

THE BRIXTON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Autumn issue, October 2022

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Heritage Success

Once again, members of the Society were involved in several events during the Lambeth Heritage Festival, which ran right through September. There were more live talks and walks, also supplemented by on-line events. We will shortly be discussing the Festival with other groups in the Lambeth Local History Forum. Early feedback has been positive, but if you have any comments or ideas for future events, it helps our planning if you tell us while it's fresh in your mind.



The Brixton Society's stall at the Local History Fair in St. John's Church, Waterloo, on 3rd September. The Fair was the first event at the church following recent refurbishment. Volunteer Helene Faure was on the stall when Vauxhall MP Florence Eshalomi visited, while Tracey Gregory took the photo. (TG, DL/IMG2280.jpg)



*The former Empress Theatre in Brighton Terrace has featured here before. However, from recent contact between our Chair, Bill Linskey and Profesor Simon McVeigh, author of the forthcoming **Music in Edwardian London**, the Johns postcard above has been dated more precisely from the playbills, to the week starting 6 May 1912. (DL/image7.jpg)*

Unveiling Nelly Roberts plaque

Reminder for Sunday 16 October

The 2 pm guided walk round Nelly's neighbourhood is now fully booked. Feel free to join us at the corner of Loughborough and Fiveways Roads at **3-30 pm** for a few words from Nelly's family and people inspired by her work, before the unveiling of the plaque on 92 Loughborough Road.

Ready for another outing?

Sunday 11 December

We have been invited to run our bookstall again at Brixton Windmill's Winter Market, between 12 noon and 3-30 pm. If you can lend a hand for part of the day, please tell us via info@brixtonsociety.org.uk

More dates inside this newsletter...

Diary of Events – Autumn 2022

Committee Dates

Our Executive Committee meets monthly, on the second Thursday, to plan activities and agree our response to current issues. Meetings are now back at the Vida Walsh Centre, 2b Saltoun Road SW2, at 7 pm. If you want to join in or to raise a specific issue, please contact the Chair a week beforehand at chair@brixtonsociety.org.uk

- 13 October
- 10 November
- 13 January

Guided Walks

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

Most other groups within the Lambeth Local History Forum have completed their walks for this year, but do check the LLHF website at 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 (by 20 December for the New Year issue) to the Secretary, Alan Piper, 82 Mayall Road, SE24 0PJ, or by e-mail to info@brixtonsociety.org.uk

Events arranged by other groups

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

Brockwell Park Greenhouses events

Just in time to catch the Oysland Band performing on the last day of the Herne Hill Music Festival, 3 to 5 pm on **Sunday 16 October**. A 5-piece Klezmer band mixing the exuberant and soulful.

Recent completion of the Barn means that Saturday Yoga sessions can now be offered year-round – Slow Flow at 10 am or Gentle Yoga at 12 noon. More events on the website at: <https://www.brockwellgreenhouses.org.uk/events/>
Brockwell Park Community Greenhouses.

Battersea Power Station opening events

Maybe too late for the first weekend (14/16 October) but there will be another weekend of family-friendly activities and performances on **22 & 23 October**, to celebrate the building's heritage and mark the opening of the restored building with its leisure venues, restaurants and shops. More info at: <https://batterseapowerstation.co.uk/news/>
Battersea Power Station.

Garden Museum events

The Museum is in the former St. Mary's Parish Church, next to Lambeth Palace. Their Houseplant Festival returns on **22 & 23**

October. The Beautiful and Useful Craft Fair will be on **Sunday 4 December**. Admission £7 (concessions available). More details at: www.gardenmuseum.org.uk
The Garden Museum



Winter Market at Brixton Windmill, Sunday 11 December

Expect seasonal craft workshops, together with stalls from food and drinks vendors and local makers. 12 noon to 3-30 pm around the mill and education centre, Windmill Gardens. See the website, www.brixtonwindmill.org
Friends of Windmill Gardens

