

# THE BRIXTON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Autumn issue, October 2021

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

## We have been busy

Members of the Society were involved in several events during the Lambeth Heritage Festival, which ran right through September. This was a mix of live and on-line events, which approach is likely to continue while Covid infections remain high. This was closely followed by a week of mostly live events, the Space in Between, organised by Make It In Brixton and the Brixton Business Improvement District (BID), reminding us of current issues.

## Coming Events

*More can be found inside this newsletter...*

### Sunday 17 October

Our last guided walk of the season will be a repeat of the **Railton Road** walk that we held back in April. Inevitably, the original Brixton Riots of April 1981 will be part of the story as we traverse what was the Front Line. While numbers are less restricted than in April, we must still ask you to reserve places in advance, to [info@brixtonsociety.org.uk](mailto:info@brixtonsociety.org.uk) but we will meet at 2-30 pm by 198 Gallery at the corner of Hurst Street and Railton Road.

### Sunday 12 December

We will be running our bookstall at Brixton Windmill's Christmas Fair, between 12 noon and 3-30 pm (see also page 9). If you can lend a hand on the day, please tell us via [info@brixtonsociety.org.uk](mailto:info@brixtonsociety.org.uk)



*Recent application of decorative paintwork on the southern arm of Atlantic Road, where traffic is already restricted as part of the Railton Low Traffic Neighbourhood.*

*P/IMG0055.jpg.*

## Town Centre Challenges

Back in Spring 2017 our newsletter featured emerging proposals for changes to Atlantic Road. Those got bogged down in Transport for London's ambitions for reducing traffic over a wider area. Then Covid came along, with attendant emergency measures.

In July last year, the Brixton BID floated its own proposals for extensive pedestrianisation under the "Vision for Brixton" banner. Their idyllic vision of street-side café tables and planters however ignored the practicalities of delivering goods to the shops and cafes in the arcades and adjacent streets.

The BID re-opened the debate this month at a discussion during the Space in Between week. Already the Railton LTN has reduced pressure from through traffic, and there seemed to be more realisation of the need to balance delivery provision (and Deliveroo-style pick-ups) with a more attractive street scene.

In recent years, we have also been concerned about the loss of workspace from the Brixton area, mostly displaced by new housing. When the Council has insisted on business space being provided, it only suits a limited range of businesses - noisy or messier processes are seldom compatible with flats directly above. Even office uses need to suit small and creative businesses, rather than the old corporate headquarters model which is the basis of the Hondo Towers proposals.

*Alan Piper.*

## Diary of Events – Autumn 2021

### Committee Dates

Our Executive Committee meets monthly, on the second Thursday, to plan activities and agree our response to current issues.

The October meeting will be at the Brixton Windmill Education Centre\*, but during the winter months, meetings will be on-line via Zoom. These meetings are still open to any of our members, but if you want to join in or to raise a specific issue, please contact the Chair a week beforehand at [chair@brixtonsociety.org.uk](mailto:chair@brixtonsociety.org.uk)

- 14 October\*
- 11 November
- 9 December
- 13 January

### Walks & Talks

Our **Market Walks** remain suspended while Covid infection rates remain high, but we are keeping the situation under review. We are collecting ideas for talks (live or on-line) and guided walks for 2022.

### 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 (before 21 December) to the Secretary, Alan Piper, 82 Mayall Road, SE24 0PJ, or by e-mail to [info@brixtonsociety.org.uk](mailto:info@brixtonsociety.org.uk)

### Events arranged by other groups

*Please check directly with organisers for any queries over times or costs.*

#### Music in Herne Hill

Catch the tail end of the HH Music Festival, including:

**Friday 15 October:** Film music recital by oboe and piano, St. Paul's Church, Herne Hill, 7-30 pm.

#### Saturday 16 October:

The Talking Strawberries present Rocking for Refugees, 8 to 11 pm at Off The Cuff, Railton Road.

**Sunday 17 October:** Folk with Fran and Mike at Brockwell Park Community Greenhouses, 3-30 pm.

Full details including tickets via the website, [www.hernehillfestival.org](http://www.hernehillfestival.org) *Herne Hill Music Festival.*

#### Local History Events

If the recent Lambeth Heritage Festival has left you wanting more, other groups within the Lambeth Local History Forum will occasionally post details of their talks or events on the LLHF website at [www.lambethlocalhistoryforum.org.uk](http://www.lambethlocalhistoryforum.org.uk)

#### Camberwell Talks

Still time to catch a couple of talks in this series on the first Monday of the month: **1<sup>st</sup> November:** local grocer Keely Stanhope talks about Camberwell and exotic veg.

