# STREATHAM SOCIETY NEWS

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*The Celebration Cake*
*(Photo Sandy Hardy)*

**THE STREATHAM SOCIETY CELEBRATES 50 YEARS SERVING THE COMMUNITY**

# STREATHAM SOCIETY MEETINGS & EVENTS

**MEETINGS**

Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm in St Leonard's Church, Streatham High Rd/Tooting Bec Gardens. Booking not required. Visitors are welcome but are requested to donate £1 towards expenses. Refreshments are available. Please check our website for details and any changes or additions.

*3 Sept* **Lost Rivers of South London** by Dr Tom Bolton, author of several most informative walker's guides, including 'London's Lost Rivers' and 'Vanished City'. His books will be on sale.

*1 Oct* **tbc**

*5 Nov* **Tooting in the Second World War** by Geoff Simmons.

**EVENTS**

**LAMBETH HERITAGE FESTIVAL**

**LAMBETH HISTORY FAIR Saturday 7 September** Free entry

The Heritage Day is hosted by the Streatham Society at St Leonard's Church and Church Hall. There will be stalls, talks, walks, exhibitions and music from organisations across Lambeth. Refreshments will include delicious cakes by the Streatham WI. Stalls will provide information and sell publications. The programme includes 4 talks, 10 walks/tours and much more.

**See more Heritage Day details and Events listed on p.34**

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*The Streatham Society welcomes articles of interest to our members, but the editor reserves the right to edit these. Opinions expressed may not be those of the Society. Articles and photographs may be reproduced only with the editor's permission.*

# STREATHAM ROUND AND ABOUT

## PLANNING MATTERS

### WHITHER STREATHAM HIGH ROAD

Sir John Betjeman's neglected much loved poem about Streatham High Road still captures its idiosyncratic bustling character.

***Streatham High Road, where the buses trundle,***
***Through avenues of shops that hustle and huddle,***
***A concrete artery of suburban sprawl,***
***Where life in myriad forms unfurl and brawl.***
***The greengrocer's shout, the butchers' cleaver's thud,***
***A symphony of commerce in the daily grind and thrum,***
***Old women with trolleys, schoolboys with a nudge,***
***Life's varied tapestry beneath the urban sun.***
***Edwardian facades, with weathered charm,***
***Stand juxtaposed against new glassy towers,***
***Each brick a whisper of history's arm,***
***Each pane a reflection of future powers.***
***Cafes and bistros, the cosmopolitan feast,***
***Here, the world's flavours blend east to west.***
***The Odeon lights with a nostalgic glow,***
***Echoing reels of yesteryears' show,***
***All converge on this street so long and broad,***
***Finding in Streatham a common accord.***
***Oh, Streatham High Road, your pulse so steady,***
***A lifeline for many, both rough and ready,***
***You weave together lives in your endless tide,***
***A vibrant vein where London's heartbeats reside.***

Now before you all start reaching for your dusty book of Betjeman poems, don't get disheartened - this poem was produced by AI (Artificial Intelligence) in the style of John Betjeman, as if he was writing about the High Road. But if he had penned such a poem, he would no doubt have portrayed the vibrancy of the High Road – Europe's longest continuous high street – which continues today.

The jury is out on whether the High Road finds favour. Back in April 2012, comedian Jo Brand referred to Streatham's "town centre" as a 'sh**hole', yet did come back two years later to open the refurbishment of the new Streatham Tate Library. We are used to the High Road evolving, but as always, the grand question is whether it can be improved.

A recent review by the Streatham Society of the High Road conservation area flags up some issues – not so much the inevitable short-term shop changes, but significant and interesting buildings that are vacant and in disrepair tarnishing the High Road's appearance. Of course, as with all High Streets there have been attempts of planning for improvement, notably Lambeth Council's *Streatham Growth and Investment Strategy* which still runs until 2030. And InStreatham Bid held a summit last year on practical improvements that could be made. Below are some of the problems as you walk down the High Road.

Starting at the Streatham Hill end we immediately face the thorny problem of how to maintain Streatham Hill Theatre. Owned and occupied now by the Ruach City Church formal plans for the changes to the iconic building are at glacial pace, but meanwhile as with any neglected unused building there are major problems with damp and water ingression which we hope the new owners will rectify immediately.

Next on the list is Streatham Hill Station built in 1856 and still serving Streatham's commuters. Can a small station keep up with the current demands and, as we've seen with other stations, they get re-modelled but not for the better. Lambeth's strategy talks about a dialogue with TfL and Network Rail to redevelop the site though no discernible action yet.

Across the road turning into Leigham Court Road, along here and other adjacent roads there have been 73 Thames Water emergencies since 2020. Road works particularly from Thames Water are now a constant feature not only here but along the High Road. Here the iconic Dorchester Café is about to be demolished to be replaced by an anonymous block of flats. Opposite there are plans for the car park area at the side of the shops to be earmarked for potential flats under Lambeth's site allocation plan.

The Horse & Groom Pub is probably a bit of a success story with plans for the pub to be re-opened with upstairs for use as a hotel and then houses to be built in the car park at the back. This site has a long history for potential development dating back nearly seventy years with similar plans to build either 16 flats or six semi-detached houses behind the pub provoking intense local opposition. The houses will now arrive but thankfully the pub is retained.

Opposite, the ABC Cinema is closed, last used to sell carpets but nearly twenty-five years since it was a cinema. When the rear was converted into the Picture House flats, they didn't leave enough space at the front for a sizeable retail development which is now proving problematic.

Further on Elgar House Kwik Fit plies a busy trade which should have been in Betjeman's AI poem. The conservation area statement states this is a "large monotonous office block that creates a deadening break in the retail frontage of the High Road. The whole building stands back from the road breaking the sweep of grand apartment blocks and disrupting the pavement frontage of shops." One wonders what was in the minds of planners who granted permission back then.

Used until recently as offices for the Performing Rights Society, the building has been approved for residential use with sixty flats to be built but so far, no signs of building even though we apparently have a major housing crisis.

*The ABC Cinema (Photo Lambeth Archives)*

A similar story with the old Police Station on the corner with Shrubbery Road. Built in 1912 replacing a previous station, interestingly the site anticipated the current key worker home models by having much needed officer accommodation at the rear (30 single men at 1 shilling per week each). Approval was given way back in 2020 by Lambeth Council to create office space and 40 flats. But it's now a sad site with graffiti on the side – though no anti-police slogans.

*Once a thriving Police Station*

Next door but one, Pratts & Payne pub is similarly boarded up for sale and looking through the window you can observe a Tracy Emin-style bed artistic installation either for an artistic purpose or to create the impression someone is living there. The present building dates from 1932 built for Burton's the gentlemen's outfitters and designed in their Art Deco house style. Despite its short-term life, the pub proved to be a popular part of the Streatham community. But Pratts & Payne has suffered like a lot of pubs and is now on the market as a "development opportunity" - the watchword now for more flats.

