



STREATHAM SOCIETY NEWS

Published quarterly

No. 238 Autumn 2019



STREATHAM SPACE PROJECT - OPEN HOUSE WEEKEND

September 21st - 22nd

(See p.9)

STREATHAM SOCIETY MEETINGS & EVENTS

MEMBERS' CHRISTMAS PARTY
Monday 2nd December (*See p.31*)

ARE YOU BEING SERVED? -
400 years of London shopping
Talk, Guy Rowston
Monday 6th January **8pm**

VANISHED CITY -
London's lost neighbourhoods
Talk, Tom Bolton
Monday 20th January **8pm**

A TONIC TO THE NATION -
London 1951 & the Festival of Britain
Talk, Michael Gilbert
Monday 3rd February **8pm**

LITTLE HOLLAND HOUSE -
The story of Frank Dickinson and
his dream home in Carshalton
Talk, Angela Cornes
Monday 17th February **8pm**

THE PAINT DETECTIVE -
The research required to match the
original colours of historic buildings
Talk, Patrick Baty
Monday 2nd March **8pm**

STRETCHER BEARERS OF THE
FIRST WORLD WAR -
The development of the first re-
sponders' capability and its influ-
ence on medicine today
Talk, Emily Mayhew
Monday 16th March **8pm**

*Meetings are at The Woodlawns Centre, 16 Leigham Court Road SW16 2PJ,
unless otherwise stated. Visitors are welcome, but £1 contribution is requested.*

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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.
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STREATHAM ROUND AND ABOUT

STREATHAM VALE

Nestled on the edge of Lambeth between the boroughs of Merton, Wandsworth and Croydon, Streatham Vale was part of Surrey for many years. About 250 years ago there existed a single muddy track known as Greyhound Lane, which was a winding country lane leading away from the Ancient Roman route to the South Coast towards Mitcham, a traditional home of gipsies.

Before the railway arrived, there was hardly a boundary noticeable between the two adjoining districts of Lonsome and Mitcham. It was Wates, one of the local developers, who changed the name of Lonsome to Streatham Vale, in order that people were encouraged to buy property in the area.



Streatham Vale 1905

The first “church” that appeared was a Salvation Army hall of modest proportions on the edge of Lonsome District. The first bus route was the no. 50 in 1921, offering a penny ride to anyone wanting to travel between Lonsome and Streatham Common.

The development of Streatham Vale started in the early 1920s when prior to that it was open fields, orchards, woods and farms. Intense building took place between 1922-1932, attracting desirable properties, which also helped with alarmingly growing waiting lists for housing.

Two new schools were planned, the first of which was Granton which opened in June 1929 and Woodmansterne exactly a year later, with its large playing fields, adjacent to the Westminster Bank Sports Ground, at a cost of £42,000.

An abandoned brickworks on the site of Streatham Vale Park passed into the hands of R H Miller, the other local developers, based in Ellison Road, who offered it to Wandsworth Council, who acquired it in 1925 with the intention of turning it into a public park. After delays, a children’s playground was completed in 1930. Three tennis courts and a bowling green were added, attracting players from far and near in the years that followed. The park was officially opened on 26 June 1931.



A no. 50 motor bus drives down Streatham Vale in 1928

Streatham Common Station was first opened in 1862, known as Greyhound Lane, and was changed to its present name in 1875 (on a personal note, I think it should have been named Streatham Vale, being 0.2 km further from the Common than Streatham Station!). The station's second entrance on the road bridge was opened in May 1929 and closed by the Council in 1989 on the grounds it became unsafe. After a long campaign led by SVPOA members Charlie Ruff and Alan Bedford, it was re-opened by Transport Minister Tom Harris MP and Streatham MP Keith Hill on 14 May 2007.



The Vale has the only tributary of the River Wandle. There were frequent cases of flooding until County Hall decided to take some drastic measures in 1926 by building concrete embankments.

The SVPOA, the local Residents' Association, was once called Streatham Vale Estate Property Owners' Associa-

tion – the “Estate” was dropped in time. It began in 1926 when a “handful” of enthusiasts met at Eardley Road School – today standing on an outermost parish boundary – to possibly form an Association for the benefit of new settlers in the district. It was warmly received and formed in April 1927, side by side with the Streatham Vale Sports and Social Club, which organised dances, whist drives and sports activities. The official organ *Vale Topics* (left) started in the same year, the aim being to improve street lighting, appropriate street signs, keeping the estate tidy and river free from pollution, maintaining allotments, improving bus services and obtaining a fair deal from all the utilities.

In the early 2000s, after much discussion among the Executive Committee due to the change in nature of the properties from almost entirely owner-occupied to a significant amount of private or public rented housing, it was decided to change the association’s name but keep the now familiar acronym, SVPOA – it is now known as the Streatham Vale Property Occupiers’ Association.

Road stewards were appointed for all the streets in order to pay closer attention to local needs. All this brought a real depth to the Vale’s motto, “We Serve”.

In 1920 the Great Southern Cemetery and Crematorium Company gave us a resting place of about 70 acres in Rowan Road.

Wandsworth Council built a library for the Vale on the vacant site of the old St. John’s Church in Eardley Road – it was opened in the early 1930s and closed by the Council in March 2000. The building is now a children’s nursery.



World War II - Sherwood Avenue, Streatham Vale’s VI bomb damage

WW2 brought destruction by way of a V-1 flying bomb on the corner of Glenister Park Road and Sherwood Avenue, more damage than casualties, one of some 41 V-1s that hit Streatham.

The strength of the Association was put to the test when the threat of a new motorway loomed in 1966 which was planned to cut right through the Vale (right where I lived at the time!). People sold their properties in panic, but the Association employed Queen's Counsel and experienced solicitors to save the Vale from this catastrophe, which took two years.

By 1971, the population had reached 12,690. During the reign of President Amin of Uganda, many families fled to Europe and most settled in the Greater London area and the Vale took its fair share of immigrants. They soon merged with the local population in a harmonious manner.

However, problems did arise when, in 1976, the Council decided to accommodate a few travellers' families at the southern extremity of the borough. They were given 15 pitches and within a year the place became overcrowded and sheer unprovoked vandalism, combined with violence, spread to the adjoining park. The children's play area was damaged, the bowling green ruined and local residents in general were terrorised. The Council closed the park for two months and sought the help of the law courts. Eventually peace was restored and the park re-opened, with the appointment of a paid full-time warden chosen from among the travellers' community.

In 2003, Karen (my wife) and I formed a Friends' Group at the park and over the years have transformed it from a neglected green space

into a decent place for local residents to enjoy. We have updated the tennis courts, landscaped the old bowling green and planted trees and shrubs. Annual Community Fun Days feature in our calendar and in recent years the Friends joined forces with the Streatham Youth and Community Trust, who run a successful One O'Clock Club with children's facilities for all ages in the refurbished hut, formerly the H.Q. of the Bowling Club.



Streatham Vale Park today



The Holy Redeemer Church was consecrated on 5 March 1932 and the Rev. C P Turton was its first vicar until 1941.