**6<sup>th</sup> December:** broadcaster, musician and film music buff, Neil Brand.

Both from 7 to 9 pm at the Camberwell Arms, 65 Camberwell Church Street, SE5 8TR. Tickets £10 (£7 concessions) with a drink and 10% off a meal. Tickets via Eventbrite at [bit.ly/3jHUjpb](https://bit.ly/3jHUjpb) *SE5 Forum for Camberwell.*

#### Loughborough Farm

**Sunday 24 October** will be Apple Day in the Wyck Forest Garden, open between 12 noon and 5 pm, in Wyck Gardens, between Loughborough Road and Millbrook Road, SW9.

#### Free wellbeing workshops

continue into December at the Farm on Loughborough Road (opposite Wyck Gardens) including: Moss workshops, Sunday 24 October; Natural dyeing, Friday 5 November; Mending, Friday 3 Dec.; Wreath-making, Sunday 5 December.

Book by e-mail to [l jag.events@gmail.com](mailto:l jag.events@gmail.com) *Loughborough Farm/ LJAG*

#### West Norwood Cemetery & WW1

**Saturday 13 November** The centenary of the Great War has stimulated much research in recent years. John Clarke and Peter Hodgkinson present their research on people involved in the war who were commemorated within the cemetery, not just the fallen.

2-30 pm at the Old Library, 14-16 Knights Hill, SE27. *Friends of West Norwood Cemetery.*

### What should we do about Climate Change?

In August, Lambeth Council published the final recommendations of its Citizens Assembly on Climate Change. To save you time, we have scanned through the 88-page report and set out the key points below.

We should start off by saying that it's not just about what Lambeth Council alone should do. To have any impact, the guidance should be followed by residents and organisations across the borough, but that will need the Council to promote good practice and lead by example. It's also important to take a wider view of sustainability, and not focus on carbon dioxide emissions alone without tackling other forms of pollution and degradation of the environment.

Assembly members were selected to be a cross-section of Lambeth residents, rather than Green enthusiasts or experts, but early agreement was reached that proposals should be fair, effective, affordable, capable of local support and able to start having an impact from early on. Some suggestions failed to make the final cut because they did not attract enough support, although some of these still influenced the chosen recommendations.

#### **Reducing Transport emissions**

##### ***Reduce private car journeys; review public transport routes to reflect users' needs.***

(Supported by 90.7% of Assembly members.) Transport accounts for 24.8% of carbon dioxide emissions in Lambeth, but limited charging points are holding back switching to electric vehicles.

##### ***Encourage and enable cycling.***

(91.7% support.) Cyclists have benefitted most from the introduction of LTNs (Low Traffic Neighbourhoods) but there is still scope for longer-distance signposted routes avoiding dangerous main roads. More cycle training was supported.

##### ***Encourage businesses and organisations to use greener transport methods.***

(93% support.) Many will be responsive if they can be convinced that greener is also more efficient.



*A rare example of an electric car charging point, in Rattray Road, SW2. P/IMG0046.jpg*

##### ***Support vulnerable groups when transport changes are introduced.***

(92% support.) An acknowledgement that the hasty introduction of LTNs ignored the needs of those with limited mobility needing door-to-door transport by relatives or community groups.

##### ***Lower emissions from Buildings***

##### ***Improve the energy efficiency of homes in the borough.***

(92% support.) This is important because home energy use accounts for 41.2% of CO2 emitted in Lambeth.

##### ***The Council to co-ordinate a homes retrofit scheme, especially for those on lower incomes.***

(90.7% support.) A worthy aim, but perhaps a more urgent need is for guidance for both tenants and home-owners on choosing the more cost-effective solutions, rather than those which are more heavily advertised. Then think about how to help residents with the upfront costs.

# Green Issues

## ***The Council to set targets for energy-related emissions from buildings.***

(92.3% support.) Not sure how this would work alongside National standards, but perhaps the Mayor could take the lead instead, promoting higher London-wide standards? So far, little attention has been paid to the embodied carbon (dioxide) in existing buildings, which would strengthen the case for retaining and adapting existing buildings, rather than demolishing them.