Across the road at Streatham Green all eyes are on what proposals will be presented to improve this "green space" – currently an eyesore beset by a lot of anti -social behaviour and associated flocks of pigeons. It's come on quite a bit since described in 1910 by Herbert Baldwin, a local historian, as "a pleasant oasis in the wilderness of bricks". The aim of the £200k refurbishment is to make it welcoming for all. Plans are to be consulted on over the summer, but the term "exciting journey" used in enticing people to participate is a bit over egged, with many questioning what changes can stop anti-social behaviour.

*Pratts & Payne Pub*

Along Gleneldon Mews there are the 19th Century stables built to serve the High Street shops complete with a rare, cobbled street. The conservation area statement describes the Mews as "an unusual, charming, and relatively still intact area of light industry not normally associated with Streatham". Although frequently subject to planning applications to create bijou flats Lambeth Council to be fair have remained firm in safeguarding the Mews as an area for light industry and small creative businesses. The difficulty is that the bottom half consists mainly of car workshops serving a useful purpose but creating now probably the most congested street in Streatham.

Down the dip we await the six-storey hotel to replace the Hideaway, finally approved earlier this year. What will be interesting is how this will affect that part of the High Road and what custom it brings to shops, cafes, and restaurants. Next door is the sorry looking Bedford Park Hotel built in 1882 with a distinctive mock Tudor half-timbered gable and a great example of a Victorian pub, but now bedraggled.

*Century House*

Finally, Century House, a stark imposing building in the Art Deco style, purpose built as the headquarters of the jewellers and goldsmiths James Walker and Sanders & Sons then one of the largest chains of jewellery shops in Britain. Interestingly this building was an early example of office to flats conversion dating back to the 1960's. However, it was removed from the conservation area earlier this year, though for what it's worth is locally listed. With boarded up windows and the clocks stopped it is hardly a good welcoming advert as you enter the High Road. Apart from continually keeping it clean from graffiti it's difficult to see what its prospects are.

## WOODGATE TOWERS - THE BEGINNING OF A POSTMORTEM

Time may be running out on stopping the Woodgate Towers monolith. But given it's likely that Streatham Vale will see other high-rise buildings in the future are there any lessons that can be learnt obviously with the benefit of hindsight to prevent further incongruous developments.

One issue raised by residents is that it seems impossible to stop a planning juggernaut of this kind proceeding with great momentum. But also, was this all pre-ordained always going to get the planning nod even with local opposition?

It's very likely there must have been strong political support for high rise housing in Streatham Vale. Putting large developments on major transport hubs is a GLA requirement, plus the council needs to meet demanding housing targets. Though this went against what everyone thought were clear safeguards in Lambeth's Local Plan to not have high rise in this and other areas south of the Borough.

Some Freedom of Information requests made to Lambeth Council have started to reveal more of what happened, though it's a bit like a complex Miss Marple investigation and the pieces in the jigsaw don't together yet.

Lambeth Council entered into something known as a Planning Performance Agreement with Hadley the developer to set up a joint team involving Hadley and council planning staff to develop the scheme which was signed by Hadley on 1st April 2021. A Planning Performance Agreement is for major applications where major development proposals are deemed to be in accordance with the Development Plan for the area or have the potential to meet the Council's objectives. The Council then instigates a Project Team approach and seek to manage the project through a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA). Essentially Lambeth worked closely with the developers and Hadley appear to have paid Lambeth Planning a fee of £9,315 per month to get council planning resources – to date this could possibly amount to a staggering fee of well over £400K going to Lambeth though the figures need to be clarified.

The agreement signed stated that the development will benefit from strong engagement with council members including ward members and members of the Planning Applications Committee (PAC), though with the caveat that "their decision-making function is not compromised". But it did state the applicants would be invited to present their proposals to the council's Growth and Investment panel which usually consist of the leader of the council (then Jack Hopkins), the CEO of Lambeth (then Andrew Travers), the cabinet member responsible for planning and regeneration (then Matthew Bennett), the Chair of the Planning Applications Committee (then Clair Wilcox) and councillors and senior managers. The agreement stated that the ultimate aim was to ensure that the best development outcomes are achieved – but also noted the scheme should serve as an example that can be built upon in the development of proposals for further expansion in line with the council's programme.

Sadly, Lambeth won't share with us the notes of the meetings between Lambeth and Hadley, nor the minutes of the Growth and Investment Panel even though this is council group.

The agreement did emphasise the need for appropriate consultation with the local community so there was "a sense of community ownership" of the project. But as we know the public consultation was run through the developers and many felt wasn't going to make any difference. The big question is should the planning agreement have included representatives of the local community so they could have shared in this momentous decision making.

We know that there were 34 meetings between Hadley and Lambeth officers before the application was considered by PAC. Also, local ward councillors met with Hadley in January and July 2021 and the 14th September 2022. Councillor Danny Adilypour, local ward councillor, also met the developers on the 10 August 2022. There don't appear to be formal notes of these meetings.

There seems to be a serious power imbalance going against the local community not able to be connected into the real decision making and consultation largely nugatory. So, if this scheme was going to be prescient in changing the whole character of Streatham Vale in the absence of a neighbourhood plan shouldn't there have been a council-led community forum set up to discuss this and the implications? No doubt more will come out of the woodwork.

## STREATHAM PUBS AND LOCAL HISTORY: THE WETHERSPOONS EXPERIENCE

Pubs are part of Streatham's physical heritage and those with interesting architectural and historical value need preserving.

One aspect of local pubs is how they relate to the local community and its history. This is most visible in the names of pubs and what they convey about the area. The now saved Horse & Groom on Streatham High Road is renamed as "Stanleys" named after the owner's son allegedly. It has previously been called

the Halfway House amongst other names. The Manor Arms pub occupies the site of the lodge, coach-house and water tower of Manor Park House. The now defunct Pratts & Payne neatly embraced two bits of local history, an iconic department store and a local sex celebrity. But many pub names though sounding historical don't have an automatic connection to the area.

Some pubs and restaurants do feature some local history connection through local photographs of the past. The Wetherspoons pub chain has a more coherent approach to pursuing local history as part of their brand often naming their pubs after high-profile personalities with local connections as well as restoring historic buildings into pubs. The Wetherspoon's website features histories of its pubs The Holland Tringham Streatham - J D Wetherspoon and clearly pursuing local history is a core part of its brand identity.

The newly refurbished Wetherspoon's Holland Tringham on the High Road opened in 1998 and was named after the Victorian artist and illustrator. Indeed, his Wikipedia entry proudly states he has a pub named after him "as Streatham's most famous artist". Inside the pub there are photos and information about local celebrities including the Streatham worthies, the Howland Family, Henry Tate, William Dyce alongside Holland Tringham with some of his drawings and some photos of old Streatham.

Whether drinkers appreciate the whole story about Holland Tringham is questionable. Sadly, he turned to alcohol (perhaps now challenging Wetherspoons keeping you safe mantra) and met an untimely death on the Isle of Man in 1908 where he had been admitted to an asylum aged only 45. A local newspaper report of an exhibition after his death commented that his friends weren't surprised by his death, "his vagaries and peculiarities, too often the accompaniment of the highly endowed artistic temperament were too well known to them" and if "he had possessed the well balanced mind of the average commercial man or cared for fame he would have probably lived to good old age and died with the auriol of a ripe celebrity". And with no family in tow there was a sad notice in The Streatham and Wandsworth Chronicle on Saturday 29th August 1908 requesting claims against his estate.

