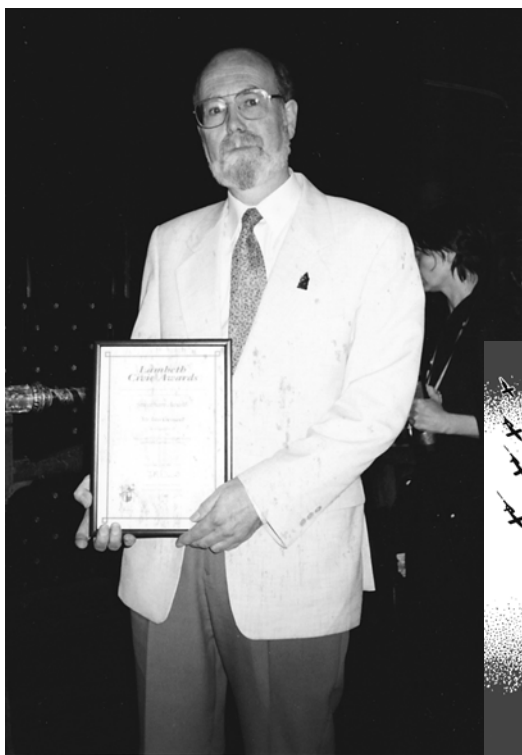




STREATHAM SOCIETY NEWS

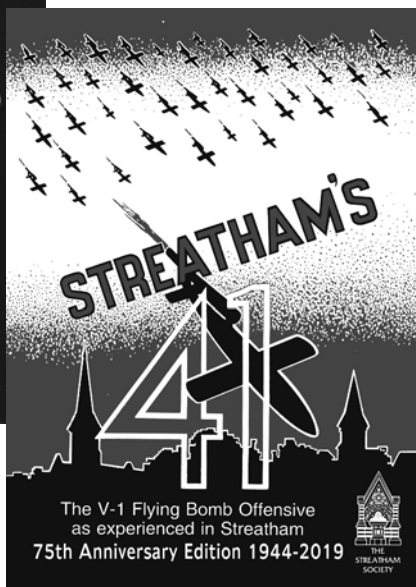
Published quarterly

No. 236 Spring 2019



JOHN CRESSWELL
04.03.1939 - 20.02.2019
Receiving his Lambeth Civic Award
May 1998
(See p.3)

‘STREATHAM’S 41’
75th Anniversary Edition
in memory of
John Cresswell
To be launched at our AGM
Monday 17th June
(See p 31)



STREATHAM SOCIETY MEETINGS & EVENTS

HENRY TATE GARDENS TOURS

Meet main gates Streatham Common North/Leigham Court Rd Buses 249, 417. No parking or toilets on site. Strictly no photos of private homes. Book-stall. Free, but donations welcome.

Sunday 26th May 2pm & 3pm

(Part of Wandsworth Festival & Lambeth's Local History Walks programme)

BYGONE STREATHAM

A lost corner of Wandsworth

Talk, John W Brown

Monday 3rd June 8pm

(Part of Wandsworth Festival)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Following the AGM John Brown will launch our 75th Anniversary edition of *Streatham's 41*, dedicated to John Cresswell (see p31).

Monday 17th June 8pm

THE DIARY OF A FIRST WORLD WAR MEDICAL OFFICER

Douglas Page RAMC, MC on the Western Front 1915-1918

Talk, Raymond Coggin

Monday 1st July 8pm

ST. PANCRAS STATION AT 150

150th Anniversary of St Pancras Railway Station 1868-2018

Talk, Lester Hillman

Monday 15th July 8pm

EPHEMERA, COLLECTABLES & ANTIQUES - Members' Evening

Bring, display and tell us about your favourite items

Monday 5th August 8pm

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY OF OUR UNDERGROUND STATIONS

Talk, Edmund Bird

Monday 2nd September 8pm

(Part of Lambeth Heritage Festival)

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. Articles and photographs may be reproduced with the editor's permission.

STREATHAM ROUND AND ABOUT

JOHN CRESSWELL Streatham Society Secretary c.1980 - 1999

Formed in 1974, the Streatham Society is 45 years old this year. Amongst the number of influential members during its history, the most prominent is John Cresswell. John died peacefully in February in Bournemouth, aged 79.

I first met John when I became a member of the Society's Local History Research Group in September 1983. He seemed a very quiet, gentle, unassuming person. By the time I joined the Streatham Society in 1984, I realised he was the driving and coordinating force behind its many successes. That quiet exterior hid a determined, tenacious personality with high ideals. He strengthened the foundations

of the Society and supported members' varied interest groups. He was the Streatham Society's representative on all local issues.

The 1980s and 90s were a particularly active time. In 1978 John suggested the setting up of Society sub-committees. Five were agreed upon: Publicity, Planning and Conservation, Social and Programming, Local History and Secretarial. John served on all of them and attended all the monthly talks and other events. The Streatham Society Players (an amateur dramatic group) put on performances and the Local History Research Group published several very successful books.

I once asked John, at a poorly attended event, why he continued to support it. His reply was that popular talks were: "the easy option and would draw in the crowds," but that other local concerns were equally important.

A few months ago, when he felt he might not have long to live, John sent me his account of the Streatham Society's history and notes from his time as secretary, from which the following is taken.

JH



*John Cresswell excavating the well
in the Rookery, October 1997*

(Photo JWB)

Streatham Society Memories from John Cresswell

John and Pat Cresswell married in 1977. The significance of this is that he felt he “needed to be at home more rather than gadding about all over London with other groups - so I joined Streatham Society in 1978”. (*And gaddered round Streatham!*)

He was invited onto the Executive Committee and soon became Secretary. One of the members, Colin Crocker, suggested the setting up and collecting for a Local Museum and they teamed up. The resulting vast collection of local artefacts and books were displayed at intervals in Streatham Library and formed the basis of many future displays.

In 1978 on the 50th anniversary of the laying of the foundation stone of Streatham Hill Theatre (*below*), Brenda Hargreaves invited Evelyn Laye to come to speak to the Society about her memories of laying the stone. John “scrambled

together a small exhibition of programmes”.

He was invited to write a history of the Theatre (“- having a mere 6 facts ...published over 20 years later...!”). In 1979 he put up an exhibition in the Library regarding Streatham

Hill Theatre and was given 200+ programmes plus a souvenir opening brochure.

Meeting up with Graham Gower and Keith Holdaway, who were building a good local history team, John suggested writing a definitive history of Streatham to generate funds. He worked in publishing and, encouraged by small booklets produced by a similar group in Bournemouth, he suggested a series of quick publications to generate sufficient funds for the main aim. Four titles were agreed.

Circa 1981 John created an exhibition at St. Leonard’s Church to mark the 175th anniversary of the death of William Dyce, buried in the churchyard. He arranged a talk with Marcia Pointon, the author of a Dyce biography. The object was to raise £1000 for the restoration of memorial brass in the crypt (as a heritage project organised by the Streatham Society).



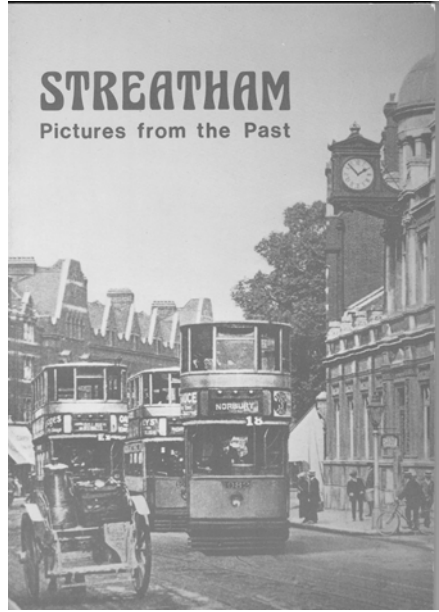
*The Dyce Fountain
on Streatham Green*

In 1981/2 the planned local history booklets were produced. First was *Two Streatham Childhoods* (by Dorothy Rockett and her sister Brenda Hargreaves). It was a runaway success, showing an appetite for such books. The other titles were *A Brief History of Streatham* (Graham Gower), *A Walk Round Streatham Hill* (Derek West) and *Norwood Grove* (Daphne Marchant). All were published and sold in large numbers. Seven more titles soon followed.