The Vale formed a Football Club in 1928 which had some successful seasons at the top of the local amateur league.

Today, the Association represents many residents in the Vale, campaigning on issues vital to the area from family housing to maintaining allotments. It works closely with Lambeth Council, local councillors and our own MP. Since 1924 the Association has defended the area from innumerable threats to its existence. The Vale has maintained its integrity and still has the feeling of a community amidst the changing face of South London. It also is only as strong as the resolve of its members, but, from the evidence of the last 80 years, it will continue to defend the Vale for the foreseeable future.

Mike Morfey SVPOA



SVPOA Allotments with Holy Redeemer Church in the background

Photos: early courtesy John W Brown; recent JH.

JOAN MUNDAY CELEBRATES HER 100th BIRTHDAY



Joan and her card from the Queen

August 9th 2019 saw the 100th birthday of long-time Streatham resident Joan Munday. She has lived for the past years in a care home in Sydenham but lived in Streatham Vale from 1948 to 2015 and as such I was wondering if Joan is deserving of a paragraph in the next edition of the *Streatham Society News*? She loved Streatham.

Joan was born Kathleen Joan Meyer on August 9th 1919 in Coventry. In 1936 at 17 years old, Joan moved to Bromley from where she'd commute daily to Berkeley Square, London, where she worked in the Civil Service for the Ministry of Transport. In 1944 she met George Munday at work – they married in 1947. In 1948 the young couple moved to Streatham, living in Abercairn Rd. Their first son, Christopher, was born later that year and their second son, Jon, in 1953.

The young Streatham Vale family very much enjoyed their life in Streatham. Every Thursday they'd go to the cinema, usually the Astoria (from 1961, the Odeon) but also the Gaumont and ABC further down Streatham High Road, which was blessed indeed with cinemas and theatres. The family also enjoyed plays and pantomimes at Streatham Hill Theatre and (Joan recalls) the Stoll Theatre, which I have been unable to find any further reference about – Joan says it was “down towards Mitcham”.

In 1997, Joan's and husband George's Golden Wedding Anniversary year, they attended a garden party at Buckingham Palace. George sadly died in 2005 and in 2015 Joan finally left Streatham, after 67 years, to move to a Care Home in Sydenham where she happily spent her 100th birthday with her sons and family (including some of her 5 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren), friends and fellow residents, enjoying cakes and a card from the Queen.

Michael Viner

Congratulations, Joan - any more news and memories from early residents?

STREATHAM SPACE PROJECT - OPEN HOUSE WEEKEND

September 21st & 22nd



What is Open House?

This is the 28th year of London Open House weekend. Its aim is to open up London's architecture to all, for free. It is part funded by individual local authorities, all 33 of which participated this year. In the early years, buildings of historic interest dominated but it has now evolved to display a variety of modern architecture including business and educational premises and community schemes.

I have been a keen participant in the scheme since its inception. However I now avoid the popular, the crowds and queues. I prefer local venues, thus cutting travel time to visit more and speak to the hosts. My main interest is in educational, social or mixed-use buildings, particularly conversions of older buildings, and good modern architecture.

Among those I visited, the Streatham Space Project (SSP) was a favourite. Below is reproduced the accompanying architect's information sheet.

What is SSP?

Streatham Space Project is a new Theatre, Comedy, Music, Multi-Arts venue in south London, which uses creativity to bring our neighbourhood together.

The venue was built as part of a section 106 planning agreement with a developer, to provide community space as part of a new development. Streatham Space Project came together under a team of local arts professionals responding to the open tender for operators, and opened the venue in June 2018. SSP is a registered charity.

Spaces

Our main feature is the 120 seat blackbox auditorium that houses our big shows. We also have a large open bar/café space (*see photo*), with lots of natural light, and a stage for performance and gallery space. The studio also features our art collection and houses our many classes.

The Role of the Theatres Trust

When the Gaumont ciné-variety theatre in Streatham was demolished, a new theatre was proposed as part of a Section 106 agreement within a mixed-use development in a dense residential area in Streatham. Streatham once held many large-scale performance venues and the opportunity was identified by London Borough of Lambeth to turn the required community space into a theatre.

However, the initial plans would not have resulted in a viable theatre suitable for the needs of its community. The Trust commented on the planning application in 2015, querying the use class and whether the theatre space as proposed would be viable. Their concern was matched in the community, where residents felt the scheme was not an adequate replacement for the theatre they'd lost.

The Theatres Trust was able to support the local authority by advising on the Section 106 agreement and worked with the developer to ensure there was adequate space for the theatre in the plans. They also made the case for an accompanying café and galleries, which would be vital if the theatre was to be financially sustainable. On their advice, an experienced theatre architect was brought onto the project.

Once further plans were submitted and approved that would allow a proper theatre space to be created, the Trust supported the council to find the right operator for the venue. From 19 proposals, three were shortlisted, which led to a consortium of nine local arts professionals being selected.

Although London Borough of Lambeth was unable to offer ongoing subsidy to the theatre, the Trust worked to ensure that there was sufficient money in the budget to fit out the theatre and negotiated a 25-year peppercorn lease for the successful operator.

David Hughes Architects; Streatham Space Project 2018

Streatham Space Project is a registered charity. See their website for a wide programme of events and how to become involved.

STREATHAM FESTIVAL - 11th-20th October

Congratulations to all concerned in organising the Streatham Festival Programme.

The now winning formula of dividing it into sections covering live entertainment, art and food venues with associated exhibitions again worked well.

Unfortunately it clashed with our publications month so we cannot report on events in this issue, apart from some art on the first Saturday, but any photographs submitted would brighten our Winter issue.



Art in the Woodfield Pavilion

Streatham Art 2019

Monochrome reproduction does not do justice to these lovely paintings at the Streatham Schools' Art Exhibition.





One of the many exhibitions offered in the programme was the Streatham Schools' Art hosted by Streatham & Clapham High School, which also featuring artwork (*above*) by talented Jean, Upper Sixth, SCHS. Two pri-

mary schools and two secondary schools participated.

On the first Saturday I also visited the Woodfield Pavilion, Streatham Tate Library, St Leonard's Church and Hood, Streatham. What a wealth of artistic talent we now have in our area. I hope the artists benefitted from the publicity and will exhibit again next year.

OTHER OCTOBER FESTIVITIES

Following September's packed **Lambeth Heritage Festival** and **Open House** programmes, October brought more than enough local activities to keep everyone occupied without travelling far (especially appreciated by those of us using public transport suffering from endless road works and curtailed routes).

In October we had **Lambeth's** and **Wandsworth's Open Art Studios**, **Black History Month** and **Lambeth's Celebrating Age Festival**, all with packed programmes. Streatham's contributions to these sounded most appealing. I didn't need to travel much further north as there was so much on offer.

My only quibble (which shows my age?) is the difficulty in locating publicity. In the Olden Days, everything was advertised in the (defunct) local newspaper and easy to plan. Now the internet dominates, yet websites are often out of date. Facebook and Twitter are the main sources, but these are usually last minute posts and only as good as the supplier. Too often times, venues or dates are omitted!