Dulwich Picture Gallery

Two special shows run until March next year. **Anthony Daley: son of Rubens** presents 12 paintings by Black British Abstract Expressionist Anthony Daley, inspired by one of Rubens' paintings in the gallery. **M.K.Ciurlionis: between worlds** shows over 100 works by the Lithuanian artist who lived 1875-1911. More details at www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk
Dulwich Picture Gallery

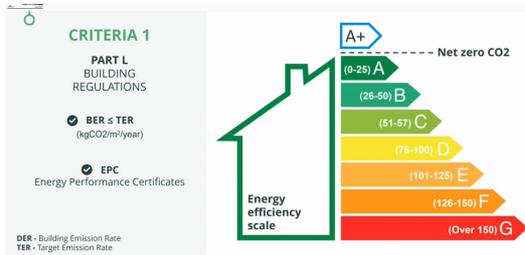
Energy Saving – what must we do to save?

At the start of the year, we summarised the Lambeth Climate Action Plan. Frankly, not much has happened since then, except that our energy costs have been rising steeply. So it seemed a good time to pull together some advice from various reputable sources - and we have provided some contacts at the end, in case you want more detail.

Measuring Success

At the very least, ensure you have a thermometer in your main living room, so you can see the actual temperature, rather than just rely on feeling hot or cold. You ought to maintain an indoor temperature between 18 and 21 degrees C to ensure good health.

If you want to keep a closer eye on where the energy is going, you could install a Smart Meter. Otherwise, you should at least check the labels of your domestic appliances so you have some idea of how much energy each device consumes.



For homes being sold or rented out, EPCs or Energy Performance Certificates are required, to show how efficient (or not) the property is. The numbers are not as precise as they look - EPCs assume use by Mr & Mrs Average, so give no credit for careful use, and their suggested improvements are usually obvious anyway.

Good Housekeeping

There are several tricks you can use to trim energy consumption, particularly electricity: Obvious wins are using low energy bulbs and switching off any fittings when not needed – standby settings and indicator lights can all add to the bill. Don't overfill the electric kettle. Use washing machines and dish-washers only

when you have a full load, and most laundry can be done at 30 rather than 40 degrees C. Keep the freezer and refrigerator fairly full so they retain their temperature better when you open the door - and don't do that so often! On sunny mornings, open the blinds for some free heating from low winter sun.

Of course, the recent price surge and the collapse of several energy suppliers means that the popular option of switching suppliers is no longer available. It might be worth exploring an off-peak tariff if a decent part of your electric use can be at those cheaper times, e.g. overnight charging of an electric car.

I always advise having a regular service contract for your central heating system, to maintain efficiency and deal promptly with any problems. Bleed radiators to release any trapped air and ensure the whole radiator surface is warming the room (or ask your service engineer to do it for you). Programme timings to give heat when you most need it, and to "coast" along when you don't. Turn down radiators in rooms that are less used.



HP/pics/IMG0405.jpg (C1005).

Building in Efficiency

To make more headway, you really need to add insulation to your home and install more energy-efficient appliances. For any major investment, you ideally want it to pay for itself in energy savings within 7 years, or at least to boost the value of your home.

Where radiators are mounted on outside walls, a simple foil panel placed behind them will reflect more of the heat back into the room. Thermostatic radiator valves will give you more control of the output from individual radiators.

Green Issues

If the hot water cylinder is warm to the touch, fit an insulating jacket. Fitting insulation to the central heating pipework is often overlooked but will boost efficiency – especially for that back bedroom at the far end of the circuit!

For a house - or a top floor flat - insulating the roof will make the greatest difference. New double (or triple) glazing may only be worthwhile if window frames need renewal anyway, but secondary glazing – installed between the old frames and the room – is a cheaper option. In either case, don't forget the fanlight over your front door!

Many homes built up to the mid-20th century had solid walls, so the options are to insulate internally (and lose a little space) or to add insulation to the outside, behind a protective render. Timber ground floors lend themselves to installing insulation below the floorboards, but with solid concrete floors, it's challenging to do more than a thin overlay.

