artist, fell back on the pun Brixton = Ton of Bricks!

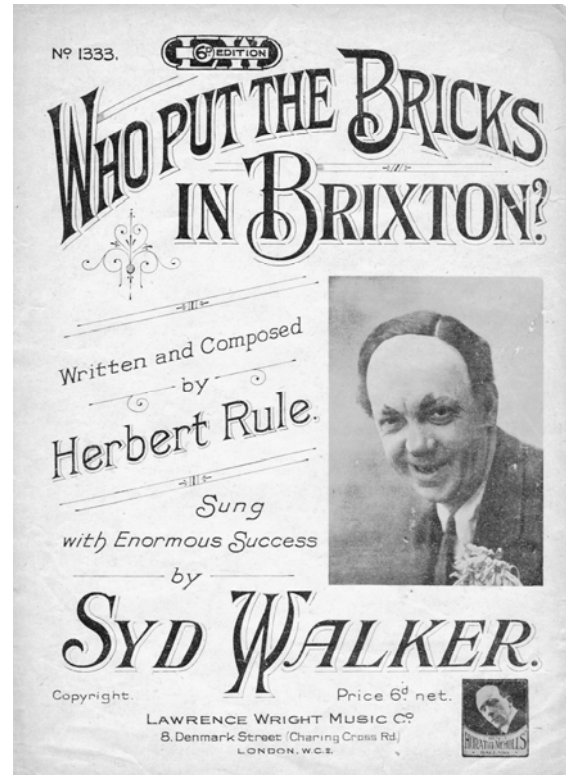


This was hardly an original thought.

The Brixton roller skating rink, which was on the corner of Tulse Hill and Brixton Water Lane (where there is now a Sainsbury's) from 1910 until the mid-1960s, produced this small (30mm across) enamelled brooch:



The exact date of the brooch is unknown, but we can date this sheet music for a music hall song by its copyright date MCMXX (1920).



Syd Walker (1886–1945) was an actor, comedian and music hall performer. He appeared in at least a dozen films and on the radio. This song must have been important to him, as it is prominently stated: “Music Hall singing rights reserved to Syd Walker”.

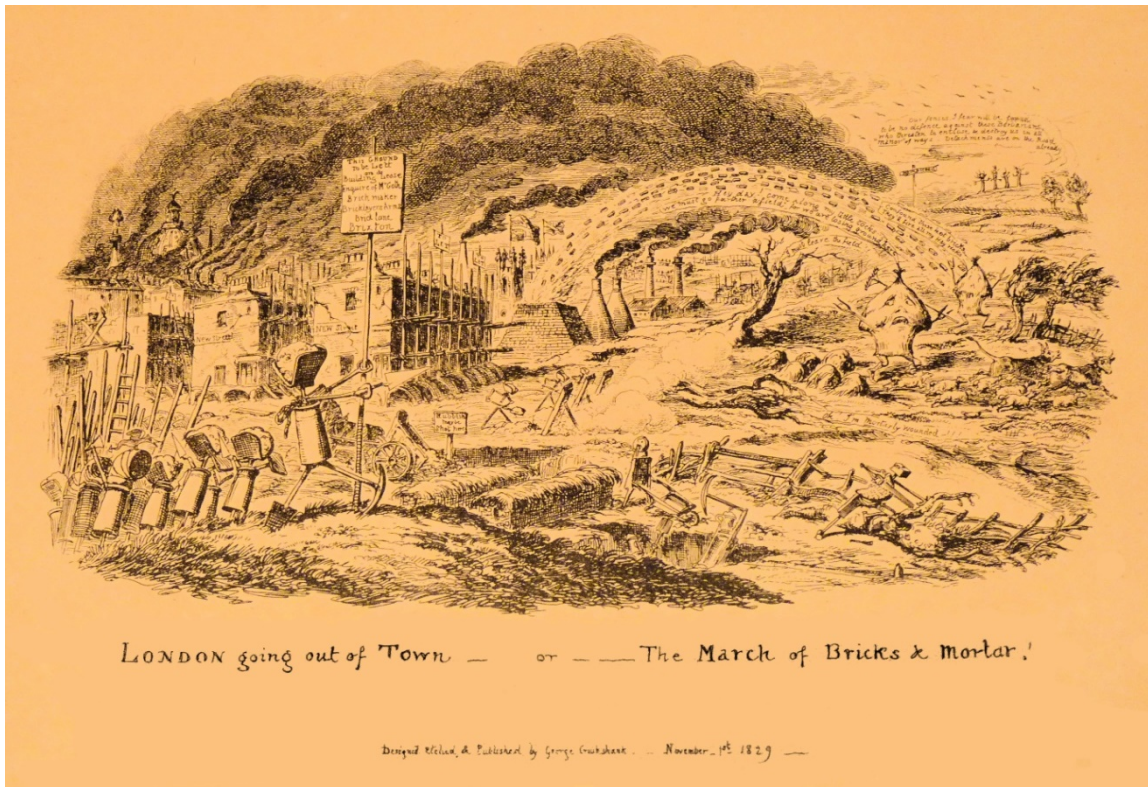
Just how far back can we go with this?

