STREATHAM SOCIETY NEWS

Published quarterly **No. 259 Winter 2024-25**

THE WOODFIELD COMMUNITY ORCHARD GROUP
invite all to visit their newly planted saplings burst into leaf
(Photo Mark Weeks)

2025 SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE ON JANUARY 1st
Have you paid?
See p.34

STREATHAM SOCIETY MEETINGS

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 is not required.

Refreshments are available. Visitors are welcome; they are requested to donate £1 towards expenses. Check our website for details and any changes.

Our finalised meetings' programme is emailed to members and advertised on our website, Facebook and social media. Several talks are recorded for YouTube for later viewing.

4 March	**Christina Broom, Pioneer Press Photographer** by Alexis Haslam
1st April	To be advertised later
6 May	
3 June	**AGM** and President John W Brown's annual talk

A packed programme of events is planned for our Spring programme. These will be advertised and emailed to members nearer the time.

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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

WOODGATE TOWERS – WHAT NEXT FOR STREATHAM VALE?

Those enjoying the view from the top of Streatham Common will soon be able to see Woodgate Towers rising from the mists of Streatham Vale drastically altering that area. And perhaps a portent of Streatham's future. Public objections failed to convince neither Lambeth Council nor the Mayor of London to turn down the proposal. Many people wrongly took comfort from Lambeth's 2021 Local Plan there would be no high-rise developments in Streatham.

So how did we get to this position and what next for Streatham Vale and indeed perhaps the rest of Streatham?

The postmortem will be a long and complicated one. What we know is that Hadley the developer signed a Planning Performance Agreement with Lambeth and paid the council just under £100 thousand pounds to develop the site. Large developments go through this type of agreement and in some cases, but not this one, include community representatives on the group helping the application. Lambeth Planning Department received over £3.5 million in the past four years from entering into 60 agreements with developers.

The agreement for Woodgate Towers stated that the development application will benefit from strong engagement with council members including ward members and members of the Planning Applications Committee. It stated the applicants would be invited to present their proposals to the council's Growth and Investment panel which usually consists 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 went onto boldly say 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.

So, there was clear political and officer support for high rise housing in Streatham Vale. Big developments like this though a Planning Performance Agreement undoubtedly require Cabinet blessing for them to proceed. Sadly, we've been unable to obtain through FOI the minutes of the meetings that took place and it's rather suspicious they can't be released.

The likely postmortem autopsy is that Planning officers worked closely with the developers to shape this scheme and once "pre application advice" was triggered, the planning juggernaut motors at speed and very rarely is stopped. Lambeth's 2021 Local Plan - the rules of the planning game - were carefully "bent"

by officers to push this scheme forwards – policies on tall buildings and views were conveniently disregarded or interpreted to push the development through. Officer recommendations played down the harms versus the benefits of the scheme. For example, Tall Towers are fine if they're housing, but would a fourteen-story Premier Inn or a telecommunication tower have been approved? The elite group of councillors constituting the Planning Applications Committee then gave the application a rather lacklustre scrutiny and the application was all sealed in 165 minutes.

The 64-thousand-dollar question remains; why were the Streatham Vale residents to be overshadowed and affected by this big new development not consulted about the high-rise future and were there broader plans afoot for this area triggered when this application came forward? We will probably never know.

So, what of the future? Some have talked about a neighbourhood plan for the area which would be "taken into account" by planners. This would require true community engagement and local representation. But the hard bitten and frankly exhausted campaigners inevitably are now suspicious about plans coming from Lambeth many feeling alienated from the planning system.

EVERYONE'S DIGGING UP THE HIGH ROAD

Digging up Leigham Court Road again

A hardy perennial local grumble is the amount of roadworks on Streatham High Road. One of many impediments to improving the quality of experience on the High Road.

But it's not new – back in January 1962 a *Streatham News* front page headline was "Everyone is digging up the High Road – Traffic Protest". Wandsworth Council's Road Committee Chairman was grilled by councillors why the High Road had been dug up six times in twelve months. Local shopkeepers complained it was affecting their business. Councillors called for more co-ordination between the various undertakings.

Now a special investigation by the Streatham Society can unsurprisingly reveal it's got much worse. Freedom of Information requests made to Transport for London revealed there were 233 works on the carriageway or pavements on Streatham High Road from Leigham Court Road to Tesco's by Streatham Station in the past 30 months up to June 2024. That's nearly two new works per week. Not all are on the carriage way as many are about work affecting pavements predominantly cable work, but this also involves contractor vehicles parking at the side of the road. The biggest culprits on works affecting the road lane closures in order of magnitude are Thames Water, Southern Gas, TFL and UK Power Networks. On pavements it was cable providers BT and Virgin. This covers just the High Road and doesn't take into account roadworks on adjacent roads. On Leigham Court Road, Valley Road, and Leigham Vale there have been 73 water emergencies involving Thames Water since 2022 highlighted by Lambeth Council.

And this is before the mega works affecting Streatham likely to start soon with TfL's £9million project to upgrade walking and cycling and bus lanes along the High Road.

Apart from the usual emergencies from antiquated water and gas pipes the increase in developments along the High Road require more utilities making it difficult to synchronise.

Thames Water are viewed as the biggest culprit. Neighbouring Wandsworth Council last year fined Thames water more than £500,000 in two years for late running roadworks – with 320 road works in that borough taking longer than scheduled.

Transport for London's website provide information on current road closures and delays - https://public.londonworks.gov.uk/roadworks/home

STREATHAM HIGH ROAD TRAFFIC CONGESTION – SEVENTY YEARS AGO

2024 was the year of the Low Traffic Neighbourhood in Streatham creating opprobrium and unleashing fierce community divisions.

But the traffic problems facing Streatham High Road have always attracted controversy and a quick look back at the 1950s and early 1960s reveals everyone had strong opinions how to cope with the effects of traffic. And this was before social media was even invented.

Stirling Moss spearheading more cars -- "a new car built every nine seconds"

This was the era of the rise of motor car and writing in the *Streatham News* in 1955 racing driver Stirling Moss summed up that zeitgeist, arguing for new arterial roads such as the High Road to be built and widened. The culprits he said were the misers of Whitehall not putting money into roads.

The 1950s saw Streatham High Road's traffic problems piling up and articles regularly appeared in the local press bemoaning hold ups, accidents and roadworks. For Streathamites the High Road was not just another High Street but a major route out of London and so had Ministry of Transport, London County Council and Wandsworth Council all involved in trying to solve problems.

The Streatham Bypass

Streatham Hill Station

A big problem was by the station in Streatham Hill. Now we have a one way system in place, but back in the 1950s this was an area of big congestion. Different plans were mooted starting with a bypass to avoid the High Road and then a Bailey Bridge to be built joining Drewstead Road with Sternhold Avenue. The bypass was to run from Kings Avenue, Thornton Road, over the railway linking Sternhold Avenue with Drewstead Road and on to Garrads Road – all designed to take non local traffic from the High Road. The official line was that this then left it "to the person who wants to drive slowly and comfortably along the High Road and to take advantage the excellent facilities of Streatham".