So congratulations to Mark Bery, our webmaster and secretary, who also runs the Streatham Society Public Facebook page, which keeps me well-informed. Also thanks to the excellent *Heart Streatham* magazine - but you need to be quick to pick up a copy if you live outside Streatham and are not on-line. **JH**

LOCAL HISTORY MATTERS

DIGGING UP THE PAST AT ST. LEONARD'S CHURCH Part 2

Continuing our account of discoveries made during excavations in the north porch of St. Leonard's Church when the walls were being underpinned.

In our last edition we told of the discovery of a mysterious passageway. A month later, in Easter week, another discovery was made when a number of skull fragments and bones were discovered among the soil being excavated as the workmen dug deeper down to the foundations of the porch. This was not unexpected as the porch was built on part of the graveyard although it was believed that all coffins and remains in this area were removed to the charnel pit in the crypt at the time work on the chancel extension was being undertaken in 1863.

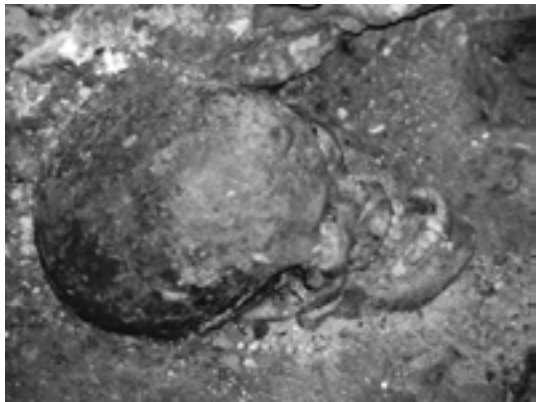
As the workman dug deeper an apparently empty tomb was encountered forming a large void beneath the eastern wall of the porch. This suggests a large grave, probably with a chest tomb above through which entry to the vault would have been made.

The area above the void had been reinforced with three feet of concrete by the Victorian builders who had obviously considered this sufficient support for the porch wall and had therefore not bothered to fill the void.

Following services on Easter Sunday, work continued in the porch when yet a third discovery was made when workmen unearthed a complete skeleton resting alongside the north wall of the porch. Its coffin had completely decayed away, and the bones were resting on the soil very much in the form that the body lay in



St Leonard's north porch skeleton



the coffin. It would appear on discovery of this coffin, that all the Victorian builders had done was to pour concrete around it to provide sufficient support for the wall above, very much in the same manner as they did with the aforementioned underground vault.

The skeleton has been identified as that of a man and the absence of serious dental decay and deformity in his teeth suggest he was wealthy, well cared for and lived a comfortable life. The date of the remains has still to be ascertained, but must be prior to construction of the chancel extension in 1863. The depth and position of the grave would suggest a burial possibly from the mid to late 18th century onwards.

John W Brown

STREATHAM IN THE 1930s

St Helen's School was a popular girls' school in Streatham and was founded in the early 1890s by Miss Edith Salmon and her younger sister, Christine. It was located at various addresses in Streatham eventually occupying the former vicarage of Immanuel Church, at no. 22 Streatham Common Northside, where the school moved in 1929 and remained until it closed in 1965.

One of the school's most famous former pupils was the actress Ida Lupino, who lived in nearby Leigham Court Road. Another former pupil was June Bridgeman



St Helen's School, 22 Streatham Common North



'Colyton' 294 Leigham Court Rd

who later attended Streatham Hill and Clapham High School for Girls between 1945 and 1947.

June was born in 1932 and lived at Colyton, 294 Leigham Court Road, until the outbreak of war in 1939 when her family moved to Scotland. They returned to Colyton in 1945 and continued to live there until 1947. June has lots of memories of Streatham in the 1930s the earliest of which occurred in 1936 when she was taken out of bed and lifted up through the skylight on the top floor of her house to see the Crystal Palace burning on the ridge in the distance.

When she was at St Helen's School, it was run by Miss Burgess and her sister Miss Margaret. She remembers walking home up the steep rutted lane that ran beside the fields of the Convent where there were cows grazing. She also used to play regularly among the hawthorns and brambles on Streatham Common and a favourite spot was a small building one could walk though at the Rookery, looking at stuffed birds.



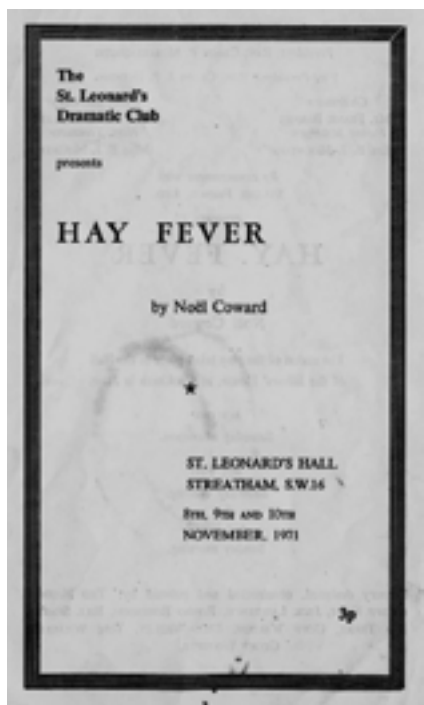
Ida Lupino



St Helen's School for Girls board

June is currently writing up some of her memories of her time at school in Streatham between the wars for her grandchildren and would be interested in establishing contact with anyone who has memories of pre-war years in Streatham or who were at school with her. Anyone who would like to help June can contact her via John W Brown at 316 Green Lane, Streatham, London SW126 3AS and he will arrange for their details to be passed on to her.

ST. LEONARD'S DRAMATIC CLUB



*Programme for 'Hay Fever'
November 1971*

Amateur dramatics were a popular pastime for many Streatham inhabitants in the past. Many such groups were attached to churches or evening classes run by the London County Council (LCC) at local schools or were established by groups of enthusiasts who formed themselves into a self-supporting drama group.

One such group was attached to our ancient parish church of St. Leonard and was originally known as the St. Leonard's Dramatic Society. This group was founded in 1934 and was based at the old Streatham Town Hall (*see p.20*) which had been purchased by the church for use as a parish hall. The group initially performed two plays a year: one in the spring and another in the autumn and were active up to the time of the outbreak of the second world war in 1939.

During the war many such groups folded as members were drafted into the armed forces, war work or civil defence activities.



ST LEONARD'S CHURCH DRAMATIC CLUB 1957/58 PRODUCTION "FESTIVAL TIME"

It is likely that the St. Leonard's Dramatic Society was forced to close down in the early years of the war. However, by the end of the war it had reformed as the St. Leonard's Dramatic Club and shortly after the end of the war in Europe in May 1945 the group were back in action staging a production of *Mystery at Goldfingers* on the 12th June; *On Approval* on the 15th and 16th October with their final performance that year being a Christmas production of *Family Affairs* on the 10th and 11th December.