George Cruikshank (1792–1878) was one of Britain's most famous caricaturists and book illustrators. He did illustrations for some of Charles Dicken's books; he is buried in St. Paul's Cathedral.

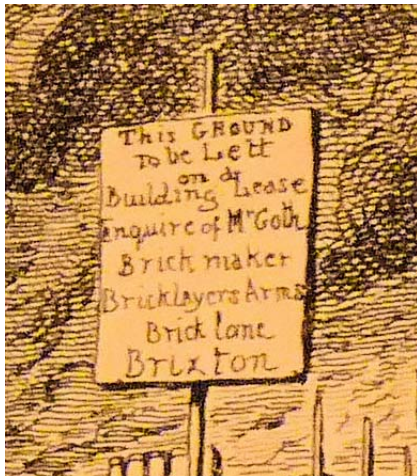
This cartoon is annotated: “Designed, etched & Published by George Cruikshank – November 1st 1829” and is titled: “London going out of Town – or – The March of Bricks & Mortar”.

The British Museum has a hand-coloured version of this etching which can be seen on their website: www.britishmuseum.org.

Who Put The Bricks In Brixton?

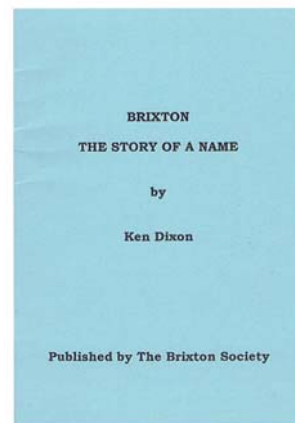


Cruikshank is lampooning the building over of the countryside by the expansion of London. The animated bricklayer's hod is carrying this sign:



Brixton would have been very rural in 1829, more than 30 years before the coming of the railway and only 5 years after the population had just grown sufficient to warrant the area having its own parish church.

If you would like to know the real origin of the name Brixton (nothing to do with bricks!), we have a publication with all the answers:



This booklet costs £1 plus postage.

www.brixtonsociety.org.uk/publications/books/

Our Newsletter – paper or electronic – black & white or colour?

Our newsletter is now available in pdf format sent by email. The pdf version will have colour illustrations from this issue onwards. Unfortunately, because of the cost, paper copies will remain in black & white. To switch to receiving the pdf version, please email chair@brixtonsociety.org.uk.

Van Gogh in Brixton

As an artist, I was particularly interested to see the new bust recently installed in Van Gogh Walk, off Hackford Road, SW9. It was installed on 16 November by Anthony Padgett, the sculptor, who had travelled from the North West bringing the bust and its small stone plinth. He said "The Van Gogh sculpture project is going brilliantly with sculptures being sited in Holland, France, Belgium and the UK."

