

THE BRIXTON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Spring issue, April 2019

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*Time again for us to report on what we
have been doing, air some of the local
issues, and flag up some coming events
which we hope will be of interest. But we
also need to hear from you – are there any
issues not being covered enough or even
missed entirely?*

Our next open meeting

Thursday 13 June: Annual General Meeting

7 pm at the Vida Walsh Centre,
2b Saltoun Road, SW2

Not just the usual business of reporting what
we have done over the past year, where the
money went, gathering ideas for the year
ahead and electing committee members to
carry them out. This year the formalities will
be followed by a social get-together, so you
can all relax with a drink and tell us what you
really think. Naturally we hope this will tempt
more members to appear in person!

The Society on show...

Weekend 20 & 21 July

Lambeth Country Show

12 noon to 7 pm, Brockwell Park, SE24

We have been promised a better site this year,
so save the dates to visit our stand – or even
lend a hand. And tell us **now** if you want us to
join in any other summer events around the
area – info@brixtonsociety.org.uk

See inside for more coming events...



The Lambeth Local History Forum has
published the 2019-20 local history walks
leaflet. It includes all the walks being planned
by ourselves; other local walks such as the
ones run by the Friends of Windmill Gardens;
plus very many other interesting walks
throughout the borough. You will find two
copies enclosed with printed copies of this
newsletter: one for yourself and one to give to
a friend. If you can help distribute more copies,
they should be available in the borough's
libraries or email chair@brixtonsociety.org.uk
and we will get more copies to you – please
help spread the word!

If you receive the newsletter electronically, a
pdf of the walks leaflet may be downloaded
from <http://bit.ly/WalksLeaflet>.

Diary of Events, Spring 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. 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 beforehand.

- 9 May
- 13 June (AGM)
- 11 July.

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.

Sunday 14 April – SLBI Garden Opening

A small but densely planted botanic garden, open as part of the National Gardens Scheme: entry £3.50, 2 pm to 5 pm, at 323 Norwood Road, SE24. Also evening openings (free) on **23 May** and **20 June**. More events and information at

www.slbi.org.uk

South London Botanical Institute.

Monday 15 April – the Battersea Arts Centre

Three years after a severe fire, the former Battersea Town Hall was restored last year. Maddie Wilson will talk about the centre and its restoration. Open 7 pm for 8 pm start, at the old Clapham Library, now Omnibus, North Side SW4.

Clapham Society

Wednesday 17 April – Easter Egg Hunt and crafts session

Children of all ages welcome – 2-30 pm at Brixton Tate Library, Brixton Oval SW2.

Brixton Library

Thursday 18 April – Windrush Square and roundabout

Another chance to catch this talk by Alan Piper, if you missed it last September in Brixton: 8 pm at the Phoenix Centre, Westow St., SE19.

South London Local History Group.

15 April – 31 October Underground London

A free exhibition of original documents, maps, and films showing the development of the many tunnels and spaces below London, at London Metropolitan Archives, 40 Northampton Road EC1. (Closed Fridays and weekends). More details at

www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/lma

London Metrop. Archives

Sunday 28 April – Dawn Chorus Bird Walk

Meet at 6 am (!) at the Herne Hill gate of Brockwell Park for a special walk led by RSPB members.

Friends of Brockwell Park

Saturday 18 May – the Medieval Port of London

A history conference to be held at the Museum of London, London Wall EC2. More details and bookings via:

www.docklandshistorygroup.org.uk

Docklands History Group

Monday 20 May – Beulah Spa

A talk on the Upper Norwood spa by Steve Oxford.

Monday 3rd June – Bygone Streatham

A talk by John Brown. Both start at 8 pm at Woodlawns, 16 Leigham Court Rd, SW16.

Streatham Society

Events in Parks

Respond to the Consultation

Lambeth Council is reviewing its policies on events in its parks and open spaces. Your executive committee is due to discuss this after this newsletter goes to the printer, but if you have any comments, we would still like to hear from you. We also encourage you to respond directly to the Council – see www.lambeth.gov.uk and follow the links to the consultations page.

