

# The Brixton Society Newsletter

Summer Issue : July 2025 : No.258



## EDITORIAL

### FIFTY YEARS ON

#### INVITATION

As announced in the last newsletter we are mounting an exhibition in the Brixton Library to highlight the Society's involvement in key events in Brixton in the last half-century.

All members are cordially invited to a private viewing and celebration on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> July from 6.15pm to 7.45pm. There will be refreshments, including a birthday cake!

Please book through Eventbrite so that we know how many people to cater for:

[membersprivateviewofBrixSocexhibition.eventbrite.co.uk](https://membersprivateviewofBrixSocexhibition.eventbrite.co.uk)

### REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

In this issue you will see a copy of our Report and Accounts for the last year. There is no pretending that this is the most exciting reading in the newsletter, but it is, in some ways, the most important.

The society is a membership organisation and a registered charity. As such, it is answerable to its members and the charity commission. The Report and Accounts is our annual return to the commission. We publish it in our newsletter (albeit brightened up with some photos) in the interest of complete transparency, for our members, and anyone else who is interested, to see.

### LAMBETH HERITAGE FESTIVAL

The Lambeth Heritage Festival is co-produced by Lambeth Archives and the Lambeth Local History Forum, of which we are a member.

As ever, it runs throughout September, throughout the borough, with many events in and around Brixton.

The festival programme brochure should be available in both printed and electronic formats in early August. We will, largely through the good offices of our team of volunteer distributors, get printed copies to our members who receive printed copies of the newsletter. Members who receive the newsletter electronically will receive a link to a pdf version.

We have more events than ever in this year's programme, with four walks, a talk, and another outing of our (so far, but no doubt other societies will catch on) unique, urban sketching event.

We will also have a stall at the Local History Fair on Saturday, 6<sup>th</sup> September, being held in the Clapham Library, Mary Seacole Centre, 91 Clapham High Street SW4 7DB. This runs from 10.00am to 4.30pm and we would very much welcome offers of help from members to staff the stall.

Please email:

[newsletter@brixtonsociety.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@brixtonsociety.org.uk)

## Diary & Events

### BRIXTON COMMITTEE DATES

Our Executive Committee meets monthly at 7:00pm on the second Thursday, to plan activities and agree our responses to current issues. Meetings are at the Vida Walsh Centre, 2b Saltoun Road SW2 1EP, facing Windrush Square.

These meetings are open to any of our members, but if you want to join in or raise a specific issue, please contact the Secretary at least a week before at:

[secretary@brixtonsociety.org.uk](mailto:secretary@brixtonsociety.org.uk)

Our Planning Committee meets on the Tuesday before each Executive Committee meeting. To raise a planning issue please email:

[planning@brixtonsociety.org.uk](mailto:planning@brixtonsociety.org.uk)

The next dates are:

- August 14<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup>
- October 9<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup>

The committee will not meet in September because of commitments to the Lambeth Heritage Festival.

### LOCAL HISTORY WALKS

The society runs history walks throughout most of the year with just a short winter break. The next ones are:

Brixton Market Heritage Walk

- Saturday 9 August
- Saturday 13 September
- Saturday 11 October

Thereafter our market walks will run on the second Saturday of the month until December. The dates will be confirmed in future newsletters.

If a group of people (minimum 6; maximum about 12) would like to have a market walk on a different day, please email:

[marketwalks@brixtonsociety.org.uk](mailto:marketwalks@brixtonsociety.org.uk) giving as much notice as possible and we will see if we

have a volunteer walks leader available to accommodate the request.

Other walks before our next newsletter are all on Sundays:

- 20 July Myatt's Fields and Fiveways
- 17 August Brixton's Other Half: western parts of the town centre
- 7 September Brixton Art Tour
- 21 Sept Rebuild or refurbish: 50 years of change
- 28 Sept Brixton's Plaques (Blue and Otherwise)



*Photo of our first Brixton Art Tour led by Vivienne Lewis on 8 May 2025*

### OTHER EVENTS

7 September Urban Sketching  
Join us at our urban sketching session and hear about local landmarks while we draw.

No experience required.

NOTE: this event is on the Sunday morning, the Art Tour (listed above) is in the afternoon. With enough time in between for lunch, art buffs can make a splendid day of it.

11 September 200 years of the Waterloo Commissioner's Classics

A talk by our Vice-Chair, Nick Weedon, about St Matthew's and the other three "Waterloo" churches in Lambeth.

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



**AGE UK LAMBETH  
FUNDRAISER  
Wednesday, July 23rd**

Eshaan Akbar, British comedian, actor and writer, is set to host as we welcome a brilliant bill of comedians on Wednesday, July 23rd, at 7.30pm. Taking place at the vibrant Brixton House, London. An evening of laughter and raising funds for Age UK Lambeth in support of their invaluable work supporting older people within the Borough of Lambeth. Eshaan has appeared on Live at the Apollo, QI, Mock the Week, and even stars in Sex Education on Netflix. Expect punchlines, sharp wit, and an incredible line-up still to be announced.