There are 7 similar sculptures (each a different colour) to be permanently sited in England, France, Holland and Belgium at:

- **Espace Van Gogh in Arles**, France, where Van Gogh lived as an artist 1888-1889 in the Yellow House, where he infamously cut his ear off;
- **in Nuenen, Holland**, where he lived at the family home and worked as an artist in 1883-1885;
- in the **Borinage in Belgium** where he was a missionary to the mining community in 1878-1879;
- in 4 places where Vincent lived in England, at **Brixton, Ramsgate, Isleworth and Welwyn**.

The base of each sculpture incorporates items from his life, including 19th century Parisian paints and the same pipe that he smoked that is on Vincent's famous "Chair" painting in the National Gallery.

The award-winning bust is part of artist Anthony Padgett's "A Year With Vincent" where he has created updated versions of 67 of Vincent's work as well as a number of contemporary artworks.

The work is part of a resurgence of interest in Van Gogh that coincides with the releases of the films "Loving Vincent" (2017) and "At Eternity's Gate" with Willem Dafoe (2018) and the forthcoming blockbuster exhibition at Tate Britain of Van Gogh's work which will celebrate his time in England.

This show will bring together the largest group of Van Gogh paintings to be shown in the UK for nearly a decade - over 40 works loaned from public and private collections.

The exhibition aims to show how Van Gogh was inspired by the city and its inhabitants, by British artists and writers, and how he in turn inspired British artists from Walter Sickert to Francis Bacon.

Vincent Van Gogh came to London aged barely twenty to work at the London showroom

of a firm of art dealers. Initially he lived at 87 Hackford Road as a lodger with Mrs Loyer. He worked in Covent Garden, and enjoyed weekend walks out to the country, for instance across the fields to admire the paintings in the Dulwich Picture Gallery.

A prolific letter-writer, he sent regular updates to his brother, Theo, about the delights of London over the three years he spent here. The joy and optimism in his writing stands in marked contrast to the final years of his life. "Things are going well for me here, I have a wonderful home and it's a great pleasure for me to observe London and the English way of life and the English themselves, and I also have nature and art and poetry, and if that isn't enough, what is?" he wrote in 1874.



Vincent Van Gogh, aged 19

He visited art galleries and auction houses, and John Constable and John Everett Millais became favourites. "English art didn't appeal to me much at first, one has to get used to it. There are some good painters here, though," he said.

He described walks by the Thames gazing at the "splendid villas", the "grey rainy sky" above Hyde Park, and the "shimmering lights of street-lamps that hadn't yet been put out" on the way to Westminster. But it was his encounters with the works of Charles Dickens, and the poorer areas of the East End, which the Tate exhibition will claim to have been the greatest influence on Van Gogh's work.

When learning about him in art history I was intrigued to find that he had come to Britain as a young man. His work was also collected by the Davies sisters in the late 1880s to be included in their pre-Impressionist and Impressionist collection, now in Cardiff at the National Gallery of Wales.

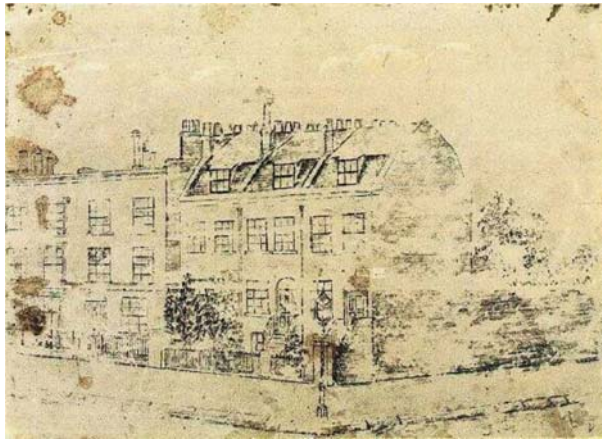
I had previously visited the house where he lived in Hackford road as part of an ArtAngel project when artists worked with the permission of the owners to create an installation inside the by-then dilapidated

Local History Focus

house. Having lived in a similar house in Stockwell in the 1970's, with its original gas lights and open fire grates, the Hackford Road house was familiar. The house itself has low ceilings in the lodgers' rooms.