But this didn't find favour with all. Streatham Chamber of Commerce instead proposed a roundabout to be built at the junction. Evidently many motorists were confused at a new traffic light system that had been installed and were being prosecuted for traffic offences. Local Liberals threw their own plan into the pot with building a new road from Leigham Court Road and Amesbury Avenue and curving round to Leigham Court Road by the carpark. "It would obviously mean

the demolition of property," they added. Building extra car parks in the area and creating a traffic free arcade in front of Streatham Hill railway station were also part of their transport manifesto. A local resident also wrote to the *Streatham News* proposing the horse ride on Tooting Common be converted into a road under the railway bridge, thus diverting traffic away from Streatham Hill.

Eventually plans were made to widen the high road at the junction and also introduce a one-way system. Though plans were hampered by the refusal of British Railways to move the Streatham Hill station entrance.

The new St Leonard's Parish Church Roundabout

The second biggest traffic problem was the St Leonard's Church junction described in 1954 by the Streatham Ratepayers Association as the "blackest spot in Streatham" with regular holdups and accidents. Traffic lights had been installed earlier but these frequently broke down. The *Streatham News* praised police who regularly had to direct traffic side stepping vehicles coming from five directions. At night police wore white coats, and the *Streatham News* hoped that "myopic motorists will not mistake them for zebra crossings to be approached at 30mph". There were press reports that the new traffic lights installed had been mistaken by pedestrians as "crossover" signals resulting in many accidents. Wandsworth Council did introduce throughout the 1950s new lighting and reduced pavement width but to no avail, so more radical solutions were called for to solve the frequent traffic chaos.

Step up Councillor Jack Westbury Chairman of Wandsworth Highways committee who speaking at a meeting of the Furzedown Women Conservatives in 1958 outlined his plans for a roundabout at the junction. His vision was St Leonard's Church proudly sitting in the centre with traffic flowing smoothly around it via a one-way system preventing many accidents. He boldly proclaimed, "I don't believe anyone here can appreciate the beauty of the church and how it would look if it were standing in an island in the hub of Streatham". Furzedown Women Conservatives naturally raised the question of whether it would make it difficult for people to get to church on Sunday, but Councillor Westbury had it all sorted with a pedestrian phase system in the traffic lights. The

St Leonard's Church - sadly without its roundabout

one problem he acknowledged was the difficulty of contacting relatives for permission to move tombstones for such a scheme. Another member commented that the idea of a roundabout had been mooted before the new Rector Rev J. P Hodges arrived and that as he was a younger man, he might appreciate the idea. Councillor Westbury replied, " I would be delighted to take it up, but at the moment he won't let us have his garden for our summer social". The *Streatham News* reported the Rector had no comment to make on the subject!

Not quite the High Road - Ernest Marples, Minister of Transport, walking on the newly built M1

The Streatham Rate Payers Association took the matter even higher in 1963 in a letter to Ernest Marples, the Minister of Transport, highlighting the risks of crossing at the junction. The letter stated, "Come dear Ernest, to Streatham. And with a pram try and cross the road aforementioned. We will provide the pram, And a first aid kit. Go to and fro across the road several times pushing the pram. And if you are not knocked down you will increase your stature as an expert crosser of roads. And if you are knocked down, it will be sad." Marples didn't take up the challenge and spent his final years living between Monte Carlo and his vineyard estate in Fleurie, France, dying in Monaco in 1978 aged seventy.

Plans in the 1960s led to a one-way system. Nowadays Google Maps at 5pm regularly estimates ten to fifteen minutes getting through the junction. The Church and graveyard remains intact.

What to do with congested Streatham High Road?

Meanwhile there were plenty of exciting ideas how to solve congestion on the High Road. In 1953 the ambitious Streatham Chamber of Commerce had a talk on shopping high streets from an American Mr Calvin S Hamilton who became Planning Director for Los Angeles. His future vision for shopping in urban areas was, "where the housewife would drive to a large store, park her car in the spaces and leave her children at the store's nursery". He pointed out the problems of traffic in shopping areas advocating closing some of the roads in shopping areas – directed at Streatham's problems. Hamilton's plan for Los Angeles was a pedway – an elevated people mover carrying passengers into the heart of LA's finance district, relieving traffic pressure on the streets below.

Little old Streatham had to cope without a pedway. Inevitably there were suggestions for a by-pass road to remove non local traffic which received widespread support. But the authorities looked to extend and improve the existing

High Road to try and ease traffic flow. However, the widening plans provoked fears of the resulting 60-foot dual carriageway. Streatham Rotarians had a talk from councillors about what the High Road would be like in the future. This so alarmed Mr Stephens, a resident of 15,Streatham High Road, that he wrote a letter to the *Streatham News* predicting the catastrophe that an expanded road would mean, with one half of Streatham not knowing how the other half lives. And crossing the High Road would become "a greater adventure then crossing the Atlantic with the risk of sudden death," made worse with residents "crimed" for leaving their car parked for ten minutes on the road. He was in the let's build a by-pass camp.

Local traders also voiced alarm at plans for the shrub lined traffic island running along the High Road. One trader said you might as well build a ten feet concrete wall, whilst others thought people wouldn't bother crossing the road, leading to two separate shopping centres. "Nonsense" was the sharp retort from pugnacious Wandsworth Borough Engineer Mr Marchant, who publicly complained his time was being wasted having to answer questions on the detail of the scheme.

This was set against a backdrop of some growth of public transport with new bus services in place and the removal of trams that had run in Streatham. Though buses were regarded by the public as extremely slow which stimulated someone in 1956 to carve a tombstone placed near a Streatham bus stop with the inscription: "In memory of those who died while waiting for a 49 bus". Like now the arrival of a tube line to Streatham was viewed as the panacea. A beguiling headline in 1954 was, "That new tube gets nearer" – of course the long-planned underground from northeast to southwest London.

Last Tram in Streatham 1951

There was energetic discussion in the local press on how to reduce car traffic but interestingly with no real mention of cycling. The London Borough Engineers' Association recommended that people without garages should not be allowed cars which caused massive outrage, viewed as an attempt to drive working class motorists off the road. The Greater London Council were forced to issue a rebuttal stating they were surprised that a body as responsible as the engineers association advocated an unworkable and such a class biased proposal. But the GLC in the mid-1960s produced a report stating that private cars and lorries needed to be restricted during rush hour to speed up the flow of buses. Streatham's own Tory MP Duncan Sandys suggested the idea of "mini taxis which can be driven by individuals with a penny in the slot and returned at the end of the day".

Meanwhile there was a growing fear from tradespeople about the effect of congestion and parking along the High Road on business. The Southern Women Conservatives group meeting in Streatham complained that Streatham's new shops were distinctly second rate, and the main cause was traffic congestion, compounded by the reckless behaviour of jay walkers crossing the High Road who should be severely fined for hindering the traffic.

One associated problem was parking. The Streatham Rate Payers Association were so exercised by this burgeoning issue they set up a specialist subcommittee to come up with solutions. Official plans were produced for parking restrictions along sections of the High Road and prohibiting unloading along from Gleneldon and Sunnyhill Roads between 8.30 and 10am to help the flow of buses. At a public inquiry on the Streatham scheme the Road Haulage Association claimed that the proposal would speed up traffic flow by only two seconds. The Streatham Chamber of Commerce and Ratepayers Association put their differences aside to push for parking to be allowed in the centre of the roadway in the widest parts of the High Road.