Heat pumps have been widely publicised as the successors to gas boilers, but presently installation costs are much higher, and ideally you should have larger radiators to suit the lower typical water temperature. If you are only using one room, limited use of an electric fan heater may be more cost-effective than powering up central heating for the whole house. Only use wood-burning stoves if desperate, because of their relatively high pollution output.

Photo-voltaic solar panels are probably most effective if you can use them to charge up an electric car, rather than charging it from the mains or on-street charging points. Simpler solar thermal panels can be used to pre-heat water, reducing your overall heating costs.

Remember Air Quality

Potential quick wins are adding draught-sealing around front and back doors, and older window frames. Unused fireplaces should be obstructed, but not completely sealed.

It's tempting to seal up all the air vents to stop warm air leaking out, but you will always need a little ventilation to stop the build-up of smells, humidity and toxic fumes, such as carbon monoxide.

Beware of Overheating

This is the sting in the tail – it's only a couple of months back that people were complaining about a heat wave. Try to retain scope for a cooling draught through your home during the height of summer. There is no point in saving energy in winter if you end up spending more in summer to run fans or air conditioning!

Further Advice

The Energy Saving Trust provides general advice to householders through its website,

<https://energysavingtrust.org.uk>

There are also a number of projects offering advice in specific boroughs or for particular client groups, e.g.

Green Doctors, part of Groundwork London, www.london.greendoctors.org.uk

Most utility companies also offer basic hints on their websites or when posting bills, but maybe it's a bit late by then!

For businesses, the counterpart to the EST is the Carbon Trust, which also provides briefings for specific industries:

<https://www.carbontrust.com>

Alan Piper.

Air Quality Action Plan

Lambeth Council is inviting comments on its draft Action Plan to control air quality through 2023-25. See the consultation pages on the Council's website, and respond via its Commonplace site before **2nd November**.

If you want us to feed anything in, you need to tell us NOW.

Recycling Reminder

In case you missed their stall on the fringe of the Lambeth Country Show, Lambeth's Environmental Services Team are trying to make known a number of changes to waste and recycling services, particularly since Serco took over the main contract from Veolia.

There is now an A-Z list of what can and cannot be recycled on Lambeth's website (with a few surprises) but if you have a question that doesn't seem to be covered, contact the team by e-mail at:

streetcarecallcentre@lambeth.gov.uk

Local History

Charabanc Outings

Charabanc: "A kind of long and light vehicle with transverse seats looking forward." (OED) The earliest recorded usage is in 1816. The word is derived from the French for "benched carriage".



A horse-drawn charabanc outside the Prince of Wales on the corner of Brixton Road and Coldharbour Lane, pre-WWI. Until 1935 there was an extremely wide paved area in front of the pub and other buildings fronting Brixton Road. Then the LCC took half that space to widen the road and allowed the building line to move forward. This pub was demolished and today's buildings constructed.

A motor charabanc of the 1920s outside Brixton Motor Works on Brixton Road.

How comfortable was the ride? The charabanc has solid tyres! But there is a cover, concertinaed at the back, in case of rain.

A sign, partially obscured by someone's head in the photo, reads: Charabanc Trips / Cars for Hire".



A later excursion setting out from Bernay's Grove behind Morley's store.

The sign on the left is a playbill for the Empress theatre which was then on the corner of Bernay's Grove and Brighton Terrace, where there are flats today. Unfortunately, the playbill is illegible otherwise we could precisely date the image; 1940s?

Bill Linskey

Local History

We have several shorter items to share with you this time. Remember though that we do welcome longer contributions or research, ideally well before our publishing deadlines.

A forgotten centenary?

Although plans are already being made to mark next year's 75th anniversary of the arrival of the Empire Windrush with the first party of migrants from the West Indies, these were far from being the first Black residents of Brixton. Many individuals can be traced during the century before 1948, particularly in the field of entertainment, and a few of them have been mentioned in past newsletters. However it was several years ago that Black historian S.I.Martin traced the earliest local reference in Lambeth Parish records. In 1722 the Poor Law accounts refer to a loan being paid to a Black woman living in what is now Brixton Road to help her through a bad patch. The accounts state that the loan was duly repaid, but sadly omit to tell us her name or occupation.