**Date:** Wednesday 23rd July  
**Time:** 7.30pm, doors open 7.00pm  
**Venue:** Brixton House, 385 Coldharbour Lane, Brixton SW9 8GL

**Age Restrictions:** 18+

**Booking:** [brixtonhouse.co.uk/shows/age-uk-lambeth-laugh-til-you-drop/](https://brixtonhouse.co.uk/shows/age-uk-lambeth-laugh-til-you-drop/)



**18 Jul - 27 Jul 2025**

**Brixton Chamber Orchestra's Summer Estates Tour is back — and we're bringing live music to your doorstep.**

We're taking our full 30-piece orchestra (plus some very special guests) out into the open for 11 free concerts across Lambeth estates.

No tickets needed — just turn up, bring a blanket, your friends and family, and enjoy an open-air concert coming to an estate near you.

**11 free concerts across two weekends**  
[brixchamber.com/gigs/Summer-Estates-Tour-2025](https://brixchamber.com/gigs/Summer-Estates-Tour-2025)



**The South London Botanical Institute**

Open Evening in the SLBI garden

Thursday, 24th July 6-8PM

[slbi.org.uk/events/](https://slbi.org.uk/events/)

# Rawmaterial

## SUMMER BAND PROJECT

is a five-day music project designed to spark creativity, build confidence, and get young people making music together. Whether you're picking up an instrument for the first time or already jamming at home, this is your chance to form a band, write original songs, and perform in a final showcase for friends, family, and staff.

### Essential Info

**Dates:** 28th July - 1st August (5 days)

**Time:** 10am - 2pm

**Ages:** 11-15

**Location:** Raw Material, 2 Robsart Steet, Brixton SW9 0DJ

### Costs:

- FREE (Low-Incomed Households)
- £150 (Incomed Households)

[rawmusicmedia.org/creative-pop-ups/summer-band-project](http://rawmusicmedia.org/creative-pop-ups/summer-band-project)



As ever, our good friends at the Brixton Windmill have a huge range of upcoming events. We are highlighting their

### Harvest Festival Sunday 28 September 1pm to 5pm

for the good and simple reason that we will be taking a stall at the event, so do come and see us at this delightful venue.

For details of all their events:

[brixtonwindmill.org/all-events](http://brixtonwindmill.org/all-events)



### FREE Dr Bike Sessions CYCLE MAINTENANCE

Marcus Garvey Way (corner of Railton Rd) SW9  
Saturdays 9<sup>th</sup> August and 13<sup>th</sup> September  
12.00 noon to 3.00 pm

## Diary & Events

### A VANISHED KENNINGTON: THE STUDIO ARCHIVE OF MANNING PHOTOGRAPHERS



*A bride and groom outside St James's church,  
Knatchbull Road, Brixton North,  
leaving for their reception*

In the impoverished and rationed world of post-war Lambeth, cameras were expensive, and film was virtually unobtainable. In 1949, when Jim Manning started up his business, the wedding photograph was the one luxury that newly married couples would splash out on.

Jim Manning was thirty years old when he photographed his first Kennington wedding. Recently demobbed, working out of his mother's house in Newington and renting darkroom space in Brixton, his fledgling business took off and within three years he had moved into to a studio at 3 Windmill Row, Kennington.

Two years later in 1954 he expanded into shop-front premises at 308 Kennington Road and started offering studio portraiture and baby photos alongside the wedding work.

In 1960, Jim's teenage son, Frank, began working with his father. After graduating from the London College of Printing, Frank then further expanded the business into commercial photography and advertising, working for PR companies and in the process photographed many local Kennington businesses, institutions and celebrities. After Jim died in 1993, Frank would run the business for a further 30 years.

After Frank's sudden death in 2022, Manning Photographers closed. It had been running for 72 years, and Frank had already arranged for its archive to be donated to Lambeth Archives. The studio's collection of a half a million negatives – the largest single photographic archive that Lambeth Archives holds and probably the largest anywhere in London – together with all the original order books make up an astonishingly complete collection. When fully catalogued, it will be possible to trace back any photo commission

The Manning studio archive provides an extraordinary visual document of post-war change. The new communities that came to Kennington, Maltese, Caribbean, Portuguese, and West African, all came to Mannings to be photographed. It also records the changing streetscapes of Kennington and many of the now mostly vanished local businesses and institutions like the NAAFI, the Children's Society, Burrough's Gin, the Alford youth club, The Fitzroy boxing club, the Brixton synagogue.

**Free Exhibition, 15th July - 16th August 2025  
Lambeth Archives, 16 Brixton Hill, SW2 1ET**

Open: Mondays 1-8, Tuesdays & Thursdays  
10-6, Fridays 10-3, Saturdays 9-1 & 2-5

## Planning Matters Round-up

### London-wide Plans

As promised in our last newsletter, we have responded to the changes proposed by the Mayor and GLA planners. In the event, this was not the detailed or fundamental review that we expected, so our comments largely repeat what we said back in 2018. We took on board several points made by the London Forum of Amenity Societies and by Just Us, the latter more limited only because their suggestions reached us just before the deadline for our reply.

It was also interesting to see suggestions from the Future of London group, who held a briefing on what is becoming known as the “Experience Economy” on 5<sup>th</sup> June. This is an umbrella term for the more familiar Night-time Economy, as well as established London visitor attractions and major public events such as those recently dominating Brockwell Park.

As usual, the full text of our response will be posted on our website.