Key issues already identified include:

- Large areas of public open space being taken out of use for commercial events for extended periods.
- Although supposedly to raise money, finances are not transparent about how much comes back to the park.
- Damage to grass and paving from heavy vehicles, concentrated footfall and temporary structures.
- Noise disturbance to people living around the park, particularly from entertainment events.
- Community events are discouraged by demand from commercial events and cumbersome booking arrangements.

Have we missed anything? Remember we are thinking about smaller spaces like Windrush Square, as well as major parks like Brockwell. Closing date for responses is **Sunday 5 May**.

Windmill Gardens events

Brixton Windmill re-opens for tours this weekend (13/14 April) and there will be an open weekend each month until October. For a full tour, please book in advance via the FoWG website (see walks leaflet).

Their next major event is the **Beer and Bread Festival** on Bank Holiday Monday, **6 May**, open between 1 pm and 5 pm.

Wyck Gardens

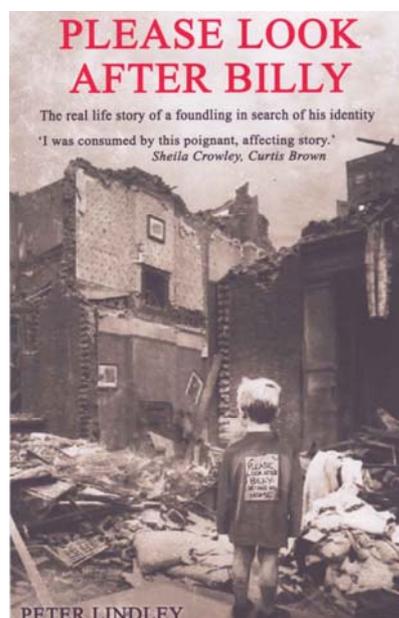
As a spin-off from the new SW9 development across Barrington Road, a forest garden is being created, and soil beds are now being prepared for perennial food plants. For more details or to get involved, contact:

waltergr@btinternet.com

Friends of Brixton Tate Library

The Friends are hosting a literary event on **Wednesday 8th May** at Brixton Library, 7 pm to 9 pm, as part of Lambeth Readers and Writers Festival. Brixton locals Peter Lindley (documentary editor and author) and Meredith McArdle (writer and editor) will be in conversation. Peter will talk about how his life unfolded after he was found abandoned on a bombed out South London Street at the age of two and a half, with a note pinned to his back saying “please look after Billy”. Meredith will be discussing the pitfalls of book publishing and the practicalities of self-publishing.

Enquiries to foftlbrixton@gmail.com



Wake up to Tai Chi

The Friends of Tate Library Brixton have joined together with the Friends of Windrush Square to organise a weekly Wellbeing activity in the centre of Brixton. Thanks to a recent grant from the London Community Fund, the Library will host one-hour Tai Chi sessions on Saturday mornings, 9-30 to 10-30 am, led by a professional tutor. Sessions should start by the end of May – contact FofTL to check.

Other events lined up for the Library include **Parallel Programmes** offering basic IT skills, coding and CV writing, on Wednesdays 10-30 to 12-30 from **10 April**. Afternoon craft sessions (1-30 to 3-30 pm) are starting again from the same date, with support from individual Friends.



C965-017.jpg

Brixton Town Centre Summary of Current Plans

On 4th March your Chair and Secretary were briefed by members of Lambeth's Regeneration Team on current developments in the Town Centre, and a further update was provided to Brixton Neighbourhood Forum at its meeting on 1st April.

Master-Plan for Central Sites

Lambeth plan to refresh the Master-Plan as a formal Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), for which there will be a public consultation exercise in September/October. The main focus will be on the land between the railway lines and on the Pop Brixton site.

The Council's ambition is for the main station entrance to be from Popes Road (behind the present toilet block).

On the opposite side of the road, Hondo Enterprises, owners of Brixton Village/Market Row, have recently bought the freehold of the Sports Direct stores from Mike Ashley.

Brixton Recreation Centre

It was announced at the start of March that the Mayor would fund adapting disused space behind the Station Road shops as affordable workspace, with an emphasis on manufacturing and technical training. Shopfronts below the Rec would also be upgraded.

Walkway access is to be opened up between the Rec entrance foyer and International House, though we would also like to see improved access to the Rec from Station Road.

