



# STREATHAM SOCIETY NEWS

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**THE STORY OF  
IMMANUEL & ST. ANDREW  
CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**



**ARTHUR WILLIAMS**  
with the help of the  
school community

**PARK HILL STREATHAM**  
Former Home of Sir Henry Tate  
and the first Tate Gallery  
by **Brian Bloice, Graham Gower  
& Daphne Marchant**  
Reprint with a new cover  
(See pages 4, 12 & 34)

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IMMANUEL & ST. ANDREW  
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by **Arthur Williams**

A new publication  
(See pages 9 & 34)

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## STREATHAM SOCIETY MEETINGS & EVENTS

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### **LAMBETH HERITAGE FESTIVAL September 2021** **Streatham Society Programme - In person talks return (See p.27)**

#### **Conyers Road Pumping Station**

Open House weekend: Saturday/Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> September 2021 11am-4pm  
68 Conyers Rd, London SW16 6LT

The event is free, and booking will be via an Open House link which is to be announced. A rare opportunity to visit the interior of this magnificent building

*The Southwark and Vauxhall Water Company erected the first pumping station here in 1881 and this was in a corrugated iron shed. The tall pumping station we see today was built in 1894 and it was a condition of the freeholder, Mr Thompson, that the buildings should be of an ornamental character. In 1980 it was selected to be adapted as one of 11 pumping stations serving the Thames Water ring main supplying half the capital's water supply*

#### **Brookwood Necropolis Railway - A Streatham Society meeting**

Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> September 7:30pm (60 minute talk- refreshments available)

St Leonard's Church, Streatham High Road, SW16 1HS

Event free (donations welcome)

*Most people travelling by train expect to return to their original station, but the majority of travellers on the Necropolis Train never came back. John Clarke presents an account of how railway funerals were conducted by the London Necropolis Company. This company, latterly based at 121 Westminster Bridge Road, (literally) sold one-way tickets for the deceased.*

*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.*

## **West Norwood Cemetery Tour**

Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2021 at 11am (90 minute duration). The tour may be repeated in the afternoon

Meet at gates to cemetery Norwood Rd, SE27 9JU

The event is free (donations welcome to FOWNC) Booking essential via <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/streatham-society-31488784265>

*Explore the many graves and monuments of former Streatham residents that are buried at the cemetery, with Bob Flanagan, Chair of the Friends of West Norwood Cemetery. The tour includes Sir Henry Tate, Sir Henry Doulton, John Tredwell & Sit Hiram Maxim plus more well-known and interesting individuals.*

*West Norwood is one of the first private landscaped cemeteries in London, it is one of the "Magnificent Seven" cemeteries of London, and is a site of major historical, architectural and ecological interest.*

## **Tours of the Grounds of Sir Henry Tate's House in Streatham**

Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> September at 2pm and 3pm (50 minute walk)

Henry Tate Mews, Streatham Common North, SW16 3HA

Event free (donations welcome) Booking essential via <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/streatham-society-31488784265>

*Park Hill was built in c.1830 by William Leaf, a banker and silk merchant. Henry Tate, the sugar magnate (Tate & Lyle), lived here from 1885. A philanthropist and art collector, he opened his gallery here to the public once a year and later donated most of his collection to the Tate Gallery, which he established in London.*

*St Michael's Convent later occupied the site which is now a private residential site.*

## **STREATHAM SOCIETY MEETINGS PROGRAMME**

### **October & November**

**Tues Oct 5** 6.30pm **AGM** & 7.30pm. **Bygone Streatham** - Talk by John W Brown on his new publications. Meet at St Leonard's Church

**Mon Oct 25 Zoom talk - The Regent's Canal** by Professor Lester Hillman.  
7:30pm A 1 hour talk with Q&A

**Tues Nov 2 Movers and Takers - 150 years of the Streatham & Brixton**  
7.30pm **Chess Club** Talk by Martin Smith of the club. St Leonard's Church

**Mon Nov 29 Zoom talk - The Manor of Norbury** by Michael Gilbert  
7.30pm

**See p.27 to access Zoom talks**

**See also More Dates for your Diary p.35**

**All live events are subject to any changes in government restrictions**

**Mark Bery**

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## STREATHAM ROUND AND ABOUT

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### HENRY TATE TOURS RECOMMENCE IN GLORIOUS SUNSHINE



*The Entrance Gates to Park Hill, Henry Tate Mews and Gardens  
Streatham Common North*

On 30 May 2021, after a year of Covid lockdown, we were delighted our tours were able to go ahead, albeit under restrictions and the need to book ahead. We were able to accommodate 28 guests on each tour; the first led by Robert Doyle and the second by John W Brown. Mark Bery, our secretary and webmaster, backed up the group and took photographs, some on our Facebook page and reproduced here. All went very smoothly.

The reprint by John W Brown's Local History Publications of our Park Hill history, with a new cover, was on sale for only £5. It tells the story from the building of the house and establishment of the estate by William Leaf, the purchase by Sir Henry Tate, to the careful owners for 80 years, St Michael's Convent.

Thanks to our restricted team of organisers, the guests who all followed the guidelines, and the co-operation of the Residents' Association. A special thanks to the resident who bought ice-creams for Liz Burton, our treasurer, and me at the welcome desk. I was so surprised I forgot to ask her name. (It was lovely!)

**Judy Harris**

### **Some comments from our public Facebook page**

What a hidden gem in Streatham- magnificent gardens, a mansion, an orchard, a lake, a Victorian folly a.k.a. ‘Streatham Castle’, a wild flower meadow etc etc.

Thanks to all involved including the Residents Association at Henry Tate Mews for being so accommodating.

