

# THE BRIXTON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Summer issue, July 2023

No.250, Quarterly issue,  
Distributed free to members.

Registered with the London Forum of Amenity Societies, Registered charity no. 1058103, website: [www.brixtonsociety.org.uk](http://www.brixtonsociety.org.uk)

## UPDATE on “Hondo Tower”

### Planning application withdrawn

### See page 7 for background

The Greater London Assembly (GLA) issued the below statement this week and also cancelled the public representation hearing scheduled for 21 July.

On Monday 17 July 2023, the applicant decided to withdraw the planning application (GLA Ref: 0265/03 and Lambeth Council Ref: 20/01347/FUL). The applicant may decide to submit a further application to Lambeth Council for redevelopment of the application site in due course but that will be their decision.

## Urban Sketching with the Brixton Society

### Sunday 17 September

Whether you are experienced or a first-timer at urban sketching, join two Brixton Society members for some pointers and hear about the history of what you want to draw. No pressure or prizes, just a lovely opportunity to come together and have a go at sketching with a little bit of history included.

Bring a small sketchbook or clipboard and paper, pencil and rubber, and any other materials you need.

The intention is to sketch at various points in and around Brixton Market for about two hours total.

FREE but registration essential as numbers limited. email:[sketch@brixtonsociety.org.uk](mailto:sketch@brixtonsociety.org.uk)

This session is part of the 2023 Lambeth Heritage Festival. The Festival programme will be available online and as a printed booklet in August.



*Brixton Market. Electric Avenue from its intersection with Electric Lane. Top left are the Foxes and Cherries sculptures (2010) by Lucy Casson. Top right is part of the illuminated Electric Avenue Sign (2016). This was formally switched on by Eddy Grant, creator of the international hit 1981 song of the same name. The sign was part of a £1million refurbishment of the market. Sketch by Nicholas Weedon 2022*

## Windrush celebrations 2023

### 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary Windrush events

Among the many celebrations was a parade and Town Hall reception. The parade included this homage to the Empire Windrush, seen here in procession down Railton Road to the square that bears its name.



# Diary of Events – Summer/ Autumn 2023

## Market Walks

Normally on the second Saturday of the month, £5 a head, including booklet, RV 2-30 pm in Brixton Station Road. Please book via:

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

## Guided Walks

We still have some Sunday afternoon walks to come but please help our planning by booking places in advance.

### Sunday 20 August, Brixton's Stone to Clapham Park:

meet 2-30 pm at c/o Brixton Hill and Morrish Road, SW2.

### Sunday 17 September, Tracing the River Effra:

meet 2-30 pm o/s Brixton Police Station, Brixton Road

### Sunday 24 September, Stockwell Green:

2-30 pm o/s Costcutter, Stockwell Green/ Lingham Street SW9

### Sunday 15 October, North Brixton:

meet 2-30 pm at front of St. Mark's Church (opposite Oval tube station) Clapham Road SW9.

## Committee Dates

Our Executive Committee meets monthly, at 7 pm 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.

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 or Secretary a week prior at [info@brixtonsociety.org.uk](mailto:info@brixtonsociety.org.uk)

The next few dates are:

- 10 August,
- 14 September,
- 12 October.

## Lambeth Heritage Festival

There will be a series of events around the borough throughout September. We will have a stall at the **Local History Fair** on Saturday **2<sup>nd</sup> September**, at West Norwood Library. We are also contributing:

### An Edwardian night out in Brixton, Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> September

Illustrated talk by Alison Young on Brixton's Music Hall heritage, **6 pm** at Tate Brixton Library.

Free, but it helps if you can tell us you are coming, via [info@brixtonsociety.org.uk](mailto:info@brixtonsociety.org.uk)

### Urban Sketching, Sunday 17 September

Try your hand at recording the street scene around the market with pencil or pen – meet at 11 am, register as above for confirmation of meeting point.

## Addendum – LTNs

We can now confirm the websites for comments on the LTN proposals on p.8 are:

<https://stockwellgardensltn.commonplace.is/> and <https://sladegardensltn.commonplace.is/>

## Events arranged by other groups

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

## Sunday 13 August – Art in the Park

Free art workshops for both adults and children, 1 pm to 5 pm in Windmill Gardens, off Blenheim Gardens SW2. *Friends of Windmill Gardens*

## Saturday & Sunday, 19/20 August – Black Culture Market, 11 am to 5 pm:

This showcase for products and crafts returns to the basement of the Department Store in Ferndale Road, different traders each day. Free but please book via [www.blackculturemarket.co.uk](http://www.blackculturemarket.co.uk)

## 6 to 17 September – London Open House

This London-wide Festival is now spread over two weekends with a few other events in between. The website should go live before the end of August so you can plan which buildings to visit: [www.open-city.org.uk](http://www.open-city.org.uk)

## Membership Renewals

You will find this year's renewal form enclosed with this newsletter. Whilst we were not at the Country Show in June, we will have a Stall at the Lambeth History Fair on 2 September in the West Norwood Library and Picturehouse if you would like to renew in person. Otherwise, the form gives details in how to pay on-line, or by post.

