

THE BRIXTON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Autumn issue, October 2020

No.239, Quarterly issue,
Distributed free to members.

Registered with the London Forum of Amenity Societies, Registered charity no. 1058103, website: www.brixtonsociety.org.uk

The Struggle Continues...

Despite the limitations of an on, off and then on again lockdown, we continue to be active. The Lambeth Heritage Festival has already segued into Black History Month, while there are massive changes underway on the Planning front. We are fortunate that we aren't paying for staff or premises, and publications sales are holding up on-line or by post, so we are in a better position than many other local organisations.

We do miss seeing more of you in person at meetings and events, but feel free to e-mail, phone or just write – it would be a relief to see a letter that's not notice of another planning application!

Something for the Weekend

Two last-minutes reminders for you...

Saturday 10 October

Friends of Tate Library have arranged a talk for World Mental Health Day, at 3 pm – for booking contact foftlbrixton@gmail.com
Wake up to Tai Chi continues at 9-30 am on Saturdays via Zoom.

Saturday 10 & Sunday 11 October

The final weekend of opening Brixton Windmill before closing for the winter – but look out for future activities in the adjacent new building. Tours every half-hour between 1pm and 5pm each day, but please book via <http://www.brixtonwindmill.org/>



Hondo Towers, proposed view from Brixton Station Road/ Valentia Place as shown in February. Minor changes have been made recently. CI/BTC-2020-02-01-IMG939.jpg.

Resisting the Big One

The Hondo proposals for the old Tesco site in Popes Road were discussed by an on-line meeting of Lambeth's planning applications committee on 25 August. Over 700 objections were reinforced by recorded messages from Helen Hayes MP, local councillor Emma Nye and your Secretary. The height of the tower (21 storeys) and its impact on the Town Centre conservation area were criticised by both the Brixton Society and Heritage England.

Lambeth's conservation officer was carefully neutral in his comments, but otherwise the Council's planning officers were enthusiastic about ignoring their own policies in favour of very modest benefits. Much was made of a new entrance to the railway station, but few visitors would arrive facing the Hondo building. Those from the south-eastern suburbs would still arrive in Atlantic Road, while those from Central London would continue to prefer the frequency of the Victoria Line. Councillors were beginning to express doubts when the Chair moved to defer a decision,

Continued on page 9.

Winter is Coming - Diary of Events

Guided Walks

We have completed our limited series of walks around the wider Brixton area for this year. Monthly walks around Brixton's markets are suspended due to crowded conditions and limited space within the arcades. Tailor-made walks for organised groups will be considered, depending on prevailing conditions. Enquiries to info@brixtonsociety.org.uk

Committee Dates

Our Executive Committee meets monthly, on the second Thursday, to plan activities and agree our response to current issues. Currently meetings are held on-line via Zoom. Meetings are still open to any of our members, but if you want to join in or to raise a specific issue, please contact the Chair a week prior, at chair@brixtonsociety.org.uk

- 12 November
- 10 December (tbc)
- 14 January.

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

Most normal meetings remain suspended, but many talks and discussions are now available on-line. Please check directly with organisers if any queries over times or charges.

Thursday 22 October – the African Diaspora

Talk by Professor Hakim Adi, one of the free lectures presented live on-line by Gresham College, more at www.gresham.ac.uk
Gresham College

Thursday 29 October – the Windrush Generation

An on-line interactive performance and community debate presented by 492 Korna Klub – to book, see www.492KornaKlub.com
Lambeth Libraries

Saturday 31 October – Closing date for the Great North Wood Photography competition

Photos must be from the arc of the Great North Wood, from Streatham Common via Crystal Palace and Selhurst to Deptford. More details on the website at www.wildlondon.org.uk/gnw-photocomp
London Wildlife Trust

Thursday 12 November – the Archivist and contemporary issues

Arike Oki, director of the Black Cultural Archives will discuss the question “What responsibility do archivists

have to document contemporary issues, or to activate their collections as tools for social justice?” Postponed from earlier this year and now a Zoom talk. Free but book via Eventbrite <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/arike-oke-on-the-civic-archivist-tickets-113617059684>
Black Cultural Archives