But this is a case of bringing history to people, remembering that even on a cold November Tuesday evening the pub has well more customers than attending a Streatham Society talk! There is debate not for now about whether Wetherspoon's version of history just concentrates on the exceptionalism of local people rather than the deeper trends in local history. But in the absence of a Streatham Museum the Holland Tringham is worth a visit, open from 8am with free admission though it helps if you buy a drink.

## ANOTHER SAD CHAPTER IN THE 124 SUNNYHILL ROAD SAGA

Number 124 Sunnyhill Road a fine Victorian cottage is looking very sorry for itself with a hole in its roof. The owners seek planning permission to knock it down and build in its place. It started with two three-bedroom houses which did

*124 Sunnyhill Road*

get approval. Previous applications have talked boldly about regenerating an "unmodernized and dilapidated property on an under-utilised site" and create high quality much needed family housing – though of course inevitably not affordable housing. Meanwhile the building is left to decay in a dilapidated state, so according to surveyors must be demolished. Now the latest plans appear to have leapt in scale to be a block of seven flats with thirteen bedrooms squeezed in on three floors with two flats being basement flats. So, from a small family house with three people living there it could cater for between 13 and 18 people living there. Needless to say, neighbours are extremely worried about being overlooked with roof terraces as well as extra load on the road.

This is an example of what is known in the planning jargon as "windfall development" – a site becomes available and can accommodate more housing. The council will seek to maximise the supply of additional homes in the borough to meet and exceed Lambeth's housing requirement of 13,350 homes for the ten-year period 2019/20 to 2028/29. And this means seeking to optimise levels of residential density in accordance with the design-led approach set out in London Plan policy. What we are seeing in common with all London Boroughs is houses on largish plots being knocked down replaced by multiple units. Of course, this is by no means new and over time Streatham has always changed with older buildings redeveloped and new ones in their place.

The big question is whether in the race to create more housing, cramming in new housing units fits in or over burdens an area. The risk is we have ugly and incongruous buildings appearing and in some cases such as 124 Sunnyhill Road a loss of heritage.

**SHOULD WE PRESERVE INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS ?**

W.R. Auker the joinery business closed after over fifty years operating in premises on the corner of Mitcham Lane and Ambleside Avenue. Inevitably there are plans now to demolish the Victorian workshops and re-develop the site with a three and half storey block of nine flats with a "contemporary feel" complete with roof gardens.

*WR Aukers & Sons, Mitcham Lane, and the proposed block of flats replacing Aukers*

Although the workshops wouldn't win any architectural awards and sit outside the conservation area, it does seem a pity that a Victorian building is demolished, with a rather boring anonymous building emerging in its place. It might have been great as a pub or restaurant with a micro-brewery or a community centre or even stylish offices and elsewhere in London this may have happened. But Lambeth council appear gung-ho at permitting demolition of buildings even though the climate effects are damaging.

**TIM WHITAKER, TRUSTEE STREATHAM SOCIETY**

## STREATHAM GREEN - A COMMENT

For several years I have noted various (usually failed) plans for the Green. None mention that this must be the most polluted part of Streatham. It is at the junction of four very busy main roads with constant slow moving and stationary traffic, pedestrian crossings, and bus stops for all the High Road routes. The grass must have a very high percentage of pigeon and rat droppings plus dog mess.

I have used the Green for over 55 years; its use has changed little. It is a busy path between bus stops and seating mainly used by harmless often older men, resting and chatting. Anti-social behaviour has long been a problem. Apart from special events (the food festivals seem the only survivors), is this where women meet or take children when Tooting and Streatham Commons are so close?

Following public complaints and proposals, I have observed its daytime use. I do not feel comfortable sitting alone but have never been molested. This space should be preserved and maintained. Keep it open with sleep-deterrent seating, no litter-trapping planting, regular litter clearance, monitor and deter anti-social behaviour - and install low metal railings to protect the Dyce Fountain. I recommend sitting and observing before any planning decisions anywhere.

Finally congratulations to dedicated volunteers who have long tried to keep the Green litter free. **Judy Harris**

## EVENTS

### THE FURZEDOWN PROJECT'S GREEN PLAQUE *(Photos MB & the Project)*

Despite the rain a large crowd gathered on Tuesday 21 May for the unveiling at the Centre in Moyser Road. The plaque is in honour of Dr Norman Levinson who founded the Furzedown Project 49 years ago.

His family, daughter Wendy and son Andrew *(left with Dr Lewicka)*, friends and colleagues, Dr Halina Lewicka and Francis Appleby, were joined by Wandsworth's Deputy Mayor Sana Jafri, members of the Project and supporters from across the community. The plaque was unveiled by Dr Rosena Allin-Khan MP *(below)*. Dr Levinson lived at 42 Woodfield Avenue, Streatham.

Streatham Society member and Hoadley Road resident Dr Halina Lewicka, 100 this year, was a special guest. She was a partner with Dr Levinson at the Greyswood Surgery in Furzedown. A Society member since 2004, she is still very active, interesting and interested - and she has always paid her subscription on time with a complimentary note. It was a pleasure chatting with her.

*The cake, the plaque and a painting of Dr Levinson*

**KITE DAY** *(Photos MB)*

Thousands came to a sunny Streatham Common on Kite Day, Sunday May 12, organised by FoSC (Friends of Streatham Common). Our book stall was very busy and new members were recruited. We met local councillors, the Mayor of Lambeth and Steve Reed now MP for the new Streatham and Croydon North.

Congratulations to the volunteer organisers of the event, their helpers and those on the charity stalls. These are dwindling in number yet manage to keep community events alive. Our photographs include entertainment organised by FoSC and Shea Richardson, our Chair, in front of the Sttham Society stall.

**MB/JH**

## HENRY TATE GARDENS TOURS *(Photos MB)*

Three outdoor events took place around the top of Streatham Common on the afternoon of Sunday 26 May. Heavy showers were forecast but it was sunny all afternoon.

Our two regular Spring tours of the grounds of Park Hill, Sir Henry Tate's former home, was part of the Wandsworth Festival. About 80 people were guided round the estate by Robert Doyle and John W Brown.

Thanks to Mark Bery and Freda Graham for organising all.

Photographs show the Park Hill mansion and the listed artificial stone 'mediaeval' tower and grotto with our visitors following the leader.

## RYECROFT ROAD OPEN GARDEN *(Photos JH)*

A short walk away from Park Hill was the open afternoon at a private garden in Ryecroft Road. This was the only local garden in National 'Yellow book' scheme this year and the first time the owners had entered it. The grounds were extensive and beautifully maintained. There were views towards the North Downs from a roof terrace. Plants and homemade teas were on sale. I hope it will participate next year - and some others previously opened.