Three hundred years ago most Lambeth residents were concentrated between what we now know as Waterloo and Vauxhall, and south of this there were only scattered houses and cottages. It would be another 70 years before Brixton's first wave of gentrification was reflected in the street scene, so her home would likely be similar to the modest cottage shown below.



Cottage on east side of Brixton Road, with the River Effra in the foreground, in an engraving from 1784. (HP/pics/img007L.jpg)

A tale of two timelines

Since our last issue, we have seen the changing local scene presented in two different forms, both impressive in their way.

Brixton Gentrification Struggles:

Two activists from the Fight The Tower campaign, Marion Hamm and Jordi Blanchar, have put together a timeline of local struggles from 1993 (the onset of the Brixton Challenge regeneration programme) through "Future Brixton" to the launch of the FTT campaign last year. It's an impressive review of local issues, referencing Brixton Buzz, Past Tense, Urban 75 and other sources. You can find it at <https://brixton-timeline.maydayrooms.org/#intro>

My only quibble is their assertion that the old Guinness Trust Estate in Loughborough Park was upgraded by the London County Council in the 1950s. In fact this 1939 estate was far more advanced in design than anything the LCC were doing at the time, like the older parts of the Loughborough Estate.

And I would love to see the story extended back another 20 years, to when the Angell Neighbourhood Council was first challenging Lambeth's rebuilding plans around the Angell Town and Myatt's Fields estates. Both areas had to be much rebuilt in modern times due to Lambeth Council brushing aside criticisms made in the early 1970s.

Loughborough Junction:

Today this is a minor stop on the Thameslink rail service, within a local centre that never really recovered from bombing in the Second World War. It has had a complicated history of rail lines being added by different companies, only for rail services to be cut back in the past century. During this century, the shopping has continued to dwindle and local industry has largely been displaced by new housing development.

Local architect Colin MacInnes has compiled a detailed "4D" model of the development of the Loughborough Junction area over the last 160 years which can be found at <http://colin-m.com/lj4d> or there's a short video at <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=28nH7oEcfc>

Local History



A chance discovery recently, at the London Transport Museum in Covent Garden, was this 1890s photo of railway company directors and managers at Loughborough Junction Station, when it really was a junction.

(HP/pics/IMG0360.jpg)

Black History Month

We are already halfway through the month, but there are still several local events to note:

Events at **Brixton Tate Library**, book via www.lambeth.gov.uk/bhm

Tuesday 18 October, 6 pm, Windrush Playback Theatre performance, presented by Tony Cealy and 492 Korna Klub.

Wednesday 19 October, 10 am to 2 pm, Mapping Brixton through Song, with indigenous Australian musician Jessie Lloyd.

Thursday 20 October, 7 pm, Settlers: journeys through the food, faith and culture of Black African London, with *Evening Standard* journalist Jimi Famurewa.

Monday 24 October, 7 pm, **Jamaica at 60** celebration evening, with poetry, song and comedy.

Tuesday 25 October, 2 – 6 pm, Carnival head-dress making workshop, for children age 7 up. New Daughters of Africa at 7 pm, presenting a range of African women's voices from past and present writings.

Brixton Storytrail continues through October, featuring Trinidad-born pianist Winifred Atwell, a hit artist of the 1950s.

Children's badge-making workshop,

2-30 pm, age 7 up, (book as above):

Thursday 27 October at **Carnegie** Library;

Friday 28 October, at **Minet** Library.

Publications News

We recently heard about two books with local connections.

Billy Brown, I'll tell your mother is a memoir by Bill Brown of growing up in post-war Brixton, initially on the Guinness Trust Estate in Loughborough Park, and later on Tulse Hill, but often around the market. Commended by Alan Titchmarsh on his TV show, it's available as a 344-page paperback, published by Orion in January 2011 (ISBN 9781409120640) or on Kindle.