In the post war years, the Club was very active staging at least four productions in 1947 and 1948. Over the next twenty-five years the club continued to perform with productions being staged in St. Leonard's Church Hall in Tooting Bec Gardens. The last known production performed by the Club was *Mornings at Seven* on the 5th-7th November 1973 after which I have been unable to trace any further references to the group.

Recently a wonderful picture (*above*) of the St. Leonard's Dramatic Club has been added to the church archives by Deborah Linthwaite, whose family were active members of the group in the 1950s and 60s.

The photograph shows the company's production of *Festival Time* in 1956/57 with 30 adult members of the club and 5 children involved in the presentation. Four of the children were Deborah and her three sisters who together with her parents, Frederick and Madeline Culver-James, were the largest family group in the picture.

In addition, the photograph shows four members of the Anderson family in the cast as well as a number of husband and wife partnerships including Mr and Mrs Barnes, Bennett, Doolan, Lawrence, Mountain and Webley.

JWB

SLIDING INTO HISTORY

Many will remember our past chairman, Brian Bloice, a renowned authority on the local history of South London and a well-known lecturer on the subject to local organisations, evening institutes and at Morley College. During his many years of lecturing he built up an extensive collection of slides to illustrate his lectures and talks amounting to around 20,000 images. These were mainly kept in over 200 plastic slide containers which were rescued from his house following his death.

For want of space these boxes were stored in my greenhouse. As this is not an ideal location for them, over the past couple of months the slides have been decanted from their large plastic storage boxes into clear, plastic slide wallets where they can be viewed more easily and take up considerably less space to store. This onerous task has been undertaken by Barbara Richardson, a willing volunteer whose cheery countenance and nimble fingers have accomplished the task with great speed and accuracy for which we are most grateful.

Over the past couple of months, I have also amalgamated a large number of stray slides Brian kept in boxes, containers or envelopes into the collection including some dating from the 1950s and 60s.

Most of Brian's slides are numbered and these he listed in several handwritten files. However, those familiar with his handwriting will know it is similar to that of an ageing doctor and his lists are very difficult to read! However, now the slides are easier to view it is hoped that a typed index can be compiled on a computer database so that individual images can be accessed as required and later stored as digitalized images.

I hope to start this process with Brian's Streatham slides as these images would be of most use to the Society. These include a number of unique photographic collections including pictures of Park Hill before its conversion into Henry Tate Mews, and of the Streatham Silk Mill before its alteration into the coffee shop and offices at Sainsbury's supermarket at Streatham Common.

Our grateful thanks to Barbara Richardson for all her labours in transferring the collection into the plastic wallets for us. As a consequence, I am now storing in my greenhouse a large number of good quality empty slide storage boxes and around 20 empty Kodak slide carousels. If these would be of use to anyone, we would be pleased for them to have them with our compliments.

The Society is now seeking someone to help with the transcription of Brian's handwritten slide listings onto a computer database. Not an easy task, as I have said, his handwriting is very difficult to read. If you are interested in helping in this way please contact me at 316 Green Lane, Streatham, SW16 3AS or send an email marked for my attention to streathamsociety@gmail.com

JWB

SUNNY LODGE - 124 SUNNYHILL ROAD

As you wander around the back streets of Streatham it is still possible to get a glimpse of the town in bygone days.

Andrew Johnson, the Verger at St. Leonard's church, recently drew my attention to one of the most delightful old cottages to be found in the area which I had researched some years ago. This charming, small, detached house, with a slate roof, is to be found at 124 Sunnyhill Road, and was formerly known as Sunny Lodge.



124 Sunnyhill Road

This attractive Victorian dwelling conjures up the image of a humble country cottage and provides a rare glimpse of the outskirts of the village of Streatham in the 1870s when the area would have been surrounded by open fields and pasture with Streatham then nestling in a northern corner of Surrey.

The house was probably built in the late 1860s. It does not appear on the early 1860s Ordnance Survey map and was probably erected after the railway tunnel was constructed in the mid-1860s. It appears in the 1871 census as Sunny Lodge, Leigham Lane, the former name of Sunnyhill Road. John Chittenden, a gardener, was then residing there with his family.

In 1865 John was living at 5 Leigham Lane. This house was subsequently re-numbered 10 Sunnyhill Road when the street was renamed and renumbered in 1884. However, the building was subsequently demolished when new buildings were erected on the site and John briefly moved to Dulwich before returning to Streatham to live in Sunny Lodge. I have no evidence to suggest that Sunny Lodge was tied to any employment and can only assume that John rented it during the period of his occupancy.

At that time a large part of Sunnyhill Road was mainly occupied by the working classes and although today the house has a charming rural ambiance it would not have been considered anything special in the late 19th century at the time when Streatham was being transformed from a small, sleepy Surrey town to a burgeoning southern suburb of London.



Streatham Hall 1872 (Photo courtesy Graham Gower)

John was still in residence in 1873 when his wife, Ann, died of consumption there. In 1876, at St. Leonard's Church, John married for a second time, taking as his wife Ellen Giles. They continued to live at Sunny Lodge until the late 1870s when they moved to Coulsdon.

John's grandson, Frederick James Chittenden, obviously inherited John's love of plants and gardening as he became a lecturer in biology and botany and subsequently became the Director of the Royal Horticulture Society's gardens at Wisley.

By 1880, Charles Needham, a coachman, was occupying Sunny Lodge. It appears his son, also called Charles, subsequently took over the property and is detailed living in the house in the 1891 census. Charles (Jnr) was for around 20 years the manager of the Streatham Town Hall. The hall was built in 1887 but despite its name had no civic function and was used to stage concerts, lectures and other public gatherings.

The building comprised three halls, with the main auditorium providing seating for 1,000 people with two smaller halls accommodating 450 and 350 people.

The opening night concert was a great success and concluded with the popular tenor of the day, Sims Reeves, singing 'Come Into the Garden Maud' to rapturous applause.

Many of the popular music hall stars of the day appeared here, and in October 1910 Dame Edith Evans made her stage debut at the hall when she played Viola in the Streatham Shakespeare Players' production of *Twelfth Night*. In 1913 Mrs Pankhurst, the suffragette campaigner, addressed an enthusiastic gathering here and in May 1916, Queen Alexandra attended a children's pageant in the main hall in aid of the Streatham War Hospital Supply Depot.

St. Leonard's Church purchased the hall in 1925 and it became the social centre for the parish. However, following damage by a flying bomb in 1944 the hall was sold to an engineering company after which it fell into decay. The building was demolished in 1973 and the site was subsequently developed with a large complex of flats called Gleneagle Heights.

By 1905, Arthur Jenkins, an Associate of the Royal Sanitary Institute had taken up occupancy in Sunny Lodge. He is well known locally for the partnership he formed with Henry Dowsett in 1898. Their business, called Dowsett and Jenkins, started life as a firm of builders and decorators which, as was common at the time, also conducted funerals.



