

THE BRIXTON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

New Year issue, January 2023

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Plans for 2023

You may have expected this newsletter last week, but don't blame the postal strike, since we have tried to reduce numbers going out by post. It's just the knock-on effect of a couple of other date changes, and our team of volunteer distributors will deliver to you as soon as they can.

As usual, we have tried to include as many dates as we know about, though typically more dates will be firmed up over the next few weeks as local organisations get going again after the Christmas/ New Year break. We will be most interested to hear about opportunities to run stalls at local events. We need early warning of these so we can organise transport and find members to set up, staff a stall and clear away. It's very frustrating when we have to miss out because we were only asked a couple of days beforehand. Contact us at info@brixtonsociety.org.uk

Overleaf you will find the dates of our guided walks for the summer months, as part of the annual programme published by the Lambeth Local History Forum. However, we have not settled all of the walk routes yet, so if there are forgotten backwaters that you think deserve attention, or if you would like us to repeat a walk that you missed in the past year or two, tell us before the end of this month, at apiperbrix@aol.com



*The former Black Horse pub, 393 Brixton Road, was bought by Lambeth c. 1966 in readiness for major developments around the Brixton Rec, but only saw a series of temporary office uses before eventual sale to the Halifax. It's on the route of our monthly Brixton Market walks, which resume on **Saturday 11 March.***

(HP/P/IMG0542.jpg, 2.1.23)

Blessing Brixton Orchard

Looking back a couple of centuries to Brixton's rural past, on **Sunday 5 February** a Wassail event is taking place at Brixton Orchard on the corner of Brixton Hill and St. Matthew's Road. This re-creates the traditional ceremony to toast the trees for the year ahead, with hot mulled drinks, dancing and singing. Main event 1-30 to 3 pm with Brixton Tatterjacks morris dancers, or if bringing children, arrive between 12-30 and 1-30 pm to make rattles to scare away evil spirits.

Book your place via Eventbrite at <https://bit.ly/Brixton-Orchard-Wassail> or enquiries to info@urbangrowth.london

Diary of Events – Early 2023

Guided Walks

We are offering our **Market Walks** again on the second Saturday of each month, from March onwards – please book via our website, www.brixtonsociety.org.uk/events

We may be able to offer tailored walks for visiting parties (and already have a couple lined up!).

Our **Sunday afternoon** walks range further afield, and will start in April by picking up from October's unveiling of Nelly Roberts' plaque in Loughborough Road:

Sunday 2 April: Lambeth Cemetery, Meet at 2 pm at main entrance, Blackshaw Road SW17 0BY, for a walk highlighting Brixton's horticultural and music hall connections. Led by Tracey Gregory with Geoff Simmons of Summerstown 182, free but book via <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/nellys-lambeth-walk-guided-cemetery-tour-tickets-494054850357?aff=ebdshpsearchautocomplete>

Sunday 23 April: around Loughborough Road, for those who missed the walk on 16 October. Meet at 2 pm outside the Annapurna Café (former Loughborough Hotel) at corner of Evandale and Loughborough Roads. SW9 7TB.

Ensuing Sunday dates are:

- 21 May,
- 2 July,
- 16 July,
- 20 August,

- 17 September,
- 24 September,
- 15 October.

Committee Dates

Our Executive Committee meets monthly, at 7 pm on the second Thursday, to plan activities and agree our response to current issues. Live meetings have returned to the Vida Walsh Centre at 2b Saltoun Road SW2, facing Windrush Square.

These meetings are 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

- 19 January
- 9 February
- 9 March
- 13 April.

Events arranged by other groups

Please check directly with organisers for any queries over times or costs. For more events further afield, see page 11.

Wednesday 18 January on – Community Connector course:

18, 25, 26 January and 9 February, 9 am to 3 pm at Pory House, Lambeth Walk SE11 6EE: free training in signposting people to local health and well-being services – enquiries to emma@rbeassociates.com or phone 07 734 670 300. *Project Smith.*

Thursday 26 January on: Coding for Kids age 5-11

A new series of weekly after-school sessions, 4 pm to 6 pm at Southwyck Coding & Arts Centre, off Moorland Road SW9 8UR (behind the barrier block). Enquiries to 07 368 487 263 or see www.southwyck.co.uk Millennium Community Solutions.