The Mercenary River by Nick Higham is a history of London's water supply, back in the news recently due to the summer drought and untreated sewage discharges to rivers and beaches. Our present problems, from greedy shareholders and inadequate regulation, parallel those of the 19th century, though no repeat of cholera so far!

Published in April in hardback at £22 by Headstone Publishing (ISBN 9781472283832)

Back Numbers: Many local history stories or enquiries have been featured in earlier newsletters. The Secretary keeps a small stock of paper copies, or individual pages can be supplied digitally for most issues since October 2017. Some can also be found on our website. We are gradually building an index to all newsletter items, but only between other commitments, so the last two and a half years are still to be added.

Moving the Archives

The Brixton Society's committee recently agreed to transfer the old Brixton Challenge picture archives to Lambeth Archives. There is some coverage of completed building projects, but most of the material is publicity shots, of which the highlight must be Nelson Mandela's visit to the Brixton Rec in 1996.

We need to do this before Christmas because the Archives will be closed from January, in order to pack up and move to new premises on Brixton Hill, on the site of Olive Morris House. The Archives team aim to re-open in their new base in Summer 2023.

Business in Brixton



The refurbished Toplin House, seen from Ferndale Road (1D/CI/IMG9798.jpg)

Connecting Business and Community

Below is an edited version of a piece by Michael Squire which first appeared in August in the Journal of the London Society (No.476).

When we took the decision in 2015 to move our 200-strong office to the Department Store in Brixton, arriving in the formerly derelict Edwardian building two years later, we committed to create meaningful connections in our local area. As one of Brixton's largest employers, we wanted to be a positive and engaged neighbour to both the business and residential communities.

Brixton is a fantastic location for creative businesses, as an area with a distinct history and identity, with a thriving food, drink and music scene. However, it also faces significant socio-economic challenges. Our contribution to the neighbourhood needed to be impactful and provide long-term benefits.

As we were refurbishing the building, many locals stopped and took the time to share their memories of the building in its former roles, including people who had worked and shopped at the upmarket *Bon Marche* department store, or squatted and partied in the abandoned building! The old store clearly had a place in Brixton's collective memory, and we knew this emotional connection was an important local treasure.

We asked ourselves how we could contribute to the area and have a welcoming "open door" so memories could continue to be made here.

Accessibility for local people was key, as well as our role as responsible custodians of the building, by including a series of community assets in its reincarnation, from the re-sited Post Office to a new home for a long-standing vinyl trader. We chose independent South London-based businesses over chains, accepting that sometimes this meant charging less than market value for the spaces.

Reinstating the fully-glazed shopfront, boarded over for decades, allows views into not only our reception area but also active making and event spaces. Our basement floor has been created as a generous space for exhibitions, markets and talks. Hire is offered at community rates for locals, with the majority of events free and open to the public.

Having an early open dialogue with local people and organisations was essential to finding out what was needed and where we could help. Lending our design skills to realise community projects has resulted in several "drawing board" ideas being progressed, and a new Education and Community Centre for the listed Brixton Windmill being delivered.

We have built a network of relationships with local schools and youth centres through regular creative collaborations – such as the award-winning Winter Windows series, education workshops and studio tours. Our 40+ work experience placements each year offer 50% of opportunities to local secondary students, and we regularly host a stand at their school careers fairs.

Opportunities were created for young people in higher education or entering work. Students at South Bank University's technical college were set live design briefs, to create a series of adaptable furniture pieces for the Windmill centre, and a social media challenge was set up for creative youth network Livity.

Squire and Partners were invited to become members of the Brixton BID and take an active role in shaping the area as an attractive destination for culture, socialising and work. When the Pandemic hit in 2020 we pivoted our workshop efforts to create bespoke visors and scrubs for local NHS hospitals and surgeries.

Business in Brixton

The model-shop team have also created unique award trophies for local art shows, and one-off sculptures for charity auctions.

We tap into local events to create platforms for community collaborations, such as Brixton Boundaries, and Who Cares? for the London Festival of Architecture, which explored how local people experience their neighbourhood.