STREATHAM 80

1 & 3 SUNNYHILL ROAD, STREATHAM, S.W.

ADVERT FROM STREATHAM OLD AND NEW c1910

*Dowsett & Jenkins original shop 1-3 Sunnyhill Road
early 1900s*

Over the years the firm became one of the largest undertakers in Streatham and continues in operation to this day.

Both men were popular and well-known members of the local community. Mr Dowsett lived for many years at 97 Sunnyhill Road and was a devout Baptist, worshipping at the Lewin Road Baptist Church for more than 50 years.

At some time between 1911 and 1913 Mr Jenkins moved from Sunny Lodge to live just a few doors away from his partner, taking up residence at 101 Sunnyhill Road. He was a life-long supporter of the Trinity Presbyterian Church in nearby Pendennis Road where he was an Elder for 27 years. He played an active part in local affairs and was a Wandsworth Councillor and Chairman of the Streatham Chamber of Commerce. He died in April 1940 aged 71.

In 1914 William Hester occupied Sunny Lodge but his time here was short as by 1917 a Mrs Exell was in residence.

After the First World War, Charles Shirley Carter, an architect, occupied the house and he was still in residence here in 1938, the last year for which local Streatham directories were published.

JWB

MYSTERY WEDDING PHOTOGRAPH



For many years now Kevin Kelly and I, together with others, have been collecting old photographs taken by various photographers based in Streatham. The bulk of our collections mainly comprise late Victorian or Edwardian pictures although photographs taken much later in the 20th century have found their way into our holdings.

One such is illustrated here taken at the wedding of Mr & Mrs Want. It was probably taken in the late 1940s or early 1950s by South Thames Studios which was based at 70 Streatham High Road for many years.

I am trying to identify the church where the wedding took place and the organisation to which the ladies forming the guard of honour belonged. At first, I

thought it may be the St. John Ambulance but have been advised by a long-standing member of the organisation that this is not the case. Enquiries made at the Imperial War Museum have also failed to identify the uniform the ladies are wearing.

I would be pleased to hear from any reader who may be able to help identify the church or organisation of the guard of honour who can write to me at 316 Green Lane, Streatham, London SW16 3AS or send an email marked for my attention to streathamsociety@gmail.com

JWB

11 STREATHAM COMMON SOUTH

Standing opposite Streatham Common, on Streatham Common South, is a large house, its walls were once covered in a dull, brown-grey, rendering. It reminded me of a number of properties I saw in Ballycotton, a small fishing village in Co. Cork, Ireland, which I visited in the closing decades of the 20th century. Many cottages there were dressed in the same type of rendering and in the bleak, dark Irish winter months they emphasised the drabness of the season.

However, 11 Streatham Common South, previously known as Charnwood (also recorded as Charnworth), was transformed some years ago with the painting of the rendering and the highlighting of brick and stonework dressings in white. The paintwork now reveals the hidden beauty of the building and its bright and cheery appearance is a joy to behold.

The attractiveness of the eastern wing of the building is now more clearly revealed as is the charm of the entrance porch and accompanying bay window to the left and small French windows to the right.

I recently had cause to research the history of the building and preliminary investigations lead me to believe the property probably originated as a small villa type house overlooking the common comprising of the western end of the existing house.

It first appears in the parish rate books as a new house in 1810 when it was occupied by a Mrs Sarah Reader who lived there up until 1815. Sarah is buried in St. Leonard's churchyard, along with her husband, John, where a large brown headstone marks their grave on which is the following inscription:



11 Streatham Common South with its original unpainted rendering and today (below)



Sacred
to the memory of
JOHN READER of this Parish
who departed this life
January 12th 1801 Aged 58 years

Also MRS SARAH READER
who departed this life
December 27th 1826 Aged 70 years
Tho' lost to sight - to memory dear.



*The gravestone of Sarah & John Reader,
St Leonard's churchyard*

John Reader was a man who liked his ale and was the Ale Conner for the Manor of South Streatham. It was his responsibility to make sure that all the beer in the Manor was of good quality, served in true measure and sold at a fair price. Obviously the only way for him to do this was to sample each brew, and John must have spent many a happy day staggering from the Greyhound, to the Pied Bull, and then down the hill to the Prince's Head, later known as the William IV, giving his seal of approval to each new keg of beer.

A later resident was Edward Brown who resided there in the 1830s and 40s. A monument in our ancient parish church, sadly lost in the fire which gutted the building in 1975, referred to Elizabeth Brown "the beloved and lamented wife of Edward Brown Esq" advising that she

"departed this life the 15th day of October 1834 aged 24 years".

Edward loved his new home and the large garden that surrounded his property. In the front garden an old cherry tree was a well-known local landmark. In spring its prolific blossom would hang over the street and provided a magnificent splash of colour to this stretch of the High Road.

Subsequent residents include Joseph Franks in 1861 who was a tea broker; Selina Buck in 1871, a widow living off income from investments in property and the railways; and Frank Hyland, an accountant, who probably lived in the house

for a longer period than any other occupant, residing there from the late 1880s through to the mid-1920s.

I suspect it was he who refronted the house, adding the porch, bay window and French windows, as well as the eastern wing to the property c.1888 at around the time he took up residence there.

Old photographs I have of the property clearly show there was once a small porch with a traditional slanting roof over the front door which was removed to make way for the existing porch.

In the Library of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) are drawings dated 1888 for two house designs and alterations by William Thomas Hollands for F Hylands for a villa on Streatham Common. I suspect these refer to 11 Streatham Common South. Although the designs shown in these plans were never implemented it is likely Hyland settled on other designs, probably also by Hollands, which resulted in the building we see today.

W T Hollands is a well-known architect to me as, together with Frederick Wheeler, he designed many Streatham buildings which today give the High Road its distinctive style including The Broadway (1883) between the Green and Gleneagle Road; The Triangle (1885) a parade of buildings on the High Road between Gleneagle Road and the Aldi supermarket by Streatham Station; Queen's Parade (1885) on the other side of the High Road between the old Bedford Park Hotel and the Railway Bridge and The Crescent, nos. 10-22 Mitcham Lane (1891).

Another resident of the house worthy of note is Alfred Frederick Janes who lived there between 1929 and 1930. In 1901 he and his family moved into Chesterfield House, a large Victorian residence that stood on the northern junction of Streatham High Road and Pendennis Road.

It was therefore with considerable annoyance that after over a quarter of a century of living there Alfred began to be pestered by developers who wanted to buy his house so they could redevelop the site. No matter how high the sums they offered, Janes always replied that Chesterfield House was his home and was not for sale. However, no matter how many times he made his feelings plain, the developers would always return with a better offer. Eventually, with great reluctance, he finally agreed to sell his much-loved house and in 1929 he and his wife moved to 11 Streatham Common South.

It was with considerable sadness that Alfred watched his old home being demolished to make way for one of the largest cinemas to be built in the south east of England. Within months, Chesterfield House, and its cherry tree, had disappeared and a magnificent new cinema, called the Astoria, occupied the site. This cinema survives today as the Odeon.