## ***Energy suppliers to support the Council in raising awareness of how to save energy in both homes and commercial buildings.***

(86.3% support.) Could be a promising line of development, provided enough suppliers are still in business! The industry already supports advice services from the Energy Saving Trust (for householders) and the Carbon Trust (for businesses),

## ***Public sector organisations and larger businesses to set an example by reducing emissions from their buildings.***

(91.7% support.) Some effort will be needed to encourage organisations to demonstrate their efforts, perhaps via a local award scheme?

## **Other recommendations**

### ***Minimise waste and increase recycling: the Council and larger businesses to take the lead.***

(91% support.) Certainly a field where we depend on the Council, to deal with most domestic waste. The impression is that we have lost ground in recent years, with fewer recycling options offered to residents. And did you realise that October is Sustainable Food Month?

### ***Ongoing engagement on environmental issues: the Council should collaborate with residents, community groups and businesses.***

(94% support.) Although the “co-operative council” strapline continues to appear on Council media, experience over the past decade has been disappointing, even frustrating, so this is much to be wished for, but unlikely.

## ***Green spaces should be created or reclaimed for biodiversity and food-growing.***

(91.3% support.) The greatest challenge here is the Council's current enthusiasm for high-density high-rise rebuilding of estates, greatly reducing green spaces and tree cover.

## ***Taxation measures should encourage businesses to operate in an environmentally friendly way.***

Very little scope for the Council to act on this, although it was supported by 87.3% of the Citizens Assembly members.

## **Are we on the way?**

It's worth pointing out that across the country, some changes are already taking effect. This means that annual carbon dioxide emissions in Lambeth have already declined by 37.5% since 2005. In 2017, the average emissions per person in Lambeth were 2.8 tonnes, better than the Greater London average of 3.4 tonnes, but maybe we just have less industry and transport infrastructure around here?

## **Next Steps**

The Assembly recommendations were due to be agreed by the Council on 22 September, but any change of gear within the Town Hall is unlikely until after adoption of a Climate Action Plan in December.

It remains to be seen which ideas will get priority in this Plan, and which will be buried in the small print as too difficult or just somebody else's problem. It may all be window-dressing and “greenwash” unless Lambeth abandons its present model of unsustainable development, as currently being rolled out around Vauxhall.

Meanwhile, we are keeping in touch with a number of community initiatives, including the Eco-Housing group of Transition Town Brixton. We will be happy to offer space in these pages to share good ideas or practical techniques that can help us all to live more sustainably.

*Alan Piper.*

# Planning News

## Cressingham Gardens – the story continues

As we reported in our newsletter earlier this year, in February 2021 Lambeth Council approved a planning application for the demolition and replacement of 12 homes in Ropers Walk on the SE corner of the 300-home Cressingham Gardens Estate.

The Brixton Society, along with a large number of other local and national organisations, objected to these proposals because of the damaging impact they would have on the Estate and on the neighbouring Brockwell Park Conservation Area.

In July this year Lambeth Council took the extraordinary step of quashing its grant of planning permission. This followed a Judicial Review hearing at which a High Court judge ruled that the Council's decision to grant planning permission was flawed because it had not taken account of the likely impact on local heritage assets.

Two issues were raised at the Judicial Review.

The first was the Council's failure to consider the impact on "non designated heritage assets" – a reference to the Cressingham Gardens Estate, which is not listed as heritage asset, but meets the criteria for recognition as a conservation area, either in its own right, or as part of the Brockwell Park Conservation Area.

The Consent Order issued by the High Court records – in what must have been a very embarrassing moment for the Council's planning department! - that *"The Defendant (the London Borough of Lambeth) acknowledges that its Planning Committee was wrongly advised that the Estate was not a non-designated heritage asset solely on the basis that it had not already been identified as one by the Defendant"*.

The second issue raised at the judicial review was Lambeth Council's decision to treat the Ropers Walk planning application as a standalone application, without examining the implications for developing the rest of the estate (which Lambeth remains committed to redeveloping in its entirety).



*Cressingham Gardens Estate has a short frontage onto Trinity Rise, shown above, which is once again threatened by the Council. HP/DL/img5004.jpg*

On 22<sup>nd</sup> September Homes for Lambeth, the Council-owned development vehicle which is responsible for delivering the council's housing development programme, submitted a new planning application for the Ropers Walk site. The plans and other details are unchanged, but they are now accompanied by supporting documents which purport to address the issues raised at the judicial review.

The Brixton Society will be submitting a response to this application in October. In it, we'll argue that neither of the two issues raised at the judicial review have been adequately addressed and for this reason the application should be refused.