The Listed Property Show, 3 & 4 February at Olympia, more details at www.lpoc.co.uk

Winter Tree Walk, Saturday 25 February led by Bob Gilbert, for South London Botanical Institute – for details see www.slbi.org.uk

Local History Events

Other groups within the Lambeth Local History Forum will occasionally post details of their talks or events on the LLHF website: www.lambethlocalhistoryforum.org.uk

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 31 March) to the Secretary, Alan Piper, 82 Mayall Road, SE24 0PJ, or by e-mail to info@brixtonsociety.org.uk

Green Spaces, Green Issues

News from Brockwell Park

There has long been controversy over large tracts of the park being taken out of public use for big commercial events. One suggestion was to integrate these with the Lambeth Country Show, to reduce the disruption of setting up and taking down enclosures etc for separate events. Lambeth has finally bowed to financial pressure and announced that the Country Show this summer will be over a month earlier than we have got used to, on the weekend **10/11 June**. The Council has always been cagey about the cost of putting on the show, but expects the new arrangements to reduce the cost from about £1.1 million last year to £370,000 this year. The intention is for the remainder of the summer to be clear of major events in the park.

Work is due to start this month on relocating the Lambeth Landscapes depot to the site behind Norwood Lodge, alongside Norwood Road. This is to free up the yard behind the Hall for development as an events space, so the Hall itself can finally be upgraded. Some work has already been done to provide a ground source heat pump for the Hall.

Saving Energy

Rising energy costs have done more than appeals to save the planet to focus minds on reducing our energy use. However, more than a year on from Lambeth's Climate Action Plan (see issue 244) official guidance is still slow to emerge, so grassroots groups are making most of the running.

Among these, the Herne Hill Forum have set up a series of briefing events for residents at local venues:

Wednesday 18 January: 7 pm at Herne Hill Baptist Church, Half Moon Lane SE24: *Why this matters* and *Energy-saving tips*.

Monday 23 January: 7 pm at Carnegie Library, Herne Hill Road SE24: *Getting approvals from planners, landlords and building inspectors*.

Sunday 29 January: 1 pm at Brockwell Barn, Brockwell Park Community Greenhouses SE24: *Sources of heat* and *Solar power*.

Thursday 2 February: 6-30 pm at the Club House, Herne Hill Velodrome, Burbage Road SE24: *Retrofitting older properties* and *Insulation do's and don'ts*.

For more information and booking, see <https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/reduce-energy-bills-and-carbon-footprint-1464349>

Other Events at Brockwell Park Community Greenhouses

A range of workshops and activities are now being offered, including:

Mindfulness workshop with Deepti on Sunday 22 January.

Fermentation afternoon workshop on Saturday 4 February.

Introduction to Knitting – a beginners workshop on Saturday 11 February.

Saturday Yoga sessions have already resumed. For further events and all bookings, see their website,

<https://brockwellgreenhouses.org.uk/events>

Milling and Baking at Brixton Windmill

Friends of Windmill Gardens are offering a unique full-day experience, making flour and then bread with their volunteer millers and bakers. This will be on Sunday **26 February**, 10-30 to 4-30 pm at the Windmill Education Centre. Maximum of 6 places, £70 per person including lunch. See their website for more details and booking - and further events will be listed soon: www.brixtonwindmill.org

Another Winter Wassail

A slight delay in publication allowed news to arrive of another Wassail event, this time on the north-east side of Brixton. This one will be on **Sunday 29 January**, between 12 noon and 2-30 pm. Gather at Loughborough Farm on Loughborough Road for live folk music and hot spiced apple juice, followed by a walk around Wyck Forest Garden to bless the orchard, and finishing at the Platform Café to warm up with soup and bread, in return for donations.

Enquiries to loughboroughfarm@gmail.com

Green Spaces, Green Issues

Friends of Windrush Square

Since last February, contacts have been built up with organisations neighbouring or interested in the Square, and with relevant political authorities. These stakeholders have been meeting monthly, usually on-line but on 13 December it was finally possible to get together in person, at the Black Cultural Archives. By the time you read this, there will have been another on-line meeting of this Engagement Hub, with a live meeting being lined up for Wednesday 23 February (venue to be confirmed).

Much remains to be done to formalise the organisation, and one ambition for 2023 is that the Square should feature in some of the events being planned to mark the 75th anniversary of the arrival of the ship HMT Windrush at Tilbury in June 1948, carrying the first contingent of settlers from the West Indies.