The Astoria was the first modern purpose-built 'talkie' theatre to be erected in Streatham and was designed by E A Stone, who was also the architect of the



The Astoria (Odeon) Cinema, Streatham, in the 1930s

Whitehall Theatre. Over 2,500 patrons attended the grand opening night on 30th June 1930, when the colour film *Paris*, starring Jack Buchanan, was screened.

Sadly, Alfred Janes died less than a fortnight after the new cinema had opened. However, in death, Alfred's spirit returned to the site of his much-cherished old home as his ghost is reported to haunt the cinema building.

On Christmas night 1933, the Astoria's fireman, Lewis Amis, was doing his final rounds of the empty building before returning to his home to re-join his family for their yuletide festivities. As he entered the tea lounge, he suddenly saw a figure advancing towards him in the darkness. Anticipating that he had surprised a burglar, Lewis shone his torch full in the face of the approaching silhouette.

To his surprise the flashlight illuminated the figure of an elderly man, wearing a long white gown, with a hood over his head. The apparition then glided across the floor towards him, its arms held stiffly by its side. As it drew nearer, Lewis caught a glimpse of "a wizened, wrinkled face with a short beard. The figure then turned away and headed towards the flight of stairs leading down to the vestibule."

Unsure of what to make of the eerie presence, Lewis followed it. As the ghostly apparition approached the large wooden doors leading to the stalls, they swung open to allow the phantom to enter. The fireman was flabbergasted by what he

saw. These were heavy fire-doors that usually took two men to open and fasten, and earlier that evening he had checked to ensure that they had been firmly closed and secured.

Passing through the open doors, with his heart now thumping in his chest, Mr Amis saw the figure glide down the centre aisle; float over the orchestra pit, and land on the stage behind the footlights in front of the curtain.

The spectre then suddenly turned to face the frightened fireman, who by this time was frozen with fear to the spot where he stood. The ghostly presence then raised his hand aloft, and in a weird, husky voice, cried out, "I won't sell! I won't sell! I won't sell!". Then, as suddenly as the spectre had first appeared, it vanished.

Lewis was a man of sober habits, described as a "hard-headed citizen of Clapham". He was not a person who gave much truck to the supernatural, or a man who would hold himself up to possible ridicule by speaking of such experiences had they not been true. Mr Amis had no knowledge of Alfred Janes. He had never heard of him, seen him, or knew of his reluctance to sell his old home to the cinema company.

Stranger still, when the story of the frightened fireman's experiences that Christmas evening were relayed to Jane's widow, the mystery deepened. Lewis's description of the ghostly apparition that had confronted him, proved to be an uncannily accurate description of her late husband, down to, and including, the length of his beard!

Alfred's widow, Ellen Janes, continued to live at 11 Streatham Common South up until at least 1938 and probably left the house at around the time of the Blitz in the Second World War as James Bell is listed as residing there between 1941-46.

One interesting feature concerning the property is that it contains an old well from which residents once obtained their water. This was not uncommon at the time the house was built but few such domestic wells have survived down to the present day in suburban Streatham.

JWB

HELVELLYN - A Correction

Referring to an article in the last issue, "Helvellyn", 24 Ambleside Avenue, was named after the popular tourist attraction Helvellyn, the third highest peak in the Lake District, not as described.

All factual corrections and comments to our publications are welcome - it shows they are read!

STREATHAM SOCIETY REPORTS

EVENTS REPORTS

Meetings

St Pancras Station at 150

On July 15th Lester Hillman's lavishly illustrated presentation attracted an enthusiastic audience, including several visitors.

St Pancras Station opened without fanfare in 1868. It became a listed building in November 1967, not long after the disappearance of the Euston Arch. It might have been swept away also. It was seriously underused as recently as twenty years ago.

Today the international station is more than a decade on. The 2012 Olympics, Javelin Domestic trains, King's Cross Station and tube upgrades along with the wider King's Cross Knowledge Quarter have transformed the area. Neural networks, with Google and the Francis Crick Institute, are connecting to the new rail networks.

Leslie Hillman, a previous speaker to the Society, has spent five decades involved in the infrastructure delivery here assisting regulatory, developer, rail, community, heritage, academic and land owner stakeholders. In 2008 he was conferred a Visiting Professorship with the Business School of London Metropolitan University in 2008. He is the recipient of a number of international, professional and university awards. He writes and lectures widely. He has been an awards judge for London, broadcasts internationally, has a number of academic adviser appointments and examines tour guiding.

Ephemera, Collectables and Antiques

August 5th brought our long-running members' evening which dates back to when our then small local history group gathered to discuss individual findings and collections. These meetings provide a platform for enthusiastic members to display an always interesting and often unusual selection of items.

Architectural History of our Underground Stations

The ever popular Edmund Bird presented his "whistle-stop architectural history of London Underground stations 1850 to 2019" on September 2nd. As one of our well-advertised contributions to Lambeth's Heritage Month, this attracted an unexpectedly large audience of over 90, including at least 35 visitors, well above our capacity. It was standing room only and very limited vision as we packed in far more people than we should have done. Happily few left early and book sales were good.

Edmund has been Transport for London's Senior Heritage Advisor since 2006 working on projects affecting historic stations on the London Underground and Overground networks, Thames bridges and on highway infrastructure schemes in conservation areas throughout the capital. Before joining TfL he was Head of Conservation & Urban Design at Lambeth and Camden council planning departments.

Henry Tate: His life and work

Our second Lambeth Heritage talk, on September 16th, also attracted a good audience. It was given by Bill Linskey, Chair of the Brixton Society and Lambeth Local History Forum. Henry Tate, grocer, sugar magnate and philanthropist was a man about whom surprisingly little has been written. He lived at Park Hill, Streatham, and was a very generous local benefactor.

Bill's book, *The Tate Library, Brixton*, was on sale at the meeting. This was publicised in our *News* no. 234 (Autumn 2018). It is available from the Brixton Society at the amazingly low price of £2.50.

Many thanks to the three distinguished speakers above who not only provided excellent presentations but also contributed the notes for the reports and generously declined payment and expenses - apart from Edmund's request for a cup of tea and a piece of cake!

Other events for Lambeth Heritage Month

Lambeth Heritage Month 2019, led by Lambeth Archives and the Lambeth Local History Forum, is in its seventh year. Over 60 events were advertised in an attractive programme. Evolving from Lambeth Archives Open Day and successfully coordinating events organised by members of Lambeth Forum, it is most efficiently organised, mainly by an army of volunteers, many of whom have been so from its early beginnings. Congratulations to all involved.

Lambeth Local History Fair held on Saturday September 7th at the Tate Library, Brixton, was hosted by the Brixton Society. The third of these fairs to be held at different venues, this was another resounding success. The Tate Library provided particularly good facilities with the lecture room to the left of the entrance and (after all the book shelves had been moved round the walls!) a large, light room for the various societies' stalls. The Streatham Society stall was busy and we were pleased with our takings.