You can find the plans and supporting documents for the Ropers Walk development on Lambeth's planning website (ref 20/0206/RG3). The deadline for comments on the application is 14<sup>th</sup> October. The Brixton Society's response will appear on our website in early October.

*Vivienne Lewis.*

### Things to come:

Turn to page 8 for a round-up of other projects around the Brixton Society's area of interest...

## *Brixton Shopping*

### **Francis & Son**

On Saturday, 12 May 1877 an advertisement in the South London Press (SLP) by the Wine and Spirit merchants, Francis & Son, said:

“As few localities have improved to a greater extent than Brixton in population and importance, we availed ourselves of an opportunity of securing the above eligible premises for the purpose of establishing a first-class tea, grocery, wine and spirit business...” The premises in question was The New Exchange, Brixton Road, seen right in an advertising card of 1881.

You will notice the London, Chatham and Dover railway bridge on the right and the road on the left, running away from Brixton Road, is Dorrell Place; so, this is where Marks and Spencer is today.

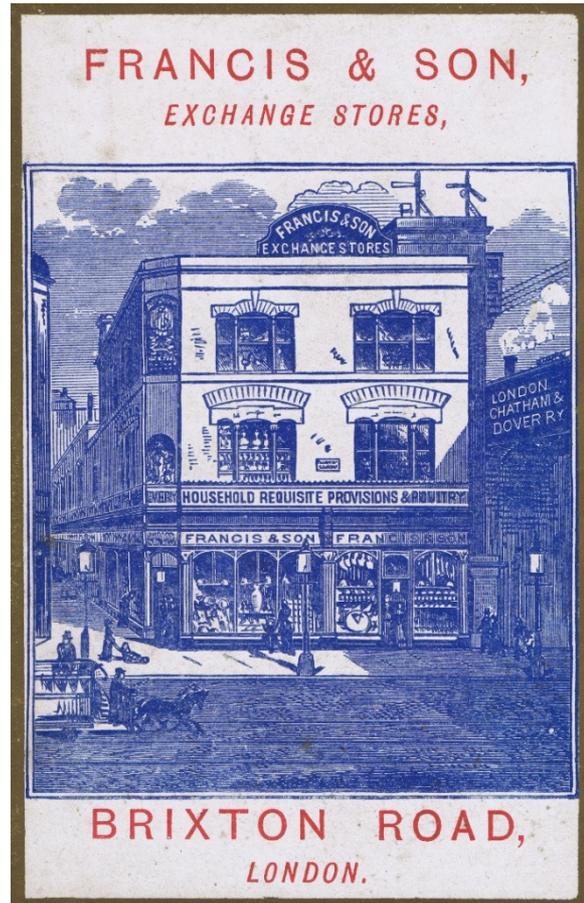
Francis & Son was already a substantial business with premises in Wandsworth Road, Battersea Park Road, Lambeth Walk and a warehouse in St George's Street. However, it appears they were purely a wine and spirit merchants until branching out into groceries in their new Brixton store. This was just the start of a rapid expansion which can be tracked through newspaper advertisements.

The SLP of 14 Dec 1878 announced the addition of homeopathic and patent medicines, perfumery and every toilet requisite.

SLP 25 Jan 1879 saw the addition of confectionery, mineral waters, poultry and game.

SLP 23 Aug 1879 announced the enlargement and rearrangement of the premises with the addition of chemicals, brushes, brooms, mats, combs, mirrors and more to their inventory.

By 11 Dec 1881 they were taking a full back page advertisement in the SLP and



later that month they announced the opening of new premises in High Street, Peckham.

SLP 15 Dec 1883 saw books and pictures added.

SLP 30 Aug 1884 boasted, coffee “roasted and ground on the premises by electric power”.

The premises stretched a long way back down Dorrell Place with the address being given in 1885 as 2, 4, 6, & 8 Dorrell Place, as well as Brixton Road. The images of inside the store on the next page are from the same 1881 advertising card.

They remained prolific advertisers and in the SLP of 4 May 1889 announced the opening of a new store at Clapham Junction. Tobacco and Cigars now appeared in their list of departments.

# Brixton Shopping



FRANCIS & SON'S  
GROCERY & PROVISION DEPARTMENTS.

PHILOSOPHY IN BUSINESS.  
To study the interest of those whom we live by.



FRANCIS & SON'S  
HONOURGERS, STATIONERY & MEDICINE DEPARTMENTS.

PRACTICE IN BUSINESS.  
To treat every customer with civility, but not servility.