## Local History & Heritage

### Archiving the Inner City

This was the theme of one of the events held under the umbrella of the London Festival of Architecture last month. A series of 3 expert panel sessions discussed the challenges of recording, documenting and sharing the experiences of Brixton's diverse community over the past 50 years. This was timely, given that the Inner City archetype is now rapidly changing before our eyes.

Brixton's north-west quadrant was one of the study areas for the original Inner Area Studies published in 1977, defining the tracts of rundown housing and faltering industry between the City centre and the more visibly prosperous suburbs which most residents aspired to move to. Numerous agencies have since laboured in their own way to tackle separate issues. Even before publication, planning blight was beginning to lift as residents banded together to resist wholesale demolition, and early progress was made with repairing older houses. Public investment has sadly not kept up, so that council estates now have more housing stress. Local employment has been more intractable, though gradual improvements in public transport have opened access to jobs across London. Gentrification began in a small way as professionals began to realise that SW9 was only a modest cycle ride from Central London.

Inner City areas have traditionally been the first foothold for immigrant communities, which become self-reinforcing as newer arrivals join their compatriots. While African-Caribbeans have predominated around Brixton, there has been wider ethnic diversity behind this. There was also a wider social diversity, embracing artists in cheap studio space and student squatters from middle-class backgrounds occupying abandoned houses and shops. All of these have been under pressure to move on, from either the aspirational pull of quieter suburbs or the economic push of seeking cheaper premises.

There is a growing sense of urgency as the old ways change, older generations die and the memorabilia of past decades are discarded. Changing formats of digital media bring their own problems. Several recent projects were

showcased, from "Sam the Wheels" recorded by 198 Gallery, to Lambeth Archives' efforts to conserve the Harry Jacobs photo collection. It's encouraging that efforts are being made to capture a range of grassroots experience beyond the conventional academic approach.

### Veteran Members

If you were one of those diligent members who would habitually come to our stall at the Lambeth Country Show early in the afternoon, you will probably have met Eileen or Barbara. Sadly, both these long-serving members have recently died. We heard about Eileen just in time for a brief notice in our last issue, but Barbara only passed away late last month.

#### Eileen Walkin MBE

Eileen was very much part of that Windrush generation who came to Britain between 1948 and 1970, but regrettably she did not make it through to the recent 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemorations. She was born in Barbados in 1931 and came to Britain in 1965. After studying law, she had a long and successful career in the Civil Service.

However, she will be widely remembered for her voluntary work with a range of community organisations, including serving as a school governor and work with refugees and the homeless.

She was a regular attender at both the Brixton and Streatham Societies, despite spending her later years in Croydon. Covid restrictions and winter travel difficulties meant we saw less of her in the past few years, though she was honoured with two awards for her work with her local church in Addiscombe.

#### Barbara Davies

We learned of her death via a phone message from her son Mark, long resident in Guildford. Barbara had been a resident of Brixton Water Lane since 1953, and was an active member of the Brixton Society since its early days in the 1970s. She only retired as a committee member in 2020. She spent her last few months with Mark and his wife, passing away at the age of 94.

*Alan Piper.*

# The Brixton Society

Understanding the Past, Looking to the Future

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

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

## Annual Report 2022-23

### AIMS & ORGANISATION

#### AIMS & AFFILIATIONS:

We aim to encourage awareness and understanding of our surroundings, and to give local people a say in Brixton's future. Our area extends well beyond the Town Centre as far as Stockwell Tube Station, then east to Myatt's Fields Park, and up Brixton Hill to the South Circular Road.

The Society is registered with the London Forum of Amenity Societies and Archives for London. Our membership of the British Association for Local History has lapsed since we adopted alternative insurance arrangements. We continue to participate in Lambeth Local History Forum, Brixton Neighbourhood Forum, Lambeth Parks Forum and Brockwell Park Community Partners (the park's Management Advisory Committee).