Parking was also a problem in the roads adjacent to the High Road not just in daytime but also with road accidents after dusk. The *Streatham News* came up with the novel idea of designating some roads as Night Parking Prohibited streets where there was a local park nearby such as Streatham and Tooting commons. A charge of sixpence would be made to park on the commons and the cost of night staff to stop pilfering from cars.

Streatham's business community were also concerned about the talk of clearways preventing motorists stopping anywhere along the High Road to keep traffic moving. They campaigned for the greater use of the side roads along the High Road to absorb a higher proportion of traffic. Inevitably this caused angst from residents. The Ratepayers Association criticised such plans as ruining quiet neighbourhoods leading to the deterioration of homes and of course dangers to children. Mr Thorneycroft from the Association commenting, " It is strange that after money has been spent widening the High Road the traffic should be diverted though the by roads". Responding Mr Scammell of the Chamber of Commerce said routing of traffic was a matter for the experts. But extra traffic affecting suburban tranquillity in Streatham caused many local residents living in those adjacent roads to be alarmed. For many years, the residents of Becmead Avenue had seen increased traffic and 144 residents submitted a petition to Wandsworth Council to reduce traffic in their road. Their other gripe to the council was barrow boys selling goods on their road.

The official Ministry plan was to alleviate congestion approaching St Leonard's Church with a one-way system including installing traffic lights at the junction of Streatham High Road, Stanthorpe Road and Gleneagle Road and the junction of Tooting Bec Road, Tooting Bec Gardens, Garrads Road and Ambleside Avenue. Criticised by the Ratepayers Association as the "Marple Maze", it devel-

oped its own plan headlined in the *Streatham News* as "We'll beat Marples". Their plan was to make the area from Shrubbery Road , Gleneldon Road, Tooting Bec Gardens, Garrads Road and Prentis Road as one vast roundabout leaving the section between St Leonard's and Prentis Road traffic free making it "a shoppers paradise". Unsurprisingly their plan did not gain support. The £14,000 Ministry of Transport scheme for one way traffic won the day despite the protestation of ex-Highways Committee Chairman Councillor Westbury about the expense and that it would lead to more accidents.

A brilliant article, Tim, illustrating the importance of looking to the past to educate the present and future - and not throw funding to schemes likely to fail. JH

CO-LIVING ARRIVES IN STREATHAM

Lambeth Council are considering an application for 102 co-living unit building in Shrubbery Road. This would involve demolishing out buildings at the back of the old police station with rather non-descript contemporary new buildings up to five storeys which could be anywhere in London. They hope to refurbish the existing buildings on 2-4 Shrubbery Road keeping the facade - the annex to the police station built in 1913.

Plans for co-living in Shrubbery Road

Co-living is classified as building hotel sized rooms with communal facilities. This is targeted at younger renters as a way of solving the housing crisis. Opinions vary as to their value – some argue they are new forms of collective living and help with urban loneliness. Others see them as vast complexes of rabbit hutch rooms. Certainly, with this proposed development sitting behind the new Boutique Hotel planned for the Old Police Station there will be plenty of new footfall on the High Road but also increased deliveries on Shrubbery Road.

TACKLING DERELICT SHOPS IN STREATHAM

Streatham has its fair share of derelict and boarded up shops particularly along the High Road. Now local authorities have powers to tackle these and from last December can auction off leases for commercial properties that have remained empty for long periods. Disengaged landlords will be stopped sitting on empty lots for more than 365 days in a two-year period, before councils can auction a one-to-five-year lease. Designed to be a new measure to revitalise High Streets we wait for the Lambeth Council action plan on which empty shops it's going to tackle on the High Road.

Tim Whitaker, Trustee Streatham Society

PALACE ROAD, STREATHAM HILL

Congratulations to the Palace Road Residents Association, the community workers and all volunteers for their success in making this an attractive and safer environment. I have known the area well for almost 50 years. Despite the best intentions, various initiatives and funding from organisations, Lambeth and others, it has long had social problems. However in November I walked along Palace Road to find the Hive Café (well worth a visit) and the formerly neglected Palace Road Estate litter-free and cared for.

I started teaching at Fenstanton Junior School in September 1965. Following heavy bombing in the area, Fenstanton was one of several new schools opened in the 1950s to rehouse those from destroyed homes, cater for the post-war 'baby boom' and immigrants from former Commonwealth countries.

Fenstanton House, built in 1875, was the largest and one of last of the 19th century Roupell Park development. Occupied initially by a successful local butcher, by the early 1900s it had become a care home for the elderly and mentally ill. After WWII it was bought by Lambeth, was a mother and baby rest home, then demolished in 1950. Like much of south London, the planned 19thC fashionable area did not survive London's rapid expansion and bombing. Many of the surviving large houses became flats, often with shared kitchen and bathroom.

Fenstanton Junior and Infant Schools were separate. By 1965 the rolls were enormous. My first two classrooms were the former art room, then the dining hall(!). There were three or four classes in each year group, i.e. over 450 7-11 yr olds; the infant school was also packed. But by the, early 1970s rolls were falling and most of the new schools in the area were under subscribed. Two large Comprehensives were demolished. Fenstanton was rebuilt in the early 2000s, being replaced by one primary school and City Heights secondary school.

I started researching the original Roupell Park Estate, bisected by Christchurch and Palace Roads, c.1980. I walked the area for many years watching its decline. In c.1975 six houses opposite Fenstanton and the open parkland behind bordering Palace Road became the Palace Road Estate. Palace Road, with its western approach from Christchurch Road being gated, was a magnet for anti-social behaviour, offering quick escape by cycle and motor bike. The badly sited shop and community centre were regularly vandalised and closed.

Today a new purpose built community centre includes a shop and the Hive Café fronting Palace Road. The open space and play area are attractive and inviting.

Visiting the Hive Café, which gives hospitality and catering training, I found it spacious, well-designed and managed, with good food. I was also delighted to see a display of the history of Roupell Park, attributed to the Streatham Society *(above).* This had been donated to the café following its display at a barbeque hosted by the Palace Road Association. Much hard work has gone into this success; I'm sure more volunteers will be most welcome.

JH

WATERSTONES

Waterstones in the former bank/post office
(Photos MB)

We are delighted to welcome Waterstones book shop to the High Road. Opening in time for the Christmas trade it received much interest and many visitors.

Over the last 25 years most book shops have disappeared from our high streets. Lambeth has a few small independent bookshops, the closest to Streatham being at Crystal Place, Herne Hill and West Dulwich. Those such as WHSmith have had to adapt to falling sales, offering other services such as our post office.

Many areas have lost shops - they cannot survive unless supported and the internet sales (helped by Covid restrictions) have changed our buying habits.

If you want Waterstones to succeed - use it. Please don't be one of those who browse then order online because it's cheaper, having no overheads such as rent, staff, maintenance and insurance. Use it or lose it!

EVENTS

STREATHAM FESTIVAL

In October the Streatham Festival art exhibition was held in the library; it was well worth a visit. Exhibitors included the Streatham Vale Community's Streatham images *(below)* and our member Ronnie Hackston's packed stall *(left)*.

Ronnie has recently produced for sale a most imaginative Streatham print and card. The word 'Streatham' is made up of letters taken from various shops and businesses on a background of local images. The only one I guessed with the 'M' from Morley's burgers. (Ask Ronnie!)