## NORWOOD GROVE BOWLS CLUB

Entering the gate from Ryecroft Road into Norwood Grove, the entrance to the Bowls Club *(below)* is on the right. Their open day publicised another tranquil area known only to members and visitors.

After a warm welcome visitors could try a game or sit and watch. It was good to hear that volunteers and membership are increasing. Some children and young people were learning to bowl - and several were impressive.

## STREATHAM FOOD FESTIVAL

The Streatham Food Festival 20-22 June celebrated the flavours of Streatham. The Streatham Food Tour offered taster dishes and a competition hosted by Streatham eateries from Streatham Hill to Streatham Common.

On the afternoon of Saturday 22 June the Food Fair was held on Streatham Green *(below)*. Running alongside the monthly Village Market it offered world foods, live music and a DJ with a dance demonstration from Whizz Dance.

An exhibition and information on planned improvements to the Green offered visitors a chance to choose their options.

## HERITAGE DAY AT THE WOODFIELD PAVILION

*The Streatham Society book stall, a talk and playing chess*

This event was held on Saturday 1 June at the recently restored pavilion on the edge of Tooting Common. There were short talks by the Tooting History Group, Dr Tom Bolton and Aidan Steer, and the Streatham Society, plus a walk by the Balham Society. Other groups had outdoor stalls including the Brixton Chess Club. Delicious refreshments including homemade cakes were served by the Streatham WI. It was well-attended. Thanks to all who made it such a great day.

**MB/JH**

## SIGNAGE - WELCOME TO STREATHAM

*Heart Streatham* published *(above)* the first sign then later the corrected version recently painted at the top of the Russell's Footpath steps opposite Streatham Station. The original sign shows an apostrophe and missing H. Was this a joke or a test of observation? Surely it wasn't a promotional sign passed by Lambeth Council or any pro-Streatham publicity group?

The signage, including directions to the Rookery, were beautifully painted by the man on the scaffolding *(right)* and brighten up a dark corner. But they are only visible to the few locals who use the path and the steep steps. Station commuters cannot see them except perhaps the sign at the bottom of the steps 'Welcome to Streatham' visible only to approaching trains.

As a Facebook post pointed out, the T and H should both be missing if ridiculing Streatham was the intention.

Please keep trashing Streatham comments to some social media members.

**JH**

**HARBOROUGH ROAD SIGN**

Attached are the before/after photos of the very beautiful cast iron sign I restored in situ recently. My wife and I are new to the area and spotted it on our evening walks.

The response from the local community as I was out there scrubbing, cleaning and painting was overwhelming. It was gratifying to know that people of all ages and backgrounds universally valued the original street furniture. I estimate 60+ people came to say thank you over the five or so visits I made.

Many mentioned that they were worried the council was going to replace it with a modern sign, so I hope Lambeth Council has a record of these pieces and protects them accordingly. I have since spotted signs of an identical design along many roads adjoining the High Road, nearly all mounted at first floor level (hence survival rates over lower ones, I suppose).

Regarding date, I have been told this is pre-1917 as that's when postal code numbers were introduced, so 1890s-1917. The comma is a nice touch. The original red of the 'S.W.' on the Harborough Road sign was only revealed after sanding, so that has been reinstated. Good quality hammarite paint was used for the job, applied after suitable preparation to reveal the immaculate metal surface beneath. Here's hoping it lasts another 100 years.

**Resident, Wellfield Road**

*An excellent contribution both to the restoration of good signage and Streatham's heritage. Well done new resident - welcome to Streatham.* **JH**

# LOCAL HISTORY MATTERS

## THE WOODFIELD GROVE TENNIS CLUB – Centenary celebration 2024

The Club was formed in 1924 by builders of houses in surrounding streets. Tucked-away between Woodfield Avenue, Mount Ephraim Lane and Woodfield Grove, the club was built with 4 grass courts and a pavilion. It quickly flourished and was one of many tennis clubs in Streatham at the time

In 1993 Brazil's Maria Esther Bueno and winner of 19 Grand Slam Titles agreed to become an Honorary member and she frequently visited when in the UK. Maria was not the only celebrity tennis player associated with the club. Long-time Chairman Peter Risdon, who was a stockbroker, forged a close friendship with Aussie legend Lew Hoad and Peter took a sabbatical to manage Lew Hoad's Campo de Tennis in Spain.

In 2001 the Millennium Cup was launched. It was the brainchild of Barbara Wancke of the Woodfield Grove Club and involved the 5 active tennis clubs in the Streatham area. It was not until 2013 that Woodfield Grove, the smallest of the 5 clubs, won the trophy

Centenary celebrations were sadly muted with the death of Peter Risdon days before the club's celebrations in June this year

Peter had been a member of Woodfield Grove since a child, and its staunchest supporter, acting as Men's Captain and Treasurer before becoming the club's longest serving Chairman, and helping to champion the club's revival through the rebuilding of its facilities in 1999 with Lottery funding.

*Source: A History of Woodfield Grove Tennis Club by Barbara Wancke*

**Mark Bery**

**LEST WE FORGET - WE REMEMBERED** *(Photo MB)*

*D-Day in the grounds of Streatham & Clapham High School*

## STREATHAM AT WAR (WWII) - LEST WE FORGET

About 35 years ago c.1990 the very active Streatham Society Local History Group ran two memories projects: 'Memories of Streatham' and 'Streatham at War - at Home and Abroad'. They attracted about 30 items. The writers may be no longer with us but their written memories live on.

Two of the war-time contributions below recall an age long-gone. First, a teenager's recollections and second, a childhood experience. Others will follow in future issues.

### WAR REMINISCENCES

I was almost 17 when war was declared and it was to be another two years before I was called up. During that time, we all did rotas of fire-watching at our work-places - surprising how far one can walk over roofs around Holborn Viaduct ans Snow Hill!

In Streatham Vale, I and my immediate friends were trained as stirrup-pump teams of three. The leader had charge of the pump and two buckets of water were kept in his hallway. Should incendiaries be used, the other two had to report to the leader with the alacrity of a Life-Boat crew. We had training sessions from the Fire Brigade (or was it Civil Defence?) - using our pump, crawling on our bellies through smoke-filled rooms, with and without gas-masks, and several lectures.

Nothing much happened during the 'phoney war', but then, one Sunday evening, I heard the unmistakable whoosh, explosion and patter of incendiaries from a 'Molotov Cocktail'. My gallant team arrived and we rushed out (tin hats of course) with our equipment. We could see no roofs alight, but there was a little bonfire in Braeside Road. We prepared for action but, almost immediately, an A.R.P. Warden arrived and threw a sand-bag on it - a much more efficient extinguisher.

Out into Streatham Vale and we could see flames through Holy Redeemer Church windows. We rushed over there, only to be met by a Scouts Leader (who had his own team) and be told that everything was under control.

A passing bus-driver leaned out of his cab to tell us a shop was on fire round the corner. Off we went again to find the top floor of Thwaites Ironmongers burning nicely. But we were to be thwarted once again. Whilst we were trying to find a way in, the Fire Brigade arrived and we were summarily dismissed.