Competition must have been fierce, In Brixton alone, by the turn of the century, Morley & Lanceley, Bon Marché, and Quin & Axtens surrounded them on that side of Brixton Road.

The new century brought the First World War, the Spanish Flu pandemic and the Great Depression. The end seemed to come quickly. In the Norwood News of 21 November 1930, choice new fruits: currants, raisins, sultanas, and mixed peel were being advertised at 8d a pound with branches at Brixton, Balham, Streatham, Clapham Junction, and Norwood. On Boxing Day, a clearance sale in all branches was advertised for January 1931. What happened next is shown by the two superb photographs by courtesy of Lambeth Archives.

The store had an Art Deco makeover in just a year and reopened as Marks & Spencer. Their story in Brixton is too long to include here but we can note this remarkable fact. Francis & Sons were the first occupants of the premises; Marks & Spencer are still there: this building has had only two occupiers in over 140 years!

Sometime in 1893, without apparent fanfare, a store in Norwood Road was added to the list of advertised branches and this appears to be the zenith of their expansion, although by now Peckham had gone from the list.



# Planning & Regeneration

## Local Sites Update

*Several major developments are in the offing, so here's a quick round-up of where they stand in the first week of October.*

### Hondo Towers, Popes Road

The Mayor is due to decide on the former Tesco site next to the Brixton Village arcade and we are imminently expecting a date for the hearing.

### International House & Pop Brixton

The Council is plodding on with seeking a developer to rebuild both sites, but opposition is growing to the removal of International House. Meanwhile, the lease on Pop Brixton has been extended to 2024.

### Blue Star House

This has been bought by Derwent but their track record with managing other sites north of the river suggests they may rebuild as more efficient office space attractive to small and medium enterprises.

### Lambeth Hospital, Landor Road

An insanely dense, high rise housing estate is proposed to replace the mental health services on the site, which are mostly moving to the Maudsley campus at Camberwell. Planning permission has yet to be decided.

### Geoffrey Close Estate

Another high density, high-rise rebuilding of a housing estate, this time on the Camberwell border, was given planning permission at the start of September. The present 4-storey blocks will be replaced by six new blocks of between 6 and 13 storeys, an increase from 134 to 441 homes, though the number which are social rented will not increase.

### Lilford Road light industry

Rebuilding is proposed with the addition of residential, unusually in the form of co-housing space, a bit like a student hostel but targeting single staff at the nearby Kings College and Maudsley hospital sites. Most will be in a tower at the rear of the site.

Business space will not reduce, but will be in smaller and tidier units, which reduces the

opportunities for messier businesses to continue locally.

### Somerleyton Road Housing

A couple of years back, Lambeth declined an offer from Brixton Green to develop the site at no cost to the Council in partnership with a housing association. Apart from the new Brixton Theatre, nothing has happened since because the struggling Homes for Lambeth arms-length company lacks capacity to handle this project while it's busy tearing down other estates to dilute the number of council tenants.

### Fenwick Estate

Replacement of this ex-GLC estate has been on the cards for a few years, and last November, Lambeth gave itself permission for rebuilding a 2-storey block in Fenwick Place as a 4-storey block of 27 homes, though only half will be affordable.

### Shakespeare Road recycling site

Lambeth recently gave permission for housing development rising to 11 storeys, but only if the recycling business can be relocated. At the same time, it refused permission for the replacement site in what used to be the West Norwood Industrial Area, due to strong local opposition, so the situation is deadlocked.

### St Jude's, Dulwich Road

For over 40 years the former church has been in commercial use, first as an office furniture warehouse, and latterly as offices for Mark Allen Publishing. They are relocating to Sutton, and Lambeth has given permission for conversion into flats. This was a Permitted Development case, so the council had little scope to challenge the poor internal layout.

### Facing the Tulse Hill Hotel

Strictly speaking, anything east of Norwood Road is beyond our area, but the site on the corner of the South Circular Road, opposite the Tulse Hill Hotel, was given planning permission last December. Demolition has recently been underway for a block of 43 flats, rising to 7 storeys, designed by Tigg & Coll for Holland Park Estates.

