



STREATHAM SOCIETY NEWS

Published quarterly

No. 241 Summer 2020



WATER PUMPING STATION, CONYERS ROAD

(See p.8)

****2020 MEMBERSHIP VALID FOR 2021****

(See p.29)

MEMBERS' E-MAIL LIST

(See p.28)

PUBLICATIONS OFFICER NEEDED

(See p.30)

STREATHAM SOCIETY MEETINGS & EVENTS

BECAUSE OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ALL SOCIETY MEETINGS AND EVENTS ARE CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

Please check with our website, public Facebook page or national media for further news if government restrictions are lifted.

Restrictions on numbers for indoor public meetings and social-distancing, especially for older people, are unlikely to be lifted until well on in the year or next year. As many of our members and events' organisers are no longer young, we cannot arrange these. Even if restrictions were reduced it would be impossible to organise and monitor large numbers, social-distancing and sanitise the venue during and after use.

However, our quarterly journal, *Streatham Society News* should still be sent to you with updates. We thank our printer, Printinc, for its continued publication.

Congratulations to all involved with providing a virtual programme, supplying details of similar events and contributing to our excellent Facebook page.

Don't forget to supply Mark Bery with your email address to add to our contacts list. To date, fewer than half our members have done so.

Meetings are at The Woodlawns Centre, 16 Leigham Court Road SW16 2PJ at 8pm unless otherwise stated. Visitors are welcome, but £1 donation 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 only with the editor's permission.

STREATHAM ROUND AND ABOUT

COVID-19: COMMENT, COMMUNICATION AND CONSEQUENCES

When lockdown started, after the first panic, I adjusted to the advised three-month isolation. I am quite active and feel I am too old to worry about a future I cannot influence. The few people I encountered on my daily walk were nearly all social-distancing. Within days, six of my neighbours offered shopping help. Fortunately, my nearest shop had essentials and I could walk to others.

I made an 8-week list of Things To Do, relaxed and planned giving up onerous commitments to enjoy neglected retirement activities. I could smell fresh air and hear the birds sing in almost car-free side roads with no planes overhead. There are many attractive surrounding areas to walk around; even a busy Streatham Common has less popular areas to enjoy. I missed talking to friends but I could chat to interesting neighbours and passers-by from my front garden 'chatting chair' - all of a younger generation unfamiliar to me.

However, as restrictions changed, boredom struck. I have every sympathy with younger people who, probably being at lesser risk, feel they have to suffer restrictions and the long-term effects on the economy. But I resented that, without a car, my freedom and ease of movement were restricted by the limitations of public transport. I cleared the shed and washed the curtains but most of the sorting and spring-cleaning are on hold. All that concerned me was travelling on the bus with shopping - and when I could resume activities I now had time for.

One enjoyable activity was to email or send letters to several distant friends on my Christmas card list. With plenty of time to write and respond, I now have a folder of accounts of their varying lives. All are of my age, mid-70s, many with underlying health problems and some with no near relatives, but there the similarities end. The most ordinary day-to-day accounts of lockdown from all over the England surprisingly provided the most interest.

Perhaps you might consider recording your experiences of Lockdown Streatham? Have you interesting or amusing experiences or comment - good or bad - to submit to me for publication? This world-wide pandemic is a major event in our history. Will the present crisis will change us all for the better or will it soon be almost forgotten? Record it for posterity!

Communication - Members' Email List

Mark Bery, our secretary and webmaster, publicised our new email contact list in the last issue. Members who have emailed me may believe that their contact is now on the list but I cannot add these without your permission. I have submitted only email contacts given to me on recent membership forms and reminder slips. As indicated in our Privacy Policy, you must submit details to Mark yourself.

Fewer than half our members have done so. This may be because members are not on-line, because they think they have already been added, or it may be the reluctance of some older members who fear attracting scams or unwanted emails. Let me assure you that we abide by a strict policy code (check it on our website) and do not divulge your postal address, email or phone number. They will only be used for legitimate Society business by our secretary, myself and any other of our committee members with good reason.

Your post address is used only for posting the *Streatham Society News* along with any membership correspondence. Your phone number is unlikely to be used except in an emergency. For obvious reasons it is not practical to use phone contact for meetings' cancellations etc. This contact is likely to be discontinued.

For several years email communication has often been the only method used by small volunteer-run groups and organisations such as ours. Gone are the days when subscriptions and book sales were made cash only, with the occasional cheque. Today it is too time-consuming to cater for all methods of communication and payments. We must reorganise to survive.

Meetings' Programme

As meetings are cancelled some speakers are being re-booked for our 2021-22 programme. Our income from raffles, refreshments, visitors' and other donations has mostly stopped. Fortunately we have previously received a high number of donations towards the running of the Society. Unlike other societies who have been unable to send out printed copies during lockdown, relying on an online post, the *Streatham Society News* has continued publication in print. And we also continue to move into the 21st century...

Virtual Events

In our last issue and on our Facebook page, we publicised Lambeth Archives' and member Barbara Wright's virtual presentations. Barbara's first Zoom talk on 'Marvellous Marylebone' was followed and much appreciated by all, including several Society members. Now Mark Bery and John Brown have done the same for the Streatham Society!



John's 'Streatham's 41' talk, which he gave at a meeting last year, is available on our YouTube channel. It tells the story of the 41 'doodlebugs' that fell on Streatham in 1944. John made an audio recording which was edited and clipped to his Power-Point presentation by Mark. Follow the link from our website.

Again I recommend you access our Facebook page which now has 1,100 members. It is also a public site to which you do not have to log in. However, to add and read all comments or posts you need to join. Not only is it a wealth of archive information and photographs of Streatham, it also attracts fascinating new contributions from residents past and present, thus publicising more of Streatham's history. It is my regular bedtime reading!