ART DECO WALK

Also part of the Festival, in heavy rain, Roger Wates guided his fascinating Art Deco Walk, photographed here by Chris Everett.

Both Roger and Chris are Accredited Lambeth Tour Guides and very active members of the Streatham Society.

JH

LEST WE FORGET

On November 10th, Remembrance Sunday, Shea Richardson (Chair) laid the Streatham Society's wreath in front of the War Memorial.

Then she and Robert Doyle laid flowers from the Streatham Society on the Civilian Memorial. Robert took the photographs below.

ROOKERY CHRISTMAS MARKET

Finally, congratulations to all who braved more atrocious weather to support SCCoop's Annual Christmas Market on December 8th in the Rookery.

This photo, posted by Streatham Common & Vale Labour Councillors, pays tribute to sellers and buyers.

We hope sales were not also a wash-out.

LOCAL HISTORY MATTERS

HISTORY OF THE LEIGHAM COURT MANOR

Leigham Court Road runs from opposite Streatham Hill Station to Streatham Common North. Over the years it has been one of Streatham's premier roads for many rich and famous people. At the time some of the large houses on this road were built, the vision was to provide grand, comfortable villa type homes for wealthy London merchants and middle classes who wanted to live in a semi-rural location with space and fresh air not available in London, but would still provide good transport links to their businesses in the city. These homes began replacing the open land used for farming. Many were built in sizable grounds, set well back from the road, with sweeping drives to accommodate carriages, and were laid out with extensive gardens to the back.

Sadly, many of these old houses in Leigham Court Road no longer exist; by the 20th century houses were becoming smaller as demand for grand large houses diminished. As London developed, and Streatham was no longer part of Surrey, but became part of South London, the demographics of the area changed. Many of these villas, once built for families and their servants, were demolished, converted into flats or used for other purposes. However, a few have survived today to provide us with a small glimpse of their grandeur, and hopefully next time you travel down this road, you will be able to envision the properties and the people who called it home.

History of the area

By the early Middle Ages and the imposition of the feudal system in England, land holdings and villages were well-organised manorial estates, each controlled by a Lord of the Manor. Within the parish of Streatham three manors were established, Leigham Court, Tooting Bec, and South Streatham.

The largest of these manors was Tooting Bec, which included the estate of Streatham and part of Balham. Leigham Court covered most of the Streatham Hill area, the remainder of Balham and the detached portion of the parish situated at Knight's Hill. Leigham Court had a small village with a manor house, known as Leigham Hall. The name Leigham is an Anglo-Saxon word, meaning a clearing/open area in or by a wooded area. This would best describe the area at the time.

The early history for the estate is unclear and this isn't helped by the fact there is no clear entry in the Domesday book. However, during the 12th Century the land came into the possession of the Mandeville family, Lords of Clapham and Balham. Around this time, Ralph de Mandeville gave the manor of Leigham to the priory of St Saviour in Bermondsey. In 1535 after the dissolution of the pri-

ory under Henry V111, he granted the land in 1544 to Henry Dowes. By 1610 the land was in the possession of the Howland family. As the Howland family took on more land in Streatham, Leigham village was finally supplanted by the small village of Streatham with the consolidation of the Howland lands. There continued to be various owners who leased whole or part of the manor, until 1789 when Lord Thurlow, a distinguished lawyer and later Lord Chancellor of England, was sold the land from the Duke of St. Albans following his death. It is unsure where the old manor house stood. However, Thurlow built a mansion at Knights Hill. After he died in 1806, under the terms of his will, it was given to Lord Eldon and others in a trust for its sale. But it took a private Act of Parliament (in 1809) to enable the estate to be broken up into plots, as no buyer could be found to purchase the whole estate. The Act of Parliament allowed the trustees to either sell or lease the land in smaller lots and to encourage building. Under the terms of the act, the Lord of the Manor of Lambeth, the Archbishop of Canterbury, granted a licence for the Mansion house at Knights Hill to be demolished. *(Streatham News 14 March 1924.)*

THE BUILDERS OF LORD THURLOW'S ESTATE

Lord Thurlow's House, Knights Hill *(Image from The Story of Norwood by JB Wilson)*

In 1819 John Fuller, a wine merchant of St James`s Street, London (and between 1818 and 1830 the sole proprietor of Boodles, a private gentlemen's members club founded in 1762), purchased some of Lord Thurlow's land, on the hill just south of what is now Downton Avenue. John Papworth (1775-1847), who was a prolific architect and had also been involved in a number of alterations to Boodles club, was commissioned to build a small house. But while still under construction a larger one was designed and built. The house was built in the 1820s and was known as Leigham Court, named after Leigham Manor of which the land was once a part. The house was a large, grand mansion, surrounded by large formal gardens, woodland and open parkland. Behind the house was a

Leigham Court *(Photo Streatham Antiquarians Society, Lambeth Archives)*

large formal garden with a central fountain with orchards. It is thought that the house was originally intended to be used as a country gaming club associated with Boodles, but it seems that it was only used as a private residence. Tall trees and shrubs screened the grounds and large gates stood on Streatham Hill behind which was a small lodge where the gatekeeper lived. A long carriage drive led from Streatham Hill to the house.

After Fuller`s death in 1849, the property was purchased by John Tredwell, a railway contractor, who had worked with Isambard Kingdom Brunel. Local legend tells how he started life as a "humble navvy" and rose to be a man of great wealth through his contracting work. As a reminder of his humble origins it is said he kept his pick and shovel in the hallway at Leigham Court to serve as a constant reminder of his early life! John was born in Devizes in 1805, he married Elizabeth Skilliter in 1824, however she died in 1869 while living at Leigham Court. He then married Maria Coxe in March 1870. Maria had lived with the family as a housemaid, according to the 1851 census, and continued to live there after John's death. At the south eastern end of the estate John built a tall tower, which was known as "Tredwell`s Folly". From here he had panoramic views of the surrounding countryside. In the mid 1850's Tredwell ensured the railway line, planned to lead from Streatham Hill Station, was constructed under the grounds of Leigham Court so that his estate would not be scarred by a large railway cutting passing through it. (No doubt being a railway contractor and a director of the West End of London and Crystal Palace Railway Company helped!) The station was located near the Streatham Hill entrance to his property, and was opened on 1st December 1856 (it was originally called Streatham Station but changed its name to Streatham and Brixton Hill in 1868, becoming

Streatham Hill Station the following year). John died in December 1875. According to the *South London Observer* he left over £200,000 in his will. He is buried in West Norwood Cemetery. John is remembered by Tredwell Close

The population in Streatham in 1840 was around 6,000, but with the coming of the railway and the building of Streatham Hill Station in 1856, this saw the population expand, by 1881 it was over 20,000. The arrival of the station significantly accelerated the development of Streatham and residential homes being built as London continued to expand across the river. Much of Streatham was being developed. George Pratt extended his draper's shop in the High Road in 1867 and purchased Lord Bedford's estate facing the High Road in 1879 and built the Bedford Park housing estate as the rural areas began to feel the housing pressures and more land was being used for housing and new streets developed.

In 1889, 66 acres of land owned by Tredwell were sold to the Artisans, Labourers & General Dwellings Company, established in 1867 by William Austin. Austin was by trade a drainage contractor and became a philanthropic housing developer. It was claimed he could neither read nor write. The company was established with the objective of building new houses for the working classes, who would be able to rent for an agreed number of years, then become owners.