New Chair at Friends of Loughborough Park

At the on-line AGM in November, Jon Bromwich was elected as Chair of the Friends, to succeed Lydia Stone who has moved away from the area. Jon can be contacted through the same e-mail account as before, at friendsofloughboroughpark@gmail.com

This little park is continuing to recover from years of neglect, benefitting from some recent investment by Lambeth Parks and some hands-on help from local residents. Monthly litter-picks are continuing, now co-ordinated by Anthea Masey, the next being on **Sunday 29 January** at 11 am.

Beware of Greenwash!

Many claims are being made that new features will save energy, reduce emissions or support wildlife, but they should not be taken at face value. Developers too often think that adding a few solar panels or beehives at the last minute will redeem an over-sized building in the wrong place.

Forward-thinking interests in the construction products industry are beginning to sign up to the **Anti-Greenwash Charter**, where they

commit to clear communication of the sustainability benefits of their product or gadget, substantiating their claims with valid evidence, fair comparisons with competitors and honest statements about sustainability efforts.

It's worth remembering that a factor in the Grenfell Tower disaster was unreliable or even fictitious data on the fire performance of the external insulation of the tower block.

South London Botanical Institute active despite building works

During renovation of their building in Norwood Road, a temporary office will operate from February at **International House**, Brixton. For ongoing events, see their website, www.slbi.org.uk

The Platform Café

The café in Wyck Gardens is now open on Tuesdays to Fridays, 8 am to 4 pm, and on Saturdays 9 am to 4 pm. Outside these times, the space can also be hired for supper clubs, cooking courses or other events – enquiries to Platformcafe.lj@gmail.com



IMG0544.jpg

Reporting Water Leaks

We lost the habit of reporting leaking water mains because in most cases it only meant less profit for the shareholders. However, the sudden freeze and then thaw in the run-up to Christmas resulted in so many leaks that many residents were reporting loss of water pressure and even their boilers shutting down.

So if you spot a leak that Thames Water have not dealt with yet, you can report it to them on 0800 714 614, or via their website at <https://thameswater.co.uk/leak>

Alan Piper.

Council Housing Focus



Cressingham Gardens – Roper's Walk forms the existing frontage to Trinity Rise. (HP/DL/IMG5004.jpg)

The Kerslake Review and the Cressingham Gardens Estate

By Vivienne Lewis.

The end of November last year saw the publication of the 130-page independent review, commissioned by Lambeth Council from crossbench peer Lord Kerslake, into the borough's affordable housing development programme

For the last five years responsibility for developing new affordable housing has been delegated to a Council-owned private company, Homes for Lambeth (HfL). The Kerslake report was a damning indictment of HfL's performance, which it described as "very poor" with just 65 homes completed from £30 million provided by the Council

Not surprisingly, therefore, the Kerslake Report recommended a "fundamental reset to the Council's approach to regeneration", including winding down HfL and bringing responsibility for its house-building programme back in house, as well as conducting ballots of residents before estate demolition plans are progressed.

Lambeth Council have accepted the recommendations of the Kerslake Report and have pledged to implement them in full.

What this means for Cressingham Gardens

Some of the most startling revelations in the Kerslake Report are included in the chapter on the Cressingham Gardens Estate. Readers of our newsletter will be aware that the Society has been concerned about Lambeth's proposals for Cressingham Gardens. As well as adding our voice to those urging the Council to recognise Cressingham as a Conservation Area, we have expressed concerns about the damaging impact that taller replacement blocks might have on Brockwell Park.

Details of HfL's 2021/2022 estate development plans obtained by Lord Kerslake's team (and not previously published) indicate that HfL's most recent plans for the estate would have involved the replacement of the existing 306 flats and houses on the estate with 1002 new flats, more than double the number agreed by Lambeth's Cabinet.

Back in July 2015 when Lambeth's Cabinet approved plans for redeveloping the estate, it was envisaged that 464 new homes would be provided. Under HfL's latest plans this would have doubled, while doing little to address the borough's need for affordable homes, since the majority of additional homes would have been market housing for sale, while the number of homes at council rent levels would have increased by just six.

119 of 130

Kerslake review of affordable housing in Lambeth

HfL programme: Detailed overview of projected housing uplift (2021/22 JDP)

Estate	Current			HfL programme (21/22 JDP)					Total
	Private owned	Social rent	Total	Private owned	Social rent	LAR ⁷⁷	LLR ⁷⁸	Shared Ownership	
Central Hill	144	318	462	725	320	0	0	139	1184
Cressingham Gardens	98	208	306	666	210	0	0	126	1002
Fenwick	144	264	408	618	258	0	0	234	1110
Knights Walk	1	17	18	45	16	11	12	0	84
South	42	58	100	225	31	34	28	20	362

Part of table from Kerslake Report showing big increases in private homes but minimal gain in social-rented homes.