Henry Tate Gardens Tours

Our two Lambeth Heritage tours were led by Graham Gower and John Brown on Sunday 8th September. The weather was perfect and there were about 70 people on each tour, including 13 who did both! As usual, our book stall did well and donations were generous. Thanks to the Residents' Association for their continued support. We were pleased their accompanying refreshment stall selling apples from the orchard and delicious home-made produce sold out.



Lambeth Local History Fair - The Streatham Society bookstall with Marion Gower, Janis Benson, John Brown and Russell Henman

NEW TREASURER

We are delighted to welcome Liz Burton to our executive committee as our new treasurer. She has much experience as honorary treasurer for other organisations and as an IT instructor.

MEMBERSHIP

Subscriptions for 2020 due

Membership for 2019 again has increased at c.290. Attendance at meetings is good at an average of c.50. Our visitor numbers have also increased, particularly for the Wandsworth Festival and Lambeth Heritage Festival meetings, now advertised on our Facebook and various Twitter pages.

The 2020 subscription is due on January 1st but payment is accepted at meetings or by post from November 18th. This should be by cheque, payable to The Streatham Society, or cash at meetings. The subscription remains at £10 (individual); £15 (household); £180 (life). Please give all household names with that payment.

BACS payments are also accepted although you must inform me at **jhar-ris.streathamsociety@gmail.com** of your payment to register your name as I

do not have access to our account. The Streatham Society Account is held at the Royal Bank of Scotland; sort code 160093; account no. 13206936.

Membership cards for those who have already paid for 2020 accompany this *News*. Members who have joined since September 2019 are paid up for 2020.

Final reminders will be sent out with the February *News* but it would be most helpful if payments were made well before then. 2019 membership expires on March 31st 2020. Of course payment is accepted after this date, but back copies of the *News* may not be available. Membership cards will be given at meetings or sent with the *News* issue following your payment. Please enclose an s.a.e with payment if you wish to have it sent before then.

New members

We welcome new members Andrew Cordani, Charles & Sarah Skinner, Lucy Perry & household, Alexandra Carney & household, Rossana Rocchini and Eric Harvison. We hope they enjoy our events and publications.

Long-term members

Every year I receive complimentary notes, cards and generous donations from some of our oldest members. These are usually people who grew up in Streatham and have fond memories of their early years. Some live far away, some still live here, but none can attend meetings so they rely on the *News* for contact. It is very humbling to be appreciated by these members who gain least from the Society. If any of our older members wish to contribute their Streatham memories - however short - to the *News*, they would be most welcome.

Judy Harris

CHRISTMAS MEETING - MEMBERS' EVENING

Our members' Christmas Party takes place on December 2nd. Please do not bring non-members, such as partners and guests. (The Household subscription usually covers up to three people.) This event is run by and for members and space does not allow us to accommodate more. Please don't arrive before 7.20pm as we need time to set out the room. Refreshments start at about 8pm.

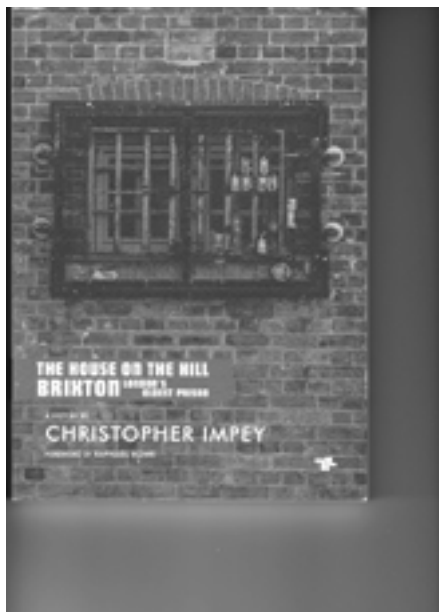
We request members bring food contributions: sweet or savoury finger food which isn't messy as we cannot provide cutlery. Sandwiches and 'party nibbles' are very popular, so if generous members can provide these - wonderful! Sorry, no biscuits, apart from posh ones, as no one eats them. Drinks are also very welcome, but not those that need diluting. There will be no teas and coffees served that evening. Surplus bottles may be put in the raffle.

We'll provide paper plates and cups etc. Please collect your containers before we clear up. There will be a large raffle with at least twice the usual number of prizes. Good quality contributions for this are welcome. As usual, please chat and laugh where appropriate!

NEW PUBLICATIONS

THE HOUSE ON THE HILL Brixton: London's Oldest Prison

Christopher Impey



HMP Brixton is one of Britain's most notorious prisons and the oldest in London. Opening in 1819, it was originally the Surrey House of Correction.

The House on the Hill tells the story of this remarkable institution which reached its 200th anniversary in 2019. This book reveals how Brixton prison popularised the dreaded treadmill, became the first women's prison and acted as London's remand jail for most of the last century.

Today, as well as a prison, it is home to The Clink restaurant (open to the public and much acclaimed; advance booking essential), the Bad Boys' Bakery and National Prison Radio.

The book also recalls the colourful lives of some of its staff and inmates

- among them serial killers, politicians and rock stars, including Oswald Mosley, Mick Jagger and the Kray twins.

A very detailed 220 pages, it includes rare photographs and illustrations, some of which have never been published before. It is an essential read for everyone interested in the history of prison and penal reform. Sited just north of Streatham's parish boundary, it will also be of interest to local historians.

Published by The Tangerine Press, Unit 18, Riverside Road, SW17. Price £14.

THE COMMON STORY - A HISTORY OF TOOTING COMMON

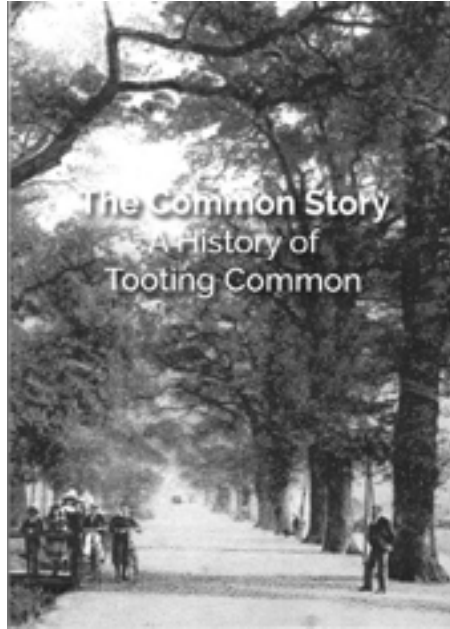
Available from the Tooting History Group. Price £10

Officially launched during the Wandsworth Heritage Festival, this publication brings the rich history of Tooting Common to life. This is the outcome of a four-year research project to highlight the people and events that have shaped Tooting Common over the centuries. It includes contributions from local community groups, residents, archivists, council staff and professional historians.

The project's main partner was the Tooting History Group, but other local historical societies also made important contributions including the Balham Society, the Streatham Society and the Wandsworth Historical Society.