Thursday 12 November – London's Georgian Theatre in a Dulwich Diary

An on-line talk by Rachel Reynolds – to reserve a place, please supply your e-mail to the membership secretary at membership@dulwichsociety.com
The Dulwich Society

Sunday 15 November – English Church Murals of Hans Feibusch

An illustrated talk by Emma Rose Barber on Hans Feibusch and his forgotten murals, 3 pm at St. John's Church, Waterloo Road SE1 Book via Eventbrite, on <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/finding-feibusch-tickets-122309134915>
St. John's Waterloo

Saturday 16 January – In pursuit of special interest

A talk by Roger Bowdler on identifying key tombs and features for conservation in West Norwood Cemetery. 2-30 pm at the Old Library, Knights Hill, SE27.
Friends of West Norwood Cemetery, www.fownc.org/

Heritage Highlights

Lambeth Heritage Festival

Despite the limitations of on-line events, a very full programme was provided through the month of September. Many of the on-line talks have been recorded, so if you missed any, in due course they will be available to catch up with later. Access to some will be through the websites of the organisations who provided them, or by You-Tube channels, but there will be a nucleus on the Lambeth Local History Forum website,

www.lambethlocalhistoryforum.org.uk



*The Empress Theatre, Brighton Terrace, in its latter years as a Granada Bingo Club, 1987.
G/BS-BTC-87-01.jpg*

Music Hall Wednesdays

Over five evenings, we heard how much has already come to light about past performers and performances around Brixton. This was only the start of the Music Hall Brixton project, which will tie in with the Layers of London on-line platform (see www.layersoflondon.org). Already there seems to be a pattern emerging of some artistes basing themselves in Brixton, while others – perhaps lower down the bill – merely passed through in theatrical “digs”.

Remembering the Hollamby years

Our annual local history talk last year focussed on the plans for Brixton Town Centre which appeared 50 years earlier in 1969. These plans were overseen by Edward Hollamby, combining the roles of borough architect and town planning officer. This year we were able to enlist Edmund Bird, sometime Lambeth conservation officer and now adviser to TfL and the GLA, to review the buildings and estates which were designed in Hollamby's time at Lambeth.

Edward Hollamby joined Lambeth from the London County Council in early 1964, in readiness for Lambeth assuming greater powers in April 1965 and expanding to take in most of Clapham and Streatham. His department also grew, taking on many other ex-LCC staff, though County Hall continued in use for the GLC, still active with its own housing projects. Hollamby remained with Lambeth until moving to the London Docklands Development Corporation in 1981.

In the early years, the emphasis was on slum clearance and tower blocks. Two tower designs were repeated on several sites – the Wates system blocks built near the line of Clapham Road, and the Pentagon blocks scattered further south. The Ronan Point disaster discredited both tower blocks and panel systems, so low-rise high-density developments like Angell Town and Stockwell Park estates followed. Cressingham Gardens used similar elements, but its lower density and suburban setting helped it last better. This highlights the variable success of different council housing estates, with the unloved Myatt's Fields North replaced by Oval Quarter, while tenants speak out in defence of Central Hill, Blenheim Gardens and Cressingham.

At first sight, Loughborough Park seems to have mixed success, with an overpowering “barrier block” (Southwyck House) to screen the low-rise development (Moorland Estate) from the noise of a projected motorway. An overlooked third element was the restoration of early Victorian houses around the north end of Loughborough Park, but only for a 15-year life

Heritage Highlights

pending a motorway intersection arriving nearby. In reality, what we see today is the result of major interventions by several later hands to overcome the shortcomings of all three original elements. Even so, Hollamby could be sympathetic to conserving the better examples of 19th century architecture, keeping several old terraces within the Myatt's Fields Masterplan. From 1952 until his death in 1999 he lived at, and gradually restored, the Red House at Bexley, built for William Morris and now in the care of the National Trust.



Grantham Road Estate, an early design from Hollamby's office based on precast concrete panels. Some of the residents have compiled a brief history of the estate, which we hope to add to our website. BxW-2019-12-23-x.jpg

Beyond housing, Lambeth needed a range of public buildings, and Hollamby's department produced several children's homes, nurseries, old people's homes, and a range of industrial workshops along Somerleyton Road that clearly imitated the Smithson's Hunstanton School of 25 years earlier.