We found no more fires, which was just as well, as I think our buckets were devoid of water by this time. Afterwards, I heard of no property being destroyed by fire, and can only assume that many incendiaries fell in back gardens or other areas where they could be doused with a spade of earth or just left to burn themselves out.

**Frank Alflatt** (23 Braeside Road)

## MY WAR REMINISCENCES

### Evacuation

I was 6½ when war started and I don't have a coherent memory of the actual process of leaving London and being billeted in Worthing.

I think we walked from Telferscot School to Streatham Hill Station, but I remember nothing of the journey or how I finished up in a (?) church hall with nobody that I recognised.

I then remember being in a car with other children, sitting in the middle of the back seat. Every so often, the car would stop and the driver would take one or two children to a house and return without them. I was the last child and was taken to a house where only the maid was in. She took me to the sitting room where I sat and waited in fear of the dog barking in the next room.

Then Mrs Howe, with whom I was to live for the next few months, came home. She was a very kind elderly lady who must have found having a small child in the same house a great trial. But I was cared for in a thoughtful and affectionate way until I came back to London in May 1940, to spend the rest of the war at home.

### Education

In 1944, when the 'buzz bombs' were a daily event, our elementary school classes were held on the ground floor of the school, with blacked-out windows. We sat round tables working and dived underneath if a V.1. came over.

I think I was about 9 years old when our class, and presumably other classes too, had to knit sea-boot stockings for sailors. The finished pairs were sent off with a note inside from the knitter. As it took me weeks to turn a heel, I think I only knitted one and a bit stockings, so never wrote to 'one of our gallant boys'.

At one stage during the war, there were no milk bottles for school milk and we all had to take our own mug. My mother refused to send me with anything breakable and bought a Bakelite mug, which made the milk taste funny. We would queue up in the hall to have the milk ladled out from a churn.

### Childhood

The war was part of my life, I didn't remember peacetime and accepted that life was always like that. In the morning after air-raids we would go out collecting shrapnel; what I did with mine I have no idea, I certainly did not have the large collection some children had.

When sharing a flat with a friend's family, (an unexploded bomb outside ours had forced a temporary move), the other child and I shouted to each other during the raids at night, "One of ours", "One of theirs", as the planes flew over.

We never slept in the shelter, my mother preferred to be killed in her own bed. But early on in the war, when my parents' bed and mine were moved into the

sitting room because the position of the windows made it unlikely we would be hit by flying glass if it shattered, we had a very nervous neighbour who came in every evening until her husband came home. I would be in bed and they would listen to the radio or talk. Eventually my mother couldn't stand the constant presence of this neighbour, and that I was being kept awake until late, so she had to ask her not to come in.

**Irene Bennett**

## A 'JOLLY RIPPING' TIME WITH SEXTON BLAKE AT THE MITCHAM LANE PICTURE PALACE

Over the many years I, and others, have been collecting old picture postcard views of Streatham we have amassed a huge archive of photographs of the town mainly taken in the Edwardian period.

The backbone of the collection was put together by Marion and Graham Gower in the closing decades of the last century. This was subsequently added to by the late Patrick Loobey, with whom I worked to produce a series of books of post-card views of Streatham, Tooting and Balham; he providing the images and I the text.

Following Patrick's death I decided to start collecting images not in the collection so as to continue their work and these additional pictures have appeared in the various books I have published subsequently and which are sold on the Streatham Society bookstall.

Sometimes, it is the message on the reverse of the postcard which can be more interesting than the view on the front of the card. Such is the case with a card I recently acquired of Mitcham Lane *(right)*. I must have several hundred old views of this street, and indeed I already had a copy of this card in my collection, but what made it of interest to me was the following message sent to Miss Katie Smith of St. Omer, 44 Cranley Road, Westcliff-on-Sea in Essex by 'Ronald'. The card reads:

Dear Katie,

Just a line to tell you I went to the pictures this evening and saw one of Sexton Blakes called the 'Clue of the Wax Vesta' it was jolly ripping.
I remain with love to all,
Ronald.

The card is dated the 2nd May 1914 and as it features a view of Mitcham Lane suggests that Ronald lived in the area and most probably saw the film he refers to in the Mitcham Lane Picture Palace.

The Mitcham Lane Picture Palace was one of the earliest purpose built cinemas to open in Streatham and was located at 127 Mitcham Lane on the corner of Blegborough Road.

It was owned and built by James Harding who lived adjacent to the property at "The Ness" No. 125 Mitcham Lane. The Harding family owned a number of businesses in Mitcham Lane with a James Harding operating as a jobmaster at No. 95a, and J Harding & Co. running a furnishing, ironmongers and builders business at Nos. 115 and 117 Mitcham Lane.

Published by E. A. Wood, 148 Mitcham Lane S. W. 2. 41/4279

The building of the Picture Palace was greeted with much enthusiasm by the local press who praised the venture and advised "When opened the inhabitants of the district will have access at a moderate price to a place of entertainment for which there has been a long felt want around Mitcham Lane".

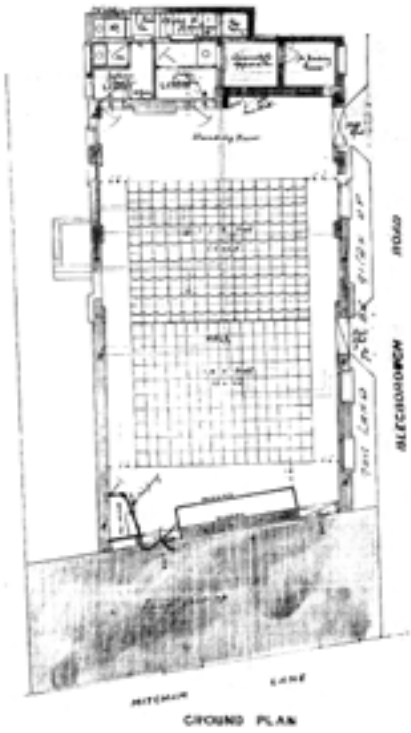
Despite its small size, no expense was spared to proved the neighbourhood with a building of some quality. The picture hall was ornately decorated with carved, fibrous plaster on the walls and ceilings, electric light was used throughout the building and accommodation was provided "for close upon five hundred people".

Patrons could watch the "latest and original" pictures in the comfort of their tip-up seats which were available at a cost of 3d, 6d, 9d and 1s. Afternoon matinees were arranged for children at half price.

The piano for the house was purchased from Charles Samuel Gould who operated a piano warehouse at 16 Mitcham Lane.

Patrons were able to obtain information on the programme or reserve seats by telephoning the box office. However, as the cinema's telephone number was STREATHAM 120 there would have been few private local subscribers to take advantage of these facilities.

To-Morrow!! OPENING DAY To-Morrow!!
Mitcham Lane Picture Palace
127 Mitcham Lane
Will be OPENED TO-MORROW (SATURDAY), OCTOBER 22nd.
AT ONE O'CLOCK ON SATURDAY
FOUR PERFORMANCES—
THE SHOW OF THE DISTRICT.
SATURDAY'S PROGRAMME:
Stalls 3d., 6d. Balcony, 9d. and 1s.
THE PICTURE PALACE, 127 MITCHAM LANE.