Lambeth Heritage Festival Zoom talks

As September's Festival is planned to be a virtual event, Mark Bery has organised Streatham Society participation by broadcasting four Zoom talks, details to follow on our website and social media. These are:

Chess in Victorian Lambeth and Beyond

Streatham's Theatrical History

South London and the 19th Century Bicycle Boom

Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens: A Place to See and Be Seen

The **Streatham Festival** in October is also likely to be mainly a virtual event. See local media, Heart Streatham and press for details nearer the time

Judy Harris

A VIRTUAL TOUR OF MARYLEBONE

Little did I know a few months ago that I would be giving virtual tours. Having embarked on a tour guiding course, in autumn 2019, we went out every Saturday, practicing our craft. I was on the last lap, the assignment to create a tour of Marylebone. Then Covid struck.

It was decided that we would have to complete our assignment on Zoom. Students split up into groups to practice. There was all the stress of whether one's computer was up to date and the fact that all the add ons were accessed differently depending on whether one was using a lap top, p.c. or tablet. There was so much to take in. Some people appeared to be so much quicker off the mark. I gradually became more at ease with it all and found that it had so many other uses apart from the Marylebone exam, such as talking to friends and doing my exercise class!

Having passed the exam, I set about creating my experimental 'Marvellous Marylebone' tour, which Streatham Society members attended. The tour takes people on a magic carpet through time starting at Baker Street station at the huge statue of Sherlock Holmes, describing the origins of Marylebone, how it was developed and how architects and Victorian philanthropists shaped it. Finally, we discover how it has become a centre of Institutions and what it is like today.

Feedback on my virtual tours has been favourable, though most people want to get out on the streets of London again and see the history for themselves. Others who are not so mobile have found it a real boon to do the tour on line and there are always those cold dark winter nights, even for the most active!

I think that even after lock down, the virtual tour will have more of a presence than in the past, though personally I think you can never beat the real thing!

See you on the streets of London very soon, virtually or otherwise!

Barbara Wright

SUMMERSTOWN 182 'GREAT ESCAPES'



Geoff Simmons of Summerstown182 has repurposed 22 of his local history walks for people to download and do during the lockdown. These include 'Fabulous Furzedown', 'Wimbledon Walkabout' and many in the Tooting, Earlsfield and Garratt Lane area. They have been promoted on social media and proved very popular, encouraging people to take more of an interest in where they live. You can find

them all here: <https://summerstown182.wordpress.com>

Posters and walk descriptions can all be downloaded from this site. Congratulations, Geoff and all others, including Streatham Society members, who have contributed to these.

NEIGHBOURHOOD SUMMER ARTS TRAIL



*Photos of art displays and the
Railside Community Garden*

Happily, I spotted this event advertised on our Facebook page. This trail, held on Sunday 21st June around Wellfield Rd and the Stanthorpe Road triangle, had everything a good community event could offer. It was devised and organised by Fion Gunn and Ailbhe Phelan.

Displays were held in front gardens with visitors kept at a safe distance. It was open to all local residents who wished to participate and included all forms of arts, crafts and performance. It was opened by Streatham MP Bell Ribeiro-Addy who met some of the volunteers.

Some thirty residents offered over 100 exhibits including painting, drawing, mixes media, sculpture, pottery, knitting, embroidery, film, mosaics and individual performances of music and poetry.

The exhibits were of a high standard. Being lockdown, nothing was for sale but there were some free nibbles and drinks.



Starting in Wellfield Road, I walked through the Railside Community Garden to Gleneldon Road then round the Stanthorpe Road triangle.

The Railside Garden was beautiful. I was most impressed by the changes the volunteers have made to this long-derelict site in such a short time.

It was a delightful afternoon; the weather was perfect. It made a very welcome escape from the restrictions and worries of lockdown. Hopefully this will be an annual event.

JH



WATER PUMPING STATION, CONYERS ROAD



Recently a photograph of the pumping station was posted on our Facebook page after scaffolding had been removed. A question was asked as to whether the public could look inside.

In the summer of 1995, Thames Water held, I think, a one and only open day. I was one of many who followed a fascinating and informative guided tour.

Perhaps some were disappointed that such a wonderful building did not reveal an interior like Kew or Crossness, but there was still much of interest and impressive design in this Grade II listed building.

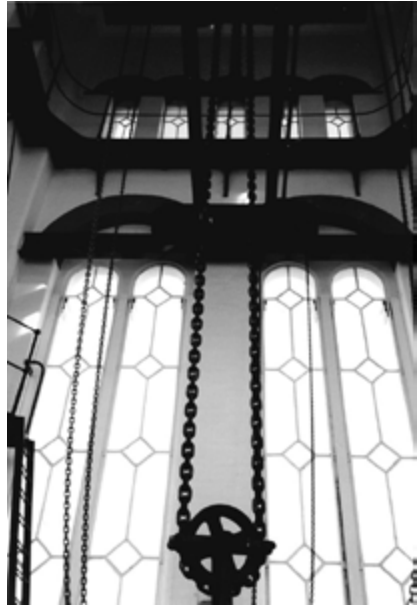
The Southwark & Vauxhall Water Company built the pumping station above a deep well in 1894 at a cost of £13,489, with a condition that it should be of an ornamental design.

The two steam pumps were replaced by electrically driven pumping machinery in 1943. In the 1980s the building was adapted as one of 11 pumping stations serving the Thames Water

Ring Main, providing half London's water supply. At this time the station underwent a £300,000 refurbishment and restoration. The original well sunk in the 1880s is still in use as an emergency water supply and is stored in a huge underground tank under the front lawn of the property.

Information from 'Fascinating Streatham' by John W Brown, available from the Streatham Society.

JH



Photographs show visitors entering the building, ground floor wall and ceiling detail and vast below ground machinery.