#### STRUCTURE & MANAGEMENT:

The Society is a registered charity and an unincorporated association. The society's constitution was amended at last year's AGM to enable the Friends of Windrush Square and the Friends of Tate Library Brixton to organise as independent bodies, rather than sub-committees of the Society.

Since the last AGM, the Executive Committee has resumed meeting "in person", normally monthly. Members were Bill Linskey (Chair), Doye Akinlade, Ashleigh Gill, Tracey Gregory, Diana Linskey, Vivienne Lewis, Douglas Pineiro, Alan Piper, Marilyn Rogers, Eileen Walkin, David Warner and Nicholas Weedon. Sadly, Eileen died in March and will be greatly missed.

### PROGRAMME & ACTIVITIES

#### EVENTS:

Our main live events have been our guided walks, with additional dates to meet interest from overseas students. We ran stalls at the Lambeth Country Show last July, the Local History Fair at St. John's Waterloo in September, and Windmill Gardens in December. Talks covered Olive Morris House in September

and Buildings of Brixton for the London Festival of Architecture in June this year.

#### PLANNING & REGENERATION:

We share oversight of a high volume of local planning applications amongst our "virtual" planning sub-committee, but try to bring the more prominent proposals to the Executive Committee for comment. The Hondo development in Popes Road is still in abeyance, while we have also discussed the future of International House and prospects of re-opening the Brixton Academy.



*International House as seen from Stockwell Road. IMG9347.jpg*

We were pleased to assist with the provision of a plaque for RHS artist Nellie Roberts in Loughborough Road, and helped navigate South-Eastern Trains through the re-installation of the statues on Brixton Station platforms.

We also commented on some wider policy and environmental issues, where we have benefitted from information from the London Forum, Lambeth Eco-Housing Group, the Centre for London and Global Action Plan.

# The Brixton Society

Understanding the Past, Looking to the Future

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

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

## Annual Report 2022-23

### NETWORKING:

We keep in touch with a wide range of local groups, exchanging newsletters with most nearby amenity societies. We have continued to respond to a steady trickle of e-mail enquiries from students, academics, media and family historians.

### PUBLICATIONS:

We continue to add material to our website, which also acts as a gateway to all our publications. Publications sales have been healthy and we are in a position to launch another title or update an earlier one. *(An analysis of sales is provided as a footnote to the accounts overleaf.)* Our Newsletter is still distributed to members quarterly, with more gradually opting to receive it digitally.

### RESOURCES

#### MEMBERSHIP:

Paid-up membership stands at 164, down a little from a peak 2 years ago, though our Twitter contacts have increased to over 3,000. We are grateful for "in kind" support from individual members including delivering most of our newsletters, staffing stalls, reporting back from a variety of meetings, and other tasks which all help maintain the Society's level of activity.

**FINANCE:** The annual accounts (*on the following page*) cover the year ended 31 March 2023.

In summary, although there were no grants received in the past year, our core income from subscriptions and sales was stable, and there was a full programme of Brixton Market walks. A one-off item was making our card-reader machine available to Lambeth Archives for their sales at the Local History Fair last September. Subscriptions were last reviewed after the 2016 AGM, and were waived in 2019/20 because Covid restrictions limited our activities.



*Unveiling an extra statue on the platforms at Brixton Railway Station, January 2023. IMG0591.jpg*

### We're still here!

Stepping back and taking a longer view, whatever our achievements, what is most striking is that we are still here when many worthy groups and causes have fallen by the wayside since the 1970s. If there is a secret, it's that we have been able to maintain our core activities from members' subscriptions and from our sales of publications, together with a lot of volunteer input from our members. We have occasionally benefitted from one-off grants, but we have not depended on keeping on the right side of the Town Hall, City Hall or Whitehall for our continued existence.

There are downsides too, so we have had to manage without our own premises or paid staff. Inevitably this limits how much we can take on, though as far as possible we have tried to collaborate with other local groups to share the load.

Since we are still not an incorporated body, the committee members, as trustees of the charity, have had to be risk averse and limit our involvement in a number of projects that in our hearts we would love to support, but which are outside the terms of the charity. Between us, we get around and try to turn out for local campaigns and good causes, but there can be times when dates clash or invitations come too late, so we cannot guarantee a personal appearance for every occasion.