In 1983 10,000 copies of *Streatham: Pictures from the Past* were published (*right, only 270 remain today!*). This was an assemblage of pictures from various sources; such a book was often asked for at the local WH Smith (where Brenda worked). An advance of £6000 was arranged on publica-

tion. A resolution by John was accepted, that such monies be earmarked only for publications to save monies being dissipated elsewhere.

When Graham Gower first introduced himself to John, he talked about a local history exhibition once held in Streatham - suggesting it would be great for the Streatham Society to do something similar. John demurred because he did not think the Society could assemble a sufficiently large display. A couple of years later, things had changed and the Society held its first (in his time) exhibition at Pendenis Road church. In subsequent years the Society held regular exhibitions in churches around Streatham. One-day events involved setting up all night.



Streatham Society Local History Exhibition 1992
(Photos JH)

In 1985 John, as the Streatham Society's representative, worked in forming the Friends of Brockwell Park. Others followed. Circa 1989 he worked with John Stewart (of the London Transport Forum) and Julian Heather (local LibDem councillor) to oppose an inner London road that would cut across Streatham and Tooting Bec Commons. A group called STAR (Streatham Against the Roads) resulted. After London-wide protest with other groups, the scheme was dropped.

Circa 1991 the Streatham Society was approached by friends for support to form an anti-litter organisation. They called it SAL (Streatham Against Litter). At its launch outside the Odeon it was joined by Keith Hill, who donned a T-shirt and made his first public appearance next to Bill Shelton (then MP for Streatham). In 1992 Keith replaced Bill as MP for Streatham.

The Lambeth Conservation Area Advisory Committee (LCAAC), was long established, with Jim Nicholson (of the Vauxhall Society) as chair, and other local civic societies as members. It was felt that it was running down, but there was still a need for some local dialogue. John set up the Lambeth Local History Forum to arrange walks (several led by Streatham Society members) and Lambeth Local History Day at the Archives (these activities were pre-existing but a group was more able to plan).

About 1993 Lambeth Council decided to close Streatham Baths. John approached the chairman of the Swimming Club to sound out the situation and

their determination to protest. He introduced Julian Heather to the group and they formed a successful campaign to keep the Baths open.



The VE Celebration Cake

In 1995 the Streatham Society held a wartime exhibition at St. Leonard's Church Hall to mark the 50th anniversary of VE Day: "probably our best exhibition". It was visited by the Mayor

In the mid-1990s Lambeth Council was looking to establish partnerships across the borough. John attended meetings which resulted in a Town Centre Manager being created for Streatham. Later, the LibDems proposed a Streatham Community Forum linking relevant groups to discuss and plan issues. The LibDems failed to get it going, so John discussed with the Rector and others to form such a Forum. It was launched at St. Leonard's Church. A major first issue was the replacement of Pratts store with Lidl.

In the mid-1990s Lambeth Council set up Management Advisory Committees (MACs) for local parks, including Streatham Common. John was a member of

the SCMAC. It was later replaced by the Friends of Streatham Common. They established the annual Kite Day on the back of John's initial Wind Day Festival.

In 1998 the publication of *Streatham's 41* (the V1 flying bomb offensive) print run of 1000 sold out in about three months! (*Being reprinted. See p.31*)

During the mid/late 1990s, John attended a London-wide project to create a walking route around the capital. It would pass through Streatham and Tooting Commons. He supported the concept as highlighting the suburb. The Capital Ring Streatham section was opened by Keith Hill in 2001/2.

In 2000 "at long last" - the publication of the *Streatham Hill Theatre* book - the "parting shot" from John Cresswell before he moved to Bournemouth.

He listed following in which he played a major part:

Conservation Areas: Telford Park, the ABCD Estate; Streatham Common; Streatham Hill; Streatham High Road (as a result of creating the Conservation Area for whole of the commercial area of the main road, a special Governmental improvement award was given to the Council to assist revitalisation); Lewin Road(?). John also painted the original railings at Streatham Station and (with other members) planted daffodil bulbs on Streatham Green.

Listing: The Beehive Coffee Tavern (now Anthony Gold, solicitors); the Georgian Silk Mill (with Brian Bloice, now part of Sainsbury's, Streatham Common), Park Hill house (in Henry Tate Gardens), the grounds of of Norwood Grove; four tombs in St. Leonard's Churchyard (as a result, the church was able to gain some grant/status); the Dyce Fountain (on Streatham Green).

Plaques: Streatham Park (unveiled by Richard Thrale); Tommy Trinder, Well-field Road (unveiled by Roy Hudd) (both paid for and erected by John on behalf of the Streatham Society); Sir Arnold Bax, Pinfold Road (English Heritage. This latter was researched and requested by John on behalf of the Streatham Society).

Campaigns: Saving the Well House in Valley Road (1980); Streatham Against the Roads; saving Streatham Pool; tried to save Pratts department store; Streatham Against Litter; Streatham Forum; London Walking Forum (creating the local link in the Capital Ring); tried to list Streatham Hill Station; Civilian War Memorial (proposed with Colin Crocker); Palace Road Nature Reserve.

Other organisations: Working with other groups to form Friends of Brockwell Park; Friends of West Norwood Cemetery; Streatham Common Management Committee; Tooting Bec Management Committee; Friends of Streatham Common; Friends of St Leonard's Church; Lambeth Local History Forum. **JC**

Goodbye John - and thank you

John's funeral was held at Bournemouth Crematorium on 14th March. It was attended by over 50 people, including councillors and members of the Bournemouth Natural Science Society, of which John was a member. Instead of flow-

ers, donations in John's memory were requested for The Woodland Trust. (*Send c/o Wilton Funeral Services, 156 Tuckton Road, Bournemouth BH6 3JX.*)

In her tribute to John his wife, Pat, wrote that they differed on politics, religion and the arts but over 40 years of marriage they respected each other's views. John had strong Buddhist beliefs, an ability to see the larger picture, the other person's viewpoint and an enthusiasm for the natural world. The funeral closed with this poem:

The Buddha said:
Life is a journey.
Death is a return to earth.
The universe is like an inn.
The passing years are like dust.
Regard this phantom world
As a star at dawn, a bubble in a stream,
A flash of lightning in a summer cloud,
A flickering lamp - a phantom - and a dream.
May your spirit be free.

Pat, a retired teacher, wrote: "Our shared interests in history and archaeology enabled me to overcome his reluctance to go away on holiday and leave his beloved Streatham and Streatham Society". They enjoyed holidays exploring ancient civilisations, and trips to satisfy his interest in the cinema and ballet and

her passion for opera and the theatre. He also encouraged her interest in deaf education - and to learn to drive in her forties.



John & Pat Cresswell May 1998

Pat recounts how his sister told her that as a child John was always peering at the pavement for cigarette packets to collect or interesting aspects of nature, like a colony of ants. She also describes his later passion for exploring the contents of skips.

We have recently lost three major contributors to Lambeth's local history and environment: Brian Bloice, Peter Jefferson Smith and John Cresswell. All were born in 1939. Perhaps they, only young children during the war, benefitted from the freedom and numerous activities which sprang up later in their teenage years. Truly a vintage year!

JH

49b LEIGHAM COURT ROAD



A planning application has been lodged with Lambeth Council for the demolition of 49b Leigham Court Road in order to create an access to land at the rear, formerly the bowling green for the Streatham Constitutional Club, on which 35 dwellings will be built.

The Streatham Society has objected to these proposals and supports local residents and other local organisations who are against the granting of planning permission for this proposed development.