Limited landscape works are likely in Brixton Station Road and Popes Road, again supported by funds from the Mayor.

International House

Now fully in use for affordable workspace as a meanwhile use, managed by 3Space on a 5-year lease. Although it's a robust building, renewing the old services would be expensive, so the longer term intention is to replace it by a new residential block, rather than convert it.

Pop Brixton

This is continuing as a meanwhile use, including the Impact Hub (or Impact Brixton) at the back of the site.

The Canterbury Arms site is likely to be included in the long-term development.

The intention is to re-provide the Traders' parking (42 spaces) presently next to Pop Brixton, but future customer parking is less certain, with the Mayor keen to discourage private car use in Inner London.

Other Business Space

Developers are becoming more interested in providing long-term business space, rather than just residential.

However, Regeneration Team members agreed with us that the replacement proposed for the "foxes and cherries" block at the corner of Electric Avenue was too big for its market setting.

Railway Arches

The arches between Atlantic and Station Roads should be coming back into use in the next few months.

We highlighted the neglected/overgrown parapets above the shopfronts, and The Arch Company, now operators of the railway arches, have since agreed to deal with this. The buddleia should be removed by the end of April, while the fascia on

Planning & Regeneration News

Brixton Station Road will be replaced where missing, and then repainted up to Popes Road.

The planners have recognised the need for ongoing storage of market stalls etc further east along Brixton Station Road or close by.

Atlantic Road changes

TfL approved funding for the scheme at the beginning of March. Initially this means some £350,000 to finish design work, before releasing a couple of million for the actual road works. The core works cover Atlantic Road between Brixton Road and Coldharbour Lane (as outlined in our newsletter 225, two years ago). This also covers improvements to Coldharbour Lane between Brixton Village and the Oval Theatre site opposite. Linking together the forecourts of Brixton Village and the former Walton Lodge laundry is under discussion.

However, TfL is keen to reduce vehicle traffic through a wider area, so look out for some further consultations in the summer months, on traffic restrictions in nearby streets. We are anxious to avoid a repeat of the Loughborough Road closure dispute from a few years ago.

Street Market

After major efforts to revamp Electric Avenue a couple of years ago, standards are slipping due to a lack of enforcement. Compactors for market waste will be sited off Electric Lane, behind Electric Mansions.

Townscape Heritage Initiative

Work is expected to start shortly on the refurbishment of Reliance Arcade, funded from the THI scheme. The aim is to do this while existing businesses continue in operation. A few more shops in Electric Avenue are also in the pipeline for refurbishment (see heading photo).

Night-time Economy

Residents and traders need to keep reporting concerns and ensure this remains a live issue. Councillors have yet to be convinced of the value of a Public Space Protection Order, which would make enforcement simpler. The scope of the order should be clear-cut but not too restrictive.

At the urging of the Sleepless Brixton campaign, there was a constructive workshop session last April on noise nuisance, but another would be useful to restore momentum, not least because of changes among Council staff.

Alan Piper.

Brixton Green breaks with Lambeth Council

Following decisions on the Somerleyton Road site taken by Lambeth's Cabinet in January, the Trustees of Brixton Green announced in February that they were ending collaboration with the Council and would not join in meetings of a proposed steering group to oversee development of the site.

Brixton Green had developed a costed proposal for the land to be leased to a Community Land Trust, which would manage the flats and community facilities in the scheme to deliver social value. Initially 50% of the flats would be rented at market rents, 28% at social rent levels, and 22% rented to low to middle income households, paying rent at an affordable percentage of their income. Great store was set by community and tenant involvement to reduce maintenance costs. Not only would the development be 100% rented, with no sales or shared ownership, but the scheme of 234 flats would be built at no cost to the Council.

Brixton Green stated that the Council had not acted collaboratively since the May 2018 elections, despite Councillors pledging beforehand to support Brixton Green's approach. The Cabinet report even failed to set out construction costs, tenure mix, dwelling sizes or the likely rents to be charged, implying that officers would unpick the planning permission and remove community facilities.

One element of the original plan still going ahead is the relocation of **Oval House Theatre** to the Coldharbour Lane end of the site. After 6 years of lobbying and planning, work is finally underway with a target of opening in Autumn next year. Activities continue at their old site by the Oval until the end of December, but will then be limited to touring or other venues during most of 2020.