Thinking of him like myself, as a young artist, getting to know a new area in London echoed some of my own experience, drawing views in parks and on the riverside or walking along the embankments.

The new owners of the house also run the San Mei Gallery, working across art and education in the UK and China. This gallery opened in Summer 2017, within what was originally 'The Loughborough Hotel'. The gallery seeks to both promote and facilitate emerging artistic practice, through its exhibition and studio spaces, residencies and events.



Van Gogh was enamoured with the landlady's daughter, Eugenie Loyer, and it was her granddaughter, Kathleen Maynard, who found his sketch of the house (above) amongst some old family photographs in a box in the attic of her home in Devon.

Sadly, Vincent's love for Eugenie was not reciprocated, and despite being cheered up by a visit from his sister Anna in 1874, they both had to leave Hackford Road. He moved first to North Lambeth, and later to Isleworth.

Never exhibiting in his life, his work now is worth millions, far more than the house in Hackford Road, as Elaine Kramer says on the website updating readers on the house's progress.

Now the new owners are doing up the property but as locals with a gallery on Loughborough Road, they are in sympathy with the area and its local heritage.

What is now Van Gogh Walk, opposite the house, was pedestrianised from the former Isobel Street and re-opened in March 2013.

Visiting the site on the day of the installation, we met Susan Bowen, one of the residents who helps maintain the space. A local residents' gardening group now maintain the planting beds along the walkway as part of a civic pride in their local environment.

Vincent's time in Victorian London helped shape the painter that he later became. This formative period in his life was dramatised in the play *Vincent*, written by Nicholas Wright in 2002.

Marilyn Rogers.

Further references:

www.tate.org.uk for details of the exhibition to run from 27 March to 11 August.

www.ayearwithvincent.co.uk

<https://www.pps.org/places/van-gogh-walk>
www.vangoghwalk.org/p/vincent-van-gogh.html

www.vangoghhouse.co.uk

<https://pressreleases.responsesource.com/news/96546/sculpture-of-van-gogh-to-be-permanently-installed-in-london/>

Work in progress

Recent enquiries have been for more information about the homes of two Music Hall stars, Kate Carney (Brixton Hill), Vesta Tilley (Tulse Hill), and similarly for the home of the astronomer William Huggins (Upper Tulse Hill), none of which survive.

Other enquiries touched upon local pubs, an air raid casualty outside the White Horse (but Brixton Road or Brixton Hill?) and early licensees of the Elm Park Tavern. We are also trying to help trace some early supporters of the Chartists in the Brixton area.

The Civil War in London

We try to mention publications likely to be of interest to anyone researching the history of our part of Lambeth, or London generally. We were sadly unable to fit in details of this one before now.

The Civil War in London grew out of a themed walk around the City of London, but since expanded to take in the run-up to the Civil War, the rule of Cromwell and how City institutions coped through the period. Written by Robin Rowles, this 176 page paperback is published by Pen and Sword Books Ltd at £12.99. ISBN 9781 5267 0647 8

Origins of Railton Road

Something else we have had to hold over for lack of space but expect a feature on this in our April Newsletter.

Ten Years of Transition

Transition Town Brixton marked its 10th birthday on 6th December with a gathering in the Impact Hub at the back of Pop Brixton. Over the past decade, a number of TTB ideas have spun off into independent projects, which each reported on their current work. These included the continuing series of Open Project Nights at the Impact Hub, the Brixton Pound (and its café), the Remakery in Lilford Road, Incredible Edible Lambeth with its food-growing projects, and Brixton Energy with solar panels placed on several estates.

There were also fraternal greetings from Transition Town campaigns in Tooting, Crystal Palace and (by Skype) Totnes. By the end of the evening, the “Ideas Tree” bristled with more ideas for the next ten years, generated from an informal visioning session. Find more at www.transitiontownbrixton.org

Conserving remnants of the Great North Wood

In medieval times, the Great North Wood extended from the modern South Circular Road to the edge of Croydon Town Centre, and even today fragments survive within the urban sprawl of South London. Small woods, public spaces and railway embankments continue to harbour plants and wildlife, but older species can lose out to more recent invasive species.