*Alan Piper.*

**#Autumn's Out**  
**THE FRESH-START BootCamp 2021**  
 From, Monday, 25 to Friday, 29 October (10am to 4pm)  
 5 Days of PURE Activities, Fun & Food BootCamp

Age 7 to 16 and also, Volunteering/Work Experience Opportunities For 16 +++++

Partners: Lambeth, Kew Park, Department of Westminster, Lambeth Council, Lambeth Libraries, Lambeth Youth Centre, Lambeth Community Centre, Lambeth Sports Centre, Lambeth Leisure Centre, Lambeth Community Centre, Lambeth Youth Centre, Lambeth Community Centre, Lambeth Sports Centre, Lambeth Leisure Centre.

Arts & Crafts, Music, Dance, Workshop  
 Multi Sports/Games Boot Camp  
 Youth Leadership & Opportunity Workshops  
 The Bicycle Workshop Maintenance & Riding  
 A Healthy Lunch Every Day + Bread-Baking Workshop

This is a COVID-19 Safety Compliant Camp and it is taking place at the Windmill Gardens (Park), Blenheim Gardens SW2 5EU with LIMITED PLACES allocated on first-come-first-served basis  
 Registration is NOW OPEN ONLINE!! To Register, Scan QR Code of or EMAIL: #Autumn'sOut2021 to COMMUNITY7@CEFL.ORG.UK  
 For More Enquiries, contact: Alesha on 07930 501 106 Or Christian on 07706 179 851 or Visit our Website, www.cefl.org.uk; Facebook, CEFLynx

## News from Brixton Windmill

To meet demand, an extra weekend of Windmill tours is being offered on Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 November. The mill will open at 1 pm, but close earlier at 4 pm. Book for full tours via the website, [www.brixtonwindmill.org](http://www.brixtonwindmill.org)

**A Christmas Market** is also being planned for Sunday 12 December, open between 12 noon and 3-30 pm, with a variety of stalls from local groups and makers, and we expect a return of Santa's Christmas Grotto.

## Library services returning

Lambeth Libraries have announced that from mid-October you will no longer need a prior appointment to visit your library, though they ask users to keep wearing a mask, use the hand sanitiser provided and maintain social distance. Newspapers and magazines will re-appear this month, and events in libraries are happening again, albeit with seating capacity still limited to 50%.

At Brixton, we can confirm that the induction loop in the gallery room does now work for hearing-aid users, and the system should cover both service points too. The aim is to gradually add similar induction loops in other branches too. Brixton has also acquired an electric piano, available for pianists to play.

## Your views on local parks

Lambeth Council is conducting an on-line survey of residents' views on local parks and open spaces. Closing date for comments is Friday **29 October**. See the consultations page on the Council website and follow the links: <https://beta.lambeth.gov.uk/consultations> And why not share your views with us too?

## The lights are going out, one by one...

Although there has been a lot of work going on in Windrush Square for months, to replace the ugly concrete blocks by shiny new bollards, regular maintenance has been neglected. A local resident recently highlighted that 24 out of a total of 37 lamps within the square were no longer working. This is a dangerous trend, given current concerns about women's personal safety.

## Re-opening the Cambria pub?

It was not meant to be the theme of last month's guided walk, but we did seem to pass a depressing number of former public houses that have been mothballed, or turned over to other uses, usually as flats.

Recently the idea was floated of re-opening the Cambria pub, on the corner of Cambria Road and Kemerton Road, SE5. What's different is the proposal for it to be a community-run project. One of the promoters is Phoebe Ford, a former customer, who recently moved from Railton Road to Loughborough Park. She has devised a questionnaire with Bede Trillo, a former staff member living on Cambria Road, to gauge local interest. They have formed the Cambria Society to take the project forward. Link to the survey at:

<https://forms.gle/1BKXK8wPBaSYDvFh9>

The pub name comes from the yacht Cambria, which was the first British contender for the Americas Cup sailing race in 1870, shortly before the pub and adjacent streets were built.

## Heritage Miscellany

### Facelift for Domino Club

This prominent 1844 building on the corner of Coldharbour Lane and Moorland Road is currently the base of the Brixton Soup Kitchen and the long-standing Brixton Immortals Domino Club. Following a design competition, Gbolade Design Studio were appointed in May to produce a design and feasibility study, with the Ubele Initiative assisting with capacity building for management team members.

Lambeth has already approved a first phase, consisting of essential repairs and tidying up the back of the building. A second phase will re-organise the interior spaces, so that the building can fully re-open as the Lloyd Leon Community Centre.



HP/P/IMG9924 (taken 23.7.21)

### Deeds not Words

We recently passed on a 1919 mortgage deed to Lambeth Archives. It may surprise you that it covered not one house but four – 76, 78, 80 and 82 Mayall Road. This reflects that after the houses were built in the 1870s, investors would often buy the leaseholds on several properties, to enjoy the income from renting them out. Dr Westall, the original developer, retained the freeholds and received ground rents of typically £5 to £6 per year per house.