Local History Focus



This octagonal pillar box design of 1873 is a forerunner of that in Mervan Road. This smaller version came with black morocco leather covering and a Bramah patent lock.

It's in the post!

In 1840, the idea that a letter could be sent anywhere in Britain for just one penny was revolutionary. For the first time, ordinary people could afford to send letters, and the effect was as wide-reaching as the introduction of the Internet.

By 1874-75, one million letters were being posted a year. This was also an election year so election literature swelled the numbers. However, 25,500 letters were posted without an address, including £6,000 worth of cheques and £500 in cash or banknotes! The Illustrated London News quoted items posted as including silkworms, flowers, fruit, vegetables, game, crayfish, white mice and 2 snakes. A dog which had accidentally fallen into the letterbox of the Lombard Street post office probably should not count!

Becca Thackray.

Names and numbers

The item above reminds me that perhaps the greatest challenge in researching local history is the extent to which addresses may have changed over the past century or two. Partly

this was to make postal deliveries more reliable, and partly to ensure that fire engines turned up at the right location. Many early street names were variations on a theme, too easily confused with each other, or there were several different named blocks or terraces along one road. And developers have always wanted to give their new buildings a more upmarket address!

Even now, these matters are not set in stone, because new blocks are being added and street layouts modified. Occasionally we are asked to advise on new block or street names, and we try to avoid laying false trails for future researchers.

House numbers can be problematic too, especially if plans changed or extra houses were inserted later. Logically you expect odd numbers on one side and even numbers on the other, but that's not always the case – check out **Talma Road**, SW2. And is there another Brixton Street like **Mervan Road** where the number 13 is omitted?

Alan Piper.

In Brixton 1973-1995

Chris Steele-Perkins at Photofusion

Local history is not confined to a couple of centuries ago. The present pace of change means that even a decade or two can bring big changes to the street scene, and more subtly, to the people on it. Celebrated photographer Chris Steele-Perkins has travelled the world taking photographs of people and places for nearly 50 years. After graduating from Newcastle University, he moved to London to work as a freelance photographer. Brixton remained his base for over 30 years. In 1976 he joined the VIVA agency in Paris, and then Magnum Photos in 1979. Although his work took him to many places around the world, he continued to document many of Brixton's inhabitants, events and cultural landmarks.

The L A Noble Gallery has arranged an exhibition of Chris's Brixton images at the new home of Photofusion in International House. The exhibition runs from Friday 3 May to Thursday 29 June, 10-30 am to 5-30 pm with

Local History Focus

free entry (closed Sundays; private view on the evening of Wednesday 8 May).

For further details, including associated talks and events, contact Photofusion, 020 7738 5774, info@photofusion.org or Laura Noble, 07 999 099 975, hello@lauraanoble.com

Origins of Railton Road

Around last Christmas there was a flurry of e-mails about the origins of Railton Road. To clarify, this was not created in one go, but rather a stitching together of different sections of roadway. Early 19th century maps just show a trackway crossing the fields from Coldharbour Lane, heading south-west to the Half Moon inn, after swerving round the grounds of Herne Hill Abbey, a fashionable “Gothick” whimsey (1840 map below).



Curiously, the first section to become a proper road was in the middle - West Place, which joined the northern ends of Regent Road and Herne Place by 1824. Two pairs of cottages and a former pub survive from this decade. The nearest section to Coldharbour Lane became a paved road by 1868, as part of Atlantic Road, but at that stage scarcely going past Vining Street. The first edition of the large-scale Ordnance Survey map was compiled at this date and shows the “Poets” Roads laid out but no defined road passing their northern ends.

The new railway connections meant that development now speeded up. Dr Edward Westall bought the land between the railway embankment and the trackway from the Church Commissioners in 1869, and began building terrace houses in Mayall and Railton

Roads, to join up with West Place. To the south-west, the Stuart-Bruce family built on their road frontages, mainly shops for their new streets behind. A sliver of land between the Stuart-Bruce estate and Dr Westall’s land was developed as Dexter Road by John Roycroft. All these new buildings were being completed in the 1870s.