JOHN WILLIAM HALE WHITE (1946–2019)



It is with great sadness that I report the sudden death of FOWNC Trustee, Tour Guide, and representative to the Lambeth Local History Forum, John White. Born in Southwark on 5 December 1946, he grew up in Streatham and Balham. He then lived in Twickenham for many years. He spent his working life with London Underground (he was once their youngest station master) and retired as an area manager.

In retirement, he was a member of the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children, volunteered weekly with Twickenham Citizens Advice Bureau and monthly with a Christian organisation for homeless people, The Passage, took courses of study at Birkbeck College, and also

became a City of London tour guide. In addition to his work at Norwood, he was a tour guide at Kensal Green and Brompton Cemeteries, and was a member and/or regular attender of meetings of the Streatham, Brixton, Clapham, Balham, Herne Hill, and Norwood Societies, the Crystal Palace Foundation, Southwark & Lambeth Archaeological Society, Richmond & Twickenham Historical Association, the Robert Farnon Society, and the Cinema Theatre Association! He will indeed be sadly missed.

John died in West Middlesex Hospital after a stroke on 10 December last. Just five days before he had celebrated his 73rd birthday by going to East Croydon to watch a Pullman train hauled by Bulleid Pacific Merchant Navy Class Clan Line pass through. His funeral mass was held at the Church of St James, Twickenham, on 14 January – his uniform peaked cap was on his coffin. He was buried in East Sheen Cemetery, Richmond.

Bob Flanagan FoWNC May newsletter

Each September at the Lambeth Local History Fair, and at the former Archives Days, John, travelling from his home in Twickenham, would come to me with a cheque for his subscription for the following year and a donation to the Streatham Society. At first, I told him that I did not take subscriptions until mid-November at the earliest, but he quietly insisted.

He was a member of the Streatham Society for several years. As he belonged to so many groups, he only had time to attend our meetings when a talk particularly appealed but he was instantly recognised and welcomed by our other multi-society members. His support for and contribution to south London's local history was immense - as was his appreciation of their wealth of activities available to all. We shall miss him.

JH

LOCAL HISTORY MATTERS

THE TWO STREATHAMS OF STREATHAM



Perhaps it is easy to assume from the body of published material that the history of Streatham comes to life during the glorious years of Georgian and Victorian England. It was during this period that the contemporary narrative of our local history becomes well recorded and set down for future study. From these records we can form our own picture of what Streatham was like during those recent centuries. However, the abundance of knowledge for this period has somewhat overshadowed the earlier history of Streatham, which is often difficult to research but nevertheless rewarding in its results.

It was the 19th century antiquarians with their writings who set the initial framework for our understanding of our local history. However, in keeping with the times their emphasis chronicled more or less the activities of the local gentry, church and parish history and the recital of notable events. Today our approach is different and is facilitated by the availability of many new records not available to those 18th and 19th century historians. With the light of present knowledge we can review aspects of our local history, add to or revise previous studies and offer new interpretations and information. Such results can be appreciated in our wide ranging local history publications.

So for example, let us take a fresh look at Streatham Village. Here we automatically think of the old village clustering around the ancient parish church of St. Leonard. This has a certain logic about it when we think of a typical English village and its layout. But with Streatham Village we have to think differently. In previous times there was no ancient village as such nestling around the old parish church. It was just a village in name and not in substance, as the legitimate Streatham Village was sitting unobtrusively elsewhere.

To explain this we must look at the place-name of Streatham. This is a Saxon place-name indicating a settlement by a street and in our case alongside or near to the Roman Road from Londinium to the Weald of Sussex. Such settlement could have occurred anywhere along this road (the A23) between the River Graveney at Norbury and the summit of Brixton Hill, two points that mark the extent of the ancient parish boundary of Streatham as it crossed this road. One event which may have created this place-name took place during the period AD450-600, when pagan Saxons were settled some 500m from the summit of Brixton Hill and close to the Roman Road from Londinium, and where archaeologist found evidence of Saxon occupation. These people were settled as mercenary soldier-farmers, placed there by the late Roman authorities to protect Londinium during turbulent times. Perhaps it was these people who were the original 'settlers by the street', thereby in their language creating the place-name Streatham and endowing any later settlements along this road with that name.

Moving forward to the late Saxon – early Norman period, we find that an embryonic parish had been formed and given the name Streatham. Usually when this was done, it was the main settlement within the designated parish area that was chosen for the parish name, as seen for example with Croydon, Clapham, Mitcham, Battersea and Wandsworth. Streatham therefore would have taken its name from the main or principle village in the designated parish area.

History tells us that there were two places in the parish that were referred to as Streatham. The above mentioned Streatham around the parish church of St Leonard finds its origins as a village later in history. This followed a shift in land ownership when the area came into the hands of the Howland family when they acquired the Manor of Tooting Bec during the early part of the 17th century. Associated with this medieval manor was an estate called Streatham, a minor manor which was often treated as a component part of Tooting Bec Manor, and frequently took a secondary role as expressed in the term Tooting and Streatham, and exemplified in the medieval records of Tooting Bec. This secondary status continued for centuries until the break-up of Tooting Bec Manor from the 17th century, during which this Streatham gained greater autonomy and progressively became the centre of parish affairs, and during which the elements associated with it being a village came into place, alongside the existing Streatham Green, a watering place and the source of a local watercourse, and perhaps being the Green for the nearby village of Leigham.

The lands of the manor of Tooting Bec with Streatham were not the only areas enclosed during the creation of the parish of Streatham. Not only was Tooting Bec Village enclosed but also the tofts and crofts of the village that flanked the main road immediately to the north of St. Leonard's Church. This was known as the village of Leigham, an unusual place-name and hinting of a late Saxon or Norman settlement. This was the principle place in the Manor of Leigham, later known as Leigham Court. This manorial estate covered most of northern Streatham, the hamlet of Balham and the area of Knight's Hill, Norwood. During the 14th century Leigham Village was assessed for tax purposes as the Village of Leigham and Streatham. The addition of Streatham indicates that there was a taxable community, amorphous and appearing not to be large enough to be taxed separately.