In this case, the investor was a scientist, George Downing Living (1827-1924). He was a lecturer and then professor of chemistry at Cambridge, where he continued to live after his retirement in 1908. A reference to Wikipedia revealed that he died at the age of 97 after being knocked down by a cyclist on Boxing Day 1924.

Lambeth Archives has a large collection of title deeds, which often contain clues about how and when different streets were developed.

The bulk of these documents came from the Town Hall as a by-product of Compulsory Purchase Orders in the 1960s and 70s, plus stray donations like ours. Historian Andrew Saint is currently cataloguing them as a retirement project.

### Current research and enquiries

With panto season in prospect, Audrey Gregory reports that an ancestor, George Kirby, a stage carpenter living in Acre Lane, invented the Kirby Wire, first used for the apparent flight of characters in Peter Pan. We are particularly interested in theatrical stories, both performers and back-stage staff, as part of our wider investigation of Brixton's Music Hall past.

Paul Lea enquired about the sites of air raid sirens from the Second World War – it seems some of them survived locally into the 1960s.

Proposals for upgrading the facilities at Slade Gardens Adventure Playground were reported here exactly 2 years ago. The playground has been active since the 1960s, and they are now preparing a history of the site, and also what preceded it – the site is largely the result of a V1 flying bomb impact in 1944.

Can you help with any of these queries?

Please respond to

[history@brixtonsociety.org.uk](mailto:history@brixtonsociety.org.uk)

### Nostalgia isn't what it used to be

Recently I have been following posts on 3 Facebook sites:

Memories of Brixton and Stockwell (19,000 members);

Brixton and Herne Hill Memories (only 917 members);

Memories of Brixton, Clapham, Stockwell and Streatham (4,100 members since 2015).

Between them, they are great for sharing photos of Brixton and roundabout, both past and present, though it's only occasionally that people respond with extra details, despite lots of "likes". If you are a Facebook user, it's "if you liked that, you'll like this" algorithm may well have offered you the links already.

*Alan Piper.*

## Beyond Brixton



IMG0054.jpg

### The Garden Museum

The Museum is hosting a **Houseplant Festival** over the weekend **23 & 24 October** – a two-day festival of everything houseplant, not just plant stalls but also talks, workshops, a plant swap and a houseplant clinic. Open 10-30 am to 9 pm Saturday, 10-30 am to 5 pm Sunday.

**Sowing Roots** is a new exhibit, based on Caribbean gardening heritage and the traditions of the Windrush generation. It opens on **25 October** and continues until 20 February. Material and memories have been collected from various food-growing projects in South London, including Loughborough Farm.

The **Beautiful & Useful** Craft Fair returns on Sunday **5 December**, 10-30 am to 5 pm. Tickets are £6 each and include entry to the museum collections. The Museum is in the former St. Mary's Church, next to Lambeth Palace. For details, see [www.gardenmuseum.org.uk](http://www.gardenmuseum.org.uk)

### News from Morley College

Among the short courses on offer at their Waterloo site, **Medieval London** will run on Wednesday afternoons from 3 November to 8 December, 1-30 to 3-30 pm. For details and booking, see <https://www.morleycollege.ac.uk/courses/course/medieval-london/medieval-london>

**The Brixton Riots of 1981** are the subject of a photographic exhibition at the adjacent Morley Gallery, running until 29 October and provided through Learning Through the Arts. See also [www.morleygallery.com](http://www.morleygallery.com)

### Any Wrens in your family?

Not the tiny garden bird, but the indomitable ladies who served in the Women's Royal Naval Service. The Dauntless Divisional Photo Project is seeking Wrens who joined up between 1946 and 1981 and did their basic training at the Burghfield Training Depot near Reading, also known as HMS Dauntless, a "stone frigate" in naval parlance. This is a national project to gather photos and memories from those training days, and also to reunite ladies with old friends, share stories and relive exciting moments. If a family member, friend or neighbour served in the Wrens, the project would love to hear from them at [ddpwrens@gmail.com](mailto:ddpwrens@gmail.com) or phone 07 765 435 295.