The largest such project was the Brixton Recreation Centre, a bold innovation when designs were unveiled in July 1971. However, producing such a complex building ran into several problems, including union disputes. Completion was not achieved until 1985. Even

then, some corners of the building were quietly left unfinished so that the "Rec" could finally open to the public.

Edmund managed to highlight many Lambeth building projects from Hollamby's reign within the space of an hour, helping us to attract a record audience of 97 – easily double what we could fit into a "live" venue. Clearly we are grateful for his time and insights.

Alan Piper (who worked in Lambeth's borough architect's department in 1965-67).

Local Heroes and community banner-making

Lambeth Heritage Festival saw many highlights, some already mentioned. We had intended our evening on Community Banners to be the culmination of a series of craft workshops, supported by the GLA Culture Seeds fund. However, Covid and library closures meant that events could only continue on-line, though we hope the workshops will resume in coming months.

The event was introduced by Annick Alet, as growing out of the earlier Local Heroes initiative. Two of those heroes were also featured in the banners. Images used were from various archives including Lambeth Archives, Tate Gallery, the Women's Library (now at the LSE) and MAKE (the Women Artists slide library) at Goldsmiths University. Our guest speaker, Rita Keegan also referred to WOCI (the Women of Colour Index) and Layers of London (see page 12).

Ed Hall made banners initially for Lambeth trade union branches, but a chance meeting with a Turner Prize winner at the Lambeth Country Show led to wider commissions and examples are now in the People's History Museum in Manchester.

The talk finished by highlighting another banner made in 2018 as part of the Brixton Design Trail, and now displayed in Lambeth Town Hall. This was partly made in Brixton Library by the Stitch School, embroidery volunteers led by Melanie Bowles.

Marilyn Rogers, Friends of Tate Library Brixton

Memorials and Commemoration

Who should we remember?

Charmian Kenner wrote in response to the front page article in our last Newsletter (July) about the memorial to Sir Henry Tate:

I feel it's important to respond to the article 'In Memoriam', regarding **Henry Tate**, because the historical legacy of slavery is so complex. Although Henry Tate's business of importing and refining sugar began after the slaves on Jamaican plantations had finally been freed in 1838, their working conditions had changed little. By this time the over-exploited sugar-growing land had become infertile, and tariff protection for sugar imported from British colonies had been removed, so plantations were far less profitable. As David Olusoga makes clear in his fine book 'Black and British: A Forgotten History', the plantation owners blamed these economic woes on their workforce, who they accused of being innately lazy. The freed slaves had been given no recompense (in contrast to the huge compensation received by slave owners) and no land, and now faced harsh working conditions and low pay, or unemployment.

In 1865 a group from St Ann's Parish in the north of Jamaica sent a petition to Queen Victoria, asking to be granted land on which to create a productive farming economy. The reply from the Colonial Office instructed the petitioners to return to the plantations. A few months later the Morant Bay Rebellion began in another equally impoverished area of Jamaica, and was put down with horrendous brutality on the orders of Governor Edward Eyre.

Thus the post-slavery economy continued to be based on systemic racism and colonial exploitation, and any entrepreneur involved in international trade was inevitably a part of this web, even if they were not actually a plantation owner. This is not to negate Henry Tate's role as a philanthropist in providing public libraries for the people of Lambeth, but to understand that what was given to Londoners with one hand, had been taken away from Jamaicans with the other.

It's also important that we have a more complex picture of **Andrew Carnegie**, funder

of another library in Lambeth. Carnegie sold his steel business in later life and devoted himself to philanthropy, but he made his fortune as one of the 'Robber Barons' in the late 19th century US, alongside other industrialists such as J. D. Rockefeller of Standard Oil. Carnegie Steel was the most successful company in the profitable steel industry, but its badly-paid workers laboured for 12-hour shifts in punishing conditions.

Although early in his career Carnegie supported the concept of workers' rights and trade unions, this view did not last. A strike by workers at his factories in Homestead, Pennsylvania in 1892 was violently put down on the orders of Henry Frick, chair of Carnegie Steel, and whilst Carnegie officially distanced himself from this action, evidence shows that he had sanctioned it. Three years later in nearby Pittsburgh, Carnegie built a large and elegant library, followed by seven more in the city. Some of these libraries would have served working-class populations, but here we can see the origin of wealth even more directly - what was taken from the people of Pennsylvania with one hand, was given to them with the other.