### Recent Planning Cases

#### Read this first!

Let’s be clear, the timescales to respond to planning applications are very tight. If you hear about something that worries you, you need to act **fast**. First check what is actually being proposed and the deadline for comments. Could you or your neighbours be overshadowed, hemmed in, or kept awake at night? Share your concerns, and be sure to tell us, because we do not get alerts from the Council in every case. If you e-mail to [planning@brixtonsociety.org.uk](mailto:planning@brixtonsociety.org.uk) each member of our planning committee will see it, and it’s unlikely we will all be away on holiday at the same time!

Some proposals are easier to stop or modify than others, and the number of objectors is usually helpful. We always try to point out where projects contradict current planning policies, which makes it easier for the Council to say no, or to impose limitations.

#### Stockwell Park Estate

There was a recent cluster of applications for various blocks on the Stockwell Park Estate, all of which turned out to be very minor additions or amendments to bin stores and cycle stores. The logical approach would be to make one application for the whole estate, but making separate applications enables the consultants to charge more fees for repeat work AND to waste more of our time checking them out!

#### Another Co-Living project

As we said last time, one of our ongoing concerns is the number of projects proposing non-standard formats, like co-living and larger houses in multiple occupation, rather than the family-friendly apartments or even terrace houses with gardens that are actually needed.

The latest proposal is to replace the old factory at **122 Brixton Hill**, recently vacated when Ruach Ministries moved their church to Streatham, by 61 residential “studios” with some communal amenities. Normally a one-bedroom flat should be about 40 square metres (m<sup>2</sup>) for a single person, or 50 m<sup>2</sup> if intended for a couple. It should also have through-ventilation and a private balcony or terrace.

## Planning Matters Round-up

Yet most proposed units here are only 25 m<sup>2</sup> apart from 7 with slightly better access with up to 33 m<sup>2</sup> each.

Thankfully there are no high-rise elements but the new block would be closely hemmed-in by surrounding buildings.



This site originally formed the core of a Key Industrial and Business Area, but the effect would be to greatly dilute the employment element, as well as restricting the range of businesses that could operate so close to cramped living accommodation.

### Bellevue Mansions update

Following our report last month, Vivien Fox responded with how things look from round the corner in Grantham Road:

Hyde Housing appear unlikely to organise a ballot of Mansions residents before October. Even then, the high percentage of leaseholders would make demolition a slow and expensive process, and similarly with 1-17 Grantham Road which Lambeth Self-help Housing Association own outright. However, Hyde could pick off the adjacent Nursery and the recreation ground (pictured) on Rhodesia Road at the rear for their insane high-rise development. All this in an area so short of public open space already!

### Brixton Neighbourhood Plan

In April, the Brixton Neighbourhood Forum applied to Lambeth for official designation to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for Brixton, to better reflect local preferences and needs. This means that Lambeth planners should imminently be advertising the bid for comments on the proposed boundary. Although the proposed area is based on Council Ward boundaries, the final version may differ as interested groups ask to be added or excluded.

### Replacing Telephone Kiosks

A programme of replacing BT phone boxes is underway across Lambeth, using an open-access design but with a traditional roof form based on the old K6 kiosk. There are moves to reduce the overall number because they can mask drug-dealing, so only 12 new kiosks are proposed borough-wide, with 23 being removed entirely.



Replacements in Brixton would be outside 274 and 423 Brixton Road, 12 Acre Lane and at the south end of Loughborough Road.

*Alan Piper*

## The Brixton Society Annual Report 2024-25

### 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, out to Myatt's Fields Park, and up Brixton Hill to the South Circular Road.

The Society is a member of the London Forum of Amenity Societies and of Civic Voice, the national network for amenity societies.

We continue to participate in Brixton Neighbourhood Forum, Lambeth Local History Forum, and Brockwell Park Community Partners (the park's Management Advisory Committee).



*Brixton Village Arcade*

*Our market walks continue monthly.*

**STRUCTURE & MANAGEMENT:** The Society is a registered charity and an unincorporated association.

Since the last AGM, the Executive Committee has met most months, under Nicholas Weedon as Vice-Chair pending a new Chair being elected.

Other members were Doye Akinlade, Ashleigh Gill, Tracey Gregory, Jean Kerrigan, Bill Linskey,

Diana Linskey, Vivienne Lewis, Douglas Pinheiro, Alan Piper, David Warner and Pam Williams.

### PROGRAMME & ACTIVITIES



*Stall at Kennington Park Fair*

**PLANNING & REGENERATION:** Our Planning sub-committee has returned to in-person meetings, usually a couple of days prior to the monthly Executive Committee meeting, thanks to the hospitality of Bill Linskey.

A continuing concern is Lambeth Council's enthusiasm for high-rise high-density developments, regardless of accessibility or context. We appeared as objectors at the public hearing into the Council's Site Allocations policy document, which targeted several sites in Brixton, notably Tesco in Acre Lane.

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

**EVENTS:** Our main live events have been our guided walks, with additional dates to meet interest from visiting groups. We have launched a bursary to enable a student to join the Lambeth Tour Guides course at Morley College from September.

## Annual Report & Accounts 2024-25



*Our stall at the May Fest  
in Windmill Gardens Community Building*

We also put on additional live talks at Brixton's Tate Library, which we hope to continue.

Over the past year, we ran stalls in Kennington Park, at the Local History Fair at Streatham, and at the May Fest in Windmill Gardens.

**NETWORKING:** We keep in touch with a wide range of local groups and networks, and we exchange newsletters with most nearby amenity societies.