There are no images or plans in the public domain which show how Cressingham Gardens might have been developed to produce 1002 new flats. However, plans produced by Karthaus Architects

Council Housing Focus

for Lambeth Council in 2015 indicate how an increase of 700 residential units might translate into building heights. The Karthaus plans, which underpin the report to Lambeth's Cabinet in 2015, indicate that, if all the existing blocks were replaced with blocks two storeys higher on the same building footprint, the estate would go from 306 homes to 464, an increase of 158.

On that basis, to build an additional 696 homes HFL would have needed to replace the estate with blocks of six to seven storeys higher than exist now, resulting in blocks nine storeys high on the perimeter of Brockwell Park.

Fortunately, these plans appear to have been halted. Lord Kerslake's recommendations for Cressingham were that the Council goes back to the drawing board and should "prioritise investment in critical repairs and maintenance" over demolition. Lambeth Council have accepted these recommendations, so hopefully the Cressingham Gardens Estate is safe for now.

What happened to Council Housing?

Alan Piper looks at the implications of the Kerslake Report for other estate developments around Brixton.

Fifty years ago, Lambeth Council was pushing ahead with ambitious plans for new housing estates, all to be rented out as Council housing. Roll forward to 25 years ago, and we find Lambeth Labour Councillors losing enthusiasm for traditional Council housing, but at the same time resisting innovative alternatives such as housing co-ops or self-build. Around then, a cash-strapped Lambeth Council transferred several of its large estates to housing associations who then had better access to funding.

Yet the need for affordable rented housing is as strong as ever, and in 2014 the Council committed to delivering 1000 extra Council-rent homes by 2019. The flagship element of this was to be the rebuilding of 6 existing estates, including on our patch, **Cressingham** (above) and Fenwick on **Landor Road**, an austere late-1960s GLC estate with later pitched roofs.

Limited funds meant adding private housing to subsidise the building costs while increasing the density to avoid a loss of Council homes. This makes it difficult to provide a better living environment, while releasing embodied carbon dioxide during demolition of the original estate. It takes 60 years to pay off the loans that built those first estates, so Council tax-payers could spend a few more years paying for the old and the new simultaneously.

The Lambeth Eco-Housing Group pointed out that, even ignoring the housing taken out of use during clearance and rebuilding, the emerging figures showed a net loss of 30 Council-rent homes within the 1377 total of new homes expected from this estate renewal programme. They also highlighted poor design which meant the first blocks to be completed failed to fully deliver the expected improvements in quality.

In addition to the controversial estate renewal programme, the Kerslake report identified a total of 516 new homes being provided across the rest of the development sites programme, though only 282 (55% of these) would be council-rent homes.

These include peripheral sites to the 6 estates, such as Fenwick Place (24 of 27 affordable), Trinity Rise/ Ropers Walk (20 affordable on the edge of Cressingham) and Roman Rise (on the edge of Central Hill).

In **Somerleyton Road** an innovative approach was developed by Brixton Green from 2013 for 300 Council-rent homes, complete with an offer of funding from a housing association, but rejected by timid Councillors in 2019. It was passed to Homes for Lambeth to take forward, but little has been done so far. A compulsory purchase order for one block has not even been followed up from 2014!

Also in the programme is the **Pop Brixton** site in Brixton Station Road, where the ambition is for 240 homes (120 at council-rent) but things are only starting to move again now after a year's silence.

In practice, the outcome of the Homes for Lambeth approach has been the reverse of the declared intention. It has only been successful in creating work for the building industry and its attendant consultants. HfL has not had the capacity to push forward all the sites it was responsible for – possibly for the good, considering the potential loss of council-rent housing.

Creating an arm's-length company merely removed the programme from scrutiny by councillors or residents. Yet, given the rising criticism in the community, it is strange that 50 backbench councillors remained silent for so long.

Even for the 3 estates (South Lambeth, Westbury and Knight's Walk) where rebuilding is already underway, there is uncertainty over the financial viability of their later phases, and some redesign will be necessary.

Alan Piper worked on the design and upgrading of Council housing for Lewisham Council, 1975-91.