Leigham Village contained the usual elements associated with a village. It had its own common (now lost), woodlands, field patterns, village pound, smithy, roadside facilities and a manor house known as Leigham Hall. Curiously, with its immediate proximity to the parish church, one would think this village would have been known as Streatham and not as Leigham, but in this instance Streatham as a village name had already been taken. Unfortunately, the name of this linear village did not survive and by the early modern period had virtually disappeared.

With the acquisition of Leigham Manor by the Howland family in their quest for Streatham lands, the name of Leigham Village was finally pushed into history and supplanted with Streatham during the consolidation of their land holdings, thus bringing the creation by circumstances of what we think as being Streatham Village today – that around the church. This is well illustrated when we look at Ogilby's 1675 map of the road from London to Croydon. Here we see the name 'Stretham' printed boldly against rows of sketchily drawn tenement buildings that were once those of Leigham Village, and seen flanking the main street running north of the parish church. The rising importance of this area of the parish is shown in the spasmodic naming of Tooting Bec Common as Streatham Common and the establishment of a post-medieval Streatham Manor House. The name Leigham was continued for manorial purposes but today is remembered as a local road name.

In 1673 John Aubrey in his worthy publication on the Natural History and Antiquities of Surrey noted, 'Stretham, is a small scattering village about a mile in length'. As he visited St Leonard's Church his observations may have been directed to that part of the High Road just north and south of the parish church, which at the time would have been a string of wayside properties, notably the old Leigham Village, and which was about a mile in length. He fairly assumed that this was Streatham. As Aubrey appears to have continued his itinerary by taking the direction of Mitcham Lane, he would have missed the southern stretch of the High Road leading down to the river Graveney and to the heath and scrublands of Norbury. If indeed he had progressed towards Norbury, he would have

come across a village of some size clustering around Greyhound Lane, an old trackway leading towards Mitcham. However, as Aubrey makes mention in his publication of the mineral springs at the top of Streatham Common he may well have ventured in this direction and considered that this was Streatham. But, as his narrative suggest, he appears to have relied on local information on the springs and more than likely did not journey this way.

None the less, down this way there was Streatham proper, a medieval settlement and manor, and the only place within the parish that legitimately carried the name Streatham. Unlike the Streatham that was linked to Tooting Bec, this Streatham stood alone as a nucleated village and like Leigham had all the traditional elements associated with a village. It had its own common, Streatham Common, a prime indicator of an established village, as seen with the medieval villages of Tooting Graveney and Tooting Bec. Also, in the field patterns of the village, there lay meadow and pasture lands known as the common fields of Streatham, a swathe of lush land stretching from Streatham High Road to Mitcham Lane and flanking the River Graveney. This field name is not found elsewhere in the parish until it was used at a much later date. Moreover, with the river Graveney running through the village lands, it fell upon the people of the 'township of Streatham' to maintain the free flowing of this river as directed in 1573.

The descriptive use of the name Streatham indicates that this was the first fixed settlement along the old Roman Road. Settlement along this sector of the road would have been attracted by the ford which crossed the River Graveney. River fords were desirable sites for early occupation, and would have found favour with those who established the village. The attraction of settling in this area would have been the abundance rich alluvial soil and other natural resources the river offered. Perhaps the siting of the village away from the river on higher ground at Greyhound Lane may have been a response to changing river levels, and the periodic flooding of the river which occurred in historic times. Also, it is not unknown for villages to migrate from one place to another during their development.

Another point we have to address is the question of why the parish church is not sited at South Streatham, as this was the area where the place-name Streatham was seemingly established. The Saxon chapel, considered to be the forerunner to the later St. Leonard's Church, was positioned to serve as an outlying chapel for the Saxon church at Tooting, as this church served a greater area prior to the establishment of local parishes. Later it became St. Nicholas Parish Church when Tooting Graveney parish was formed.

This Saxon church was established by Chertsey Abbey, who had acquired the estates of 'Tooting with Streatham' in AD933, and in their great Abbey stood an altar dedicated St. Leonard. The Saxon chapel would have served the distant communities lying at Streatham and Leigham, and those Saxon homesteads dot-

ted along the old Roman Road and across the immediate countryside. For the new parish to have taken the name of Streatham informs us that this village was of sufficient status to be selected as a parish name during those formative times, although there was one other contender of comparable status, Tooting Bec Village. Presumably this name was not chosen by the monastic authorities, as the adjacent parish of Tooting Graveney had already been named as such.

As with most manorial estates they have a chequered history and at a later date the village and manor of Streatham became linked to Mitcham, Vauxhall and South Lambeth in the shifts of manorial ownership as the Middle Ages progressed, and was for a time held by the monks of Christchurch, Canterbury. As social and political affairs of the parish began concentrating on the Howland manorial estates of Leigham and Tooting Bec from the mid-17th century, the importance of Streatham Village waned, such that it became referred to as South Streatham and later Lower Streatham, particularly with the encroachment of Victorian ribbon development along the High Road, which physically linked the original Streatham with its more recent namesake.

As the population increased from the early 19th century, the ancient parish boundary of Streatham was adjusted with the creation of new parishes within the old. This brought a new identity to areas such as Tooting Bec, Balham, Streatham Hill and South Streatham. All this was signalled by the building of new parish churches, whilst the parish church of St. Leonard was enhanced by becoming the mother church. As the suburbanisation of Streatham was consolidating, links to the past were fading but with the ancient edifice of St. Leonard's Church standing amidst a modern townscape, the very thought of here stood the village of Streatham was conjured in the local imagination. As history shows the true village of Streatham was not here but elsewhere. Therefore we may ponder and reflect that history has dealt us with two Streathams - the medieval original and the later namesake, and both in their time carrying the mantle of a village.