The London Wildlife Trust manages several sites within the old wood. Not only do they have to keep litter and dumping under control, but trees must be cared for and habitats must be managed to enable a variety of wildlife to thrive. If you want to take a “hands-on” approach to nature conservation, they run a series of regular workdays for volunteers at sites including Dulwich Woods, Streatham Common and New Cross Gate railway cutting.

To see one of their sites, why not go along for a **Winter Tree Walk** in Sydenham Hill Wood on **Sunday 27 January** at 2 pm? Meet at the gate on Crescent Wood Road, SE26. Enquiries to Rachel Dowse, 07 971 315 245, rdowse@wildlondon.org.uk or see website: www.wildlondon.org.uk



Brixton Road 70 years ago – even the tram needed a coal-fired power station to run it.

Air Pollution challenges

In recent years we have been closely following developments in reducing air pollution, mainly through events organised by the London Sustainability Exchange. Brixton Road has exceptionally high levels of pollution, due to the volume of road traffic, so our “annual” limits will be breached at the end of this month.

What has changed since the “smog” of the 1950s is that banning coal fires and cleaning up diesel exhausts has largely removed soot from our urban atmosphere. What we are left with is invisible but still harmful – Nitrogen dioxide from the burning of other fossil fuels, and “particulates” or microscopic dust suspended in the air, partly from impurities in fuel and partly from vehicle brakes. You may see references to PM2.5, which is one of the measures used for the amount of particulates in the air.

Motorists are beginning to move away from diesel-powered cars, but in this recession the rate of replacement is slow. A lack of charging points limits the scope for more electric cars. Many bus routes converge on Brixton Town Centre, so recent moves by Transport for London to introduce lower-emissions buses are welcome. However in the medium term the healthier strategy for pedestrians and cyclists is to reduce their exposure by avoiding the main road routes. For cyclists that means using Quietways or back-street routes rather than Cycle Superhighways, and shoppers should frequent our covered arcades and street markets rather than the congested “high street” section of Brixton Road.

Alan Piper.

Beyond Brixton

Last chance to see

A reminder of some exhibitions closing soon...

Strawberry Hill House

Horace Walpole's fantasy castle was an 18th century innovation, but its contents were sold off in 1842. Fifty collections have loaned items to recreate the effect of the original interiors – but only until 24 February! See www.strawberryhillhouse.org.uk

Museum of London

The Votes for Women display at the City site will now continue until March, together with extra linked events.

At the Museum of London Docklands site, the display on Slavery, Culture and Collecting will run until 15 September (admission free).

Imperial War Museum

The two free exhibits noted in our last issue will continue until 31 March: **African Soldier** and **Renewal**.

Crystal Palace

Park Dinosaurs

Since 1854 the life-size dinosaur sculptures have been a draw for visitors. Recently plans were announced for a permanent bridge to the island where most stand, so visitors can get a closer look. The café nearby is due to open this Spring after rebuilding. Both attractions are close to the Penge gate (bus 432 from Brixton or trains to Penge West or East).

The London Society

London National Park City will be launched in May. The concept already has a large following among Londoners as well as the support of Mayor Sadiq Khan. Their enthusiasm reflects the importance that we all place on green space in the capital. One of the key strands of the London Society's 2019 programme is around our legacy of parks, squares and green spaces. We'll look at our regional parks in the Lee, Wandle and Colne valleys, and at our commons and forests. But we'll also study the impact of cuts in parks funding and the frustrations of park users finding their "public" space closed off for a pop concert or winter fair. I hope you will join us to share thoughts about how we deliver the sort of capital we want to live in.

*Peter Murray,
London Society Chairman.*

More details of the society and its events at: www.londonsociety.org.uk

LFB Museum

Although the London Fire Brigade Museum collection remains closed, its Pop-up Museum has been open in the old workshops in Lambeth High Street. It clocked up over 47,000 visitors in the course of 2018, hosting a number of special events as well as school parties totalling 1130 children. Opening times are 10 am to 4 pm, Wednesday to Sunday, admission free.