As the developer acknowledges, these proposals do not comply with Council policy as detailed in Lambeth Council's 2015 Local Plan and, in the opinion of the Streatham Society, will have a major detrimental impact on the Leigham Court Road (North) Conservation Area 60 in which the property is situated.

The building to be demolished forms the eastern wing of 49 Leigham Court Road, which has one of the finest Victorian exteriors in Streatham. Built as St. Margaret's with an adjoining coach house in 1866 it was the home of William Raymond Axtens from 1896 to 1924. W R Axten was the owner of the Brixton Departmental store Quin and Axtens.

Between 1929 and 2009 the property was used as the headquarters of the Streatham Constitutional Club which subsequently occupied the western wing of the property between 2009-2015. In 2009 the building underwent a major refurbishment when the Leigham Court Road frontage of the house was cleaned and renovated revealing the full splendour of its Victorian brickwork and design.

The property is one of the most imposing and substantial properties in the Conservation Area and its grand design marks it out as a major landmark contributor to the surviving Victorian streetscape of this part of Leigham Court Road.

The two wings of the property have been specifically designed to blend sympathetically with the central building and in the Society's opinion the demolition of 49b would have a major, adverse impact on the existing frontage of the property.

The Society is of the view that the demolition of this part of the building and its replacement with an access road to a proposed development at the rear will not enhance or improve the property or the conservation area and will be detrimental to it and should therefore be refused.

The Society is also concerned at the loss of open space at the rear of the property which is classed as a community asset and its suggested replacement with a much smaller area designated to become a 'community orchard' is considered a poor and insufficient outcome, contrary to council policy which should therefore not be approved.

John W Brown

PRINCE HARRY VISITS SYCT



The SYCT reports the visit

Streatham Youth and Community Trust was honoured to receive a visit from Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex, during their half-term project. Prince Harry took part in activities and helped serve lunch. He also participated in a panel discussion with staff and young people. Some of the activities on offer during the half-term included trampoline, football and table tennis. The SYCT lunches project is part of the Fit and Fed initiative provided through their partner Streetgames. The lunches ensure that all children get a healthy meal while enjoying the Trust's half-term activities.

We also congratulate the Trust on reaching the Gold level for the London Youth Quality Mark for the second time. The Gold Mark is only awarded to youth organisations that demonstrate they are a centre of excellence and are committed to a continuous improvement through the involvement of young people in its development.

JWB

STREET FURNITURE

Telephone Booths - the Final Word?

I mistakenly thought my telephone booths articles were over with the last *News* issue.

In their recent newsletter, the London Forum of Amenity and Civic Societies highlighted my articles with the heading 'Payphones - filthy and obsolete or sinister and new?' Very appropriate!

I reported that Streatham had five new InLinkUK phone and internet points, backed by BT and Google, offering free phone calls to UK numbers, including mobiles. I thought I'd misunderstood the information - but I hadn't.

The kiosks also offer free Wi-Fi, fast mobile phone charging and access to maps, local information and directory services, all funded by revenue from their large advertising screens. Planning applications continue to pour in for these new payphones. Similar facilities are available in other cities.

In February *The Sunday Times* reported that 20,000 suspected anonymous calls to drug dealers had been made from five kiosks in Tower Hamlets over a 15-week period. Interior CCTV cameras were switched off.

The Islington Society explain that many of these transmit Bluetooth low-energy signals to send advertising messages to mobile phones. They also have Near Field Communication Connection which allows for the sharing of data between several devices, including accessing information and carrying out commercial transactions. The Islington Society questions the legality of these operations in the light of data protection and asks who is responsible for finding out.

Perhaps I should have advertised Streatham as being a safe place for those involved in the drug trade with kiosks either side of the South Circular and along the A23 providing easy access to all areas in all directions.

A spokesman recently tried to justify the free payphones by saying they offered emergency access for the public. As they are situated on busy city streets where most people carry a mobile phone and those who don't are unlikely to know how to use the payphones, this doesn't seem a sensible comment.

However, as items of street furniture, I like the design, materials and dimensions. I'm not so keen on the bright advertising screens but accept this is a sign of the times. If the thirty old, unused, shabby phone booths were removed and these new phones' usage and siting were monitored, I'd probably be satisfied.

Hopefully, by the time you read this the situation will have been rectified. If this is my final word, I can't think of any suitable for printing!



JH

STREATHAM COMMON'S NATURAL BARRIER!



Strong winter winds recently brought down this deceased tree on Streatham Common.

It completely blocks the entrance to the woods previously used by illegal fly-tippers. This section of the common still

shows signs of the tyre tracks from the heavy vehicles which were driven across the soft ground into the woods despite the fact that this occurred some time ago.

Nature takes care of its own!

JH



POETRY CORNER

The Horse and Groom

The spirit of Prince George passed, one day,
Through Streatham, on his way to Brighton,
As was his wont in more substantial times.
“Equerry,” he said, as they passed Streatham Hill,
“Have the coachman stop at that inn,
‘The Horse and Groom’, where we used to stop before.
We’ll take a bite while the horses rest,
I need a break from these damned seats.”
The coach slowed down and out they looked
At ‘Big Hand Mo’s’ in all its tawdry glory.
“Onward!” the Prince Regent cried, aghast,
“On to ‘The Bedford’ or ‘Pied Bull’.”



*The Horse & Groom -
back to its original name*

David Standfast

LOCAL HISTORY MATTERS

MEMORIES OF THE STREATHAM SQUADRON OF THE WOMEN'S JUNIOR AIR CORPS

It was a great pleasure to welcome Sheila Wood to our February meeting. Now in her early 90s, Sheila lives in Sutton and made a special trip to speak to me about her time in the 6th Squadron of the Women's Junior Air Corps (WJAC) in Streatham over seventy years ago. She brought with her a fascinating selection of photographs of the Corps, and in particular pictures of the trip the group made to Sweden in 1946.

The WJAC was formed in Streatham in response to the wishes of the Streatham League of Youth to have an organization for girls on similar lines to the ATC. In March 1941, the 6th Squadron was established with Mrs R Walters as Unit Commander and her husband, Mr H Walters, as Chairman.

An early challenge for the squadron was provision of uniforms, which involved not only raising £1,600, but also obtaining the necessary clothing coupons for the purchase. The Streatham Squadron was famous for its Bugle Band which was the first girls' band of its type in England, and the Squadron itself was the first to be formed in the London area. A remarkable feature of the growth of the Squadron was that in addition to the £1,600 spent on uniforms and over £370 on band instruments, all the money needed to establish the group was raised by members themselves without the need to launch a public appeal.

The Squadron's flag was dedicated by the Rector of Streatham at St. Leonard's Church at a special Church Parade held on Sunday, 7th February 1942.



Sheila Woods in 1943 and with the Squadron Mascot





*Women's Junior Air Corps, 6th Squadron (Streatham)
Salute the Soldier Week Procession*

During the Second World War the Squadron visited and organized many types of entertainment for the benefit of local charities, and they never refused requests from adjacent or country areas. All Wandsworth's pre-service rallies and youth meetings were attended, and each year members successfully participated in sporting competitions winning a number of trophies, including the London group of WJAC Sports trophy. In addition, special annual Harvest camps were organised by the squadron to assist farmers in bring in their crops.

The Streatham Squadron had the honour of acting as a special Guard of Honour at a service attended by 1,000 girls at St. Paul's Cathedral at which the Duchess of Gloucester was present.

The choral section of the WJAC joined that of the Streatham Home Guard and had the privilege of broadcasting to the world and appearing at Buckingham Palace. The Squadron's band also led 1,000 WJAC members in a march-past at

Regent Street where the salute was taken by the Duchess of Kent, who was supported by six leaders of the work of the WJAC, one of whom was the Chairman of the Streatham Squadron.