Graham Gower

THE INFLUENZA PANDEMIC OF 1918/19

The Corona virus pandemic we are currently living through has naturally brought to mind the influenza outbreak which occurred just over a century ago. It is widely reported that this event, happening at the end of the First World War in 1918, actually killed more people than lost their lives during the five years of conflict. The mortality rate for the flu was estimated to be between 10 and 20 percent of those who suffered from it and up to 50 million people world-wide died from the illness in 1918 and 1919. In Britain, a quarter of the population became infected with the flu with around 228,000 succumbing to the illness.

Commonly known as Spanish Flu, as the first reported case occurred in Spain, the disease had a number of similarities with our present-day pandemic. There was little doctors and nurses could do to treat influenza sufferers as there was no

cure and no antibiotics to combat the pneumonia from which most casualties died. Hospitals were overwhelmed by victims and medical students were quickly drafted into front line service to help care for patients. Perhaps one of the most interesting similarities is that the then Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, succumbed to the flu but successfully survived it much in the same way as Boris Johnson caught Corona virus and recovered.



Alan Rolfe

We have a fascinating account of the impact of the flu on Streatham residents from the memoirs of Alan Rolfe who lived at 10 Wyatt Park Road, Streatham Hill. Alan moved to the house in 1912 as a young boy and lived there for over 90 years up to the time of his death, aged 97, in 2005.

Recalling the flu epidemic, which he experienced as a 10-year-old boy, he said, “Now in those days, even houses like this all had a resident maid. Ours was called Bessie. She was a big tough girl. And she got the flu. I always remember, she was carried out on a stretcher. “Goodbye all,” she said, “don’t forget to bring me my new hat.” That was the last we saw her.



Face masks 1919 style

“That evening I said to my mother “I don’t feel very well,” and my sister added “Neither do I”. This was in November, just before the war ended in 1918. We went down with it. We were both terribly ill, and father came over from France to see us, and he thought he’d never see us again.

‘After we recovered mother said, “Oh dear, I must go and see poor Bessie in the infirmary”. So she rushed round with a bunch of flowers and was told, “Oh madam, Miss Smith has died”. It wasn’t until that moment, that she realised how gravely ill we’d been as she was so busy looking after us. Then she found out the statistics and that thousands of people were dying all over the world.”

Fortunately, Alan survived the epidemic with no lasting damage to his health. He went on to become an



Children learn how to prevent influenza

actor, performing on stage and television appearing is such well-known programmes as Emergency Ward 10, Jesus of Nazareth, Dixon of Dock Green and The Avengers, in which he had to fight John Steed and Honour Blackman! Alan was a life long friend of the famous actress Dame Flora Robson, they having both made their stage debut in the same production.



Advert in the local press promoting the use of Jeyes' Fluid to prevent the spread of influenza

Alan and his mother knew the famous author, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle of Sherlock Holmes fame, whom they met at various Spiritualism meetings they attended in London and at a friend's house in Killesey Avenue. Sir Arthur presented Alan with a number of signed copies of his books.

John W Brown

WE'LL MEET AGAIN



Vera Lynn



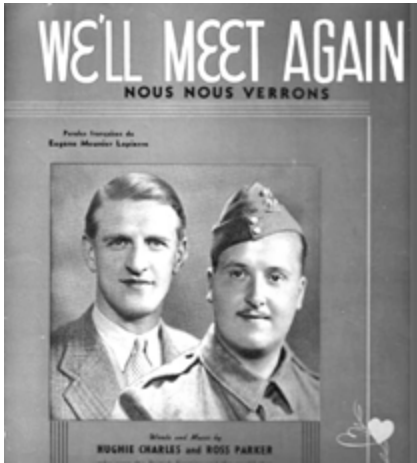
The recent death of the famous war-time entertainer, Vera Lynn, led sub-editors all over the country to headline her obituaries with the words of her much-loved Second World War song “We'll Meet Again”. This provided added poignancy due to the isolation then being experienced by the nation due to the Corona virus lockdown.



Ross Parker

However, few, if any, of Vera's obituaries mentioned that her most famous song had been written by Hughie Charles, and former Streatham resident Ross Parker. In the late 1930s Ross was living at 76 The High, Streatham High Road, and it was there he wrote another of his best known songs with Charles, the popular war-time ballad “There'll Always Be An England”.

At the time he was one of the top four song writers in Britain and was responsible for writing such hits as “I won't Tell a Soul”, “Blue Skies are Round the Corner” and “It Began in Eden”. Another of his hits was the song “Girl in the Alice Blue Gown”, which was inspired by the time he saw his wife in a blue dress. In 1956, Ross wrote Shirley Bassey's first single, “Burn My Candle”, which she recorded when only 19 years of age. The song was later banned by the BBC presumably due to its suggestive lyrics.



*Ross Parker (rt) with Hugh Charles
on the original sheet music*



*Ross Parker and his wife at the piano
in their flat in The High, Streatham,
in 1938*

The 1950s also saw Ross write songs and shows for the Crazy Gang, a number of members of which lived in Streatham, including Bud Flanagan and Charlie Naughton. These productions proved to be immensely popular and the Gang were almost permanent performers at the Victoria Palace Theatre with one show following another including Knights of Madness, Ring Out the Bells, Jokers Wild and These Foolish Things.



*Ross Parker and Shirley Bassey
perform 'Burn My Candle' in 1956*

Ross died in Kent in 1974, aged 59.

JWB

EASTENDERS ROMANCE HAS ITS STREATHAM ROOTS

Not having a television, I am unaware of the current calamities facing residents of Coronation Street or Albert Square. However, this was not the case in the late 1980s, when I would visit my sister's flat in Babington Road each week and would watch with her the depressing developments in Eastenders. Somewhat dispirited by the baleful exploits of the Fowler family we would then settle down to a fish and chip supper to cheer ourselves up.