Link to the Kerslake Review here:

<https://modern.gov.lambeth.gov.uk/documents/s142089/Kerslake%20Review%20into%20Affordable%20Housing%20in%20Lambeth.pdf>

Happy New Year from France

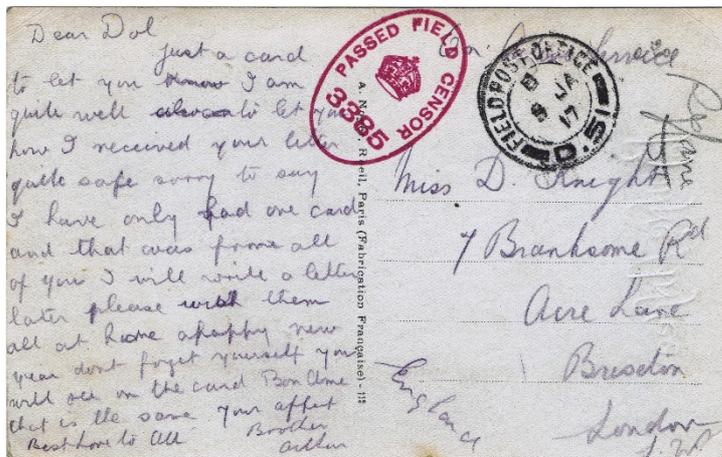


We frequently use images for postcards to illustrate stories in the newsletter. However, sometimes it is not the picture side of a postcard which is interesting, but what is written on the back.

The first thing about the back is that there's no stamp. You may be able to make out that the sender has written "On Active Service" at the top right in lieu of a stamp. The date stamp tells us that it was sent in January 1917 from Field Post Office D.51. It doesn't tell us where that FPO was located; which is the point. It would be servicing the very front line of the fighting and the army would not want to advertise where various units were stationed. Furthermore, if the recipient replied to that FPO it would arrive even if the unit had moved. Lastly, note the Passed Field Censor stamp which is of a type in use in France in 1916-17.

Often that is as much of a story as we can tell from such cards, but in this case, we can identify the sender. It is signed "Your affect [sic] Brother Arthur" and is addressed to a Miss D. Knight in Branksome Road, Brixton.

The 1901 census shows Arthur Knight, aged 19, living with his parents and family in Branksome Road. He was born on 9 September 1882 and baptised in St. Saviour's church, Brixton Hill. On Christmas Day 1908 he married Ann Louisa Jane Brookson in St. Andrew's church Stockwell. The vicar, William Hook Longsdon had a busy Christmas day that year: their marriage was one of six he took.



We next find Arthur in the 1911 census living with his wife and their 8-month-old daughter in Brook Street, Kennington Road. Or do we; how can someone be in two places at once. We also find exactly the same family of three shown as boarders at an address in Brighton. The census instructions were quite clear. Only persons resident on the night of 2 April 1911 or arriving on the 3rd. not having been counted elsewhere, should be included. The Knights seemingly having a spring break in Brighton, should not have also been recorded in Kennington. Such are the confusions to be found in census records.

Arthur would have been 32 at the outbreak of WWI. I have not been able to find a record of when he joined up; Arthur Knight is a quite common name. We know from the card he saw action in 1917 and he did survive the war. I next found him on an incoming liner passenger list. He is recorded as arriving in Liverpool on 19 December 1920 from Saint John, New Brunswick, together with 4 children aged between 2 and 9; the 9-year-old being the baby with him in Brighton. Where was his wife? Canadian records show that she died of septicaemia in a hospital in Hamilton on 6th March 1920, aged just 30.

Arthur's destination address in the shipping record is given as Branksome Road, Brixton. He was coming home, no doubt to a family who would support him coping with 4 young children.

Bill Linskey

Heritage Focus



IMG0527.jpg

Archives on the move

Lambeth Archives closed for public access at the Minet Library on 31 December, after 133 years at the same site. It will re-open in late summer in new premises on Brixton Hill (shown above).

While archives staff will have limited capacity to respond to e-mail enquiries, each Lambeth library can provide regular users with on-line access to the British Newspapers Archive and the Findmypast Worldwide website.

Archbishops Place

When we were compiling our first set of "Town Trails" in the mid-1980s, I inferred from old maps that this little enclave off Brixton Hill originated as servants' cottages for one of the grander country houses nearby. The real story of the development of Archbishops Place is now available via the website

<https://archbishopsplace.org.uk>

Typically, it's more complex than my original assumptions, and while there are still gaps to fill, it shows what residents can discover from census records, title deeds and wills.