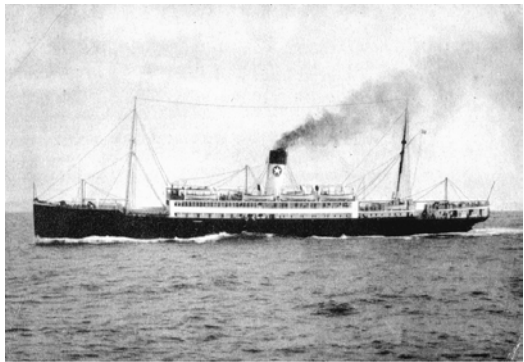
In addition, the squadron was awarded certificates of honour at all organized Government Savings Weeks' campaigns held in the war. Two hundred and twenty-five members of the Squadron joined the Forces during the war and 212 undertook munitions or other forms of essential war work.

Mr H Walters was the most indefatigable Chairman and succeeded in overcoming all the difficulties with which the WJAC was faced when it first began to take shape. He not only showed great ability but also threw himself, both heart and soul, into the movement. His wife, Mrs Walters, as Unit Commander, always manifested the greatest sympathy and understanding with the girls and brought them to a high pitch of efficiency. The result was that Officers, NCOs and Cadets all worked together with a grand team spirit, partly fostered by the fact that all the officers serving the Squadron rose from the ranks. The President of the Squadron was Streatham's MP, Mr David Robertson, who always took the greatest interest in the progress of the Corps.

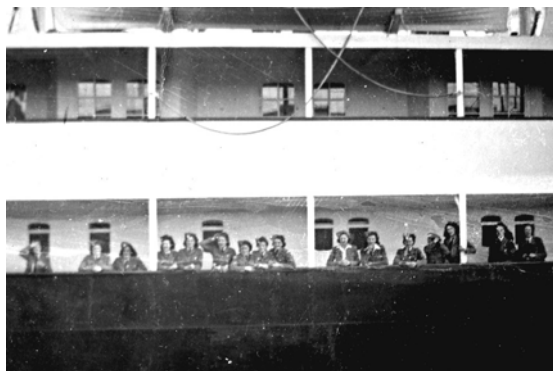
A Swedish Government representative, Miss Olga Akerblad, visited the Squadron to collect information to enable the Swedish Government to form a similar type of organisation known as the Lotta Korp. On her return to Sweden six weeks later, Miss Akerblad broadcast her impressions of the Streatham Squadron and their activities on Swedish radio. As a result of this visit the Squadron was invited to visit Sweden and this trip took place after the war in 1946. Sheila had fond memories of the visit which was a highlight of her time in the WJAC.

An account of the Squadron's tour was recorded by their Adjutant, Margaret Masters. This was subsequently published in the *Streatham News*. An edited account the item follows:

"From the moment our party marched off S.S. Britannia at Gothenburg we received an open-hearted welcome from the Swedish people. A deputation of ladies of the Swedish Lotta Korp received us and sped us on our way to Stockholm Central Station. There, Countess Hamilton, with other members of the Swedish Lotta, met us at 8.30 p.m. and despite the long train journey and the sea-sickness most of the girls had experienced, the band manfully 'fell in' and played themselves and



S.S. Britannia



On the boat to Sweden 1946



*WJAC in Sweden
Sheila Woods is 2nd from right*

the rest of the party off the Station, along a sub-way and emerged in the fore-court, where people quickly gathered at what was to them the astonishing sight of a girls' band. "It's the English flying girls," they said as they stood around the coaches into which the girls thankfully climbed at dismissal; and by this flattering description the squadron was known throughout the rest of their visit.

In an era when clothes rationing and shortages were commonplace in Britain, when the girls arrived at Drottning Victorias Orlogshean (sailors' hostel) I was greeted with cries of, "Did you see the shops?" "Have you seen the shoes?". Had the following day been a Sunday and the shops closed I think it would have been unbearable, for the girls were already fingering their Swedish money and trying to work out the values of the coins. However, it was a Tuesday and so some of the earlier birds were able to visit a shop or two before parading for a march to Skansen, a national park on the outskirts of the city. There we were the guests at lunch of Miss Olga Akerblad, well-known in London's Swedish colony and with whom we had travelled from England.

By this time the news of our arrival had gone before us and we were besieged by photographers and reporters of morning and evening newspapers.

Hospitable Swedes

Many of the girls stayed with wealthy families just outside Stockholm. Tennis, riding, bathing and enjoyable trips in motor boats were all part of their day. The girls remaining in Stockholm - chiefly the band - had a somewhat busier and more hectic holiday, for quite a lot of people apparently wanted to see and hear them and so the invitations rolled in.



WJAC in Sweden, Sheila Wood 2nd from left

On our one Sunday in Sweden, we had a church parade at the English Church and were honoured with the presence of the Air Attaché (Group Capt. Simpson) and the Assistant Air Attaché (Wing Cmdr. Fleet) of the British Legation. This was an innovation for the Swedes don't have church parades and, in fact, special police permission had to be obtained for music to be played in the streets. After church the Air Attachés and the Chaplain, the Rev. Clement Jones, gave a luncheon party for the girls. A second visit to Skansen followed where several hundreds gathered to see Streatham's WJAC.

On the Airfields

One memorable visit was to an airfield near Uppsala, where the commanding officer, Major Karl-Erik Karlsson, spared no effort to make the party happy. The girls inspected airplanes, wandered over the airfield, asked innumerable questions and then were given lunch and offered the use of the bathing pool. On another occasion we went to an airfield where the Commander of the Swedish Air Force, General Bertil Nordenskold, had his headquarters. Here we visited the room where the weather was being charted, the plotting room where the course of aircraft was noted, and finally were received by Gen. Nordenskold and allowed to inspect his conference and private rooms.

One of the highlights of the trip was a visit to the Royal Palace at Drottningholm where King Gustav lived during the autumn and winter. The beautiful tapestries and pictures were beyond description. As a special privilege we were allowed to see the private theatre in the Royal park, which dates from 1766. Cadet Dorothy Baker must be the first WJAC to claim to have sung on a Royal stage. With the rest of us as audience she was given permission to sing and chose 'Bless This



Outside HQ Estreham Hall 1948

House'. Our famous, or infamous, quartet followed with a somewhat less sedate number.

Two visits to a College at Sigtuna, an afternoon spent at the very lovely home of a member of the Swedish Lotta, were other occasions when the girls thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Then there was the afternoon when we were favoured by

the President of the Lotta, Fru Stenbick, and other members receiving us at their very beautiful headquarters which we inspected with exclamations of wonder at the painted ceilings and other beauties of the 'Castle'.

That the English girls were welcome we were never in doubt and we owe a great ideal to the personal kindness of the ladies of the Swedish Lotta who made our trip such a success."

Margaret Masters, Adjutant, WJAC, 1946



WJAC Mitcham Lane Parade

JWB

CELEBRATING ROMAN CATHOLICISM IN STREATHAM

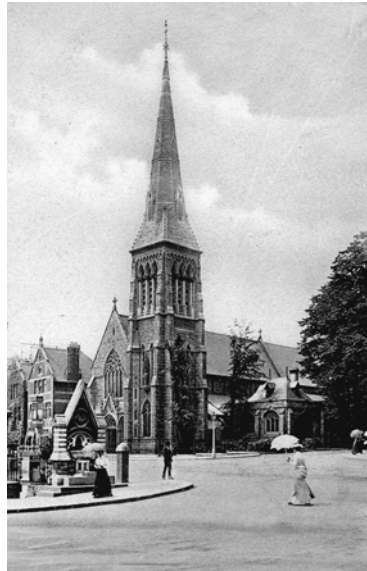
Last year the Roman Catholic Church of the English Martyrs celebrated the 125th anniversary of the opening of the church in 1893. The site for the church was donated by Robert Measures, who lived nearby at Woodlands, a large Victorian house that stood on the southern side of Tooting Bec Gardens. He also contributed handsomely towards the cost of building the church.