*Pauline & Arthur Fowler in Albert Square
(Wendy Richard and Bill Treacher)*



*Bill Treacher and Katherine Kessey
after their wedding at St Leonard's Church*

than moving to Albert Square.

I have written before about Wendy's Streatham connections. To men of a certain age she is perhaps best remembered more for her role as the delightful Miss Brahms in "Are You Being Served?", rather than for being the long-suffering Pauline Fowler in Eastenders.

Pauline and Arthur Fowler were one of the main families featured in the programme and were the first to be cast in the series. They led depressing lives and I am still haunted by memories of Arthur's mental breakdown depicted in the Christmas Day episode in 1986. Through the ups and downs of the Fowlers' daily lives viewers became aware of the joys and sadness associated with living in the east end of London, although from my memory of the programme there seemed to be little cockney cheer to be found around the Old Vic.

How different their lives together may have been had Pauline and Arthur decided to stay in Streatham, where the actors playing their roles, Wendy Richard and Bill Treacher, lived, rather

Wendy was born on 20th July 1943 in Middlesbrough, the daughter of Henry Emerton. She was later to change her surname to Richard as she thought it would be easier for casting directors to remember. Whilst still a young child her family moved to Streatham where her father ran the Streatham Park Tavern, now known as the Furzedown pub in Mitcham Lane. Tragically, one Sunday morning in 1954, the 11-year-old Wendy had the distressing experience of finding her father dead in front of the gas fire in their living room. Mystery still surrounds his death. It is not known if he fell and knocked himself out before he had the chance to light the gas or if he had committed suicide as he had been suffering from depression.



*Miss Brahms (lt) and Mrs Slocombe
played by Wendy Richard and Mollie Sugden in
'Are You Being Served?'*

Wendy had a successful career in television and films before moving to Walford appearing in popular comedy television programmes such as “The Likely Lads” and “Dad’s Army” as well as in the “Carry On” films. She was awarded the MBE in 2000. She died in 2009.

Bill Treacher was born on 4th June 1930 and grew up in the east end of London. Following his national service in the RAF he became a steward with the P&O shipping company before attending drama school. In the 1970s he appeared in a number of popular TV programmes, including “Minder”, “The Sweeney”, “Dixon of Dock Green” and “Z-Cars”. In late 1984 he was the first actor to be cast for the BBC TV’s new soap “Eastenders” taking on the role of Arthur Fowler, whose trademark cap he wore for over 11 years.

In the early 1970s Bill was living in a flat in Pinfold Road, Streatham, and it was while residing in our town that he was married to the Australian actress Kathryn Kessey at Streatham’s ancient parish church of St. Leonard on 1st December 1971. Bill and his wife now live in Suffolk.

JWB

GEORGE DEAR



George Dear with his award-winning daffodils at the Mitcham Horticultural Show in the early 2000s

It is with great sadness I have to report the death of George Dear of Moyser Road, Streatham, who passed away in May 2020 aged 83.

I first met George over twenty-five years ago, when, following his retirement, he took up local history as a hobby, specialising in horticultural developments in Streatham and Tooting. It was George's passion for growing daffodils and his interest in local history that led to the rediscovery of Peter Barr's nurseries in Tooting and the important part he played in reintroducing the daffodil into British horticulture.

George was a Tooting lad through and through. He was born and bred in Pevensey Road and his family connections with the area dated back to the 1830s. It was George's love of growing daffodils which led him to buy a copy of the International Daffodil Checklist and there, within its pages, he was surprised

to discover references to Peter Barr's nursery in Tooting. He had never heard of the nursery before and decided to find out more about it and where exactly in Tooting it was located.

Following his retirement in 1995 he began his quest in earnest and came to my house seeking help with his project. It was then I led him up the garden path to my shed where I keep part of my Streatham archive. There, surrounded by files, we set to work, but other than a few nurseries identified on old maps and in old local directories we could find no detailed references to Peter Barr. He had vanished into the antiquity of time.

However, George was not discouraged and over the next three or four years of painstaking research he slowly brought Peter Barr back to life. You have to remember in those days there was no internet, no google and no family history web sites to make the job easy. Research involved visiting numerous libraries and archives and wading through books and ancient records in the hope of discovering something of interest.

And George found much of interest. He discovered Peter's residence at 18 New Road, Tooting, now known as Garratt Lane, and identified the house in which Barr once lived. He uncovered Peter's later home at Bell Farm in Tooting, part of the land Barr farmed there ironically later being developed as Pevensey Road where George was born. And finally, after years of research, he was able to identify where Barr's nurseries were located and where Tooting's famous daffodils were once grown.



George Dear with the Mayor of Wandsworth (lt) at the unveiling of Peter Barr's plaque on the Aboyne Estate

It was George's research that provided the inspiration for the project adopted by the Summerstown 182 local history group, led by Geoff Simmons, that immortalized the site of Peter Barr's nursery with the unveiling of a blue commemoration plaque in September 2019. On that sun-kissed afternoon a huge crowd gathered outside the Aboyne Estate on Garrett Lane to cheer the unveiling of the plaque and it was a real pleasure that George was able to be present on that occasion to witness the proceedings from his mobility scooter.

It is fitting that I conclude my fond memories of George by quoting from a letter he sent me in the 1990s whilst undertaking his research. It bears all the hallmarks of lines written by a gifted and talented gardener when he wrote: "It is just amazing what can be unearthed when you dig into the past."

The local community has much to be grateful to George for, as by his digging into the past a quarter of a century ago he planted a bulb which blossomed 25 years later with the celebrations of the life and achievements of Tooting's 'Daffodil King', Peter Barr, at the site of the place where he once grew his famous flowers.