Following the 1806 Inclosure Act for various common lands in the Manor of Lambeth, the detailed Inclosure map of 1810 shows all the fields and their owners to the east of Brixton Hill, and how Rush Common land was divided up between them. One of the beneficiaries was Christopher Chrissell Hall, but in April 1806 he sold a plot off Brixton Hill to Nicholas Bennett, a pickled tripe merchant trading at Bishopsgate in the City of London.

Mr Bennett began to open up the land for development in 1812 by acquiring a right of way onto Brixton Hill, which eventually became Somers Road.

At this point it's worth explaining how owners were able to finance development of their land during the 19th century. It was based on leasing plots to a builder or developer, who would then at his own expense build one or more houses, which would revert to the landowner on the expiry of the lease, typically after 99 years. On the security of this agreement, the developer could raise capital to finance the building, and for larger developments, infrastructure such as roads and sewers. The developer might also sub-let smaller plots to builders to actually carry out the work. Leases might specify the size and quality of houses, and sometimes exclude trade uses in order to keep the area attractive to residential tenants. The leaseholds were sometimes sold on, so that purchasers would obtain a regular income from the rents, because the whole business model was based on renting out the houses to tenants.

In the meantime, the landowner had an income from the ground rents, in addition to his successors benefitting from the value of the reversion when leases expired.



View across Archbishops Place through an original pattern sash window. IMG0163.jpg

The electoral register of 1834 and the 1841 census both show Nicholas Bennett living at Elm Cottage, off Brixton Hill. The 1842 Tithe

Heritage Focus

map shows this and an adjacent house, their grounds and a meadow, all in his ownership. Mr Bennett died in 1848, and his will includes bequests to neighbours running a laundry and a carpentry workshop in Somers Road.

The Brixton Hill land passed to his son, the Rev. Nicholas Bennett, described as an attorney or clerk. It was the younger Nicholas who began building, and by 1851 the first 10 houses were complete at what is now the far end of the road. From the outset these were built mostly in semi-detached pairs. The 1851 census records that all except No.6 were shared by more than one family. That census also tells us that the Rev. Bennett was then living not very far away with his older brother John Bennett and family at South Villa, then numbered 31 (Lower) Tulse Hill, which seems to have been across the road from today's Cressingham Gardens Estate.

A later indenture of December 1853 records a lease being granted by the Rev. Bennett, by then living in Notting Hill, for the development of 2 more houses, possibly the last. Other leases have not been traced, but by this date there were 22 houses on the south-west side, the original 10 houses to the south-east, and 22 on the north-east side.

The record of the 1860 Poor Rate shows that Rev. Bennett had sold on his freeholds of all except 10 houses and the carpentry workshop in Somers Road. The new freeholders owned between 2 and 8 houses each, so there was no longer a unified estate management.

Flanking the approach from Somers Road, the King of Sardinia public house first appears in the 1871 census, when William Carman was the licensee. It was rebuilt in the 1930s, but has long since been converted into flats.

The Rev. Nicholas Bennett died in December 1875 at 36 Bedford Place, Russell Square, and his widow Elizabeth followed in July 1884. Her executors then sold 6 of the remaining 10 houses to George Balls for £770 in 1886.

In 1885 all the houses had been renumbered in a conventional sequence with odd numbers on the north-east side, and even numbers on

both the SW side and the south-east end where the first properties had only had names. Merredene Street was only added after this, and its residents first appear on the 1891 census. West of Merredene Street, Tudor Close was opened in 1934, replacing one of the large outmoded houses on Brixton Hill which had likely reached the end of its own lease.

Archbishops Place is now within the wider Brixton Hill Conservation Area, and various upgrades and extensions in recent years have generally respected the original character.

Alan Piper.

1920s Streets competition

A reminder that The National Archives have linked up with the British Association of Local History to run a competition for local societies and history groups. The organisers are looking for local history stories of 500-1500 words that link back to the 1920s.

Entry is free but the deadline is fast approaching – 31 January. The winning group gets an expenses-paid afternoon at The National Archives at Kew for up to 10 people. For more details see

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20s-people/20sstreets-local-history-competition/>

Scenes from Rural Life

In Newsletter 246 (July '22) we outlined the sources for rediscovering local life before the area was covered by streets and apartment blocks. Meanwhile, our near neighbours in the Dulwich Society have been exploring the old Manor records or "court rolls" and highlights have been appearing in their quarterly journal occasionally since 2017.