The cinema opened in October 1910 *(above)* and met with much success. On winter evenings its electric lights provided a splash of light out onto Mitcham Lane and long queues of patrons would wait patiently outside to take up their seats and escape to the open prairies of the American Wild West or the gang-lands of New York and Chicago.

The cinema operated "penny pictures" for children on Saturday afternoons, with westerns and gangster movies being the most popular and Buck Jones and Tom Mix being the most favoured stars. Saturday afternoons were loud and disorderly affairs, and the noise from the children was deafening. However, as the films were "silent" the din did not disrupt the youngsters enjoyment of the programme. The staff treated their young patrons with robust authority and misbehaving youngsters were apt to get a box round the ears. Goddards sweet shop next door to the cinema looked forward to the matinee performances as they did a roaring trade from the young cinema-goers.

The boisterous nature of the house was not limited just to children. By the mid-1920s the cinema had been taken over by Frederick John Freeman who inherited a somewhat disorderly cliental.

On 4 May 1924, Harry Harris together with his sailor brother from Marion Road, lost interest in the film and started a game of football at the back of the cinema, kicking about a piece of orange peel. As their conduct began to distract

the other patrons the manager, Mr. Sawdy, asked them to leave but they refused to go without getting their money back. However, when the sailor was given what he had paid for his admission he threatened to smash the manager's face in. As Mr. Sawdy opened the exit door Harris was as good as his word and punched the manager on the nose with another blow landing on his chin. As a fight developed the audience took fright and rushed to the exit to avoid the mayhem, whereupon a female usher fainted in the crush.

**Mitcham Lane Picture Palace**

Proprietor JAMES HARDING.

**127 Mitcham Lane** (Corner of Shipborough Road).

THE above Picture Palace has recently been erected at the Corner of **Shipborough Road, Mitcham Lane,** and is handsomely decorated. There is accommodation for close upon five hundred people, and the building will be

**OPENED NEXT WEEK.**

ONLY THE VERY FINEST FILMS WILL BE SHOWN. THE LATEST & ORIGINAL PICTURES.

**Good Seating Accommodation at POPULAR PRICES:**

**3d., 6d. 9d. and 1s.**

Electric Light Throughout. Operators' Room and Apparatus entirely isolated from the Auditorium.

TIP-UP SEATS THROUGHOUT THE HOUSE.

**Don't Fail to Come on the Opning Night. Value for Money.**

AFTERNOON MATINEES FOR CHILDREN WILL BE ARRANGED AT HALF-PRICE.

NOTE THE ADDRESS—

**THE PICTURE PALACE, 127 MITCHAM LANE** (CORNER OF SHIPBOROUGH ROAD).

'PHONE STREATHAM 1230. BOX OFFICE OPEN DAILY.

*Advertisement for Mitcham Lane Picture Palace, Streatham, 8 October 1910.*

It appears that the manager gave as good as he got for the Jolly Jack Tar returned to his Marion Road home with two black eyes and a cut mouth. Despite the brothers claiming they had got the worse for drink and it was the manager's strong-armed tactics in trying to eject them from the cinema that led to the fight, the magistrate sentenced them to eighteen days imprisonment.

The boisterous nature of the cinema's patrons continued and in March 1926 Charles Edward Glasson, a 21 year old labourer from Foss Road in Tooting, was fined £1 for rowdyism at the Pavilion Picture Palace in Mitcham Lane after assaulting Juliett Harmes, a female attendant.

## CINEMA SCENE

### MANAGER ASSAULTED: LADY FAINTS.

### RUSH FOR THE EXIT.

A scene at a Streatham picture palace, during which a lady attendant fainted, was described at the South-Western Police Court on Friday.

Harry Harris, a young man, living at Marion-road, Streatham, answered to a summons for assaulting Mr. H. Sawdy, manager of the Mitcham-lane picture palace.

## ATTENDANT KICKED.

### NOISE IN A PICTURE PALACE.

An assault in a picture palace was reviewed at the South Western Police Court.

Charles Edward Glasson (21), labourer, of Foss-road, Tooting, was one of others responsible, it was said, for rowdyism at the Pavilion Picture Palace, Mitcham-road, on Saturday.

## BANKRUPT OWNER OF STREATHAM CINEMA

### "Rash" Speculation of Lease At Mitcham Lane

### DISCHARGE SUSPENDED

Samuel Krep, described as S. Tropp, the late owner of the Picturedrome, Mitcham-lane, Streatham, applied for discharge in London Bankruptcy Court on Tuesday.

He failed in February with debts of £4,163, and no realised assets. In 1928 he bought the unexpired term (13½ years) of a lease of the Picturedrome for £2,750, of which £1,000 was left on mortgage; the balance he borrowed from his wife.

### CINEMA FAILURE

#### STREATHAM PROPRIETOR'S BANKRUPTCY

Samuel Krop, described in the receiving order as S. Tropp, Woodberry-grove, Finsbury Park, N., cinematograph exhibitor, lately carrying on business at Picturedrome Cinema, Mitcham-lane, Streatham, S.W., attended for public examination in London Bankruptcy Court on Tuesday. He failed in February last with gross liabilities £6,163, of which £4,163 are expected to rank against net assets £1,302.

In September, 1928, he purchased the unexpired term of a lease of the "Picturedrome Cinema," Mitcham-lane, Streatham, for £2,750, of which £1,000 was left on mortgage and the balance he borrowed from his wife. He borrowed monies from his wife, other relatives and friends to meet the cinema expenses, and in May, 1930, endeavoured to sell the cinema, but received no suitable offer; and in order to reduce expenditure he closed the cinema during June and July, 1930.

In August, 1930, he re-opened the cinema, which had been fitted with talking picture apparatus obtained under a hire-purchase agreement; although the takings increased they were insufficient to meet the additional expenses, and a judgment was obtained against him on December 3, 1930; he closed the cinema in December last and the bankruptcy proceedings ensued. His failure was due to lack of capital, heavy overhead charges, and other causes.

The examination was closed.

By this time the cinema had seen better days and it lacked the revenue needed to upgrade its facilities. Its decline is marked by the fact that it had became known by local children as the "fleapit" and it counted a large number of rowdy and drunken persons among its regular audiences.

A further change of name in the late 20s to the Picturedrome Cinema failed to halt the decline. The cinema had become uncompetitive alongside the newer and larger picture houses which had been built in central Streatham.

In September 1928 it was purchased for £2,750 by Samuel Krop, also known as S Tropp, of Woodberry Grove in Finsbury Park. However, despite his best endeavours he was unable to make money from the venture. It was not uncommon for less than a dozen of the cinema's hundreds of seats to

## A DERELICT CINEMA

### SILENT FILMS OUSTED BY "TALKIES"

In Mitcham-lane, Streatham, there stands a derelict cinema. Not long since groups of laughing children from the neighbourhood lined up before its doors on Saturday afternoons. On winter evenings it splashed its lights into Mitcham-lane, when City clerks, young men and women who had spent a hard and monotonous day could see themselves reflected in the screen world of magic.