Robert was a wealthy man and owned a large iron foundry business. Although he was a Protestant, his wife, Mary Clara, was a devout Catholic and it was for her that he supported the building of the church. He later converted to the Catholic faith. It is obvious that the English Martyrs held a very special place in his heart for in his will he expressed the wish that all his relatives should be married in the church.

The English Martyrs was the first Roman Catholic church to be built in Streatham. It was designed in gothic style by Alfred E Purdie, who had recently completed a chapel at St. Mary's Convent in Roehampton for the Sisters of the Poor Servants of the Mother of God. This may have been a contributory factor for his selection as church architect as the Sisters had also established St. Mary's Convent in Russell House, Tooting Bec Gardens, adjacent to the church site, where a chapel had been set up in one of the rooms of the house where local Catholics worshipped in Streatham.

While excavating the foundations, a small Roman votive figure, believed to be Venus, was unearthed, suggesting that this may have been the site of a pagan shrine during the time of the Roman occupation of Britain. The foundation stone was laid by the Bishop of Southwark on 4th May 1892 and the building was completed a year later on the 4th May 1893 when the first Mass was held in the building, conducted by Cardinal Vaughan, the Archbishop of Westminster.

The spire towers 136ft 9ins above the street, making it 9ft taller than that of the neighbouring parish church of St. Leonard. Although the tower has louvred openings to accommodate bells, none have ever been hung here and the ringing



*Church of the English Martyrs
(Showing the Dyce Fountain in its
original position on the corner of
Mitcham Lane)*



Robert Measures



Russell House, Tooting Bec Gardens



Fanny Margaret Taylor

chamber now houses part of the church organ.

The church is dedicated to the English Martyrs - those Catholics killed during the Reformation when King Henry VIII declared himself head of the Church in England following the Pope's refusal to annul his marriage to Catherine of Aragon. On the wall behind, and on each side of the Altar are two Aumbries, above which are carved heads. On the

right are those of Robert Measures and his wife, and on the left their daughter and Father William Lloyd, the first Rector of the church.

On Saturday 9th February 2019 a special event was held in the parish hall to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the church. Organised by the church and the Sisters of the Poor Servants of the Mother of God, it also provided an opportunity to mark the 130th anniversary of the Sisters establishing St. Mary's Convent in Russell House in Tooting Bec Gardens in 1888.

The event, hosted by The Revd. Father Gregory Verissimo of the English Martyrs and the Order, attracted a huge gathering which heard about the founding of the Sisters in 1872 by Fanny Margaret

Taylor (1832-1900), now commonly referred to as Frances Taylor or as Mother Magdalen of the Sacred Heart. In 2014 she was declared 'Venerable', the first formal step to being canonised within the Roman Catholic Church.

Fanny was the daughter of an Anglican Minister in Lincolnshire. During the Crimean War in 1854 she spent some time serving with Florence Nightingale at Scutari Hospital. She went out to the Turkish hospitals in the second party of nurses led by Mary Stanley. Fanny Taylor and Miss Nightingale did not get on. In the somewhat febrile atmosphere reigning in the hospitals, Fanny very much took the part of Mother Bridgeman and the Irish Sisters of Mercy - who were also with the second party of nurses - and who did not always receive Miss Nightingale's enthusiastic approbation.

It was while in the Crimea that Miss Taylor became a Catholic, having been influenced by the Sisters of Mercy, the Catholic Chaplains and the Catholic soldiers whom she nursed in the hospital. From her teenage years, Fanny became intimate with the lives of the poor, in particular poor girls and women, and be-

came dedicated to ameliorating their living conditions.

Initially working in conjunction with an Anglican religious order, on her return from the Crimea she continued such work among London's Catholic community which led to her founding the Sisters of the Poor Servants of the Mother of God in 1872. Her particular concern was to support the Catholic poor of London, both spiritually and materially. Her first refuge in west London was established primarily to care for vulnerable and indigent girls and women of the labouring classes, whose employment prospects were much more limited than men of the same class, and who were frequently driven by material necessity into prostitution.

In 1888 Fanny established St. Mary's Convent in Russell House in Streatham. This building also

served as a refuge to support and extend the work undertaken in West London, by providing training in laundry work which would help prepare the women inmates to go on either to obtain employment in domestic service, or in one of the many large commercial laundries prevalent at the time. Russell House belonged to Robert Measures and had formerly been used by the Westminster Memorial Refuge of the Royal Society for the Assistance of Discharged Prisoners, where female prisoners were trained for work as domestic servants when they had completed their sentence.

On May 4th, 1888, the Feast of the English Martyrs, the drawing room in the house was prepared as a chapel, and the first Mass since the Reformation was said in Streatham. The Very Rev J C Canon McGrath of Camberwell was the celebrant. The room could accommodate about one hundred persons and was used as the public chapel of the mission until the Church of the English Martyrs was built.

A special entrance to the church from the convent was constructed in 1895 allowing the nuns and the young women in their care direct access to St. Mary's Convent Chapel where the original altar, used for the first Mass in Streatham in 1888, was relocated and can be seen today.



St Mary's Convent





Trowel used for the Foundation Stone and the Celebration Cake



Pastoral work was carried out from the convent, and from the beginning of the foundation, visitation of the poor as well as catechism classes, some of which were taken in the large convent garden, were regularly carried out. In 1979 2,000 meals were served to the poor from the convent. The Sisters also took on the responsibility over the years for sacristy work at the English Martyrs' church. Various improvements to the convent accommodation were made in 1895, and in July 1913 the property was purchased freehold at a cost of £3,000.

In 1923 the Order acquired Park Hill, the former home of Sir Henry and Lady Tate, located at the top of Streatham Common Northside. The women were transferred from Russell House to Park Hill, which then was renamed St. Michael's Convent. With the changing needs of contemporary society, the emphasis at St. Michael's was increasingly on the care of girls and women with learning disabilities. The order continued their work at St. Michael's until the site was sold for redevelopment in 1999 and the grounds were partly developed with housing now known as Henry Tate Gardens.

The work of the Sisters continues today via their social services wing - known as the Frances Taylor Foundation - though with the decline of religious vocations in the western world the work is generally now carried out by lay employees.

In 1931-2 Russell House was demolished, and a new convent and a home for elderly ladies were built on the site, designed by the architect, P H Raw. The home was known as St. Agnes' Lodge and provided accommodation for 13 elderly women. It was named after Miss Agnes Foley, of 8 Fernwood Avenue, who was the daughter of the founder of the Pearl Insurance Company and was responsible for the financing of the home, in addition to many other benefactions. Phases of refurbishment took place at the home from 1983-86, when St. Mary's was registered as a nursing home and, from 1988-90, when rooms were added and improved and a new chapel was built.

The Convent subsequently moved to a house in Fernwood Avenue and the nursing home was sold in 2007 and is now under private ownership.

JWB

With appreciation for the valuable assistance and information provided by Paul Shaw, Archivist, Poor Servants of the Mother of God. Illustrations of Russell House and St. Mary's Convent reproduced by Permission of the Generalate of the Poor Servants of the Mother of God.

ONE UPMANSHIP

Can it be coincidence,
That when the Church of Rome
Built themselves a brand new place to pray
In Streatham, that it was cheek by jowl
With Saint Leonard's, of the opposition.
Doesn't English Martyrs say
I am newer, taller, grander
Than you, and all your age
Will not make up for that.
But English Martyrs does not have
A graveyard where, next the traffic's roar,
A passer-by can sit beneath the trees
And rest and think and ignore
The hurly-burly that is London life.

David Standfast



STREATHAM CONNECTIONS

Since joining Streatham Society last year I have bought and read many of the books of the Society. I was most surprised to find our family have a couple of connections to Streatham inhabitants which are contained in John Brown's books and about which I was totally unaware.