It was a hard-scrabble life for tenant farmers dependent on fluctuating weather for the success of their harvest, with the occasional drunken brawl or neighbour dispute, illegal tree-felling and the impact of frequent herds of cattle or sheep being driven through the area for sale in London. The pattern was probably similar across most of what's now South London. Past articles can be found via www.dulwichsociety.com

Brixton Hill low traffic neighbourhood

Lambeth Council recently published draft plans for another low traffic neighbourhood, this time the area bounded by Brixton Hill, Acre Lane, King's Avenue and the South Circular Road. The northern half already has some established traffic restrictions which have worked well in preventing "rat-running". Rather than extend that limited model, extra blockages may be added to make access more difficult for residents. Compared with earlier LTNs, no concessions are being offered to help pedestrians or even cyclists, who have been favoured in previous designs. Signposted back-road cycle routes and more or better pedestrian crossings around the busy perimeter are surely the least we should have? There were only vague references to flood relief measures, surely futile for the highest ground within Brixton!

Details can be found on the consultation pages on the Lambeth Council website. Time is short to respond – the closing date for comments is Friday **3rd February**, to lowtrafficneighbourhoods@lambeth.gov.uk If you want us to do or say anything, tell us now at planning@brixtonsociety.org.uk

Changes to National Planning Policy

On 22 December the Government published proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) together with other changes to how the Planning system works. The significance of the NPPF is that it tries to fill the gap where local planning policies are silent, contradictory or unclear as to whether a proposal will be acceptable. A recent example is the emergence of "dark kitchens" where Lambeth has not responded to workshop sites being used for hot food delivery services.

The NPPF is most often cited where developers have appealed against refusal of planning permission. While objectors can also quote the NPPF, published policies from the Council or the Mayor will usually carry more weight in deciding applications.

We are still working through the 64 pages and probably we will not respond to all the 58 questions asked. Fortunately our friends at the London Forum of Amenity Societies are examining the detail, so will flag up issues too. The closing date for comments is **2nd March**, so our committee has one more meeting to agree our response. If you have any specific concerns or spot emerging loop-holes, please alert us by e-mail to planning@brixtonsociety.org.uk ideally before 9 February.

Things to come

A recent meeting of the Neighbourhood Forum shared what we know about the major developments in the pipeline for Brixton Town Centre.

The Hondo Towers proposals have been looming over Popes Road since Spring 2020. This was due to be decided by the Mayor last June but Hondo withdrew it for further revision. Enquiries by the Fight The Tower campaign suggested GLA planners would have advised refusal, but Hondo have kept in touch with them, while avoiding any community contacts.

The other big package consists of the Pop Brixton and International House sites, where Lambeth chose London Square as developer a year ago, and has finally broken its silence. It announced on Friday 13th that consultation will get underway in March – enquiries about these events to info@mutualgain.org

The ambition is still for a residential-led development on the Pop Brixton site, with International House to be refurbished. Temporary management of International House by 3Space was due to end this September. With so many small firms and charities based in the building, prolonging the use would make sense, given the scarcity of local alternatives to move into.

On a smaller scale, work is finally starting on creating workspace beneath the swimming pools of the Brixton Rec, to be followed later this year by shopfront renewals and landscape works along Brixton Station Road,

Alan Piper.

Beyond Brixton

Open City Friends

The people behind London's annual Open House tours and openings each September also offer a number of building tours and guided walks through the rest of the year. There are preferential prices for those who subscribe as Friends of Open City. More details at <https://open-city.org.uk>

Celebrating the legacy of Christopher Wren

Wren 300 is a series of events around London to mark 300 years since the death of Sir Christopher Wren, one of Britain's most celebrated architects.

Three major sites designed by Wren will host special events, tours or exhibitions this year: the old Royal Naval College at Greenwich, the Royal Hospital, Chelsea and St. Paul's Cathedral. For more information, see the website www.wren300.org

Friends of West Norwood Cemetery

The Friends are hosting a talk on the Margravine Cemetery on **Saturday 18 February** at 2-30 pm at the Old Library, 14-16 Knights Hill SE27 0HY. Formerly known as the Hammersmith Old Cemetery, it lies behind the new Charing Cross Hospital and holds some 83,000 former residents of Hammersmith.

For details of other events and publications, see www.fownc.org

Film Shows at the Cinema Museum

The museum strives to keep alive the spirit of cinema from before the multiplex, with regular film shows. The Kennington Bioscope is just one regular strand, silent movies with live piano accompaniment. Through February there is also a season of films on LGBT+ themes. More details at: www.cinemamuseum.org.uk

The museum is based in part of the old Lambeth Workhouse, close to the Elephant & Castle: 2 Dugard Way, Renfrew Road SE11 4TH (bus 196 from Brixton).