Today we see the continuation of a racist and colonialist economic system, for example through the operation of multinational companies. And we see the philanthropy of billionaires, distributing fortunes made from this very system, often to cultural institutions. Whilst we appreciate the richness that results, we might prefer goods to be produced by people who have equal rights and decent working conditions, and billionaires to pay their taxes. But in order to take that campaign forward, we need to understand the full complexity of slavery and its historical legacy.

There are many ways of developing this understanding, including discussion groups and self-education, plaques alongside statues containing additional information, and in some cases the actual removal of statues or their re-siting in museums accompanied by critical commentary. In recent years, for example, the Tate galleries have begun to engage with Henry Tate's legacy. Several Tate events and exhibitions marked the bicentennial of the

Memorials and Commemoration

abolition of the slave trade in 2007, and there is currently a relevant statement on the Tate website, invited from the Centre for the Study of the Legacies of British Slave-Ownership at University College London.

It could be helpful to discuss these issues further, if other members of the Brixton Society are interested in doing so!

Charmian Kenner, c.kenner@gmail.com

Next Steps

We can report that this is still very much a live issue. Lambeth has announced a public listening exercise with residents and community groups, to review locations in the borough with historic links to the trans-Atlantic slave trade and to colonialism. The process is being led by Councillor Sonia Winifred. More details are expected to be confirmed in mid-October with a list of the potentially contentious place-names and monuments, and consultation events.

In parallel, the Mayor of London has set up a Commission for Diversity in the Public Realm to lead a London-wide conversation on how to achieve greater diversity of representation across the public realm and heritage sites. It is being led by Deputy Mayor Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard but its first formal meeting will not be until December. The Commission is due to work over a 2-year timescale. It will be considering a range of under-represented groups, not only black, Asian and other ethnic minorities, but also women, disabled and LGBTQ+ groups.

A New Brixton Mural

Meanwhile, people are finding their own ways of commemorating black achievers. Back in August we received a press release about Brixton's latest mural, in Valencia Place between The Viaduct apartments and the gateway to the old Tesco rooftop car park.

It pays homage to local music artist Ty, who passed away in May following complications arising from the Coronavirus. It was unveiled on 15 August by its artists, Bunny Bread and Jason Caballero of Create Not Destroy, and is

based on a photo by award-winning photographer Benji Reid. It was organised by newly-formed charity Pass the Torch Music Foundation, set up to support independent black music artists with annual bursaries in Ty's name. The charity's founder, Cyndi Anafo, said "We wanted to make sure that there was a permanent legacy piece in Brixton honouring Ty that would be here for a considerable amount of time."



New mural seen from same viewpoint as our front page picture. 1D/CI/2020-10-05-IMG9662.jpg

The mural commemorates the Mercury-prize nominated rapper in his home town of Brixton, unveiled just before his 48th birthday, 17th August. The acclaimed and revered artist released 5 albums, his last being *A Work of Heart*, released by Jazz Re:refreshed in 2018, in addition to his collaborations with international acts including De La Soul, Damon Albarn, Talib Kweli and Tony Allen. Benedict "Ty" Chijioke was fondly known as the unofficial Mayor of Brixton, as he touched and supported many people's lives in the local area.

The installation was also supported by The Brixton Project, and sponsored by music arts organisation Jazz Re:refreshed, who won Best Independent Label Category at this year's AIM Awards. More details of contributors at:

<https://www.facebook.com/icreatenotdestroy/>
<https://m.facebook.com/PassTheTorchTy/>
<https://linktr.ee/jazzrefreshed>
<https://www.thebrixtonproject.com/>

Myvanwy Evans, www.ltwltd.com

Focus on Artefacts

Mystery Objects

We are used to old pictures, maps or other documents turning up, usually with a request for an explanation. Once in a while though, it is some other form of artefact which comes to light, a tool, container or piece of furniture with links to former times in Brixton. Below are two examples which people have shared with us. We may show a few more in future editions.