The next phase of our investment in Brixton is The Department Store Studios, a new local workspace created as a platform for business, supported by a programme of networking and wellness activities. Recognising that opportunity doesn't always present itself to those with ideas and talent, we initiated The Studios Residency in January 2021. Following an open invitation to local entrepreneurs under 30, we awarded two Residency winners free workspace, access to amenities and mentoring for a year to start and grow their creative business idea at The Studios.

Our 2021 residency winners were TV producer and champion of black and brown experiences in the media, Gabriella Lafor, and innovative textile designer Coco Cripps. The Studios will run the Residency annually to ensure that access to opportunity is sustained in the long term.

We take great joy and pride in being an active member of the community in Brixton. The approach to Brixton was unique, because there is nowhere else like it – one size definitely doesn't fit all when it comes to local connections. Our actions do not form part of any Environmental Social and governance policy, or a short-term plan to soften our arrival. They come from a long-standing commitment to be good neighbours and use our skills to benefit others.

Brixton X Harlem Festival

To celebrate the Brixton BID's twinning arrangement with Harlem's 125th Street BID, they held their first Festival from 3 to 7 August. Exploring the common threads between Brixton and Harlem, five days of events showcased local businesses and projects, and welcomed delegates from the New York district.

The Brixton BID plan to run a year-long calendar of events, happenings and initiatives to bring the twinning deal to life. If you have an idea to contribute to the campaign, get in touch at admin@brixtonbid.co.uk

Brixton Streetscape

Brixton's Business Improvement District is becoming more involved in the public realm between the shops and markets. Already they provide early-morning jet-washing of paving in the Town Centre, and have been cleaning the African-Caribbean war memorial on Windrush Square. They recently worked with the police to remove rough sleepers from Beehive Place. Enquiries to streetteam@brixtonbid.co.uk

Brixton Therapy Centre celebrates 20 years

The Therapy Centre has clocked up 20 years at 510 Brixton Road. It began as Brixton Back Pain Clinic on Acre Lane in 1999, but adopted the present name when the Brixton Road premises provided the space to expand into other therapies alongside osteopathy. Today this includes acupuncture, massage and physiotherapy.

Services were maintained through Covid lockdowns by scrupulous cleaning between patient sessions, and offering some video consultations. Brixton is a very different place from when they started out, but many of the team are still there from the early days, still led by Mardi Jamieson.

Enquiries to info@brixtontherapycentre.com

Hospitality in the balance

The recovery of Brixton's Town Centre in the past quarter-century is largely due to late-night entertainment venues and the hospitality sector generally, including a proliferation of cafes and restaurants, mostly east of the old "high street". However, there is conflict between the rising town centre population and departing revellers, while Town Centre venues are struggling to recruit skilled staff, against a background of high rents and other costs rising. Nationally, recent predictions for 2022 are that the pub and bar sector will struggle to reach 98% of its 2019 turnover.

A strange silence

As we go to press, there is no further news of fresh plans from Hondo Enterprises for their Popes Road site. This remains in the Mayor's pending tray until they can resolve at least some of the many objections.

Silence so far about London Square's plans for International House and the Pop Brixton site, which may continue in temporary uses until 2024, and as we go into another recession, there's no incentive for developers to hurry. Maybe the same goes for replacing Blue Star House (owned by Derwent) or the Hotel proposals above both Superdrug and the former Quin & Axtens block between Ferndale and Stockwell Roads.



IMG9677.jpg

Lilford Road Business Centre

We have been concerned for some years to retain a range of business floorspace around Brixton, because so much has been lost to housing development. Attempts to combine these uses are rarely successful, because part of business demand involves noise, fumes and delivery traffic which residents above deplore. Back in 2020, a strange mix of business space and 10-storey hostel accommodation was proposed for this site in Lilford Road, between The Remakery and the Harry Caddick Centre. We were relieved to see that recent plans, exhibited in August, are now for a straight replacement of the 1950s buildings by new workspace.

We have been busy

Following the change in Ward boundaries earlier this year, we are being notified of planning applications and appeals over a wider area, but we only have time to comment on selected cases in our core area.