*Alan Piper, Secretary.*

**The Brixton Society - Accounts for year ending 31 March 2023**  
**Year to date - starting 1/4/22**

	2022/2023	2021/2022
<b>Receipts</b>		
Members' Subscriptions	1,125.00	1,157.90
Sale of Publications, etc	1,708.29	1,717.67
Donations	276.81	431.22
Postage	69.75	195.12
Bank Interest	8.96	2.01
Miscellaneous (LEAF TRA money)	0.00	1,172.00
Nelly Roberts Plaques	752.13	230.00
Friends of Tate Library income	0.00	200.00
Sub-Total	<u>3,940.94</u>	<u>5,105.92</u>
Refunds	5.60	-45.14
Discounts	0.00	-37.98
Zettle/Ebay/Paypal/Eventbrite fees	-93.39	-79.55
Receipts less discounts/refunds	<u><u>3,853.15</u></u>	<u><u>4,943.25</u></u>

<b>Expenditure</b>		
Friends of Tate Library	0.00	542.40
Nelly Roberts Plaques	846.01	181.98
Donations	0.00	0.00
Newsletter Production	420.00	364.45
Postage	205.92	257.21
Stationery	221.15	143.71
Publications - purchase (maps)	139.00	23.00
Publications - printing	0.00	1,672.00
Posters/Leaflets/teatowels	15.36	395.81
Insurance Cost (general)	96.00	75.00
Subscriptions	68.00	68.00
Cost of Meetings	415.00	100.00
Website support	280.00	130.00
Equipment/Stall	0.00	81.60
Events	180.00	55.00
Catering/Refreshments	58.89	74.45
Website hosting	137.98	194.34
* Repayment to Archives	262.60	0.00
Total Payment	<u><u>3,345.91</u></u>	<u><u>4,358.95</u></u>

**SUPLUS** 507.24      584.30

<b>Details of Publications Sold</b>		
Town Trails	13.50	27.00
Memories	29.94	24.95
Windrush Square	9.00	15.00
Brixton - Story of a name	0.00	9.00
Effra - Lambeth's Underground River	27.00	24.00
Maps	48.00	21.00
Loughborough Road Stories	189.00	549.50
Postcards	234.00	68.00
History of Brixton	239.76	189.81
Brixton Boy WWII	9.96	14.94
Black British Celebration	20.00	54.00
Tea Towel	0.00	609.00
Synagogue	17.43	32.37
Market Walk Tickets	303.00	0.00
Market Walk Books	222.00	52.00
Brixton & Stockwell in The Mirror	2.40	9.60
Henry Tate book	50.00	7.50
Brixton MPs	12.50	10.00
* Archives Books	267.30	0.00
Xmas Cards	13.50	0.00
	<u>1,708.29</u>	<u>1,717.67</u>
Less Discount	0.00	0.00
	<u><u>1,708.29</u></u>	<u><u>1,717.67</u></u>

Balance Sheet	2022/23	2021/22
Opening	8520.85	7936.55
Surplus for year	507.24	584.30
Closing Balance	9028.09	8520.85
<b>Represented By</b>		
Current A/C	1957.92	1304.24
Deposit A/C	7054.79	7045.83
PayPal	15.38	170.78
	9028.09	8520.85

**Notes to the accounts:**

Note increase in insurance costs by the move from BALH to Zurich to update cover.  
 Sales of postcards reflect presence at Country Show and History and Windmill Fairs. Market walks have resumed this year showing a steady income.  
 \* Note our agreement for the use of Zettle to facilitate Lambeth Archives sales at History Fair. Sales £267.30; £262.60 paid to LA; £4.70 zettle fees.

*Diana Linskey*

Accounts prepared by Diana Linskey, Treasurer.

18/4/2023

**Report of Independent examiner**

I report on the accounts of the Brixton Society for the year ending 31/3/2023. My examination is carried out in accordance with Regulation 11 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements have not been met.

Name

*[Signature]*

Anthony Sullivan

Date

1.5.23

### Fight The Tower!

Way back in 2020, Hondo BV, owners of the Brixton Village and Market Row arcades, put in a planning application for a 20-storey tower in Popes Road, opposite the toilet block. Despite many objections, they have refused to reduce the height or adapt the layout, so that original design will be decided by London's Deputy Mayor for Planning, Jules Pipe, at City Hall on Friday 21 July.

The hearing was postponed from June last year, and in the past few weeks we have been busy dusting off our objections and trying to co-ordinate with other objectors. In addition to the Fight The Tower campaign and ourselves, the Victorian Society, Historic England, BRUG, the Bureau of Silly Ideas, AFEWEE and residents of Carney Place have sent in statements and requests to speak.