We have continued to respond to 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. (*An analysis of sales forms a footnote to the accounts.*)

Cash resources are sufficient for us to publish new titles, but finding time to write is the real challenge. In the meantime, our quarterly Newsletter has expanded under the editorship of Bill Linskey. For social media posts, we now use BlueSky instead of X/Twitter.

### RESOURCES

**MEMBERSHIP:** The membership year now runs from September, reflecting that it is no longer practical to have a presence at the Lambeth Country Show in June. Subscriptions were last

reviewed at the 2024 AGM and increases were beginning to take effect as members renewed.

Paid-up membership peaked at 165 during the past year.

We are grateful for "in kind" support from individual members including delivering many 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.



*Tracey Gregory giving the first of our new series of live talks in the Tate Library Brixton*

**FINANCE:** The annual accounts cover the year ended 31 March 2025 and are shown on a separate page. There had been additional cost from reprinting the Market Walk booklet, and from extra meetings and a general increase in overheads. However, income remained healthy.

*Alan Piper, Secretary, 27.6.25*

Registered Charity No.1058103  
Member of the London Forum of Amenity  
Societies and of Civic Voice  
Website: [www.brixtonsociety.org.uk](http://www.brixtonsociety.org.uk)

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The Annual Report and Accounts on the next page were approved at our 2025 AGM



## Obituary

### Clovis Constantine Salmon OBE (1927-2025)

On 18<sup>th</sup> June 2025 Brixton and Britain lost a true icon and elder. Clovis Constantine Salmon OBE Esq or Sam the Wheels passed away peacefully at the age of 98.

Born in Jamaica, Sam moved to Railton Road in 1957 spending almost 70 years keeping the area's bikes pedalling, as a pastor and as a pioneer of film making. He recorded 50,000 feet of cine film of Brixton from the churches, christenings, weddings, funerals, shops and lives of the Caribbean community especially. In an era when 'the Frontline' was seen as shameful, Sam did what few archives or authorities did and recognised the contribution and importance of people who lived there for the future residents whose city they would shape.

His Super 8 camera tucked under his coat and already such a part of Railton Road, he was able to walk around recording the 1981 Uprising. He understood the fine line of the Frontline's reaction when many could no longer turn their cheek but sought to find ways to introduce calm, particularly to the area's children. He did bike checks for free for under 10s and made sure many children and young people got their first bike and the freedom to find work, friends and new networks.

Sam was outside fixing his beloved bikes almost to the end. Since childhood he could build a bike faster and better than anyone and his first job in London was as a cycle mechanic at Claud Butler Cycles on Clapham Manor Street. If you've ever wondered why the street by the Leisure Centre and West Indian Association of Service Personnel, is called Bicycle Mews, Sam's influence went from SE24 to SW4 too.

198 Arts and Contemporary Learning has been working to digitise Sam's cine films. He was the subject of a documentary, Guardian article in his early 90s and was awarded his OBE in 2024 for services to Black culture and community. He

was a National Diversity Awards Lifetime Achiever Award and The Power of a Man Lifetime Achiever Award.

As Brixton adjusts to life without him, he gave us nine nights and more of his huge smile as part of the Untold Windrush Stories photo exhibition which ran for Windrush 77 on 22<sup>nd</sup> June. A new film had been planned to premiere about him at the Big Caribbean Lunch but will now have a wider audience.



*Sam and Nikky at Brixton Advice Centre 15  
September 2024. Photo by Tracey Gregory*

His beloved bikes and hand painted scripture signs that are the original parklet in the borough will be preserved by Lambeth Council as public monument. All this official recognition came late but Sam was always recognised and loved by the people around him. His neighbours, congregants, friends, local community and his beloved family. Husband to Delores, father of five, grandfather of ten and a great-grandfather, we extend our deepest condolences to them and all who loved him. His last words to Brixton were 'I've lived in here 70 years. If you gave me a flat in Westminster I wouldn't take it.' We're so glad you didn't Sam. Thank you for what you gave Brixton.

*Tribute by Nikky Catto, writer and Lambeth tour guide, who had many conversations with Sam about his life in Brixton.*

### Pulling Together

In Brixton, there are plenty of people and organisations with some interest in what could broadly be called “Green” issues, but could they work together in a more co-ordinated way? Recently we have been following two initiatives that attempt just that:

**The Lambeth Climate Partnership** was formed last year as a spin-off from the Council’s attempt to adopt greener policies. Starting with a nucleus of larger public organisations, more small businesses and voluntary organisations have been joining, and all seven of Lambeth’s business improvement districts have now signed up.

Being a member provides opportunities to collaborate and innovate. Members are expected to work towards the climate action goals already adopted by Lambeth and can showcase progress that they are making. Several “Quick-fire” talks and seminars have been held to share good practice, though these are now suspended until the Autumn.

One misgiving is how fully the larger partners are committed to the mission. Sure, it makes sense for a large academic institution to try to reduce its carbon dioxide emissions (and costs) from heating and lighting its buildings.

Yet despite Lambeth’s pledges, their own planners continue to encourage high-rise high-density buildings that reinforce the Urban Heat Island effect, trapping traffic fumes in canyon-like streets between taller buildings.