Stone Age Relic

One effect of the recent lock-down has been people spending more time in their gardens. This least-expected object was spotted in April, when it turned up in the front garden of a house in Trinity Gardens. Michele Sedgwick reports that it was lying among the roots of a hydrangea, near the front door. It's most likely that the flint arrowhead washed out of some subsoil imported to the site almost any time since the houses were built in 1850. Sadly it doesn't prove that stone age hunters were foraging near Acre Lane.



Weathered flint arrowhead found in Trinity Gardens. DL/IMG3174.jpg

Edwardian Branding

We may think that Branding is a modern concept, but promotional goods were clearly being used at the start of the 20th century. The eye baths (shown in the right-hand column) were produced for Dan Davies Pharmacy, probably to the order of Dan Davies himself. His shop was at 324 Coldharbour Lane from at least 1913, based on local directories. The business survived into the early years of this century.



Eyebaths made for Dan Davies, pharmacist at 324 Coldharbour Lane. DD-IMG9268L.jpg

70 objets and tings

If you want more objects, the National Caribbean Heritage Museum recently shared with us details of their recent publication about Caribbean Homes in the UK. It's the work of Catherine and Lynda, based in Nottingham, but the objects featured will certainly be familiar to long-standing Brixton residents. The book contents are being placed on-line, for free, so reminisce, remember, learn, share and enjoy. Go to

<http://museumand.org/objeksandtings/index.html>

The first part was launched on Windrush Day, 22nd June, with more parts following in stages. Part 4 appeared last month, covering Caribbean hair, beauty and dress. Part 5 will appear on 22nd October to complete the set.

History Talks on-line

Various organisations have been putting talks on-line to compensate for the lack of normal meetings and lectures, for example:

Wandle Industrial Museum already have 3 talks on their YouTube channel, at <https://www.youtube.com/user/WandleIndMuseum>

The **British Association for Local History** is putting a number of 10-minute talks on-line, via its website, covering a range of local history subjects: <https://www.balh.org.uk/resources-other-presentation-material>

Gresham College, also mentioned on page 2, has lots of its free History lectures on-line until Christmas – see www.gresham.ac.uk

Planning & Regeneration

Changing the System

The Town Planning system is facing major changes, as explained below by members of our Planning sub-committee.

Planning for the Future

On 6th August the Government published a consultation paper, **Planning for the Future**, outlining its proposals for radical changes to the UK's planning system. The deadline for responses is 29th October, and you can find the proposals on the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's website at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-future>.

As most of us are aware, the planning system we have now already favours developers over local communities – for example a developer has the right to appeal if an application is refused but there is no equivalent right for residents or community groups if an application is approved.

The Government's proposals will make things a lot worse. The key proposal is to replace the current system, whereby developments are agreed by local councils on a case by case basis, with a system which would give automatic approval for most developments.

This would be achieved by stripping most of the detail out of Local Plans and instead requiring them to identify all land within the local area as one of the following:

“**growth areas**” suitable for comprehensive redevelopment where all sites included would be deemed to have outline approval for development.

“**renewal areas**” – existing built areas suitable for infill and densification where there would be a “statutory presumption in favour of development being granted”.

“**protected areas**” – conservation areas, green belt, etc, where existing development controls would remain.

In Lambeth the effect would be that, outside of conservation areas, the majority of developments would secure planning

permission automatically and without any local scrutiny; the councillors who sit on Lambeth's Planning Applications Committee would have no involvement in the process; and local residents and community groups would lose even the limited right to submit comments that we have now.

Planning for the Future dismantles the limited controls we have now and hands over decision making to developers. The Brixton Society will be submitting comments on the proposals and we'll post these on our website later this month.

Vivienne Lewis.

Changes are already coming

As if the above changes were not enough, more proposals are emerging from the Ministry. Permitted Development rights and Use Classes for shops have already changed from 1st September – and not in a good way.

Changes to the Current Planning System

was the title of a separate consultation that we responded to last month. The aim seems to be to weaken the system in advance of new legislation. In particular, “Permission in Principle” is promoted to make it easier for commercial house-builders to launch major developments. Concessions are proposed to reduce their contributions to infrastructure and affordable housing.