Old ladies took their place in the queue, and even a hard-up fellow who could afford to pay sixpence, to get out of the cold. For an hour or so these people could relax and forget their troubles while New York's underworld came to life on the screen, or they watched Phyllis Haver in the part of a rich enchantress.

be full and the business barely survived on the children's matinee performances which remained the mainstay of its operations. The final blow came with the introduction of "the talkies" after which no-one was interested in silent films any more.

Mr. Krop tried to sell the business in May 1930 but there was no interest and he therefore decided to upgrade the facilities himself and obtained sound apparatus on hire purchase. The cinema was closed in June and July while this was installed.

Following the re-opening in August, although his takings increased they were insufficient to meet his debts and he was forced to close the cinema that December. In February 1931 bankruptcy proceedings were started against him as his creditors sought to recover the £6,163 they were owed.

By September 1931 the building was derelict. The doorway was boarded up and tatty posters flapped from the billboards in the wind. In the words of the *Streatham News* -

"This is but an individual case of the collapse of the small cinema which is taking place all over the country. An ever increasing number of monster cinemas is being built to serve every district, cinemas with acres of seats, palatial restaurants, vaulted ceilings, trained organists, marble stairways, and luxurious lounges. Competition with these cathedrals of pleasure, housing anything from 3,000 people, is, of course, difficult for the small cinema of under 500 seats."

Mitcham Lane's Picture Palace had been killed by a new generation of super cinemas, far grander and luxurious than their predecessors, of which Streatham was to boast three fine examples in the Astoria, which survives today as an 8 screen Odeon; the Regal, later converted into a 3 screen ABC which closed in December 2000; and the Gaumont, which closed on 25th March 1961 and subsequently became a bowling alley. The facade of the building survives today and houses an M&S Foodstore.

So then, what of the 'jolly ripping' Sexton Blake film which Ronald saw on the evening of 2nd May 1914 called 'The Clue of the Wax Vesta'.

Sexton Blake was a popular fictional detective who first appeared in print in 1893. Up to 1978 more than 4,000 Sexton Blake adventures were written by some 200 different authors and numerous stories were adapted and produced as films, radio programmes and later, in the 1960s, as a popular television series.

Created by the author Harry Blyth, using the pseudonym Hal Meredeth, Sexton Blake first appeared in issue number 6 of the *The Marvel* magazine published on the 20th December 1893. The publishers, the Amalgamated Press, were quick to see the potential of the character and ordered six more stories from Blyth, three appearing in *The Marvel*, and three in the first editions of the *Union Jack* story paper which the publishers launched in April 1894. Having purchased the copy-

Cover of the first Sexton Blake tale

right to the character from Blyth, the Amalgamated Press brought other authors on board to provide a steady stream of Sexton Blake stories and from August 1905 Blake was the main attraction in the *Union Jack* magazine and its successor, the *Detective Weekly*, up until the time when that periodical ceased publication in 1940.

'The Clue of the Wax Vesta' was the fifth Sexton Blake film, the first having been produced in 1909. It lasted 30 minutes and starred Arthur Dean in the title role.

Sad to report, Ronald appears to have been in the minority in finding the film 'jolly ripping' and Walter Webb, the author of 'Sexton Blake on the Films' published in the *Collector's Digest* in Vol. 8 no. 96, December 1954, and Vol. 9 no. 97, January 1955, is pretty damning about the early Sexton Blake silent movies.

He writes: 'Make a note of all the films which have brought the character of Sexton Blake to the screen, endeavour to select just one which was worth the time, trouble and expense of producing, and the result of such an undertaking must inevitably be a negative shaking of the head.

To say that those Blake films were poor is to understate; they ranged from mediocrity to rank bad productions and were, with hardly an exception, an insult to the intelligence of the average film-goer.

Situations which were supposed to be thrilling and were intended to make audiences grip their seats with suspense only brought invol-

untary laughter, for some of the attempts to build up an atmosphere of tension and excitement were so crude that the results achieved were quite absurd.

The dismal record began just before the commencement of the first world war when, on 6 April 1914, a three-reel film called 'The Clue of the Wax Vesta' was generally released for showing. It was adapted from the first few Yvonne stories, and "stills" from the film were reproduced in the pages of the *Union Jack* and *Pluck* by an enthusiastic editor who urged his readers to get in touch with their local cinema manager at once and request him to show the film; for, according to him, the production was a hit which every Sexton Blake fan should not miss.

*Drawing by John Cresswell of the Mitcham Lane Picture Palace*

But the enraptured editor's opinion was not shared by all his readers, some of whom wrote and told him so in no uncertain manner, one indignant follower going so far as to say that if the rest were going to be like that he would not go and see them.

The editor's excuses in the face of these criticisms were somewhat lame; he pointed out that several drawbacks were encountered with this first film, one being that they were strange to the art of filming their stories, and another that it was acted abroad. Seeing that quite a lot of the action in the Yvonne stories did take place abroad a puzzled Blake fan might quite naturally ask what that had to do with it!

Be that as it may, at least Ronald enjoyed his night out at the movies in May 1914 and had a 'jolly ripping' time. Within months, the First World War would erupt in Europe and the opportunities for such simple pleasures for the young men serving in the army in France would be few and far between.

**John W Brown**

# STREATHAM SOCIETY REPORTS

## RECENT MEETINGS *(Photos MB)*

### AGM and Bygone Streatham

On May 7 our AGM at 6.30 attracted only about 30 members and was the shortest on record. Perhaps this was because complete reports had already been circulated detailing a very successful year so there was little to discuss.

*The Howland Family Tomb in St Leonard's Church*

All trustees were elected unopposed. Russell Henman stood down as trustee and we thank him for his contribution as Vice-Chair. We welcomed Trudy Kuhn as a new trustee. Our revised contacts are listed on p.36.

Following the AGM the unexpectedly long break was easily filled with refreshments and chat. By 7.30 over 90 people had gathered to hear John W Brown's excellent talk *Bygone Streatham*, which told us of the Streatham connection to the Dukes of Bedford and the Russell family.

John dedicated this talk to the late Graham Gower, giving a moving appreciation of his considerable contribution to the Streatham Society.

**Two talks: Social and Medical History and Healthy Ageing**

On June 4 two most interesting and informative talks were given to about 75 people. The first was *Social and Medical History revealed from post-mortems at St George's Hospital 1841-1946* by Dr Juuli Ahvensalmi. The second, given by Society member Professor Finbarr Martin, was *Healthy Ageing: What is it, where is it and can I have some?*

Being rather too close to end of life, I was unsure about these but I was wrong. The second talk was recorded on YouTube for all members. I watched this at home and was delighted to find I am following most of the recommendations especially that most important final one - keep active, occupied and interested.

**The Streatham Society's 50th Celebration**

Our Golden Anniversary party was held for members on Tuesday 2nd July at the Belmont Bowling Club.