Douglas Wayland - the Victorian Photographer who was one of the first photographers to use electrical lights at his studios. He was well known for taking photographs of eminent Streatham inhabitants and local VIPs. Douglas was one of three brothers who were all photographers. He had his studio on the corner of Streatham High Road and Becmead Avenue which today is a branch of Lloyds Bank.

John has written about the fascinating story of one of the subjects in Wayland's photographs: Maurice Miles, as a child sitting amid ship's rigging, and tracing the life of Maurice who later trained to be a surgeon through to WW1 (*Streatham Society News Summer 2017*).

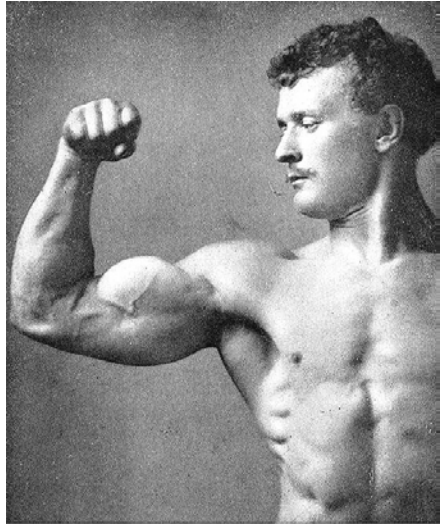
John in his book states that Douglas lived and died in my house at 14 Woodbourne Avenue, Streatham. I have substantiated this from the electoral registers and found press cuttings from the *Norwood News* announcing his death.

"Outside of his studio Mr Wayland took little or no active part in public affairs but at the same time he was a generous donor to many local charities and societies. Since he relinquished his business several years ago he had practically devoted himself to his home (Woodbourne Avenue) and garden."

My connection is through my daughter-in-law who is a direct blood relative to Eugene Sandow. Helen is the great-great-grand daughter of Eugen Sandow (incidentally Helen is also the name of one of Eugen's daughters). When my son and his wife had their first child they examined the family tree, which I had been researching over the last few years, and picked the name Otto Bery - named after Eugen's father; Otto Muller.

Eugen Sandow, the father of body-building, in about 1888-9, around the time he first came to London

Mark Bery



STREATHAM HILL THEATRE PROGRAMMES

Our thanks to Brenda Whitaker for the donation of a wonderful collection of Streatham Hill Theatre programmes which have helped fill many gaps in our holdings. Brenda's collection mainly comprises programmes for shows she saw in the early to mid-1950s.

Included among them is the programme for *Love from Judy* staged in Streatham in March 1954. This production was mounted by the well-known impresario Emille Littler and had already had a successful run at the Saville Theatre in London's West End before going on tour around the UK. The cast included the young Streatham actress, June Whitfield, who played the role of Sally McBride. This was one of the very early stage successes in her career.





*'Love From Judy' 1954 Programme
June Whitfield standing rear, right*

Among the other cast members is a young Barbara Windsor, playing the part of Sadie Kate. Like June she later became famous for her roles in the popular *Carry On* films and subsequently appeared in the BBCTV soap, *EastEnders*.

JWB

EMILE LITTLER'S

LOVE FROM JUDY

Jerusha Abbott ...	JEAN CARSON
Sadie Kate ...	BARBARA WINDSOR
Gladiola Murphy ...	LINDA BACON
Mamie ...	ANTOINETTE MILLER
Loretta ...	HEATHER LEE
Mrs. Lippett ...	BETTY BOWDEN
Mrs. Grace Pritchard ...	LINDA GRAY
Cyrus Wykoff ...	VINCENT LAWSON
Senator Parsons ...	JOSS CLEWES
Jervis Pendleton ...	BILL O'CONNOR
Julia Pendleton ...	EILEEN GOURLAY
Sally McBride ...	JUNE WHITFIELD
Jimmy McBride ...	JOHNNY BRANDON
Gordon McLintock ...	WILLIAM GREENE
Butterfly ...	ADELAIDE HALL
Mrs. Pendleton ...	BETTY BOWDEN
Mary Lou Wagner ...	JEANETTE LANDIS
Wilberforce ...	JAMES ANSLEY
Walters ...	VINCENT LAWSON
Loulie Jean ...	ANNE FOLEY
Don Mize ...	DAVID KARRY
Ballet Jervis ...	JACK MANUEL
Ballet Judy ...	IRENE CLAIRE
Ballet Magnolia ...	FRANCES PIDGEON
Captain Le Valier ...	THANE BETTANY

Dancing Girls: Angela van Breda, Jean Cameron, June Koonopsek
 Dancing Boys: Denis Gordon, Johnny Greenland
 Singing Girls: Myra de Groot, Jeanette Landis, Joyce Mandre, Joyce O'Keefe, Dorothy Wakefield
 Singing Boys: Ronald Adams, John van Best, Ronald Brown, William Crossdale, David Karry, David Redwood, Gerald Morden
 Dancer Singers: Jillian Comber, Ken Lawton, Janet Page, Renee Pasby, Kenneth Robson, Lenora Walsh
 Children: Linda Bacon, Heather Lee, Joan Lee, Annette Macdonald, Antoinette Miller, Sylvia Such, Barbara Windsor, Edna Wynn

Directed by CHARLES HICKMAN

ACT I

- Scene 1. New Orleans, Mardi Gras, 1903
- Scene 2. The John Grier Home
- Scene 3. A Railway Station, some weeks later
- Scene 4. Fergusson Ladies' College, some months later
- Scene 5. Under the Magnolia
- Scene 6. The Campus

ACT II

- Scene 7. Lock Willow Farm, Summer
- Scene 8. The Porch at Lock Willow Farm, Autumn
- Scene 9. Nightmare
- Scene 10. Jervis Pendleton's Study
- Scene 11. Finale

Interval of 15 minutes between the Acts

An attractive SOUVENIR MAGAZINE of the Show is on sale in the Theatre. Profusely illustrated, it will always revive happy memories of 'Love From Judy' and will be a worth-while addition to any collection of Theatre Souvenirs. Price two shillings and sixpence.

Production assembled by Phylsie. Scenery painted by Alick Johnston; built by Brunskill and Loveday. Costumes by C. L. Frobridge, Alec Shanks, St. John Roper, Theatrical Models Ltd., Chinery & Wright, Lezore, Joffe Roth. Men's clothes by Morris Angel, H. Sparrow, and D. A. and M. Angel Ltd. Hats by Messrs. Dunn, Sheeta and Corne. Shoes by Gamble and Friend. Wigs by Nathanaels and Wig Creations. Tennis rackets by H. J. Gray & Sons Ltd. Ukulele banjos by G. Scarth Ltd. Properties by Richard Dendy. Sound by Rishoff's Patent Cusker System. Wardrobe cleaned by Lux. Nylon Stockings by Kayser-Bondor. Drene Shampoo. Virginia Cigarettes by Abdulla.

Manager	For	ALBERT LOCKE
Stage Director	"Love From	JOHN WARBECK
Stage Manager	Judy"	DEREK ENSOR
Ballet Mistress		IRENE CLAIRE
Wardrobe		MARGOT MARTIN
General Manager	For all	IAN PAUL
Production Supervisor	Emile Littler	P. L. WRIGHT
Public Relations	Enterprises	PATRICK SELBY

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 Income tax paid by Society.

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STREATHAM SOCIETY REPORTS

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2019

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the 43rd Annual General Meeting of the Streatham Society will be held at The Woodlawns Centre, 16 Leigham Court Road, Streatham SW16 2PJ at 8.00pm on Monday 17th June 2019 to transact the following business:

- 1. Minutes of the previous meeting** - To be agreed and matters arising
- 2. Reports and Accounts** - To receive and consider the accounts for the year ended 31st March 2019.
- 3. Appointment and remuneration of independent examiner of accounts** - To appoint an independent examiner for the financial year to 31st March 2020.
- 4. Appointment of charity trustees** - Nominations for the position of Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and other committee members must be received by **Monday 3rd June 2019**.