JWB

MYSTERY STREATHAM

My thanks to many readers who contacted me concerning the five old photographs of unknown Streatham Streets featured in our last issue for which I was seeking a location. All have now been successfully identified for which I am most grateful. The locations were: Pic 1 - Killieser Avenue from Sternhold Avenue. Pic 2 - Cambray Road looking towards Radbourne Avenue. Pic 3 - Entrance to Telford Park Tennis Club, Bellasis Avenue. Pic 4 - Radbourne/Hydethorpe Road. Pic 5 - Junction of Thornton Avenue and New Park Road.

More Mystery Photographs



For this issue I have dug out two more mystery streets for identification, both dating from the 1990s. One shows a road of 1920/30s built houses with the street lined with pink blossomed trees. The other shows a road junction with a large late Victorian or early Edwardian house at the road end. The only clue here is the word SCHOOL painted on the road leading me to suspect it may be somewhere on the Coventry Park Estate near St. Andrew's Roman Catholic School.

Also, slightly more challenging, two old Edwardian postcard views of houses believed to be in Streatham as featured on old postcard views with a Streatham postmark. Any ideas where they are? If so please let me know via the Society website or by post to 316 Green Lane, Streatham SW16 3AS.

JWB



STREATHAM POSTCARDS

Our thanks to Streatham Society member, Frances Partridge, for the kind donation of a fascinating collection of old postcard views of Streatham which make a wonderful addition to our archive. We take this opportunity of featuring some of the images here which have been captioned for us by one of the Society's local historians, John W Brown. It is hoped to feature further copies of some of the postcards in future editions of our newsletter.

ST ALBAN'S CHURCH, STREATHAM PARK, c.1910



St. Alban's Church originally stood on the junction of Fayland Avenue and Aldrington Road. It was designed by E H Martineau in a Byzantine style and was consecrated on April 2nd 1887. The roof was badly damaged in the Second World War, and further destruction was caused by a fire in 1947. As a consequence, the church was not reopened until January 22nd 1949 being rededicated on September 11th 1954.

The building was subsequently declared a dangerous structure and was demolished in 1984. A new church was erected at the junction of Thrale Road and Pretoria Road which was dedicated by the Bishop of Southwark on the 17th September 1988.

STREATHAM HIGH ROAD LOOKING NORTH FROM THE JUNCTION WITH MITCHAM LANE c.1904



A busy High Road scene in the early 1900s when the only traffic on the road was a horse drawn bus and a single cyclist. At this spot the High Road comprised many buildings that had only been erected a decade or so earlier, with the oldest structure being the old Streatham Police Station built in 1865 which can be seen on the

right in the far distance. The fine building standing on the corner of Gleneldon Road was built in 1883 for the London & South Western Bank. The bank occupied the ground floor of the building, with its vaults being located in the basement. Shortly after the bank moved here it experienced its first robbery when William Thomas Webb, the bank's first manager, was found guilty of embezzling £1,200 and was sentenced to 12 months imprisonment with hard labour. The ground floor of the building is now occupied by Ladbroke's, bookmakers.

STREATHAM HIGH ROAD LOOKING NORTH UP THE DIP TOWARDS THE ST. LEONARD'S CHURCH JUNCTION c.1903

Another view of the high road in the early 1900s showing a number of buildings designed by the local architect, Frederick Wheeler, in partnership with W T Hollands. On the left is the parade of shops forming the High Road frontage of the Triangle building, built by Hill Brothers in 1886-7. Beyond can be seen part of the Broadway building situated between Gleneagle Road and Streatham Green, also built by Hill Brothers in 1884. Then north of the junction with Stanthorpe Road stands four shops, nos 207-213 Streatham High Road, also designed by Wheeler and Hollands and erected here in 1885. The old Bedford Park Hotel can be seen in the bottom right-hand corner of this view with the spire of the old Streatham Methodist Church, which stood on the southern junction of Stanthorpe Road, towering above it.



STREATHAM HIGH ROAD LOOKING NORTH FROM THE JUNCTION OF BROADLANDS AVENUE TOWARDS STREATHAM HILL c.LATE 1950s EARLY 1960s.

A comparatively 'modern' post-second world war view of the High Road which is little changed today other than for the building on the southern side of Broadlands Avenue which is now the site of a Tesco Express store. The building seen here is the Temperance Billiard Hall which was erected in the early years of the First World War. Over the following fifty years many of the great billiard and snooker players of the day played here, including Joe Davis and his brother Fred. The hall was later acquired by the Mecca organisation who completely refurbished the property and opened it as the Golden Q in November 1965. The hall then accommodated 17 tables, each one covered in gold baize as opposed to the traditional green cloth. The club also had a Black Jack table and numerous one-arm bandit machines. The success of these facilities led Mecca to convert the building into a gambling establishment, firstly known as the Craywood Club, and then the Albany. The Albany lost its license in 1970 and the building was converted to retail use with Tesco opening here in 2007.



STREATHAM SOCIETY REPORTS

SOCIETY ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

AGM

The Streatham Society is a Charity registered with the Charity Commission and our Constitution requires an Annual General Meeting to be held before the 31 January 2021. Our Financial Statements had been prepared and Audited in time for the June AGM which we had to postpone due to the national emergency

It seems very likely that we will not be able to hold meetings for some time and we will be arranging our AGM on Zoom. Notice of the meeting will be given in our next newsletter, web and social media.

We are aware some members will be unable to attend this and we will ensure all papers are emailed to members.

Members of the Executive/Trustees

We have had two resignations: from Barbara Beer and Pauline Hewitt. Our thanks for their valuable contribution over many years.

Judy Harris, our Publications Officer, has also resigned but will continue in this role until 31 December or until we have a successor before that date. We record our very grateful thanks for Judy's immense contribution, in a pivotal role of the Society and are very pleased Judy will remain on the committee and will still continue as Membership Secretary and provide our informative quarterly newsletter to members.