Community Hub at Carnegie Library

Regular weekly sessions include yoga, life drawing, karate, children's dance classes and the Raise the Roof choir. There is also co-working space available on the 1st floor at £175 per month. More information at <https://carnegiecommunityhub.org.uk/visit/>

Exhibitions at the Garden Museum

Two special exhibitions during 2023 will show paintings of gardens, flowers and green spaces.

Finding the Modern

British Garden features the work of several artists from the Interwar period, and will run from 22 March to 25 June. Most of the displayed pictures will be for sale.

Ungardening runs from 19 July to 1st October, and will show works by Jean Cooke (1927-2008) former wife of John Bratby, inspired by her semi-wild garden in Blackheath and her cliff-top cottage in Sussex.

The museum is based in the former St. Mary's parish church, next to Lambeth Palace. For details of opening times and prices, see

www.gardenmuseum.org.uk



Garden Museum interior.
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Treason: People, Power and Plot

The National Archives is hosting a special exhibition of original and contemporary documents from famous treason cases such as the Gunpowder Plot. It will run until **6th April**.

Admission is free but please book tickets online via <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk>

Locals Honoured

We were pleased to see some local names on the New Year Honours List recently. **Ken Floyd**, founder of the Brixton BMX Club and Chair of Brixton Neighbourhood Forum, receives a British Empire Medal. Other BEM recipients are **Zoey Dixon**, development librarian at Lambeth Libraries, and **Laura Harling**, former artistic director at Longfield Hall.

Elizabeth Maytom, project manager at Norwood & Brixton Food Bank, and Doctor **Stephen Mowle** of the Hetherington Group Practice, both receive the MBE.

Creative opportunities

Art4Space continue to offer a variety of creative courses at their Stockwell studios, 31 Jeffreys Road SW4 6QU.

Mosaic evening classes are on Tuesday evenings, 6-30 to 9 pm, as either 5 or 10 week courses. There are also Pinch a Pot workshops on Thursday evenings, and weekend workshops are being offered on different themes, not only mosaic but also kintsugi, upcycling denim and making draught excluders. See more on their website at www.art4space.co.uk

Slaughterhaus Gallery are running an evening class on Hard Ground Etching over 3 Tuesdays, 6 pm to 9pm on 17, 24, 31 January. Tutor is Bob White and location is Slaughterhaus Gallery, Vincent's Yard, 119-123 Hackford Road SW9 0QT. Enquiries to info@slaughterhaus.net

Support for Arts Research

The Paul Mellon Centre offers several fellowships and event support grants each year for research in the history of British art and architecture. Fellowship awards range from 3 months to 3 years, while event support grants cover the cost of hosting lectures or seminars. The New Narratives strand aims to encourage diversity, and applications from ethnic minorities are welcomed. Applications close on **31 January** – for more details see <https://paulmelloncentre.ac.uk/fellowships-and-grants>

81 Acts of Exuberant Defiance

Intended to mark 40 years since the original Brixton Riots of April 1981, this programme of events was muted by the overhang of Covid restrictions, so events extended into 2022.

There are still resources remaining, so there is a last opportunity for black-led groups or individuals to apply for grants of up to £4,000 for creative projects. Applicants might also want to reference the upcoming Windrush 75th anniversary.

Up to 8 projects can be supported, but the closing date is **26 January**. More details can be found at bit.ly/3YM62Hi with background at <https://81actsofexuberantdefiance.com/>

Mothers for Change

This is a free 6-week course designed to help mothers understand the harms that impact the lives of young people today. It's also open to female guardians such as grandmothers, aunts and foster carers. It will run on Mondays, 10 am to 12 noon at the Marcus Lipton Centre, Minet Road SW9 from **6th February** until 13 March. To register, please contact maeve@groundswell.world

Support for Older Residents

Age UK Lambeth report that they are striving to get as much help as possible for older Lambeth residents. This website link includes useful information to help with cost-of-living demands:

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/lambeth/get-involved/aukl-campaigns/>

Sharing good practice

We try to network with other amenity groups to compare experiences and pick up new ideas. Significant events that I attended in the last few months included an **Open High Streets** event at Oxford House in Bethnal Green, run by the Heritage Trust Network on 31 October. This was complemented by an evening on the **Future of High Streets** put on by the London Forum on 21 November. Finally, Glass House Community-led Design hosted a Saturday on Urban Design and **Housing Renewal** issues on 19 November.

Alan Piper.