Outside Herne Hill Station, a short shopping street emerged onto the junction of Dulwich and Norwood Roads, known originally as Commercial Place. Construction of the station had left a footpath along the base of the railway embankment between West Place and the Station. A terrace of houses was now built backing onto this for Thomas Lett, who was diversifying from the timber trade into property development and publishing diaries. Naturally he called it Lett Street.

The main section of Railton Road was renumbered c.1879 to bring together all the separate developments. Eventually somebody realised that linking up with Lett Street would provide vehicle access to the station, and the southern sections were included in the overall Railton Road numbering from 1889. The remaining kink in the road outside 239 is a relic of each estate owner doing his own thing, with minimal co-ordination by local authorities.

Alan Piper.

More Brixton Walks

It’s encouraging to see more people offering guided walks around Brixton, which also means a wider range of viewpoints being presented. Activist and poet Michael Groce is now running tours around Brixton – see www.thebestendtours.co.uk

Retired shopkeeper Barrie leads occasional walks around Brixton (and other haunts of his youth) for Back in the Day Walks: his next Brixton tour is on **Saturday 20 April** at 2 pm. For details and bookings see: www.backinthedaywalks.co.uk

We hear too that Stephen, one of the volunteer guides at the Van Gogh House, also does walks by postcode – see <http://londonpostcodewalks.co.uk>

Food for Thought

Legendary Potatoes?

One of our correspondents drew my attention to a short article in the Pall Mall Gazette on 9 February 1923, claiming that the first potatoes in England were cultivated on Brixton Hill. This claim is built on shaky foundations however, originating from fanciful tales first published in 1889. At that time two large old houses on Brixton Hill were about to be demolished for the building of new terrace houses including the present Arodene and Fairmount Roads.

Raleigh House had the approach to its tradesmen's entrance set in a tunnel or cutting to screen it from view from the sitting room. A supposed connection with Sir Walter Raleigh soon led to fantasies about a tunnel under Brixton Hill, leading to a Stockwell Manor House, or Ivy Cottage, near Lambert Road.

Sadly all the tales about potatoes, tobacco and secret assignations between Sir Walter and Queen Elizabeth are myths rather than history. In the mid-17th century, some land on the east side of Brixton Hill was owned by cousins of Sir Walter, but it only came into the possession of the family c.1650, rather than being inherited from Sir Walter. He was executed in 1618 on the orders of King James 1st, mainly for failing to deliver on his rash promise to find El Dorado in South America.

Ivy Cottage was at one time the home of the Lord of the Manor of Stockwell, but not until the early 19th century, by which time most of its lands had been sold off. The original Stockwell Manor House was in Stockwell Road (now the Waltham Estate) and replaced in the 18th century by Stockwell Park House (now the Stockwell Park Estate).

We do know that Queen Elizabeth visited Stockwell Manor House in 1580, to dine with Lord Montague. We had long assumed that Sir Walter would be present in his capacity of commander of the royal bodyguard, but his recent biography suggests that appointment was only made a little after this date. So it is possible that Sir Walter never visited Brixton or Stockwell at all!

Alan Piper.

Are we recycling right?

Lambeth has been reminding residents about its food waste collection service. If your home has wheely bins for waste and recycling, you should also have a "pigswill" bin or caddy for food waste. Feeding it to pigs is no longer allowed, so it is actually composted as a soil conditioner, but this is still cheaper for the Council than adding it to the general waste collection.

Alternatively a lot of food waste such as vegetable peelings could go into your own compost bin, but we all need to be wary of just putting out extra sustenance for foxes and rats. The strategy is weakest for estates with larger shared bins, though the Council is willing to supply community composters for a block or estate to share.

Across the food industries, minimising waste is now taken seriously. Big food producers would rather sell on "waste" as a by-product capable of being turned into something else. One example recently cited was "chips board" made from vegetable peelings and used for shopfitting purposes. Shops and restaurants are increasingly passing on foodstuffs near their "best before" dates to foodbanks and similar charities which can redistribute them. At the smaller scale, the People's Fridge in Pop Brixton allows local cafes to leave surplus items in the fridge for needy people to collect.