See more at:

[lambethclimatepartnership.org/get-involved/businesses-and-organisations](http://lambethclimatepartnership.org/get-involved/businesses-and-organisations)

**Rewired Communities** has run a series of workshops and discussions among voluntary and community groups in Lambeth and Southwark. It may seem easy enough to start out on a “green” path, but it’s worth a little background research to check if your actions are really beneficial, and to find if there’s somebody else nearby already trying to do something similar.

Rewired has promoted the Sustainable Development goals adopted by the United Nations as common standards, though in practice not all the 17 goals will be relevant for all groups. Currently it’s encouraging groups to define their work more clearly, and to share details so that more collaborative projects and networking can get underway. More information is expected soon, but in the meantime, enquiries to [Nicola.steen@rewired.earth](mailto:Nicola.steen@rewired.earth)

### Towards Greener Eating

This is something I paid little attention to until I was presented with a booklet from the British Heart Foundation during recovery from a heart attack. It turned out that diet advice had moved on over the past 60 years. Sure, we still need protein, carbohydrates and vitamins, but salt and sugar intakes need to be limited, and fats are really complicated – I still struggle with trans fats that self-identify as monosaturates!

And it’s not just what you can eat – or can afford to eat. There’s also the issue of where the food comes from. Once you start to consider the wider impact of what you consume, maybe you should use rapeseed oil from Essex rather than palm oil from deforested plantations in Indonesia? Or could you grow more of your own food to reduce the food miles of what’s on your plate?

## Green Issues



### Oat Milk or Goat Milk?

As an example, let's consider the options for the milk to put in your coffee. A common healthy switch is from full-fat to semi-skimmed milk, but maybe you want to reduce dairy products because the methane emissions from cows are far more potent for global warming than mere carbon dioxide?

Lots of milk substitutes have emerged, some "greener" than others. Soya, pea, oats, potato, almond and other nuts have all been used as raw materials for plant-based milks, though applying green criteria, almonds are less competitive due to their overseas origin and high water demand.

As it happens, Alpro, a leading brand, is made not from almonds but from oats grown within 80 miles of the factory in Kettering. Oat-based milks now make up 40% of the UK market for non-dairy milks, by volume.

As for goats' milk and sheep's cheese, these are likely to remain niche products for a local context – say, if you are running Vauxhall City Farm, it would be fair enough to offer goats' milk in the café when you already have several animals in the pen just outside.

*Alan Piper*

## Incredible Edible Lambeth

In case you haven't heard, this is a network of food growers, food entrepreneurs and activists who are working to improve our communities. Their motto is "If you eat, you are in."

Everyone can get involved – join their network for free and link up with green spaces, growers, allotments and more across the borough.

This summer, they have run occasional guided walks highlighting the less prominent green spaces and food-growing projects around Lambeth.

See more at: [www.incredibleediblelambeth.org](http://www.incredibleediblelambeth.org)



## **Loughborough Junction Station**

### **CENTENARY**

In July this year, Loughborough Junction station celebrates its 100th birthday. Although it has existed in various forms since the 1860s, the station that we currently use is essentially one that was built in 1925; a rationalisation of a previous, larger station. It was constructed as part of the modernisation and electrification of south London's railways that took place during the 1920s.



The 1925 design shoehorned the station entrance into a single railway arch – but since then, space has been reduced even further. There used to be a significantly larger ticket office and entrance hall at street level, and waiting rooms and toilets up on the platform. Loughborough Junction station suffered extended periods of neglect and underinvestment towards the end of the 20th century. In the early 1990s, despite being part of the newly established Thameslink network, British Rail proposed to withdraw all of the station's off-peak services. Without local campaigning at that time, perhaps the station would have been closed altogether.

### **ACCESS**

In 2025 Loughborough Junction station enjoys a frequent train service with direct connections to central London interchanges, and is increasingly well used, but the only way to access the platform is via the staircase built 100

years ago to a design that falls well short of modern accessibility and safety standards. The cramped entrance hall at street level, along with an inadequate number of ticket gates, creates a bottleneck during rush hour that causes overcrowding on the stairway and impedes the safe movement of passengers.

And for those who struggle with the stairs, or simply aren't able to use them, there is no alternative – Loughborough Junction has no lift.

The station has so far failed to benefit from Network Rail's "Access For All" funding, despite support from local MP Helen Hayes, and Lambeth Council. In 2023 a petition calling for the installation of a lift was instigated by the Loughborough Junction Action Group in an attempt to raise awareness.

### **CAMPAIGN**

More recently we, some local residents, have formed a campaign group dedicated to the issue of accessibility at the station. In investigating the history and layout of the station in some detail, it has become obvious that installing a lift and making the station fit for purpose is not a trivial project. Inevitably, it would involve taking over one or more additional arches in the viaduct.

Our aim is to push for meaningful investment in the station, and we believe it is necessary for proper and realistic consideration to be given to a number of options when it comes to deciding how improvements can be delivered. We hope to work constructively with Lambeth, Network Rail, Govia Thameslink, the Arch Company and any other interested parties, including of course the local community.