### Love Letters to London

This free writing competition is intended to celebrate London in all its life, charm and mystery. It was launched this month by the **London Society**, closing on 30 November. Entries are invited in 5 categories, with prizes of £400, £200 and £100 in each, and an overall winner's prize of £500. The categories are:

- Under 18s.
- Students in full-time education.
- All other UK entrants.
- International (not based in the UK).
- Poetry.

In tune with the London Society's motto of "valuing the past, looking to the future", entrants can write on any aspect of London's past, present or future. This could be a think piece, reportage, a historical essay, futurology or fiction or a poem. Entries may have been published elsewhere but should have been written within the past two years. Details at: <https://www.londonsociety.org.uk/page/loveletters>

### Dulwich Picture Gallery

Their current exhibition is of woodcuts produced between 1973 and 2009 by US Abstract Expressionist Helen Frankenthaler (1928-2011). More details at: [www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk](http://www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk)

### Changing Boundaries

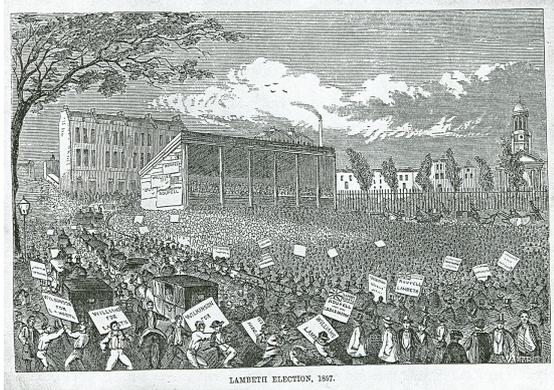
The updated pattern of wards within the borough of Lambeth is almost settled, and will take effect from the Council elections in **May** next year. This will mean musical chairs for local councillors seeking re-election, and likely changes of ward names. The new council will have 63 councillors from 13 3-councillor wards and 12 2-councillor wards.

The bulk of the Brixton Society's area will be covered by 5 wards, provisionally named Brixton Acre Lane, Brixton Rush Common, Brixton Windrush, Brixton North and Myatt's Fields. However, we will also cover most of Stockwell East, and parts of Clapham East, Clapham Park, Herne Hill/ Loughborough Junction, St. Martins and an odd projection from West Dulwich embracing Trinity Rise.

Meanwhile, the Boundary Commission has already started work on reviewing London's parliamentary constituencies. Again the aim is to equalise the number of voters to reflect population changes. Nationally, the number of MPs will remain at 650 but London will only get 2 extra. Just 12 constituencies will remain as they are, and the rest will see major changes.

Currently Brixton is split between 3 MPs. The south-east corner of Brixton was lumped in with West Norwood as far back as the 1890s, and is currently in the Dulwich & West Norwood constituency. Back in the 1880s, the present home of the Black Cultural Archives had been Brixton's Liberal Club, while the Tory equivalent was on the site of the Brixton Village arcade. The 4 existing Lambeth wards within this constituency will pass either to a revised Streatham seat, or new Clapham & Brixton seat. The Dulwich parts would be included in a new Dulwich & Sydenham seat.

Although the first round of consultation closed on 2<sup>nd</sup> August, there will be another round in Spring next year, and probably a further round of written comments later in 2022, with the final report to be delivered by 1<sup>st</sup> July 2023. More detail can be found on the website at <https://boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk>



*Parliamentary election for Lambeth in 1857, when 3 candidates contended for 2 seats. Before the secret ballot, hustings took place on Kennington Common, adjacent to St. Mark's Church, at the north end of Brixton Road.*  
*Dpbx/CI-2006-11-29.jpg*

### New Licensing for Houses in Multiple Occupation

Following the report in our January issue, the Council has announced that its extended scheme will come into effect on 9<sup>th</sup> December. Owners or managing agents of private rented houses must register them with Lambeth if the property is occupied by 3 or more persons forming two or more households.

For further details, see the housing pages on the Council website, or send enquiries to: [HMOLicensing@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:HMOLicensing@lambeth.gov.uk)

### Looking Ahead

While the Heritage Festival and other events are still fairly fresh in your minds, can we invite your suggestions for our future programme?

We have been sparing in the number of live talks or discussions that we have put on directly or with the Friends of Tate Library, but remember that we can also offer talks on-line. We are also canvassing ideas for guided walks during 2022 – are there neglected corners, or would you like a repeat of one you missed?

Taking a wider view, the Great British Garden Festival will provide an umbrella for all kinds of events through 2022 related to gardening and outdoor spaces. And we will be looking to re-appear at the Lambeth Country Show and other outdoor events.