The ALGD company planned to build a community made up of houses, maisonettes, flats, a shopping parade on Streatham Hill and a church, in a variety of sizes to ensure a socially balanced mix. The layout of the estate and the design was by Rowland Plumbe (1838-1919), with early houses designed by Henry Measures (1862-1940) and Martin Jackson (1876-1959), with later properties designed just by Jackson. It is known now as the ABCD roads (Amesbury, Barcombe, Cricklade and Downton Avenues), named after the interests in different counties that the Directors on the board had at the time.

The building plan attracted much local opposition, according to *The Building News* on March 11th 1892: "The residents of Streatham Hill must deplore the recent spoliation of the fine wooded park belonging to Leigham Court. We hear that the site has been purchased by an Industrial Dwelling Company. Why such a locality should have been selected for the purpose of dwellings for the working classes, so far away as it is from the centre of their labour, and right in the midst of a superior residential neighbourhood, we cannot imagine. It is a great pity this beautiful site could not have been secured for a different class of residences, if such indeed are necessary, which we very much doubt, seeing that house property all over London, especially in the west and south-west districts, is at a serious discount."

The building of the estate started 1891 and took almost 40 years. Apart from the opposition, from the start there were difficulties in attracting tenants due to the estate's location, even though it was a reasonable distance from London (and supported with good transport links), also demand for housing fell due to WW1. On top of this there were rate increases and as time passed properties required

The boundary stone and remaining brass letters ALGD Co. The boundary line marking the estate remains but the brass inserts have all gone.

additional sanitary fittings (bathrooms and inside toilets). Most of the estate was built by 1905, but not finally completed until 1928, hence the 1920/30's houses around Downton Avenue (the site of the old house, which was the last part to be developed). The estate was sold to Lambeth Council in 1965. It was made a conservation area in June 1981.

Next time you pass Ladbrokes at 79-81 Streatham High Road, or are on the High Road by Cricklade Avenue, look down at the pavement and you will see the brass letters ALGD Co. Also set on the wall under the arch by Wheatley Court (47 Streatham Hill) you can still see the boundary stones which reads "The face of this wall is the northern limit of the property of the ALGD Co Ltd" *(above)*. This is all that is left now of the boundary markers of the company's estate.

In 1811 Beriah Drew, a wealthy solicitor from Bermondsey, who was born around 1791 and was the eldest son of Beriah Drew of the Grange, Southwark, moved to Streatham, with his wife Elizabeth (nee Prentis) and three children, Elizabeth (later Mortimer), Jane Angles (later Fisher) and Beriah.

In 1836 Beriah purchased a large portion of land, around 260 acres, from Lord Thurlow's estate, including Mount Nod Farm. It is thought that the farm house was situated close to the junction of what is now Leigham Avenue and Conifer Gardens. The land comprised most of central Streatham and part of Streatham Hill.

Beriah was a Director of the West End of London and Crystal Palace Railway Company. So there is no doubt that in this role he saw the potential of developing this land, and history shows us that he was a shrewd and capable developer as by 1839 he began to develop the estate and the road we know today as Leigham Court Road. (The southern end was originally known as St Julian's Road, but changed to Leigham Court Road in 1902.) No doubt the road was used to open up the farmland for his building purposes. In 1840, in partnership with his brother George, he began the development of Leigham Manor, including building Leigham Lodge. George left the partnership in 1853 when he moved to Caterham. However, the road was not fully developed until 1860 after the arrival of the railway. Between 1860 and 1898 95 grand houses were built along the road.

The firm of George Trollope & Sons, which in the latter part of the 20th century was one of the largest construction companies, constructed 17 or more houses along the new road, including what is now Leigham Avenue (previously the track to Mount Nod Farmhouse). George Trollope and Sons were notable for their speculative development of Mayfair (Eccleston Square, Eaton Square and Warwick Square), they also built Claridge's Hotel in London. George Francis Trollope is listed on the 1861 census as a master builder; by this time he is living at Leigham Court Road, at Elm Field, with his wife Constance, 10 children and 4 servants. He died on 13 March 1895 and is buried at St Leonard's Church.

The earliest and grandest buildings were at the northern end near the High Road, where substantial family 'villas' were set in generous plots, with front and rear gardens. As well as building housing, Beriah was a great benefactor and gave the land to build St Peter's Church. He was also a Surrey Magistrate. He died age 90 in 1878, and was buried in St Leonard's Church. His estate was left in trust to his wife, who donated land for the building of Sunnyhill School (off Valley Road) and eventually, following her death in 1892, the vast land holding was passed to their two daughters. In 1900 Elizabeth Mortimer (nee Drew) combined the land with other lands owned by the Mortimer family into the Mortimer Estates. Streatham's association with Beriah is still around us today, with local roads named after the family: Drewstead Road, Prentis Road, Mortimer Close, Angles Road, Fisher Close and Wigmore Tennis Club (in Becmead Avenue, named after the Mortimer family seat Wigmore Castle).

Among the earliest developers to make their mark upon Streatham were the Roupell family. John Roupell was a wealthy iron smelter and property owner from the industrial Thames south bank. For a period of nine years, (1810-1819) John brought small plots/lots of land from the estate of Lord Thurlow, including Brixton Hill farm. Most of the land was farm and woodland. When John died in 1835 he left his estate to his only son Richard (senior). After his father died Richard continued to buy land and to develop the estate in Streatham, owning 55 acres at the top of Brixton Hill, he also began building the family home, As-

pen House, in 1839 (occupied by the family until 1878) which was located where the tram/bus shed on Brixton hill, by Christchurch Road is situated today. In the 1840s the family planned and developed Roupell Park, a prestigious, ambitious development centred on Christchurch and Palace Roads. The estate, aimed to attract the affluent, and contained some of the largest properties yet to be seen in Streatham. Development was spasmodic, with the estate not being completed until the late 1880s. The wall at the southern end of the nature reserve in Palace Road marks the boundary between the Roupell Park and Leigham Court estates. Richard, who in 1815, was in his early thirties, had begun an affair with Sarah Crane, a carpenter's daughter. Sarah was 14 years younger than Richard. She lived in Peckham with Richard visiting at weekends. Richard lived in the family house in Cross Street, off Blackfriars Road. They had four children before they got married, John, born in 1826, William in 1831, Sarah in 1834 and Emma in 1837. Eventually, after his father died in 1835 and his mother in 1838, Richard married Sarah and they moved to the newly built Aspen House on Streatham Hill. They had one more son, Richard (junior). In the same year (1839) Richard sold the land for the building of Christ Church, agreeing to build a road to connect Brixton Hill and Upper Tulse Hill. The building of the church started in 1840.

After leaving school, William, Richard's second son, worked as a rent collector for his father, but at the age of 18 began to study law at the Inner Temple, and was articled as a law clerk to Haslem and Rees from 1849 to 1854. Living above his means, be became heavily in debt to his uncle Frederick Watts (his mother's brother-in-law), but things began to go wrong and he soon ran up considerable debts speculating on new railway companies and volatile stock. In 1850 without his father's knowledge he raised a loan, using some of his father's property as security. By 1853 (on his own testimony) he began to forge deeds belonging to his father's properties, naming him as the owner, and that allowed him to raise money and pay off his debts.