## Local History

### LAMBETH COUNCIL REPORT

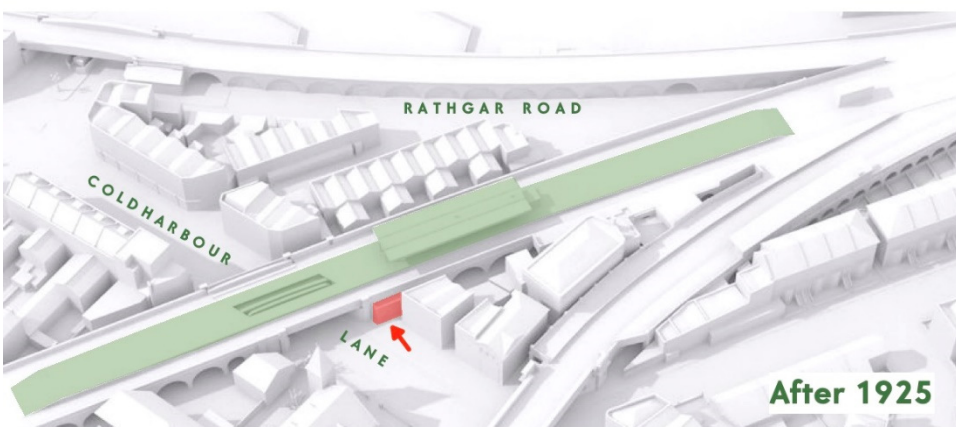
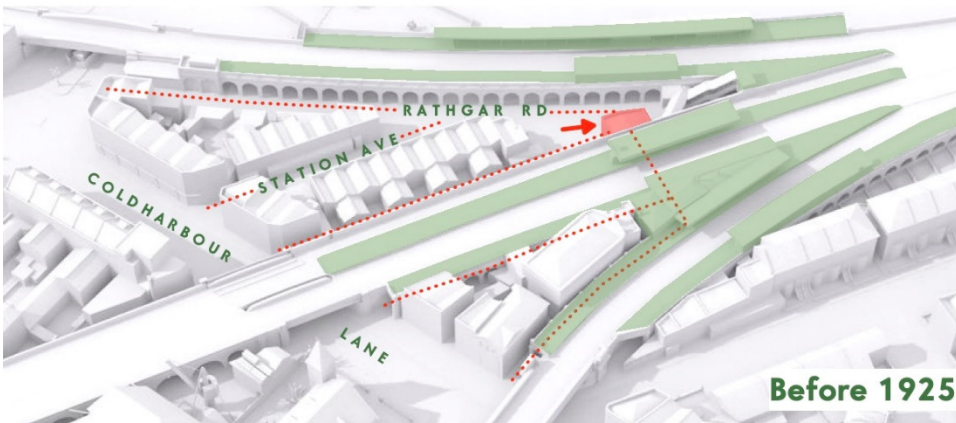
In 2020, Lambeth Council commissioned a desktop report which looked at the feasibility of installing lifts at five stations in the borough. In 2025, of these five, Loughborough Junction station has by far the highest number of passengers using an individual stairway. It is the only one with a single island platform: allowing direct step-free access between ticket office and trains to be provided with just one lift and no expensive overbridge. Additionally, it is the only one of the five which has seen passenger numbers not just return to, but exceed the levels seen just prior to Covid. Of the five stations already identified by Lambeth as priorities for step-free access, there is a very strong case to be made for Loughborough Junction.

### A MILLION ENTRIES & EXITS

With over a million annual entries & exits Loughborough Junction is well used – more so than many might think – and demands on it will increase as several major car-free housing developments become occupied. Its users also include staff and patients at King's College Hospital which in addition to its main site half a mile away now has an outpost in Loughborough Junction itself. As a busy station, with a single platform (and therefore potentially accessible via a single lift) there is a strong case to be made for many decades of neglect to be put right. One hundred years of no improvement in accessibility is far too long.

The LJ Station Access group's website is at: [LJStation.com](http://LJStation.com)

A detailed explanation of the station's history can be found at [colin-m.com/LJ4D/station](http://colin-m.com/LJ4D/station)



*The arrows mark the location of the station's main entrance and ticket office, before and after its 1925 rebuild. The dotted lines show the various ways the ticket office in the older station could be reached. In addition to Rathgar Road and Station Avenue, there were pedestrian routes that ran under or alongside the viaducts and platforms.*

Written by Colin MacInnes, a member of the LJ station access group

## “A Symphony of Youth”

### **BROCKWELL PARK**

Are there historical precedents to Brockwell Park popular concerts?

The obvious one is the 1937 Coronation celebration where planning permission was required for the stage sets. That was a Royal occasion.

### **MICHAEL TIPPETT**

Closer to recent experience might be an event staged in Brockwell Park in June 1939. This was a fundraiser for Belgrave Children’s hospital, with music supplied by the Morley College orchestra conducted by Michael Tippett. The event ran between 21<sup>st</sup> June 1939 and 15<sup>th</sup> July 1939 and was entitled “A Symphony of Youth”. The event offered LCC school kids acting and singing experience.