After a miserable day the sun emerged just in time. The venue was perfect and bowls was in action to watch on the green. Several of our members were surprised to discover such a beautiful tranquil spot so close to the High Road.

Shea Richardson (Chair) welcomed all then John W Brown (aka Mr Streatham) was unanimously elected our first President. Dr Halina Lewicka *(see p.12)*, in her 100th year and long-term member of the Society, cut the beautiful cake *(right)*. Our monochrome photo doesn't do it justice.

John, deservedly our first president, for many years has published local history information, books and booklets on south London (formerly villages in Surrey and Kent) - long before he became a member of the Streatham Society, our publisher and archivist. He has always been generous in helping local researchers as the many visitors to his garden shed archive can testify. We look forward to his annual Presidential Address.

Thanks to trustees Freda Graham, Emma Fleming, Mark Bery and team or their brilliant organisation. It was a well-attended, sociable occasion.

**JH**

*Photos show John W Brown, our first President, our lovely venue and guests*

## MEMBERSHIP 2024

### New Members

We welcome 15 new members since our last issue: Maurizio Marinelli, Crispin and Mrs Downs, Hamish Stafford, Jo Rahman, Melanie Griffiths, Geraldine Kelly & Philip Bradley, Peter Johnson, Caroline Booth, Nina Tupper, Lily Anne Putney, Mark Bonthrone & Norma McCance, Victoria Truett, plus re-joins. By July our 2024 paid membership of 359 had exceeded last year's total.

### Subscriptions

Individual £10; Household £15 (2 named adults); Life membership (single or named couple) £180. These are paid by bank transfer (BACS), standing order, cheque or cash at meetings. See our website or contact me for further details.

## 2024 SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS - PROBLEMS

**Both our treasurer and membership secretary must be informed of direct bank payments. We cannot cross-check, especially with a growing membership. We must both have names and details to register membership.**

Grateful hanks to our 280 members who renewed their subscription on time. However too many had not renewed by May 2024. It cost us considerable time emailing and posting individual reminders until most had paid.

In 2025 our system will be revised. Our membership year starts on January 1st. Please check your standing order or reminder so that subscriptions are paid close to this to ensure the continued delivery of our newsletter and emails. The February 2025 newsletter will be the last issued until payment is received.

The £10 and £15 subscriptions no longer cover the Society's expenses. Postage, venue hire, speaker's fees, events, insurance, our website, social media and the printed newsletter costs have increased. We have to find several additional ways of meeting these without a considerable increase in our subscription.

It would cost nothing to produce an on-line newsletter, but the usual 36 pages would be skim-read then forgotten - and a waste of my time. We are therefore grateful to our very efficient newsletter deliverers, who save us c.£580 p.a. in postage, and a significant number of members who regularly give donations.

### Members' Details

Problems occur if insufficient information is given. A member may have two names, such as a married and single name. This is fine if I know they are the same person but if the treasurer receives payment from one name and I am notified by another it can appear that there are two members. Someone paying membership for someone else needs to inform me. Members must also identify to me whether payment is a subscription, donation or for a publication (or all three!).

The household membership is for 2 named adults only. Please name the second person, rather than them being a blank space on our database. Members are welcome to bring their children to our meetings; they will not be expected to donate.

## LIFE MEMBERSHIP AND GIFT AID

Life Membership is a brilliant way of supporting your Society, donating, and never having to remember to pay a subscription again - specially welcome if it is also Gifted-Aided. Several of our Life Members are/were well over 70 in age.

Tax payers: Boost your subscription and any donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1. A form can be sent to you on application or is available on our website to email or post to our secretary *(Contact back page)*. Thank you!

**Judy Harris, Membership Secretary and Streatham News Editor**

## LAMBETH HERITAGE FESTIVAL HISTORY FAIR

### Saturday 7th September in St Leonard's Church and Church Hall

**Programme:**

**Talks** in the Church Hall (Booking not required)
*11.00* **Seven O'clock and not a Baby Bathed: The Story of a Lambeth Midwife.** Robert Holden recounts his grandmother's WWII experiences.
*12.30* **Deep are the Roots - Black Theatre Legends in Lambeth 1825-1975** Author Stephen Bourne discusses the lives of pioneering stage artists.
*2.00* **Henry Doulton's Lady Artists** Dr Jane Jordan recounts the large number of females employed by Doulton's Lambeth Art Pottery.
*3.30* **Streatham Village** described by John W Brown, historian and author

**Walks** ( Booking required)
*11.00* **Herbal Heritage in St Leonard's Churchyard** by Roy Vickery
*10.30, 11.30, 12.30 and 2.30* **Bishops, Brothels, and Business**
45 minute guided circular walks from St Leonard's Church by Lambeth Tour Guides Association £6 (unwaged discount)

**Tours** (Booking required)
*11.30 & 12.30* **The Crypt of St Leonard's Church** by John W Brown. Free.
*12 noon and 2.30 (30 minutes)* **Grave Encounters: exploring the graves of the dead centre of Streatham**

**MORE EVENTS (**Booking required)
*Most September events are part of the Lambeth Heritage Festival*

*Sun 8 Sept* **Art Deco, Streatham** Walk led by Robert Doyle *2.30*
*Mon 23 Sept* **Streatham Hill Against All Odds** Walk led by Gail Golding *10.30*
*1.30* **St Leonard's Church** Tour led by John W Brown
*Sun 29 Sept* **Henry Tate Gardens** viewing exterior of Park Hill and grounds
*2.00 & 3.00* with Grade 11 listed features. Tours led by *(2.00)* Robert Doyle and *(3.00)* John W Brown. £5.
*Sun 27 Oct* **SpoOoOoky SW16** Walk led by Emma Fleming *3.00*

*14-22 Sept* **Open House London** including **Conyers Road Pumping Station** Thames Water./Open House London. See OHL for booking details.

*Tues 5 Nov* **History Day** at Senate House, University of London

## NEW PUBLICATION

**BEHIND THE BLUE DOORS** by Jim Grover

An exhibition by documentary photographer Jim Grover was displayed at the newly opened Lambeth Archives for six weeks untilthe end of May. This celebrated the 20th Anniversary of Trinity Homes, in Acre Lane, almost opposite Lambeth Town Hall.

The exhibition included over 50 photographs and accompanying narrative. His informative and profusely illustrated book was on sale.

The history is in three parts and full of revelations. One part reveals how the then Trinity Asylum came to be and recognised the two previously unknown important Brixton personalities involved in the early 19th century.

A second part recounts how the alms-houses 'for pious aged women' operated and what it took to qualify as an 'inmate'. Finally some inspiring stories from the current 17 residents show, in a very different modern age, that age is no barrier to living a full life.

This 116 page book is well worth reading. It costs £25 + P&P or is available as a digital PDF for £10. For more information contact:

www.jimgroverphotography.com or www.trinityhomes.org.uk

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*Facebook*
**https://www.facebook.com/groups/546435545867439/**

*President:* **John W Brown**

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**The aim of the Streatham Society is to maintain and improve the quality of life for all who live and work in Streatham**

**Registered Charity 283297**