Packaging is probably the biggest challenge. Some food producers have reviewed the type and amount of packaging they use. Durable plastics are beginning to give way to compostable containers and wrappings, which are becoming easier to find.

Sorting plastics for recycling or re-use remains difficult. Containers are now often marked with a code number on the base to identify the plastic type, e.g. a 3 in the recycling triangle means it's PVC. However, regardless of the plastic type, black food trays still defeat the machinery at most recycling plants!

Overall the impression is that people would like to do more, but government and councils are lacking any sense of urgency or leadership.

ADP.

Food for Thought



Rosie's was one of the pioneers in Market Row 10 years ago, but the café has since changed hands twice. 2008-04-04.jpg

Can cafes save Brixton?

Eating-out may have peaked

We have all noticed the surge in the number of eating places and take-aways among our shopping parades over the past 20 years. In many ways it has helped keep Brixton busy at a time when traditional shopping – or at least the established chains – seems to be in decline. But we need to maintain a mix, so we supported limiting the proportion of café uses in the market arcades to no more than 50%.

Partly the trend reflects that people may not have the time or facilities to cook at home for themselves. There may even be a decline in cooking skills. Across the area, the local takeaways are very convenient, particularly with the growth of home delivery services linked to phone or online ordering. Within the Town Centre, the popular trends have been for coffee shops which lend themselves to web browsing or informal meetings, and to a wider range of restaurants offering different cuisines. Brixton's food offer has become a major part of its attraction for visitors.

However, Brixton does not exist in a vacuum, and we need to be wary of wider trends. One effect of the influx of higher-profile eateries has been to force up rents of shop premises, in turn undermining remaining shops. Major chains, or celebrity chefs backed by big investors, have been too willing to pay whatever landlords ask, to get a foothold. For example, Wahaca at 20 Atlantic Road is

paying £135,000 a year, while the rent on 26 Atlantic Road is only £23,000 a year. No surprise then that the Wahaca chain posted a pre-tax loss of £4.9 million for the year to June 2018 – but they seem to have deep pockets, since they lost £4.7m the year before!

The reasons for individual closures are not always clear to outside observers. Meat Liquor in Market Row closed in January, though it claimed to be looking for another Brixton site. However, it has also closed two other outlets.

Nationally, there are worrying trends across the “casual dining” market. There will probably always be the occasional spectacular failure where a celebrity chef has over-reached himself, but after a 27% rise in managed restaurant openings since 2013, the number fell in 2018, for the first time in 9 years. More closures are expected in 2019, with some chains having already said they would scale back. High business rates are one factor, perhaps reflecting those higher rents mentioned earlier. Ten years of austerity and forthcoming Brexit gloom are not helping, and 20,000 chefs are said to be leaving the profession every year. Around 85% of London's chefs were born abroad, compared with 50% in the rest of the UK.

Even so, new food ideas and concepts continue to bubble up, so we should not write off this sector too quickly. While the higher end restaurants may be more risky, the really basic “food to go” approach will always meet a need, with annual market growth of 5% predicted. If all else looks bleak, Greggs might be the chain to put your money on!

ADP.

Food growing and sustainability

We would like to feature local efforts on these themes in future newsletters – do you have any stories or projects to share with us?

Ingredients:

These pages contain material from the Big Hospitality website, the Morning Advertiser, Speciality Food magazine and presentations at Casual Dining and the International Food & Drink Event 2019.

Something in the Air

Over our heads

Perhaps because of the noisy environment in our Town Centre and along the main roads radiating from it, noise from passing aircraft has received little attention locally. Indeed, individual aircraft are generally quieter than they were 40 years ago, and there are no longer a couple of Concorde arriving at the end of each day. However, the number of aircraft overhead has been increasing, and the hours of operation are tending to start earlier and finish later to fit in the number of flights. For residents in our quieter streets, aircraft arriving overhead at 4-30 am can cut a couple of hours from a good night's sleep.

At the end of last year, the Government published a Green Paper with its proposals for UK Aviation Policy until 2050, to be finalised later this year. It is open for consultation until **20 June**, longer than first intended in order to take on board any relevant inputs from the Committee on Climate Change, whose report is due in May. A useful briefing has been prepared by HACAN, which can be seen at <https://hacan.org.uk/?p=5068>



British Airways Airbus 319 approaching LCY: IMG8284.jpg

Probably the most controversial aviation issue for Greater London is the proposed third runway at Heathrow (LHR), on the north side of the present airport. Five legal challenges were heard at the High Court last month, and a decision is expected within a couple of months. Challengers included the Mayor and several local authorities, plus Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth - and even a competing development!