Tooting Common's existence today is largely owed to the action of generations of local people who have fought to protect it. From an anti-enclosure riot in 1794 to the protracted legal battle of Betts vs Thompson in the 1860s, successive interventions by local people have ensured its survival.

In the early years of the 20th century there were a high number of trained keepers who maintained and policed the common. In 1909 there were 13 permanent staff, all of whom were dressed in a smart uniform.



The history of the common is peppered with crime and misdemeanour. In the seventeenth century, trespass and illegal grazing were the worst offences. A century later it had become the infamous haunt of highwaymen and 'footpads' (thieves). At the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the common was the location for a number of violent crimes, including an attack on ladies in a carriage in 1895 and the shooting of a local governess by her jilted former fiancé in 1904.

The archives of Streatham Workhouse, on the common from 1781, revealed a great deal about the lives of the governors, master and matron, and the inmates - and the volume of gin consumed on the premises.

Wandsworth Council commissioned Dr Katy Laylord-Jones, a cultural historian and historical consultant, both to undertake research and oversee the research undertaken by volunteers as part of the heritage project. This combined both archival and on-site research and, in the process, offered opportunities for research training and volunteering.

Tooting Graveney and Tooting Bec Commons are highly valued green spaces for local people. It is hoped this book will add to their enjoyment and understanding of its history.

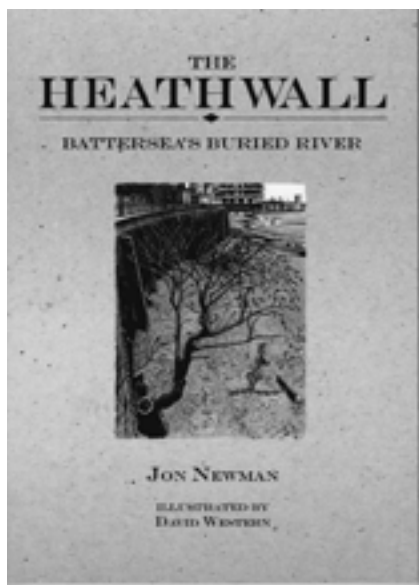
The above is taken from the Tooting History Group's website, with thanks.

THE HEATHWALL: BATTERSEA'S BURIED RIVER

Jon Newman

Illustrated by David Western

Price £6.50



The Heathwall is part history, part walking guide along the course of what was one of South London's most overlooked watercourses, even before Joseph Bazalgette consigned it to a sewer in 1865.

It ran from Battersea, through the present Clapham Junction, parts of Lavender Hill, the Wandsworth Road and Nine Elms, joining the Thames near Vauxhall Bridge.

This book is the first in the Backwater Books series providing thoroughly researched and clearly mapped accounts of the history and geography of South London's network of smaller underground rivers.

Each volume also includes a well-constructed walking route, historic prints and photographs as well as contemporary

line drawings by the artist and photographer David Western

Jon Newman is a writer and archivist who works in and writes about South London. His series of three local walks explored the territories of artists and writers James Whistler (*Battersea Nocturne*), William Blake (*Lovely Lambeth*) and John Ruskin (*Lost in Herne Hill*). His acclaimed history *River Effra, South London's Secret Spine* was published in 2016.

MORE DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

DECEMBER

Sat 7 **Lights On Streatham!**

11am-6pm **December Village Monthly Market & Christmas Lights switch-on**
Babington Plaza, Streatham Green/Mitcham Lane

Sat 7 **A Streatham Choral Christmas**

3-5pm **Family concert** Under 12s free

7.30-9.30 **A charity concert** including Lauridsen's *O Magnum Mysterium* and Clements' *Gabriel's Message*, together with carols and readings. The evening concert will include mulled wine and mince pies. St Leonard's Church, Streatham. £8/£6. *Streatham Choral*

- Sun 8 The Rookery Christmas Fair & Market**
11am-4pm Streatham Common *Streatham Common Co-operative*
- Sat 14 The Story of the Huguenots**
2.30pm Talk, Joyce Hampton, St James' Church Hall, Martin Way, Merton
Merton Historical Society

JANUARY

- Thur 16 Henry Tate**
7.30pm Talk, Bill Linskey, Upper Norwood Library, Westow Hill SE19
Norwood Society
- Sat 25 Come & Sing Stainer's Crucifixion - for all**
9.30am Registration, followed by Music Workshops
2.00-5.30 Come & Sing followed by an informal performance
£15 workshops only; £10 Come & Sing only; £20 Full day.
Streatham Space Project. *Streatham Choral*
See website for further details: www.streathamchoral.com

FEBRUARY

- Sat 8 History of Croydon Airport**
2.30pm Talk, Graeme Roy, St James' Church Hall, as above
Merton Historical Society
- Tues 11 Old Bermondsey & Southwark; Photographs by A L Wood**
7.30pm Talk, Darren Knight, 106 The Cut SE1 (almost opp. Old Vic)
Southwark & Lambeth Archaeological Society
- Thur 20 Bromley Beekeepers**
7.30pm Talk, R Jackson, Upper Norwood Library, as above
Norwood Society

Streatham Village Monthly Market Every last Saturday 11am-4pm. Including food, clothing & crafts. Babington Plaza, Streatham Green/Mitcham Lane

West Norwood Cemetery Tours continue on the first Sunday of the month at 11am (coinciding with West Norwood Feast market, crafts and events). Meet at the Cemetery Main Gate, Norwood Road SE27
Friends of West Norwood Cemetery; fownc.org

Brixton Windmill Heritage Walks £6/£4. Meet Windmill Gardens (off Blenheim Gardens SW2) 12.50 for 1pm start. Occasional tours of windmill.
Friends of Windmill Gardens; brixtonwindmill.org

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR GREETINGS TO YOU ALL

Thank you for your continued support and encouragement

SOCIETY CONTACTS

Acting Chair

Shea Richardson

7 Barrow Road

Streatham SW16 5PE

shea.richardson@homecall.co.uk

Vice-Chair

Russell Henman

Secretary, Webmaster & Social Media

Mark Bery

14 Woodbourne Avenue

Streatham SW16 1UU

markbery@hotmail.com

Treasurer

Liz Burton

53 Hambro Road

Streatham SW16 6JD

liz.joynes@gmail.com

Membership, Newsletter Editor &

Publications Orders

Judy Harris

125 Thornlaw Road

West Norwood SE27 0SQ

jharris.streathamsociety@gmail.com

Other Committee Members

Barbara Beer

Janis Benson

Robert Doyle

Pauline Hewitt

Talks Programming Team

Mike Bowtle

Jill Dudman

Russell Henman

Local History Team

John Brown (*Publications*)

Mike Bowtle

Graham Gower

Judy Harris

Local and Family History Enquiries

John Brown

316 Green Lane

Streatham, London SW16 3AS

Planning Enquiries

John Brown and **Graham Gower**

Address as above

Society Website

streathamsociety.org.uk

Society e-mail for general enquiries

streathamsociety@gmail.com

Facebook

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groups/546435545867439/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/546435545867439/)**

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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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