Richard Roupell (senior) died in September 1856. While visiting him on his deathbed, William found his father's will, only to discover he had left everything to Richard (junior), the only legitimate child, then just 16. This would no doubt bring to light the forged deeds. So he destroyed the will and forged a new one in the form of a codicil dated a few days before his father's death, leaving everything to his mother, with them both as executors. He then persuaded his mother to waive her rights as executor, leaving him to dispose as he wished of the entire inheritance, valued at some £300,000.

The fraud turned William into a wealthy young man (still only 25). He must have thought that the fraud would stay concealed and in 1857, less than a year after his father's death, he ran for Parliament for the Borough of Lambeth as a Whig reformer. He spent lavishly on the campaign, and became MP. He served on several parliamentary committees, although he rarely spoke in the chamber. He remained popular in Lambeth and was re-elected in 1859. He contributed

generously to raising a volunteer regiment, the First Surrey Rifles. As a reward for this selfless work he was invited to meet Queen Victoria.

In 1854 John Tredwell (see above) had agreed to sell some land to Roupell; possibly in desperation William urged his father to purchase the land, but instead used the money to pay debits. In 1862 John Tredwell pressed for payment. Roupell made attempts to raise more money and with mortgage debts mounting, he fled to Spain. On his return, he was arrested on charges of forgery and perjury. By now William had sold/lost most of this father's estate which had been accumulated by his father and grandfather over 50 years, and reportedly had spent over £200,000. He was taken to Horsemonger Lane Prison in Southwark, and then to Newgate Prison, to await trial. At his trial at the Old Bailey on 24 September 1862, William pleaded guilty. The trial, attracted enormous interest from the press and public. He was sentenced to penal servitude for life. However, he remained in prison, mostly at Portland, where he worked for some years in the prison hospital, helping and comforting the sick. He was released on 22 September 1876, after serving 14 years. He went back to live with his mother and sister in the old family house. When their mother died in 1878, aged 81, he and Sarah moved into a smaller house nearby. He became a keen gardener, especially interested in growing fruit, and became a founder and president of the Streatham and Brixton Horticultural Society. William died in March 1909 at the age of 77. Two hundred people attended his funeral at West Norwood Cemetery.

Freda Graham

SHERWOOD AVENUE GARDENS

At the junction of Sherwood Avenue and Glenister Park Road stands Sherwood Avenue Gardens, one of Lambeth's smallest open spaces cared for by the council's Parks Department.

A signboard on the site advises that the gardens were refurbished in 2009 'to improve its access and its visual quality' - a wonderful euphemism for the removal of a massive shrub that formerly grew here.

An old public telephone box once stood on this ground and for many years after it was removed the metal support for the box could still be seen poking up from the ground, until the area was resurfaced in 2009.

Sherwood Park Road 1930s

A recent discovery of an old 1930s postcard of "Sherwood Park Road", later to be known as Sherwood Avenue, shows the small garden in its original state, after the Streatham Vale estate had been built. The garden is surrounded by a wooden picket fence with a lamp post and the telephone box at the apex of the junction with Glenister Park Road.

The peace and tranquility of this suburban scene was destroyed at 7pm on the evening of 29th June 1944 when one of the most destructive V1 flying bombs to fall on Streatham during the Second World War exploded here. Miraculously there were no fatal casualties but a number of residents and three ARP Wardens were seriously injured.

The extent of damage caused by the bomb was considerable, affecting houses as far afield as Woodmansterne Road and the other side of Hawkhurst Road, with roofs blown off, windows blasted out and walls smashed in.

One house was completely blown away with only an Anderson shelter on the ground floor of the property left standing. Dr. Sinclair supervised the rescue services in freeing a man who was trapped in the shelter but fortunately had been saved from serious injury by the simple corrugated iron structure he had been sheltering in at the time the bomb exploded.

Sherwood Avenue changes

It has been estimated that 88 per cent of Streatham's housing stock was damaged or destroyed in the Second World War. Although the Blitz was a nightly horror to local inhabitants, it was the forty-one V1 flying bombs that fell on Streatham in the summer of 1944 that caused the greatest damage. The 13th of these bombs, which fell at the junction of Sherwood Avenue and Glenister Park Road, caused the most damage.

Today there are no surviving signs of the devastation caused here 70 years ago. Those houses which were blown away, or too badly damaged to be repaired, were rebuilt to their original designs and are now indistinguishable from the other houses in the area. The horrors of that June evening in 1944 now only live on in the memories of a small number of elderly residents who were young children at the time of the explosion.

WWII Sherwood Avenue, Streatham Vale's VI bomb damage

John W Brown

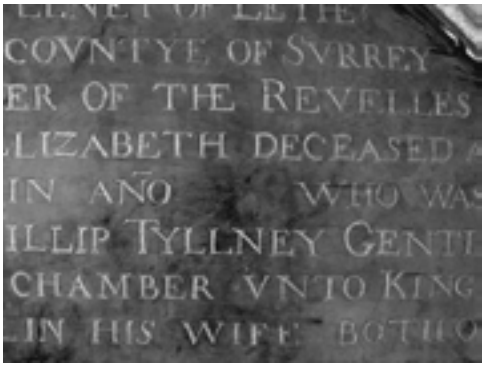
SHAKESPEARIAN CONNECTIONS WITH STREATHAM

Simon Callow
at the Shakespeare exhibition
(Photo MB)

One of the many highlights of Lambeth's Heritage Festival last September was an exhibition of "Shakespeare in Lambeth" mounted in the new Lambeth Archives building. The launch of the event was a great success with the Streatham-born actor, Simon Callow, speaking to a large and attentive gathering during which address he detailed some of his links with the local area. Streatham is featured in the exhibition in as much as Paul Robeson and Croydon-born Peggy Ashcroft appeared together in a production of Shakespeare's Othello which was staged at the Streatham Hill Theatre in 1930.

However, Streatham can claim a much more important, contemporary link with the bard in as much as Edmund Tylney, Master of the Revels to Queen Elizabeth I and King James I, and the man responsible for censoring Shakespeare's plays, lived in the parish and was buried in our ancient parish church of St. Leonard. The Tylney monument in the Chapel of Unity in the church is one of Streatham's historic treasures. It was erected in memory of Edmund who was buried in St. Leonard's on 6th October 1610.

Although at the time of his death in 1610, Tylney was living in a large house in Leatherhead, Surrey, called the Manson House, his family home was in Streatham where his parents had lived. His father, Philip Tylney, was buried here on 10th September 1541. Despite having been the Gentleman-Usher of the Privy-Chamber to King Henry VIII, Philip died in debt. He was the youngest son of Sir Philip Tylney, Knight Baronet and Treasurer of the Scottish Wars under Thomas, Duke of Norfolk, who firstly married Tylney's cousin, Elizabeth, and later took as his second wife, Philip's sister, Agnes.