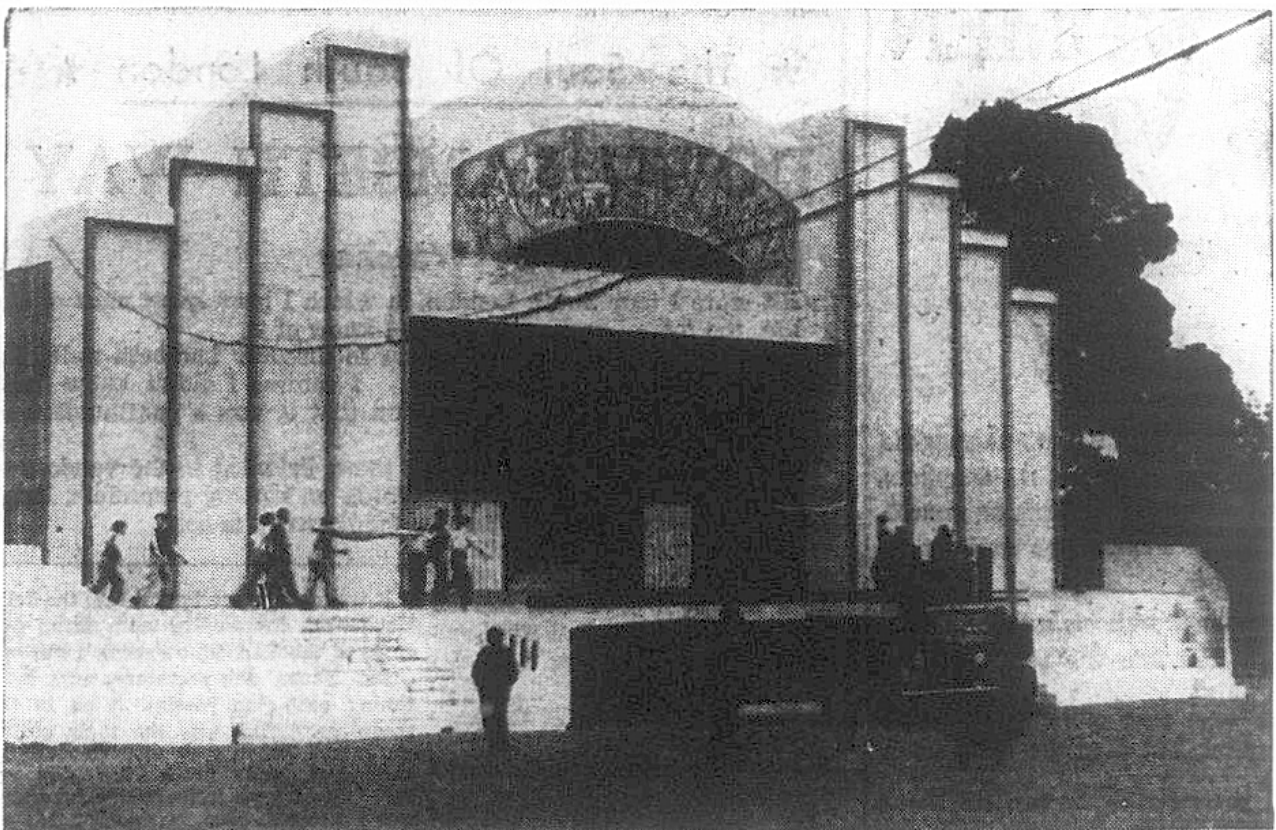
### **PARTICIPANT**

Jeffrey Rumble, a participant, describes the event in his book “A Brockwell Boy” published by the Herne Hill Society. “The open air theatre was very Art Nouveau in appearance. Great slab-sided panels flanked the proscenium with gently curved and fluted ornamentation and all finished in pale cream and pastel yellows. It also boasted an electric organ, something quite new in this country at that time, and greatly admired. The instrument was tested each morning during the run of the show, and could be heard quite clearly in my home, perhaps half a mile away.”

### **PERFORMANCE**

Jeffrey Rumble’s account of parts of a performance sounds quite larky:

THE SOUTH LONDON PRESS



Schoolboys helping to put the finishing touches to the open-air theatre for the “Symphony of Youth,” which opens next Wednesday in Brockwell Park.

South London Press picture of the open air proscenium arch being prepared by participants (16-6-39)

## Local History

“The actual performance itself was a series of scenes enacted by various youth organisations and was full of movement and colour. My favourite was the item involving an attack by Indians on a Cowboy outpost. The Cowboys built a stockade on the stage and hordes of Indians descended upon it, actually running from the back of the grassy auditorium, through the astonished audience, and clambered up onto the stage, where they were killed off by much musket fire. I expect there was more plot to it than that. It all ended when the Indian Chief in a full feathered head-dress, made friends with the Boss Cowboy and they smoked a peace-pipe together amidst thunderous applause.

### ROSENDALE ROAD INDIANS

The participants in this cameo were all local schoolboys, and my school at Rosendale Road provided a quota of Indians. The fortunate few not only got time off school, but also got bronze make-up, knives, bows and arrows, tomahawks and all the paraphernalia that we would-be Indians only dreamed of. After the dress rehearsal, 'our' Indians were allowed to come back to school still in their war paint and they were not reluctant to show off their golden-brown chests under their school shirts. I envied

them only slightly less than the schools who provided the Cowboys.”

### YOUTH'S SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The music was arranged by Frederick Holloway the organist for the show, with Michael Tippett conducting the orchestra. The scenario was devised by the novelist Louis Golding and included a torchlight procession to symbolise “youth's spiritual awakening”.

### ART FOR THE PEOPLE

What happened to these pioneers of art for the people? Louis Golding, already a famous novelist and travel writer continued to write until his death in 1958. During the war he also wrote 5 screenplays for films – notably “Proud Valley” starring Paul Robeson and “Freedom Radio” about underground wireless stations behind Nazi lines.