We are looking for members to join our Executive Committee - please contact me if you wish to join the Executive and help shape our future.

Email

We have a database of email addresses for about a third of our paid-up membership. If you have not done so already and are now willing to provide your email address please use <https://www.streathamsociety.org.uk/contact.html>. We will only use this address to communicate with you regarding the AGM and other events of interest.

Talks

All talks at 'Woodlawns' have been suspended during the Covid-19 crisis. We do however publicise on-line talks of interest on our web page and on social media. This includes the very popular Lambeth Archives series of Lockdown talks and the Zoom talk by Streatham Society member Barbara Wright on 'Marylebone'.

We have also broadcast John Brown's VI talk on our new YouTube Channel and we will have a number of on-line talks planned. This will include talks which are part of the virtual Lambeth Heritage Festival in September 2020.

Website

Our site is updated on a regular basis so please keep in touch and visit <https://www.streathamsociety.org.uk>

Mark Bery

OUR BANK ACCOUNT DETAILS HAVE CHANGED

A message from our Treasurer:

During the current pandemic we're all being asked to make card payments whenever possible, and limit our use of cheques and cash. The Society has therefore moved to an online account with Lloyds Bank that allows us to make payments by bank transfer (BACS) as well as by cheque.

The details of this new account are as follows:

Name: The Streatham Society;

Sort Code: 30-84-68;

Account Number: 39526068

For people who regularly pay their subscriptions by standing order, direct debit or BACS, and those who purchase publications by BACS, please update your records accordingly as soon as possible. Paying by recurring direct debit is easy to set up online, and also easy to cancel when necessary.

For speakers and other people whom we need to pay, we will be asking you to let us have your account name, sort code and account number so that we can pay you by BACS. This is much faster, cheaper and safer than payment by cheque.

Please note that we will continue to pay by cash only in exceptional circumstances, but we will of course accept cash at our bookstalls.

For the foreseeable future, our account with Royal Bank of Scotland will remain open, but will be inactive.

Thanks everyone for your understanding and co-operation.

SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2020 WILL BE VALID FOR TWO YEARS

As we do not expect to be able to hold 'real' meetings until at least the beginning of 2021, we are pleased to let you know that subscriptions for 2020 will be valid until the end of 2021.

Liz Burton

MEMBERSHIP 2020

We welcome new members Stuart Bridge, Finbarr Martin, John Adlington & household and Joanna Guthrie & household. A decrease in membership because of lockdown has not been as high as anticipated. The main difference has been the reduced number of new members since March who usually join via meetings. Lapsed 2020 members can pay at any time. However, our popular Facebook membership is now four times that of our Society membership.

PUBLICATIONS

Publications' Officer needed urgently

To date, no enquiries or offers have been received for the post of publications officer (*details in the last issue*). Local history publications are one of our strengths but we cannot supply any more orders by post or email after December 2020 without a volunteer. E-mail Mark Bery, our secretary, or me for details.

Covid-19 Update

Now local post offices have resumed normal service, I can process book orders.

From mid-March through to May there was a surge in my doorstep transactions. In order to make daily exercise and home-schooling more interesting, several cyclists, joggers and walkers came to my front doorstep, collected their order and deposited cash onto a plate in a box. 44 publications were sold in this way, our self-guided Trails proved particularly popular. What must my neighbours have thought I was selling to all these sporty-looking people?

Streatham Society News

Now on-line newsletters are the norm, I feel that there is still a place for our 30-36 page printed journal (past issues are on our website). Those issued by other groups are dwindling, often with few contributors. Online, larger issues might be only skim-read and not saved, which I should regard as wasted effort on my part.

This year, with only one meeting's distribution, printing, postage, envelopes and labels costs have increased to over £2,000, plus additional expenses. This is covered by your subscription. However, if only posted on-line, it would cost nothing. Other running costs, such as meetings' expenses, are covered by generous donations, visitors' contributions, the monthly raffle and refreshments' profits.

I produce, edit and distribute our *News* and, apart from 'fillers' and photos, I am not prepared to write it as well. Although I enjoy producing it, I rely heavily on contributions. Again I appeal for articles, illustrations and photographs which would appeal to our readers, particularly reports or opinions on Streatham today. We have a few occasional contributors and John Brown's regular local history items. Happily, even if John becomes a YouTube star (*see p.4*), I'm sure he will not reject the written word.

Judy Harris

NEW PUBLICATIONS

BYGONE STREATHAM IN OLD PICTURE POSTCARDS

by *John W Brown*

Price £7.60 (incl. P&P)

This attractive book, advertised in our last issue, is now available by post or via our website (contacts back page). It can also be collected in person, by appointment, from the publications' officer's address for £6.

It depicts bygone Streatham in a collection of almost 250 old Victorian and Edwardian postcards, many of which have never been published before.

Available from the Streatham Society.



MOYSER ROAD: LONDON SW16

by *Martin Beaver (author) and Alan Weller (photographs)*

Price £11

This paperback book is about change in a community. It is based on pictures and stories from one street in one year, but it includes some of its past as well as its present.

It was started as a project by local school child Arthur Tingle, then later made into a book. Moyser Road is changing but this is how it was in 2019.

It is available online from Amazon.



ST PETER'S REVIEW Summer Edition 2020

Because of Covid-19, this special edition from St Peter's Church is only available on-line. To celebrate the 150th Anniversary of consecration, it includes a detailed illustrated history of the church and a powerful article on Black Lives Matter. Congratulations to all concerned.

This packed 34 x A4 page magazine, in full colour, is well worth downloading and keeping but, as I have written previously, I and others probably only skim-read then eventually delete files. I prefer a printed copy to keep and re-read - but the expense of printing and distributing is increasingly prohibitive.

HEART STREATHAM

Those of you missing your monthly printed copy of Heart Streatham will find it on-line. The magazine is now digital with video, slide shows and live links.

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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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