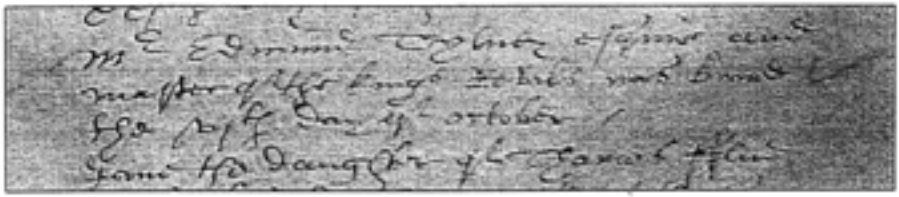
Memorial to Philip Tylney

Tylney Monument in St Leonard's Church Streatham (left)
Drawing in London Metropolitan Archives showing the Monument at the time drawing was made
The Monument as it would look according to the drawing (right)

We know that Edmund was living in Streatham in 1581 as an entry in the parish registers dated 10th July records the burial of John Hilton, "servant to Mr Tylney". An image of Edmund is depicted in the "Streatham" window in St. Leonard's Church. This shows Edmund dressed in his finery and wearing a ruff with a gold chain around his neck and sporting a handsome beard and moustache.

In 1572 he joined his cousin Charles Howard (later to become Lord Admiral of England) in the House of Commons as burgess for Gatton in Surrey. It was Charles who secured Tylney the post of master of the revels in February 1578. The revels office arranged entertainment at court and Tylney did much to make its operations more efficient. In 1583 he created the Queen's Men, an elite company of actors picked from the finest performers available, who then dominated court theatricals. Part of his duties was to censor plays and theatrical performances and in this capac-

Edmund Tylney on the "Streatham Window" in St Leonard's Church



Entry in St. Leonard's Burial Register for
"Mr Edmund Tylney Esquire and Master of the King's Revels
Was buried the 6th (VI) day of October (1610)."

ity he no doubt had dealings with William Shakespeare and other prominent playwrights of the Tudor period.

It has been suggested that Tylney was a vane and ambitious man as indicated by his memorial. It is adorned with various coats of arms, none of which were awarded to him, but were those of his relatives. Indeed, the majority of the text on the monument is taken up by listing all the important people he was related to. It is interesting to note that among the details of his illustrious forebears there is no reference to one of his most regal relatives - Catherine Howard, Queen of England and the fifth wife of Henry VIII.

The reason no doubt was because Catherine had her head chopped off by Henry VIII for adultery with Thomas Culpepper among others, including a Henry Mannox of Streatham. Not only this, but Edmund's mother, Malyn Tylney, as lady in waiting to the Queen, was implicated in the scandal and in 1543 was sentenced to life imprisonment and loss of goods, although she was subsequently pardoned after the principals were executed.

Tylney had the monument made during his lifetime and mention is made in his will that it be set up in the church in the place agreed between himself and the Parson and churchwardens at Streatham within six months after his decease. The monument cost 20 marks (£13. 6s.8d.) and was made by a "Stone Cutter neare unto Charingcrosse", believed to be William Wright.

In his will Tylney made several bequests relating to Streatham and the then Vicar of St. Leonard's, Michael Rabbitt, received half of Tylney's books and a "great silver Bowlle with ewer" for no doubt agreeing to have Tylney's monument erected in a prominent place in the church and for overseeing the execution of his will. In addition Edmund instructed that all his fine clothes were to be sold and the proceeds divided between the poor inhabitants of the Parishes of Leatherhead and Streatham. He also bequeathed unto "thirteene poor oulde men and women" of Streatham a double issue of bread, and that they each be given a black gown and 5/- (25p) apiece.

The Tylney Coat of Arms

Tylney is one of Streatham's most important links with Tudor London, the Elizabethan Court and of course William Shakespeare. That he held Streatham in high regard is evident by his wish to be buried here, where his mother and father were interred, rather than at Leatherhead where he lived in the largest house in that parish.

The bequests he made to the poor of Streatham also indicates a regard for the well-being of the less fortunate inhabitants of our town. But one only has to look at his magnificent memorial to see that it was also his wish that the parish where his family lived should remember him as man of substance, prestige and importance.

It will be noted the date of Tylney's death on line 6 is missing. Local tradition holds this is because he left no money in his will to have it inserted! Be that as it may, the parish registers show he was buried at St. Leonard's on 6th October 1610 and is recorded as "Mr Edmund Tylney Esq Master of the Kings Revils", at which time he had continued in post serving King James I following the death of Queen Elizabeth I.

When St. Leonard's Church was rebuilt in 1831 Tylney's magnificent monument was carefully removed. However when it was re-erected a major error was made in its reconstruction as the top frieze, which is located below the upper coat of arms and above the inscription, should have been placed at the bottom of the monument as is evident from an old drawing of the memorial held in the Guildhall Library in London. This also shows that the marble backplate behind the coat of arms at the top of the monument was not re-erected, neither were the two obelisks either side of the arms *(see p.27)*. These may have been damaged when removed from the old church or stolen or lost during the rebuilding works.

Today there is a pub called the Edmund Tylney in Leatherhead named in his honour.

"Shakespeare in Love"
Edmund Tylney played by Simon Callow

In 1998, Tylney was one of the characters featured in the multi-Oscar winning film "Shakespeare in Love" his part being most appropriately played by the actor Simon Callow. It is a fascinating coincidence that both Simon Callow and Edmund Tylney lived in Streatham. Simon was born on 15th June 1949 in a nursing home at 2 Rutford Road and spent his childhood at 4 Pinfold Road with his mother, grandmother and aunt.

There is another fascinating connection between Streatham and Shakespeare through the Globe Theatre, as outlined by Graham Gower in his article "Streatham and the Shakespeare Connection" published in the Spring 2017 edition of the Streatham Society journal.

The inscription on the Tylney memorial reads as follows:

Heare lyeth interred EDMUND TYLLNEY of Lethered in the County of Surrey Esquire Maister of the Revelles unto QYEENE ELIZABETH Deceased and unto KING JALMES in Ano (No date inserted) who was the onely Sonne of PHILIIP TYLLNEY Gentleman usher of the Privee Chamber unto KING HENRY the 8 and of MALIN his wife both of them buried heare & who was a younger sonne of Sir Phillip Tyllney Knight Baronet & Treasurer of the Scottish Warres under THOMAS DUKE OF NORFOLK whose sister the said Duke had then married for his second wife and who was the sonne unto HEWGHE TYLLNEY of Boston in the Countie of Lincolne Esquire that was a younger brother unto SIR FREDRICK TYLLNEY Knight who married the daughter and heire of SIR SIMON THORPPE of Ashfeldthorppe in the County of Norfolk by whom he had ELIZABETH first married to the LORD BARNES and afterwards unto the foresaid THOMAS DUKE OF NORFOLK to his first wife by whom, and by AGNES TYLLNEY his second wife, he had all his succession and from whom are decended the MARQUESS OF WINCHESTER and the EARLS OF ARRONDALL, DERBYE, SUSSEX, ESSEX, NOTTINGHAM, SUFFOLK, NORTHAMPTON, DORCETT & the VOSCOUNT BINDEN & the Barons BARKLEY, STAFFORD, SCROOP, MORLEY, SHEFFIELD, HUNSDON, KNOWELLES & ARRONDALL

John W Brown

STREATHAM SOCIETY REPORTS

TONY PIZZOFERRO - CONGRATULATIONS!

At the Lambeth Horticultural Society's prize giving event in October 2024, Tony Pizzoferro, retiring Chair *(right, photo LHS)*, was honoured for his 40 years service to the Society. He was presented with a Royal Horticultural Society Recognition Certificate.