However, we noticed an appeal decision in favour of a recycling centre in the Norwood Industrial Area, despite strong local objections. Its significance for us is that it would relocate a business from **Shakespeare Road**, allowing a high-rise high-density residential development to go ahead in its place.

If we comment on planning applications or policies, we will also post our responses on the website. However, if you are concerned about a proposal, we urge you to contact us quickly, because the timescales to have any effect are very short. Among many domestic alterations trickling into the in-box, we mainly try to pick up adverse impacts on neighbours' privacy or the original character, or missed opportunities for a "greener" approach.

More strategically, we have commented since our last newsletter on Lambeth's **Design Guide** and submitted comments to Lord Kerslake's panel which is reviewing **Social Rent Housing** in Lambeth, including the role of the Council's struggling Homes for Lambeth developer arm.

In recent years, Central Government has relaxed controls over changes of use, making it more difficult to protect town centres and business space. We welcomed Lambeth's move to protect the Brixton Creative Enterprise Zone and existing Key industrial and business areas (KIBAs) by making an Article 4 direction.

Advertising Concerns

We were contacted again last month by **Lambeth Adblockers**, who campaign against intrusive on-street advertising, particularly the new wave of animated digital LED displays. They highlighted the case of an unauthorised digital billboard in Streatham High Road which burst into flames on the night of 6th August. Closer to home, they challenged hoardings which appeared in front of the car wash below the "Barrier Block" on Coldharbour Lane. One concern is the roll-out of BT Street Hubs, which are essentially pavement LED panels with a token phone point built into one edge. E-mail enquiries to info@sg.actionnetwork.org and there's also an Instagram feed.

Alan Piper.

Beyond Brixton

The Bigger Picture

The Brixton Society is affiliated to the London Forum of Amenity Societies, which enables us to share ideas and compare experiences with other societies across Greater London. Some nearby societies exchange newsletters with us directly. We also receive regular bulletins from the Centre for London (a research body) and from the London Society, of which our Chair is a member.

Love Letters to London

This free writing competition is intended to celebrate London in all its life, charm and mystery. It was launched this month by the **London Society**, closing on 30 November. Entries are invited in 4 categories, with a total prize fund of £4,000 this year.

The categories are:

- Aged 11 and under.
- 12-18 years old.
- Open, for all other entrants.
- Poetry.

This year's theme is "making connections", but entrants can write on any aspect of London's past, present or future. This could be a think piece, reportage, a historical essay, futurology or fiction or a poem. The organisers are open to all forms and styles. More details at:

<https://www.londonsociety.org.uk/loveletters>

Carnegie Community Trust

The Trust manages community spaces within the original Carnegie Library on Herne Hill Road, and has been gradually building up a network of regular activities. These include:

Mondays: EOS children's dance classes at 3-20 pm (also Wednesdays at 3-50 pm), bookings to ari@eosdance.co.uk

Tuesdays: LJAG Craft Circle, 9-30 to 1-30 pm, learn new skills, repair clothes, make friends: e-mail Maude at mrassoc@fastmail.co.uk. Lucy Sparkles, drama, music and dance classes, 6-15 pm, jessica@lucysparkles.com. Iyengar Yoga, 6-15 pm.

Thursdays: Raise the Roof choir, 7 to 9 pm, an inclusive choir with music of all styles, see www.raisetheroofofchoir.com for details. Life Drawing at 7 pm, enquiries to Alice at aliceellis-hayle@hotmail.co.uk

Fridays: Perform after-school children's drama group, 5 pm, bookings/ enquiries to olivertheobald@perform.org.uk
Other sessions are gradually being added, see <https://carnegiecommunityhub.org.uk>

The Friends of Carnegie Library are still active, and are currently hosting a series of Author events at the library on the second Tuesday of each month, starting at 7 pm but open for coffee and biscuits from 6-30 pm. Their upcoming events can be found on their website at www.friendsofcarnegieliibrary.org.uk

Camberwell Station Road

Back in January we reported on efforts to smarten up the road past the disused railway station. The Camberwell Society report in their Autumn magazine that the project is moving forward, led by JA Projects, and the Society is to commission art works for the old station windows, with the Camberwell Identity Group.