Housebuilding targets for each council would be decided by central government, instead of the Mayor sharing them between London boroughs to reflect local circumstances. The Ministry also wants to promote “First Homes” for sale, though few Londoners could afford them, least of all young couples wanting a home of their own.

Updating the Local Plan: Until new rules are thrashed out by Parliament, Lambeth still has to keep its Local Plan current. Thus an on-line Examination in Public will review the small print of its policies between 27 October and 13 November. We will be following up comments we have made in the past few years, which should still be visible on our website.

Alan Piper.

Resisting the Big One

Continued from page 1...

on the grounds that time was running out to complete the discussion. The applicants were sent away to consolidate all their last-minute changes into a set of plans that tallied with each other.

Those revised plans are now on Lambeth's planning website (ref. 20/01347/FUL). From a quick look the changes appear to be only cosmetic – the building is the same height, bulk and floorspace as before. There are some brick columns at the Popes Road entrance, some extra horizontal bands on the upper floors, and a lighter brick colour. The “community space” on the 1st floor has moved westwards, nearer the main stairs up from the ground floor.

22nd October is the deadline for public comments, and we will certainly have more to say. At the committee, the planners defended the huge office floor area as needed to attract an anchor office tenant from Central London, whose staff would in some way interact with smaller firms to form a critical mass and office eco-system within the building. There are office buildings which achieve this, but only by having a generous atrium with shared facilities where different office workers can mix. Nobody seems to have shared this concept with the architect, so this design lacks those common spaces.

Planners justified this approach with a letter from Saville's, whose main line of business is letting Central London office space, but how familiar are they with suburban locations? Critically, Saville's letter dated from January, before office-based working was upset by the Coronavirus pandemic. More recent surveys of office users point to Working from Home (WFH) continuing as a significant part of the employment mix in the long term, suppressing demand for conventional office space. Those with a longer daily commute will prefer less frequent office visits. If the Hondo Tower goes ahead, it now seems very likely it will end up as sub-standard flats instead of offices.

Based on several contributions.



East side of Brixton Road, opposite Ferndale Rd. CI/Bx-2020-07-23-IMG9588.jpg

High Streets under threat?

The lockdown and restrictions arising from the Coronavirus pandemic have accelerated changes in the retail trade, as well as impacting on entertainment, leisure and catering trades – a perfect storm for many Town Centres.

The London Forum hosted an on-line discussion on High Streets on 30 July. It was preceded by a quick survey, to which 37 groups responded. However, a High Street was not clearly defined – 99% of Streatham is on its high street but only half of Brixton, with the arcades and much else east of Brixton Road. Individual shops also vary greatly in size, so our results may be skewed.

On Brixton Road itself, then re-opening after lockdown, 36 shops of all kinds were open, or 42% of units (57% for all societies surveyed) and 6 closed. Across banks, estate agents and other financial services, 15 were open (18% compared with 8% for all high streets) and 2 closed. For restaurants, takeaways and bars there were 13 open (15%) and 4 closed. Yet many such businesses in Brixton were excluded as being off our “high street”. The London-wide figure was 23%.

Other outlets including betting shops and car hire comprised 8 open and 1 vacant. The total number of vacant units was 13, a little higher than we have been used to (15% compared with a London-wide figure of 7%).

The Centre for London has just started a research project on Community Town Centres, hopefully more precise and due to conclude in March 2021. See more at <https://centreforlondon.org/project>

Notes and News

Honour for Committee member

Lockdown has made it difficult to keep in touch with all our members, so we have only recently touched base with Eileen Walkin, who is one of our long-serving committee members but doesn't do Zoom. Back in February, Eileen was presented with the Lancelot Andrewes Medal, for godly zeal and service to the Gospel, by the Bishop of Southwark, Christopher Chessun. In making the award, the bishop described Eileen as a pillar of the Church since her arrival in Britain from Barbados in 1965, worshipping first at St. Leonard's, Streatham, and then at St. Mary's Addiscombe.

After studying law, Eileen had a long and successful career in the Civil Service. However, it was her voluntary work, as a school governor, and with refugees and the homeless, that the bishop particularly referenced. "She has also been someone who is faithful in the little things that are of infinite value," said the bishop, "always there to welcome, noticing when someone is new, making sure they know how to join in, and above all, faithful and persistent in prayer."