Tony is well known to everyone connected to the LHS, to visitors to their events, particularly the flower tent at the Lambeth Show and, of course, their Trading Hut near Crown Point, off Knights Hill, where he has volunteered at least every weekend since it was established. There is no area of the LHS which has not benefitted considerably from his organisation, advice and cheerful welcome.

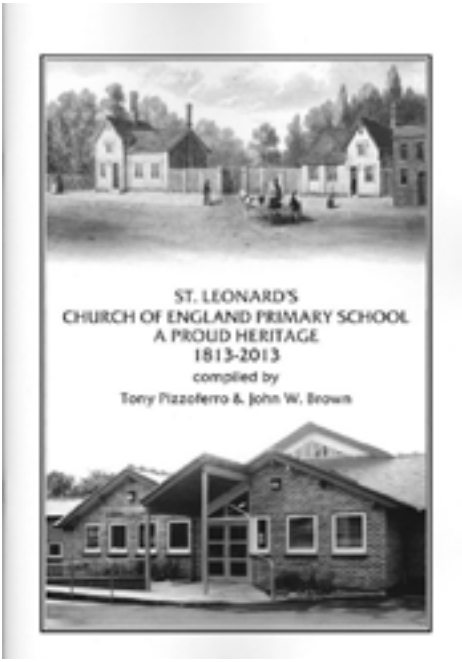
Tony has also been a member of the Streatham Society for many years. However I first met him when he was a quiet little boy at Fenstanton Junior School where I taught. Who would have thought this child who lived on the adjacent council estate would later achieve so much in our community?

I later met him in the early days of Lambeth Show's flower tent, adjacent to that of Lambeth's amenity tent with stalls and displays from local groups and organisations, including that of the Streatham Society.

Tony's early estate home had a small garden and both his parents were keen gardeners, regularly bringing home plants for the garden. Thus Tony developed his love of gardening at an early age.

He was originally known to us as Tony Farrow, his Italian family having anglicised their name on migrating to England from Amalfi after WWII. At his marriage he reverted to the original name so his sons now carry on the name, recognising their Italian heritage.

Until his retirement, Tony was a popular deputy headteacher at St Leonard's Primary School, Streatham, where he introduced gardening to many children. In 2013, to celebrate the school's 200 year history, the Streatham Society published *St. Leonard's Church of England Primary School - A Proud Heritage 1813-2013*



compiled by Tony and John W Brown (still available from the Streatham Society).

This very well-researched and profusely illustrated history was launched at a special celebration at the school. I was privileged to attend this event where two pupils showed me the school nature garden and pond, created by children under Tony's supervision.

Following Tony's retirement he increased his LHS activities but it is now time for him to slow down and hand over to others.

Happily he still visits the Trading Hut when possible to help, advise and socialise.

Well done, Tony!

JILL DUDMAN - CONGRATULATIONS!

At the Friends of West Norwood Cemetery's AGM last November, tribute was paid to their secretary Jill Dudman, their longest serving trustee. Her knowledge, kindness, persistence and commitment have been invaluable throughout the years and remain a source of information. Her scientific background contributes to her ability to research and record accurately.

I have known Jill for some 40 years. She became FOWNC membership secretary, ran their bookstall at all events, was an enthusiastic tour guide and speaker on the cemetery's history, regularly contributed her local history research to the newsletter and organised ed its printing and distribution.

Jill was/is also an active member of other local groups with a strong local history interest. She has been a member of the Streatham Society since 1985, for much of the time serving on our social and programming committee.

When I first knew her she played the bassoon with the well-regarded St Bartholomew's Orchestra (a registered charity) based in St Bartholomew's Church, Ellison Road, Streatham. She is still involved in its organisation.

Long may she continue to be one of those invaluable people in the background enabling the continuing success of local groups by filling in the gaps.

JH

RECENT MEETINGS *(Photos Mark Bery)*

Tooting in the Second World War

On 5 November Geoff Simmons, an accomplished speaker and tour guide, spoke to an audience of an amazing 120. The talk was recorded on our YouTube channel for those unable to attend. Thanks also to Colin Crocker for his exhibition of wartime memorabilia; which included a gas mask for babies *(above)*!

Members' Christmas Party

Held on December 3, there was a welcome complementary drink and nibbles for all. It was a sociable gathering with a large raffle, 'Show &Tell' with nine fascinating presentations, and a quiz held by John W Brown.

'Show and Tell' photos show *(l-r)* Robert Doyle *(rt)* introducing the speakers, Robert Holden, and Roger Wates' display.

Music and the Crystal Palace

On 7 January Philip Emery of the Crystal Palace Foundation gave a brilliant talk to a most appreciative audience of 75. The Crystal Palace was the venue for "unfashionable" music first heard by a British audience of no less than Schubert, Mozart and Mendelssohn!

Philip provides talks and presentations for The Foundation to a wide variety of audiences. Their website reports that in the last year he has presented to the Fes-

tival of Britain Society at the Royal Festival Hall, given a paper for an Ashmolean Museum conference at Oxford University, and talked about music at the Crystal Palace for BBC Radio Three.

Away from his voluntary work with the Foundation, Philip is the director of a charity supporting the rehabilitation of offenders.

Looking back over 2024 we have continued to welcome distinguished and competent speakers on a variety of topics - several of whom will hopefully return to our future programme.

At our first talk in 2025 it was also very pleasing to receive so many subscriptions - see below!

MB/JH

MEMBERSHIP 2024 - 2025

New Members

We welcome 4 new members since our last issue: John Wentworth, Penelope Dimmick, Neil Sutcliffe, Yvonne Shorten. We thank them for their support and hope they enjoy their membership.

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 JH for further details.

Our treasurer and membership secretary must be informed of direct bank payments. We both need names and details to register membership.

Our system has been slightly updated. Our membership year starts on January 1st so the Spring 2025 newsletter is the last issued until payment is received.

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 when they contributed and their membership was/is much appreciated.

Gift Aid: 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

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

MEETING TROUBLE HALF WAY by Crispin Green *Price £15.99*

Congratulations to local resident, artist, author, film & TV editor and member of the Streatham Society. Launched in October at the Backstory bookshop in Balham, his latest novel tells the story of his grandparents during the Spanish Civil War.

Meeting Trouble Half Way opens in London late in 1936. Student Newton teams up with Dai, a Welsh unemployed miner, and Isaac, a Jewish East Ender, all of whom are preparing to undertake the adventurous journey to Spain. At the same time three young seasonal crop pickers, Hans and Klaus, refugees from Nazi Germany, and Inés, a student from Cuba, are heading to fight Mosley's Blackshirts in Cable Street, after which they will join the medical volunteers supporting the International Brigade in Spain.

The novel is a fictional romp through these events.

See Crispin's website for further details.

WHO MURDERED BRAVO THE BARRISTER FROM BALHAM? Was his Wife The Seductive Siren of South London? by Nicholas Reed

In September we welcomed Nicholas Reed to publicise his book at Lambeth's Local History Fair, hosted by the Streatham Society in St Leonard's Church.

In 1923 the Bravo mystery was dubbed "The most perplexing mystery of the 19th Century". Since then many authors have tried to solve the murder in The Priory, Balham.

In his book Nicholas offers a different approach. We are pleased he has agreed to talk to the Society and sell his book at our meeting on November 4th 2025.

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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

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