All committee members are Trustees of the Charity.

Details of how to make a nomination are available from the Secretary.

- 5. Members' resolutions** - Resolutions should be sent to the Secretary by **Monday 3rd June 2019**.

- 6. Any other business** - To deal with any relevant matters raised at the meeting.

Shea Richardson, Secretary, 13th May 2019

Following the AGM John Brown will give a brief presentation about our new publication, the reprint of *Streatham's 41*. This commemorates the 75th anniversary of the WW2 VI campaign against Britain when 41 VI bombs were dropped on Streatham. It is dedicated to John Cresswell's memory. Colin Crocker will present a complementary display.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND HELP WANTED

We need help to run the Streatham Society in several areas. In the last *News* we requested nominations for a new secretary and volunteers to organise and help with refreshments at meetings.

We are very pleased that Allen Brown has undertaken the refreshments, when he is available, with his team: Maureen Barclay, Dorothy Charman, Jenny Patterson, John Brown and Tony Fletcher. I'm sure they would welcome others.

We also need help with membership: compiling a database of members' email addresses (separately from postal addresses) and/or organising Gift Aid, both for 2020. We always welcome people who can help in other areas and at meetings.

All members of the Executive Committee are also Trustees of the Society.

Nearly all communication with the Society is via email but a significant number of our older members are not on-line and do not use Facebook, Twitter or on-line banking facilities. In an age when the gap between the working and retired generations seems to be widening, all our members must be catered for but this causes a considerable extra workload for existing committee members.

THE STREATHAM SOCIETY AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The Society's Facebook page is now live and already has almost 200 members. Topical posts on the history and people of the historic parish, events of the Society and other local history and special interest groups will be publicised on this platform. Please use the address below or search 'Streatham Society' on Facebook to join the group.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/546435545867439/>

We will shortly also resurrect the Society's Twitter account which has been dormant for a number of years.

Please note that distribution of the Society's newsletter by post and the web presence remain unchanged.

Mark Bery

We are delighted to welcome our new lines of communication. Thank you, Mark, and welcome to our online visitors.

THE STREATHAM SOCIETY IS 45 YEARS OLD!

The Streatham Society was formed in 1974. Jean Gaffin, then Labour candidate for Streatham for the 1974 General Election, called and chaired the inaugural meeting. She was concerned that the old Fire Station on Streatham Green (now the mosque), had been standing empty for several years and realised Streatham needed an action group to deal with environmental matters. She continued as a member and keen supporter for 43 years, long after her removal from the area.

In the early 1980s, at the suggestion of John Cresswell, five sub-committees were formed to deal with the variety of initiatives covered. Other committee members who joined in 1974 and served until their final years were Brenda Hargreaves, her sister Dorothy Rockett, Betty Parr and Joan Rich.

Following are listed only some of the early long-term past and present committee members (*see back page*) and helpers who still support us today: 1975 Catherine Mahé, Daphne and Richard Marchant; 1977 Keith Holdaway, 1979 Gra-

ham Gower, Janis Benson; 1980 Marion Gower, Shea Richardson, Mike Bowtle; 1984 Tony Fletcher, Judy Harris, John Brown; 1985 Jill Dudman; 1988 Russell Henman; 1989 Robert Doyle; 1993 Yvonne Watkins (a regular contributor to the *News*); 1996 Peter Main (our webmaster).

The first newsletter, *Pump*, with the Streatham Society logo representing the well in the Rookery, was so called to suggest news being exchanged over the village pump in days gone by. After a shaky start, *Pump* was edited by Catherine Mahé then Brenda Hargreaves with significant input from John Cresswell. Our logo is now the Dyce Fountain (on Streatham Green) and *Pump* changed to the *Streatham Society News* ten years ago, after I took over as editor.

And so we have reached 45 years old. But our type of group is struggling to survive. A survey has shown that changed methods of communication (the internet) and socialising, longer working years and increased family and other commitments have resulted in fewer volunteer events' organisers and helpers. Yet we still attract an average of over 50 people to our meetings, so I'm confident we'll continue at least to our 50th anniversary.

JH

EVENTS REPORTS

Meetings

Our meetings' talks continue to offer an impressive variety of topics, usually attracting large audiences, and an increasing number of visitors.

Long-term Transport Improvements for Streatham - What may be possible in the view of Streatham Action

On January 21st Neil Salt outlined his overview, leading to a lively discussion on a topic which has concerned local residents for many years.

Wandsworth Prison - A history

On February 4th Stewart McLaughlin, Hon. Curator of Wandsworth Prison Museum, gave a most interesting and informative talk on the history of the prison. The Prison Museum has an Open Weekend on June 1st & 2nd 10am-1pm & 2-5pm (free entry) at North Gate Car Park, HMP Wandsworth, Heathfield Road SW18. This small museum is well worth a visit. See Wandsworth Heritage Festival programme for further details.

South London in Film

On February 18th Tony Fletcher, accompanied by cinema commissioner, Robert Holden, showed some South London silent and sound film extracts, including the Opening of Woodlawns (our meetings' venue), in 1942. His fascinating presentation attracted a good crowd. The films are held in the Cinema Museum's collection. This Museum, another gem under threat, is also well worth visiting.

Death on the Brighton Road - Places of Execution in the 18th and 19th centuries

On March 4th Jon Newman, Lambeth archivist and writer, spoke to another large audience. On sale was his linked book *Death on the Brighton Road*. His talk explored the system of capital punishment in South London in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, presented in the form of an eleven mile journey along the A23, passing the sites of the gallows, gibbets and places of execution at Kennington, Brixton Hill, Thornton Heath and Smitham Bottom.

Mayhem, Murder, Mutiny and Misery - The Greely Arctic Expedition

Allen Brown's talk on March 18th told of the Greely Arctic Expedition 1881-84, the disaster prone American expedition to the North Polar Region when, it seemed, that everything that could go wrong went wrong.

The Waterways In and Around London

On April 1st Philip Emery spoke on the development, restoration and maintenance of the waterways by the Canal and River Trust. We had a very large audience of about 70, including eight visitors, and gained five new members.

Friends of Streatham Cemetery - Cherishing history and nurturing wildlife

Kath Church, a retired lecturer in English Language studies, spoke to us on April 15th. Her talk outlined the concerns and work of the Friends of Streatham Cemetery. The presentation gave a brief review of the history of the Friends and the cemetery, together with points of interest. These included the wildlife, data collected and notable burials, such as war heroes and local celebrities.

MEMBERSHIP

Have you paid your 2019 subs? If there is an 'F' on your address label, I had not received your subscription at the time of writing (April). Unless you have paid since, this is your final *News*. If you do not wish to re-join, thank you for your past support. Otherwise please pay soon to receive the next *News*.

New members: We welcome John Williams, Corinne & Robert Short, Peter Chapman, Robert Hardy, Carol Elliott & Ian Swanson, Anna Maliniak, Susan Mills and Maria Vraca. We hope they enjoy their membership.

Members' email addresses: I do not keep a database of these as my contact list exists mainly for me to mail-merge and post the *Streatham Society News* which, at 36 pages, is preferred by a majority of our members as a hard copy. However it would in future be preferable also to have email contact if someone is willing to do this. I already have some email addresses on membership forms and could easily request more next year (2020). If anyone would like to compile and manage this database, please contact me.