*Eileen Walkin with the Bishop of Southwark (right) and her husband Newton (left).
G/Scan0050(2) from Barbados Nation, 26.6.20.*

Low Traffic Neighbourhoods

There are currently trial schemes underway around Railton Road and Ferndale Road, with another about to start west of Tulse Hill. West of Brixton Hill, there are ongoing restrictions dating back to the 1980s. We are aware of competing petitions both for and against, but it's more important to see what works.

While we support the aim to make our streets safer and the air cleaner, we have raised 3 issues with Cllr. Claire Holland, who is leading on this:

Is diverted traffic impacting on other streets and creating new rat-runs?

Are longer routes around diversions leading to more mileage and hence air pollution?

Is there a trend to more anti-social behaviour on streets which are now quieter?

We stressed the need for effective monitoring to evaluate the results of the trials, and for the figures to be made public. Meanwhile we urge you to use the Commonplace website to feed back on what works and what does not – this one now covers all LTNs, school streets and pavement-widening projects:

<https://lambethtransportcovidresponse.commonplace.is/>

Lambeth Climate Action Website

A reminder that the Council's Climate Action webpage is only live until the end of October, so don't leave it too late to feed in ideas, comments and questions. The advantage of the Commonplace format is that you can see what others have already fed into the process: <https://lambethclimateaction.commonplace.is/>

Library of Things reaches Brixton

Over the past few years of providing affordable access to quality tools in West Norwood and Crystal Palace, there have been lots of requests to extend the service to include Brixton residents. Recent funding support from Lambeth Council means this is now happening. They are still looking for a permanent community hub in Brixton, but in the meantime, a home delivery trial is underway. This means you can borrow quality power tools, sewing machines, projectors, carpet cleaners and more, for just a few pounds per day. You can now reserve over 20 different items, delivered to your door and collected afterwards. See their website <https://libraryofthings.co.uk> and follow the links for a catalogue and updates.

Loughborough Farm Crowdfunder

Loughborough Farm has launched a funding campaign to run more health and well-being workshops during the winter months. It only runs through October – see more at <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/growing-wellbeing-in-loughborough-junction>

Beyond Brixton

Patient and public oversight of health services

The South-East London CCG (Clinical Commissioning Group) oversees health services in 6 London boroughs. It is forming an Engagement Assurance Committee to advise the governing body, and wishes to recruit 2 members of the public from each borough. Meetings are expected to be monthly, over Teams until it's safe to resume normal meetings. Closing date for applications is 23 October – enquiries to Rosemary Watts at the CCG on rosemary.watts@nhs.net or phone 07 770 990 353. More details on their website, www.selondonccg.nhs.uk

Camberwell Station to return?

The Camberwell Society and the SE5 Forum have been campaigning for years to re-open the railway station – it's in Camberwell Station Road (of course) opposite the Postal Sorting Office for SE5 and SE24. It was closed in 1916, partly from wartime pressures, but also increasing competition from motor buses.

It might not be much help for commuters, since inbound trains already fill up at Herne Hill, but it could make the Akerman Health Centre and Myatt's Fields Park more accessible.

At last it's on a long list of possible projects for support from the Department of Transport, though 2024 to 2026 seems to be the earliest possible opening date.

Museums and Galleries return

Over the past 2 months, messages have been trickling in from museums and galleries about their re-opening arrangements. In most cases this means prior booking to avoid crowds at peak times, and one-way circulation around some venues. Here are a few highlights in easy reach of Brixton:

The Garden Museum

This was the first London Museum to re-open, back on 4th July. The special exhibition, **My Garden's Boundaries are the Horizon**, shows works of art, films and artefacts from the late Derek Jarman's Prospect Cottage at Dungeness. It has now been extended until 13 December.

If you are still unable to visit in person, there is an on-line version to see at

www.gardenmuseum.org.uk/jarmansgarden

There is also an on-line exhibition of artworks for sale, until 18 December. This is a follow-up to last year's exhibition on Artist-Gardeners of the 1919-39 period, but this time all the works on show are available to purchase.