Tudor Festival

Gresham College is marking the 500th birthday of its founder, Sir Thomas Gresham, with a series of free lectures, mostly at the Museum of London. The next on 29 January at 6pm focuses on the human impact on the evolution of animals and plants since Gresham's time.

For the full programme see <https://www.gresham.ac.uk/series/gresham-500-celebrations>



National Maritime Museum refreshed

The museum at Greenwich opened 4 new galleries back in September, namely Tudor and Stuart Seafarers, Polar Worlds, Pacific Encounters and Sea Things. The first explores England's rise as a maritime nation between 1500 and 1700, while Pacific Encounters covers the arrival of European travellers into the Asia-Pacific region around the 1600s. Polar Worlds shows British efforts in both Arctic and Antarctic regions, while Sea Things is a more playful gallery exploring how our identity is shaped by the sea. More details at www.rmg.co.uk/national-maritime-museum

Down your way?

We are fleshing out our programme for the year ahead. We are already committed to the Lambeth Local History Fair in September, and will be at the Lambeth Country Show in July if we can get a better site. If there is a street party or other local event you would like us to appear at, please tell us soon, to avoid clashes of dates – info@brixtonsociety.org.uk



The next meeting takes place on **Thursday 24 January, at 6-45 pm** at the Vida Walsh Centre, 2b Saltoun Road SW2 (facing onto Windrush Square). We are keen to bring together all the groups with an interest in the Brixton area, to agree our priorities for the year ahead. We are looking for extra members for our executive, so that the Forum can be more active again. Enquiries to: apiperbrix@aol.com

Supporting Community groups

These have been hard times for voluntary and community groups, as public services shrink. For the past couple of years, Community Southwark has provided a limited programme of support for Lambeth-based organisations, funded by the London Community Foundation. This has been an efficient operation, drawing on long experience of similar work in the neighbouring Southwark area. Certainly it has been an improvement on the previous offer from Lambeth Voluntary Action Council, where even renewing annual membership was so cumbersome that we stopped bothering.

Sadly the Community Southwark "Stronger Together" contract ends in February, and we have yet to hear if anything else will follow on. Despite hard times, there are still many funding sources and support services out there, but small groups need help in finding them – and some hand-holding in putting proposals together. In the meantime, you can still contact Community Southwark at development@communitysouthwark.org or phone Rachel Henry on 020 7358 7288.

Be a Community Connector

Project Smith is an NHS-funded project to make care in the community more effective. They are looking for local residents to join in the next round of Community Connector training during February and March. Community Connectors are simply local people who link others in their community to organisations and activities that can help improve their quality of life. Lots of people may do this naturally on a daily basis, but do you always know where neighbours can turn for help? The training will help you improve your skills and knowledge, and also provides a Level 2 qualification in Supporting Behaviour Change.

The training days run between 9-30 am and 3 pm on February 21, 25 and 26, and March 4th. You must attend all 4 sessions to complete the course. If you are interested in joining the programme, call 07 540 095 696.

Society for Co-operation in Russian and Soviet Studies

The SCRSS is based at **320 Brixton Road**, where it holds a library collection of publications on Russia, the former Soviet Union and its other component states. Like many archives, space is limited, so efforts are being made to dispose of duplicate or less relevant titles. You will usually find some surplus books available for sale. The library will open on the first Saturday of the month during 2019, from 11 am to 4 pm, or by prior arrangement.

A Russian language evening class starts on Thursday 17 January, for 10 weeks until 21 March, 5-45 to 7-45 pm, £40 per term for SCRSS members, £60 non-members. Limited numbers: apply to the Secretary, e-mail: ruslibrary@scrss.org.uk

The Last Tsar: Blood and Revolution, a talk on Friday 15 February at 7 pm. Presented by Alexandra Smirnova of the Science Museum in connection with their exhibition, which runs until 24 March. Entry £3 for members, £5 for non-members.