Judy Harris

NEW PUBLICATIONS

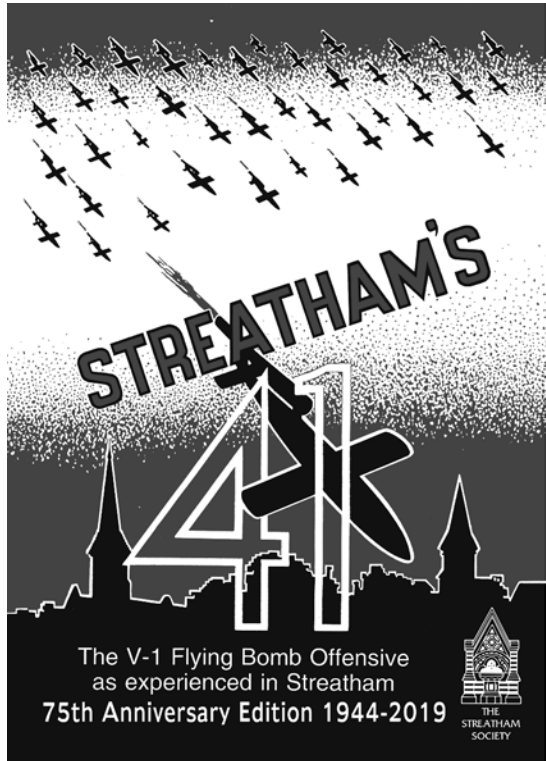
STREATHAM'S 41

To commemorate the 75th anniversary of the V1 campaign against Britain in the Second World War, the Streatham Society is publishing a third edition of our publication *Streatham's 41*. This tells the story of the 41 V1 bombs that fell on the town between June and August 1944. This anniversary is likely to be the last major occasion when the event will remain in the living memory of residents of our suburb. The vast majority of adults who lived through those harrowing days have sadly died and the occasion is now mainly recalled as teenage and childhood memories of our oldest inhabitants.

The Streatham Society hopes that by the publication of this third edition of *Streatham's 41* a new generation of Streatham residents will appreciate the challenges and hardships experienced by their predecessors at what was a decisive turning point in the war.

D-Day on the 6th June had resulted in the allied armies gaining a small toehold on the continent of Europe and at that time the inhabitants of Streatham must have looked forward with growing confidence that the war may soon be over and their hardships relieved.

A week later, on Tuesday 13th June, the Archbishop of Canterbury visited our suburb to preach at Streatham's ancient parish church of St. Leonard as part of the Religion and Life campaign. Many who attended that service must have returned home with their optimism for the future reinforced.



Front (colour) cover of the 75th Anniversary edition of 'Streatham's 41'



Photo. supplied by South Thames Studios.

The late Archbishop of Canterbury's visit to St. Leonard's, June 13, 1944.
 (Front Row (left to right): The Mayoress, The Rector, The Mayor, The late Archbishop of Canterbury, Mr. David Robertson, M.P., Mrs. Robertson.
 Back row (left to right): Rev. Leslie Craig, Rev. Gerald Knight, Rev. Eric Shave, Mr. Geoffrey Page, Rev. E. N. Martin, Rev. John Wright, Rev. C. T. L. Payne).

The Archbishop of Canterbury visits St Leonard's Church June 13th 1944

However, three days later, at 2am on the morning of the 16th June, the first V1 bomb fell on Streatham destroying the former Empire Cinema which at that time was being used as an emergency food store. The V1 was a new and terrifying weapon reigniting frightening memories of Streatham's experiences during the Blitz and once again bringing death, devastation and destruction to the area. From the explosion of the first V1 in Streatham to the last, which fell two months later in the early hours of the 13th August on numbers 132 and 134 Crowborough Road, 41 'doodlebugs' landed on our suburb.

Streatham's 41 is based on Kenneth Bryant's booklet which tells the terrifying tale of each of these bomb incidents and this is augmented by the detailed background information provided by John Cresswell, Bob Jenner and Colin Crocker. This text is superbly illustrated by the detailed maps of each bombing prepared by John Cresswell who was a talented and gifted illustrator. The layout and production of the book was very much his work and is a fitting testimony of the

skill and expertise he brought to producing publications for the Streatham Society.

For many years John was the Secretary of the Streatham Society and he worked tirelessly for the benefit of our town. During his time in Streatham he helped establish many events which subsequently developed into annual occasions which are still held and enjoyed today. He was the prime motivating force behind the creation of the Streatham Arts Festival in the mid-1990s which later led to the formation of the Streatham Festival. He also conceived and helped organise the first Streatham Wind Day on Streatham Common in 1998 which now continues as the very successful annual Streatham Kite Day.

For over 20 years John played an active role in helping make Streatham a better place in which to live, work and relax. Following his retirement in 1999 he moved back to his home town of Bournemouth where he also made a valuable contribution to the life of that community. John died in 2019 and this third edition of *Streatham's 41* is dedicated to his memory.

Streatham's 41 will be launched at the Streatham Society's Annual General Meeting to be held at Woodlawns, 16 Leigham Court Road, Streatham Hill, at 8pm on Monday 17th June when John Brown will give a brief presentation about the publication.



*The Empire Cinema - VI Bomb Damage
and a policeman clearing the wreckage*

Bomb 1

Date: 16th June 1944

Time: 2 a.m.

Place: Empire Cinema, Streatham High Road

A.R.P. Post: J.90

Just before 2 a.m. eye-witnesses heard a roar like a low-flying plane followed by an explosion with a blinding flash and clouds of smoke. A shower of sparks rose from the spot where it landed covering the area with red-hot cinders. Debris, glass and tiles crashed all around.

The Wesleyan Church was built in 1883. The bomb severely damaged the south transept and the organ was completely destroyed.

Numbers 7 and 9 were destroyed by H.E. bombs on 29th October 1940.

The Bedford Park Inn and several shops and homes were damaged.

J.Charles, 225 Streatham High Road was a dyers and cleaners. It was completely wrecked by the blast, yet not a single garment was destroyed. They all required cleaning, of course.

The former Empire Cinema, built in 1910, closed in 1932, was used as an emergency food store. It was stacked high with tons of tea, sugar and tinned foodstuffs of all kinds. It took the full brunt of the explosion and quickly caught fire.

Streatham Station

Total casualties were few and they were treated at the First Aid Post sited at the Swimming Baths.

The neighbouring railway line was blocked by debris, but soon after dawn this was cleared and trains ran normally. It was interesting to see lineswomen hard at it repairing the telephone lines, climbing the posts with quite professional skill.

This map is based on the Ordnance Survey 60" map published in 1936

The book costs £8 and is available from the Streatham Society bookstall at our meetings or £10 including post and packing, cheques being made payable to The Streatham Society and forwarded with your delivery address to Judy Harris, 125 Thornlaw Road, West Norwood, London SE27 OSQ.

JWB

MORE DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

JUNE

- Wed 12** **Reflecting on Ruskin: Thomas Lynn Bristowe Memorial Lecture**
7.45pm Talk, Jon Newman, writer and archivist
Herne Hill Baptist Church, Half Moon Lane *Herne Hill Society*
- Sat 15** **Band in the Rookery**
3-6pm *Friends of Streatham Common*
- Mon 17** **Brewing along the Wandle Valley**
8pm Talk, Alison Cousins
Omnibus, 1 Clapham Common North Side *Clapham Society*
- Sun 23** **Family Picnic to celebrate 21 years of the Friends of Streatham Common** On the Common
- Sat 29** **Birds of Prey Flying Display** Lower Common
1-5pm *Friends of Streatham Common*

LOCAL HISTORY WALKS IN SOUTH LONDON

Lambeth Local History Forum

Programme leaflets available from local libraries, societies & website

WANDSWORTH HERITAGE FESTIVAL May 25 - June 9

Programme available at Wandsworth libraries
or www.better.org.uk/wandsworth-heritage-service

LAMBETH COUNTRY SHOW July Sat 20 & Sun 21

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Sundays 2 June, 14 July, 11 August, 8 September
Lido car park 9am- 1pm. Stallholders see website

STREATHAM COMMON COMMUNITY GARDEN

Open to the public Sundays & Wednesdays 11am-3pm

No more room for a full programme of summer activities - see websites.

SOCIETY CONTACTS

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Shea Richardson

Vice-Chair

Russell Henman

Secretary

Shea Richardson

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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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