The Wood that built London

Much of the densely populated urban sprawl of South London was once a great wood, stretching for almost 7 miles between Croydon and Deptford. Outlying woodlands were felled in the 17th century – on our patch, Stockwell Wood ultimately became Clapham Park, Wickwood became Loughborough Junction and Milkwood was absorbed into Herne Hill. And yet, scattered from Dulwich to South Norwood, fragments of oak woodland still survive from that Great North Wood (meaning north of Croydon).

C.J.Schuler has written a human history of the Great North Wood, published last month as **The Wood that built London**. Published by Sandstone Press, PO Box 41, Muir of Ord, IV6 7YX, paperback, 320 pages, price £12.99, ISBN 9781914518164. Sales enquiries to rebecca@inpressbooks.co.uk, publicity enquiries to ceris@sandstonepress.com

BRIXTON

Neighbourhood Forum

Two Forum meetings are coming up, both to be held at **7 pm** at the Advocacy Academy, Vining Street SW9 8EA (between Atlantic and Rushcroft Roads).

Tuesday 25 October, for an overview of where Brixton stands 11 years after setting up the Forum, and where to direct our efforts for the year ahead.

Tuesday 29 November, a joint meeting with the Fight The Tower campaign, to update on the major developments in Brixton. Enquiries to apiperbrix@aol.com

Windrush Square

Monthly on-line meetings of stakeholder groups have resumed, and the next will be on Monday **7 November** at 5 pm. Anti-social behaviour on the Square has been raised with the police. Remembrance Sunday will be marked by ceremonies on **13 November**, and the Brixton Society hopes to lay a wreath as usual.

Looking further ahead, the Brixton Project is supporting the Windrush Foundation with plans to mark the 75th anniversary next year of the arrival of the Empire Windrush, with the first settlers from the West Indies. Delayed from the **81 Acts** series of events, the Empathy Museum will also be bringing its "walk a mile in my shoes" exhibit to Windrush Square in April 2023.

Myatt's Fields Park success

Myatt's Fields Park Project reports two recent distinctions. First, it was awarded a Gold in the London in Bloom Awards 2022, due to the hard work of staff and volunteers over the year. They also received a certificate as one of London's Favourite Parks. They are keen to point out that they welcome more volunteers in various roles, whether as horticulturists, trustees, or even a new treasurer. Contact them via enquiries@myattsfieldspark.info

Social Housing under pressure

At a time of rising costs, the Government has been consulting on the rent cap for Social Housing tenants and residents. SHAC – the Social Housing Action Campaign – is urging not only a cap on rents, but also on service charges and similar for shared ownership cases. With so much social housing in Lambeth now managed by housing associations, their tenants can no longer channel complaints through Councillors. SHAC has organised branches for tenants of each of 9 major HAs active in the borough. See their website at www.shaction.org

Craft Wednesdays at Brixton Library

Wednesday afternoon sessions started this month and will run through to the end of the year, from 2-30 pm at Brixton Tate Library. The group is free to attend and open to all, a great opportunity to learn new skills, meet new people, and support your health and wellbeing. More details from the Friends of Tate Library Brixton at foftlbrixton@gmail.com

Lambeth Borough Plan

There has been a flurry of publicity about a review of the Borough Plan, though most of the consultation will be past before you even see this. We should make clear this is about choosing priorities across the whole range of Council services, rather than amending Planning policies as such. See the Lambeth Council website for more information.

Support with Information Technology

The former tenants' hall beneath the barrier block of Southwyck House already hosts art classes and kids' computer courses. It is now offering free drop-in sessions for disabled residents and their carers, to provide help with getting the best out of your mobile phone, setting up your laptop, or exploiting the Internet or social media without being exploited yourself.

These sessions are provided by Clear Community Web on alternate Fridays between 2 and 4 pm: that's 14 & 28 October, 11 & 25 November and 9 December. Enquiries to 07 523 646 277 or info@clearcommunityweb