As we have reported before (newsletters 206, 209, 216) on most days airliners arriving at LHR approach to land across South London, into the prevailing westerly wind. Basically, Heathrow is on the wrong side of London to be its primary airport, which is why alternative suggestions included a new site on the Thames Estuary, or expanding at Gatwick,

Southend or Manston instead. The chosen option of a third runway will not change the present pattern, it just means that residents north of the Thames will share our pain!

A consultation on major changes to Heathrow flight paths closed on 4th March. A further consultation on flight paths to suit the 3rd runway is expected in June. Presently airliners pass over Brixton at 190-200 knots, typically at 3,600 feet above sea level, and descending at 3 degrees. A slight increase to 3.2 degrees is being considered, but otherwise approach paths over Brixton are unlikely to change, though a later start each day would be welcome respite.

HACAN suggests a few web sources to see actual flight paths, including the **flight paths** button on their own website, <https://hacan.org.uk> or for historic patterns over the past 6 years, see <http://xplane.bksv.com/xplane/> or to track flights (almost) as they land and take off, see <http://webtrak5.bksv.com/lhr4>

However, the Brixton sky is topped up by inbound aircraft to London City Airport (LCY) passing overhead at 2,000 feet (see left). Even if the average LCY aircraft is smaller and quieter than typical Heathrow traffic, they are more intrusive because they arrive overhead more suddenly. We also have occasional north-south transit flights by helicopters and a shrinking number of light twin aeroplanes, again at about 2,000 feet.

Public Meeting, Tuesday 23 April

Your opportunity to follow this up and ask questions: John Stewart, Chair of HACAN, is due to address a public meeting at St. Michael's Church, Stockwell Park Road, SW9 at **7 pm**.

Alan Piper.

London Sustainability Exchange

In recent years we have taken part in several events put on by the London Sustainability Exchange, on Green policies such as air pollution and protecting public spaces. We were sad to hear of the recent death of their former Chief Executive, Samantha Heath, who had stood down in February.

Beyond Brixton

Beyond the South Circular

Beware of major road works along **Norwood Road** from next month. Thames Water will be digging up the section between the Tulse Hill gyratory and the Lancaster Avenue/ York Hill traffic lights from (probably) 4th May - though the start may slip - and continuing until 30 November. After a 6-week break around Christmas, works resume from 6 January until June 2020.

Ambitious plans by TfL to remodel the gyratory system by the Tulse Hill Hotel are currently on hold until funds are available.



IMG9031.jpg

Clapham Park Estate centre completed

Just beyond the south-west corner of our catchment area, at the corner of King's Avenue and the South Circular, a new community centre (above) has been completed on Clapham Park Estate. It replaces a shabby prefab building nearby.

A swathe of ex-local authority estates is currently being redeveloped by Metropolitan Housing, but reduced public funds mean that timescales have been extended and a higher proportion of the new homes will be for sale.

Great North Wood Walks & workdays

Following our report in January, we are continuing to receive details from the London Wildlife Trust of their volunteer workdays and guided walks through surviving woodland in South London. Coming up next:

Saturday 20 April at 11 am: Biggin Wood Spring Walk.

Thursday 25 April, 6-45 pm Wildflower Walk in Long Lane Wood. Bookings and more event details at www.wildlondon.org.uk

Pre-order the Open House London Guide

Put in an early order for the guide to the September weekend openings and get it for the early bird price of £7 – it goes up to £8.50 from the beginning of May. Guides will be sent out in August, giving you first choice of booking for the more exotic sites. If you are less picky, you may be able to find a free copy in a local library early in September.

This year's edition will offer some themed itineraries to highlight sites near each other which you might otherwise miss. See www.open-city.org.uk

Moonwalk on 11 May

This charity walk in aid of breast cancer charities takes place on Clapham Common: to volunteer see www.walkthewalk.org

News from the Migration Museum

This museum explores the many ways that the movement of people to and from Britain across the ages has shaped who we are. Its aim is to tell the stories of migrants who have shaped our culture, and to promote a more historically-based conversation about the role of migration.