This has been arranged with dealers Liss Llewellyn and the museum will receive a percentage to help fill the funding gap arising from lock-down. See it at

<https://gardenmuseum.org.uk/sanctuary-revisited/>

Tate Britain

All four Tate Galleries re-opened at the end of July, but prior booking is needed both for free displays and for special exhibitions.

At Tate Britain, the Year 3 Exhibition curated by Steve McQueen has been extended to 31 January 2021. A special exhibition on the theme of Turner's Modern World will open on 28 October, to run until 7th March. More at <https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-britain>

Ideas for Fire Brigade Museum?

London Fire Brigade have secured Lottery funding to set up a new museum in the old HQ on the Albert Embankment. They are now inviting ideas for the museum via a short survey. Enquiries to museum@london-fire.gov.uk

Dulwich Picture Gallery

I managed to attend the preview of their British Surrealism exhibition just before lock-down started. Featuring 70 works from 42 artists, it was due to end in May, but is now available for free on-line (though donations welcome), see www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk

A real live exhibition returns on 21 November with **Unearthed: Photography's Roots**, to run until next May. It will trace the history of photography through 100 works from 35 leading photographers.

Alan Piper.

In Brixton, a Hundred Years Ago

The stories continue

In July last year (Newsletter 234), to coincide with the 200th birthday of Brixton Prison, we told you about two of its political prisoners. During last month's Brixton Hill/ Clapham Park guided walk, I pointed out the unofficial "blue plaque" painted onto the back wall of the prison (see below). Ann Curtis has been in touch to tell us more.



Dpx/CI/2018-06-24-02.jpg.

What can a wife do when a husband gambles on his own life? This was the question faced by Muriel MacSwiney when her husband Terence, republican Lord Mayor of Cork, Ireland, announced that he was going on hunger strike in protest at the two-year sentence handed down to him for what he believed were unjust charges in August 1920.

Frustrated that three Irish Home Rule Bills had not reached the statute book, angered by the refusal of the British to recognise the victory of Sinn Fein, the pro-independence party, in the post-war General Election of December 1918 and disillusioned that Britain had blocked Ireland's right to speak at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, the Lord Mayor chose desperate measures. Challenging their validity, he told the court that, it was he, not they who would decide on his sentence. *"I shall be free in a month alive or dead"*.

Muriel left their two-year-old daughter with her mother Mary in Cork and headed off to London to support her husband who had been taken to Brixton prison.

With her in-laws, Annie and Peter, alongside Art O'Brien of the Irish Self Determination league, they sought to challenge the view that MacSwiney was a criminal. They did not succeed, in spite of an impressive campaign

that saw the intervention of King George V, the threat by Americans to boycott British goods, strikes and protests in many parts of Europe and beyond. Terence died on 25th October 1920.

Much is known about the fight for Irish independence spearheaded by men. Far less celebrated, however, are the women who campaigned alongside them and contributed to the struggle. The "Woven Dream" a 50-minute video play, created during lockdown conditions in Brixton and Cork, depicts the lives of three strong women whose fates are closely interwoven with Terence MacSwiney's own. His proud, loyal and radical wife, Muriel, born into wealth and privilege; her pro-British, Unionist mother, Mary; and Geraldine O'Sullivan, Muriel's close friend and fellow republican activist.

The "Woven Dream" is available to watch for free via the Green Curtain Theatre website: <http://www.irishinlondontheatre.co.uk/the-woven-dream-video>

Anne Curtis, Green Curtain Theatre,
07 803 015 587.

Layers of London

You will recall last year's research project on the shops of **Loughborough Road**, led by Tracey Gregory of Leaf TRA. Much of the material has now been put on the Layers of London website, which allows stories and pictures to be linked to locations on maps of different dates. The collection can be found at <https://www.layersoflondon.org/map/collections/509>

Brixton Music Hall History: Connections began to emerge as a spin-off from the Loughborough Road research. Brixton was home to many hundreds of music hall and variety performers, and associated businesses between the 1850s and 1960s. A research project was launched last month during the Heritage Festival with a series of Music Hall Wednesdays. Again, material will go on Layers of London. The work will continue into next year, so if your family had entertainment connections in Brixton, please get in touch at leaftra@gmail.com