The GLA's own planners recommended refusal because of the adverse impact on the Town Centre Conservation Area and the wider surroundings. Our comments therefore focus on the supposed benefits of the development. Some are easy targets – replacing ground level public toilets with a new set hidden in the basement, 1<sup>st</sup> floor retail space without escalator access, and a new railway station entrance that ignores the closure of platforms 3 & 4 a century ago.

The big issue is the doubtful relevance of 19 floors of old-fashioned office space above the expanded indoor market. Current demand for workspace in Brixton is for small affordable units for Creative and start-up businesses, ideally with common areas, catering and meeting spaces which allow contact with similar firms.

Of course, the developers have a fall-back position for when their tower fails to attract corporate tenants from the West End – recent trends in Central Government policy make it easy to convert to residential use, with no obligation to provide any affordable housing – and the design already includes balconies for potential flats on the highest floors. Even if Lambeth Council resists, the developers look likely to succeed with an Appeal.



IMG9345.jpg (2019)

### Coming Plans for International House and Pop Brixton site

Talking of workspace, International House has been successful in attracting a wide range of enterprises and community organisations, despite the limitations of an office block designed in 1971. This is largely due to 3Space, who have been managing the block on a “meanwhile” basis pending its inclusion in a major development with the Pop Brixton site on the other side of Popes Road. Plans for that have slipped, so temporary use has been extended to January next year, and possibly July 2024.

Lambeth Council and their development partner, London Square, have in the meantime held a couple of consultation programmes. We were pleased to see these having some impact on the emerging designs at a presentation at Brixton House Theatre last month.

London Square accepted some time back that retaining International House made more sense in meeting low carbon targets and

providing the required employment benefits. However, its occupants will have to move out while its 1970s services are modernised. Emerging ideas are to open up the entrance space and provide more common facilities at ground level. Careful redesign of the roadway may enable the façades to extend forwards from both International House and the corner of the Pop Brixton site. Based on the number of flats to be fitted in, this is likely to be a 16-storey tower, but with two or three small retail units on each road frontage. There may be further consultation events in the Autumn, with a planning application expected by the end of the year.



DL/ BS-BTC98-03.jpg

### The Future of Brixton Academy

This has been in limbo since the tragic deaths of a customer and a security guard during a crowd surge last December. The grant of a new licence is contingent on the management convincing the police that they have better arrangements in place for managing crowds and the flow of customers into the building.

Your executive committee has discussed this a couple of times. We are keen to see this Listed building back in use, but licensing issues are beyond our experience. Going back to an all-seater layout was suggested, but that may not match the target audience and performers for this venue. There have been several applications for Listed Building consent for minor changes, but so far no convincing overall plan.

The O2 Academy is very much the flagship for Brixton's night-time economy, and the Brixton BID reported back in April that visitor spending was down by £537,000 a week during the closure.

### Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and other highways changes

Lambeth has just announced plans for two more LTNs, either side of Stockwell Road. One, with the misleading title of Stockwell Gardens, will cover the streets between Landor Road and Clapham Road. Slade Gardens is the other, to cover all the streets between Brixton Road and Clapham Road. Proposals are at an early stage and would follow on from the Brixton Hill LTN.

Other streetside works are already in the pipeline. Temporary safety measures should be in place on **Robsart Street** in the Autumn. As part of its Kerbside Strategy, the Council is developing a standard set of features which it can deploy within LTNs and along selected routes. Lambeth has also begun introducing a larger model of its roadside bike hangars, which can fit in tandems and other non-standard pedal cycles.

Lambeth is piloting improvements on 5 roads as **Walking Routes** to make them more user-friendly for walkers, prams and wheelchairs. I recently met with Lambeth officers to examine **Landor Road**, which has increased traffic due to the Ferndale LTN to the south. The other proposed route within our patch is the northern arm of **Shakespeare Road**, which links Loughborough Junction and the Railton Road LTN. Enquiries to [jhegerty@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:jhegerty@lambeth.gov.uk)

Finally, we have heard that the Loughborough Junction end of Herne Hill Road will be closed between 11 pm on Friday **11 August** and 5 am on Monday **14 August** while the tower crane is dismantled and removed from the Higgs Yard tower block behind Sureway Ministries on Coldharbour Lane.

### Another School closes

St. Martin-in-the-Fields Girls School on Tulse Hill is the latest casualty of declining school rolls in Lambeth. Founded in 1699 and re-located c.1929, it has just closed. Rising rents and house prices mean that family houses are tending to be shared by adults in order to split the cost, so there are less children for local schools.

*Alan Piper.*