Michael Tippett, a pacifist but also strongly anti-Nazi started work on his breakthrough work “A Child of Our Time” immediately after the outbreak of World War II on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1939. He went on to be a “national treasure” in the classical world, but never somehow reaching the wide public of his younger contemporary Benjamin Britten.

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These dancers are going through an audition at Brockwell Park, Herne Hill, for Symphony of Youth, Lambeth's mammoth open-air production which opens in the park on June 21 for a month's run. Dancers of any sort—folk, acrobatic, tap, anything except plain ballroom—are still needed. Application should be made to Carrington Wood, Lambeth Town Hall, S.W.2.

Audition  
In The  
Park

*This advert appeared in the South London Press on 16<sup>th</sup> June 1939, along with a call for dancers willing to audition via Lambeth Town Hall.*

## Mystery Building on Brixton Road



*Tram and White Horse pub Brixton Road c. 1945  
Beckett Collection Lambeth Archives  
ID; IMA 2022/8 Ref: 16177*

The junction of Brixton Road and Loughborough Road c. 1945. Another intriguing image from the incredible Lambeth Archives borough photos collection <https://boroughphotos.org/lambeth>

The streetscape, the Old White Horse pub, cars parked on the pub forecourt, the tram, horse drawn cart, are all of interest. But what intrigued me most in this image was the large building in the background. I had not seen photos of this building before.

My understanding was that there were Victorian houses running along Brixton Road, prior to the building of estates and open spaces in the 1970s. So, what was this large building and when did it appear? My interest piqued, I decided to try and find out.

With a bit of research, looking at local directories, I found it was the warehouse of furniture removers F. L. Pettman. Pettman opened their furniture removers at 235 Brixton Road in the mid-1920s. When they moved in, they set up business in what was an early Victorian house. Their neighbours were Mrs Carroll at 233 and Mrs Mary Clothier renting rooms or apartments at 237 & 239. (Yes, back in the 1920s 'aparts', as Mrs Clothier lists her business was used. So, apartments is not just a fancy new continental word for flats. In the 1920s, people used it to describe flats. More likely in the case of 237 & 239, it was used to advertise for rooms to rent.)

235 Brixton Road, where F. L. Pettman based themselves, is marked with a red rectangle on the 1898 Ordnance survey map showing Brixton Road. 233 next door is on the corner of Mostyn Road



1898 Ordnance Survey Map from <http://www.layersoflondon.org>

## Local History

By 1935, Pettman furniture removers had taken over four Victorian properties, 233 to 239 Brixton Road. They knocked them down and built the large warehouse on the corner of Mostyn Road and Brixton Road. The building visible in the distance in the image at the start of this article.



*A drawing of the Pettman warehouse.  
From a postcard; Bill Linskey collection*

Pettman's large furniture warehouse was only 10 years old when it sustained bomb damage during WW2. Luckily for Pettman's the building was deemed as repairable, when many other buildings nearby were destroyed.

The company continued to operate their furniture removal and storage business from 233-239 Brixton Road after WW2. This was the London branch of F. L. Pettman, originally set up in 1870, in Margate, by Frederick Lewis Pettman. The Brixton based London branch closed around 1962, after a 40-year foray into the London furniture removal business. Happily, Pettmans is still operating today from their original premises in Margate.

<https://www.pettmans.com>



*A Pettman lorry from the 1930s liveried for both  
London and Margate  
Photo: Bill Linskey collection*

The large warehouse building, on the corner of Brixton Road and Mostyn Road, was demolished in the 1970s as part of the Myatt's Fields Estate development. It was replaced with a green space, the little-known 4th section of Max Roach Park.



*Section of Max Roach Park, corner of Mostyn  
Road and Brixton Road.*

*Photo by Tracey Gregory, May 2025*

Tracey Gregory

## Membership Renewals Due 1 September

Members will find a renewal form with this newsletter or sent with your electronic copy. Please do renew your membership. Subscriptions form a major part of our income, alongside sales of publications. This enables us to produce our newsletters, publish books about Brixton, host meetings, run our website etc.

If you have picked up this newsletter at a meeting or from the library, and are not a member, please do join us. Annual membership for OAPs and unwaged is £5, otherwise £10, or corporate membership is £25.

As well as helping our finances, we very much need members to take an active part in the work of the society. You can support us in so many ways, for example : we would very much welcome support to run stalls, at events at Brixton Windmill, or at the Local History Fair at Clapham Library this year on 6 September

If you have a particular interest in an area of Brixton, consider leading walks or writing articles to help share your knowledge; we can give you support and encouragement if you haven't done such things before. Do you have experience in planning, transport, housing or local government that you could bring to our committee? There are also many "back room" activities essential to keep the society running which are currently undertaken by too few people, for example, publication sales.

Please do get in touch.

Contact: [info@brixtonsociety.org.uk](mailto:info@brixtonsociety.org.uk)

# About the Brixton Society

Understanding the past, looking to the future

Member of Civic Voice and the London Forum of Amenity and Civic Societies

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### Contacts:

**General Correspondence:**

[secretary@brixtonsociety.org.uk](mailto:secretary@brixtonsociety.org.uk)

**About the newsletter:**

[newsletter@brixtonsociety.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@brixtonsociety.org.uk)

**Planning issues:**

[planning@brixtonsociety.org.uk](mailto:planning@brixtonsociety.org.uk)

**Membership:**

[membership@brixtonsociety.org.uk](mailto:membership@brixtonsociety.org.uk)

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