The current exhibition, Room to Breathe, is an immersive experience which brings to life oral histories of migration through objects and art installations. An arts studio is embedded within the exhibition, with a rota of artists from different backgrounds.

The Museum is currently based at the Workshop, 26 Lambeth High Street SE1, sharing premises with the London Fire Brigade Museum. Open Thursday to Sunday, 12 noon to 6 pm.

They also offer Migration Walking Tours in different parts of London. They included a walk from Brixton to the museum in last year's Lambeth Heritage Festival events. See website www.migrationmuseum.org or contact Robyn Kasozi, robyn@migrationmuseum.org

Secret Rivers

This special exhibition at the Museum of London – Docklands branch – opens at the end of May: see www.museumoflondon.org.uk for details.

Notes & News

Loose Ends

Here's a few brief items to follow up stories from the January newsletter...

Save our Children's Centres

Last time we flagged up the threat of cuts among Lambeth's Children's centres. We hear that campaigners will be lobbying Lambeth's next Cabinet meeting on **Monday 15 April**, outside Lambeth Town Hall from 4 pm to 5-30 and people are being encouraged to come along and lend support. Five centres are due for closure, after another round of cuts two years ago.

A Temporary Blue Plaque

As a follow-up to the presentation on the history of Loughborough Road shops, Tracey Gregory of LEAF TRA has arranged for a temporary plaque to Nellie Roberts, the RHS orchid painter who lived above one of the shops until her death 60 years ago. The plaque and a poster with brief details are (for the time being) in the shop window of the address she lived at.

Lambeth libraries recently collected suggestions for Blue Plaques of local women to pass onto Historic England, and Nellie was among those shortlisted.

More on Van Gogh commemoration

Anthony Padgett has been in touch to report progress on his series of memorial busts, similar to that sited in North Brixton. The bust of Vincent in Arles was unveiled on 9th March. This was followed a week later, on Saturday 16th, by unveiling the bust at Isleworth Library. The next unveiling will be in Mons (Belgium) on 18 May, and then in Ramsgate on 15 June. See more on his website: www.ayearwithvincent.co.uk

Anthony was also pleased to attend the recent opening of the Van Gogh exhibition at Tate Britain. This exhibition, Van Gogh and Britain, shows the largest collection of Vincent's work in the UK for nearly a decade, together with other artists' works which may have influenced him, and in turn those that he may have influenced. It continues until 11 August.

Admission is £22 (concessions £20, under 12s free) but advance booking is recommended.

A last summer at the bowling green in Brockwell Park

The bowling green in the park has been in decline since the serious bowlers moved down the hill in 1996 to use the indoor bowls pitch in the basement of the Brixton Recreation Centre. The outdoor green has been looking the worse for wear since the Council's specialist green-keeper retired last year.

However, a small group of enthusiasts, the Sylvan Bowls Club, revived the use of the green in 2007 and has since tried to keep it in use for its original purpose. This might be the last year of playing before the surface becomes unplayable, but they expect to open the green to the public every Sunday afternoon from now until September, between 2 pm and 6 pm. There were 582 players over 30 Sundays in 2017, plus some special sessions laid on for local organisations including the Mosaic mental health centre on Effra Road.

Making an exhibition of ourselves

We run stalls at a number of events in the course of the year, to sell our publications and promote the Society. We are always in need of more volunteers to share the work, especially over the weekend of the Lambeth Country Show. We aim to pair you up with a more experienced member, and for no more than 2 hours in the day. If you can lend a hand (or help with setting up/ taking down) please contact Bill or Diana Linskey on 020 7274 3835 or e-mail diana@linskey.org.uk

Resources for Myatt's Fields Park

Myatt's Fields Park recently succeeded with two funding bids. They have been awarded £77,500 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (topped up by £20,000 from Lambeth) to help develop long-term sustainable income. City Bridge Trust has offered £249,200 over 5 years towards community greenhouse activities, including supporting volunteers and sharing gardening skills. Enquiries to: enquiries@myattsfieldspark.info