Hopefully we will back at Park Hill in September 2021.

**Mark Bery**

As well as the historical sights that we have enjoyed in previous years, this year’s tour was also a chance to see the recent progress on work by the dedicated but small gardening team working for Tate Gardens Management.

They have made some amazing changes since our last visits in 2019, creating new borders and replanting others that were looking tired after nearly twenty years, researching and planting authentic Victorian ferns and other plants in the grotto and creating a spectacular wild flower meadow in the former compost area.

**Robert Doyle**

I worked there between 1982 and 1991 doing building and maintenance work. We built a lot of the out buildings there. I was there when they had the large fire in the laundry room. I worked in every room in the main building.

I also widened the main entrance gates and large stone pillars after the fire as originally they were built for horse and carriage not the large plant that had to access the convent for the rebuild.



*The Terrace and Formal Gardens showing Park Hill’s bay windows overlooking its private garden.*

It was a fascinating place. It would be interesting to see what it has now become and whether the renovations and conversion have been done sympathetically.

**Gregg Brown (Director at G&R Construction Ltd)**

As a pupil at St Andrew's School in the 50s we used to go to St. Michael's Convent once a year, in May I think, for the annual procession in the grounds. I remember the excitement of getting to wear a waxed garland on my head!!! Happy memories!! P.S. - I'm still in Streatham!!!

**Jane Parke**



*Robert Doyle leading the group through the wild flower garden towards the grotto and folly*





*John Brown's group in  
the grotto  
and  
The folly  
(Photos Mark Bery)*

Our next tour of the grounds of Sir Henry Tate's house in Streatham is planned for Sunday 26th September at 2pm and 3pm.

It is part of the Lambeth Heritage Festival 2021 programme.

Booking is essential to keep numbers manageable for these very popular tours.

See p.3 for booking details and more on Park Hill on p.12 - Memories of Rural Streatham



## A STROLL THROUGH FURZEDOWN - looking at the houses and their famous or infamous former residents



Sunday 6th June: A fantastic afternoon and glorious weather on our Wandsworth Heritage Festival stroll in Furzedown led by Furzedown resident and Streatham Society member Helen Long (*above*).

*Dixcot (right, above) and Fairview Road  
St. Paul's Church, Furzedown (below)*



Thursday 1st July: Thanks to Helen Long for taking a small group of Society members on a tour of St Paul's Church, Furzedown. Built in 1926 the church, which is set in the heart of Furzedown, is part of the Church of England in the Diocese of Southwark and together with St. James', West Streatham, and St. Alban's, Streatham Park, known as the Furzedown Team Ministry.

The Henry Tate Tours and Furzedown strolls were part of the Wandsworth Heritage Festival.

**MB**



## **THE STORY OF IMMANUEL & ST. ANDREW CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL by Arthur Williams with the help of the school community**

Our latest publication, in association with the school, was published by John W Brown's Local History Publications to celebrate the 160th anniversary of the founding of the school on 25th June 1861. The following account of the launch at the church is taken from the website.

'It was a joy to see the church as full as we could manage with social distancing in place. There were teachers, students and school governors both from the school's past and its present. Arthur Williams, previous Headteacher and member of the congregation, has written a book to mark the occasion. With the help of a number of others linked to the school and The Streatham Society, Arthur chronicled its history and gathered many memories, stories and photographs.

During the service we reflected on the purpose of the school, Arthur spoke about the history of Immanuel, we watched recorded messages from current pupils about what they liked about their school and considered the Parable of the Talents and how we are encouraged to do *all* we can with *all* we have.

We enjoyed one of the favourite songs of the school 'I've got peace like a river' and though we couldn't sing along everyone joined in with the action and learned the school prayer.'

The service was recorded to watch on the school's Facebook page.

On Saturday 26th June Arthur arranged to sell his book outside the Winning Post café, opposite Streatham Common (*right*).

The book has 112 pages and is packed with information and photographs. It is excellent value at £4 from the school or £5 from the Streatham Society - see p. 34 for details.



**JH**

## STREATHAM AREA GUIDE

*I am disheartened reading articles decrying the changes in Streatham over the years. Which area hasn't changed? Having moved here from a rural Teesside village almost 60 years ago, I wouldn't return there to live. I still love south London. Below are extracts from Reuben Miller's positive blog, with thanks.*

I'm in sunny Streatham. Join me for a stroll down the UK's longest high street to discover a vibrant and eclectic town centre which is currently home to nearly 500 businesses – and the busy, somewhat polluted A23 road that runs through it! I love the area for its quirky history and fabulous art deco architecture: did you know it was once known as south London's West End for its elegant cinemas, theatres and dance halls?

Although Streatham went through a period of decline in the 1970s and 80s, which can still be seen in the relatively high social deprivation locally, the area has undergone significant regeneration in recent years. With three train stations offering easy access to central London and a large common right on the doorstep, I think it's easy to see why Streatham has become popular with families and first-time buyers looking for great value and lots of space.

### Typical housing stock

The area boasts a large amount of high quality housing, the most desirable of which tend to be located around the commons. Just off the high street, you'll find the Leigham Court Road Estate Conservation area with its popular 'ABC' roads, Amesbury, Barcombe and Cricklade, which are full of attractive terraces and maisonettes.



Elsewhere, there is a wide range of cottages, mansion flats and Seventies blocks, plus a good number of more contemporary purpose-built flats and smart new builds. I love the architectural style of Pullman Court (*pictured*): one of London's most fascinating examples of modernist architecture. Influenced by the Bauhaus movement, it was designed by architect Frederick Gibberd.

Although the tube never made it to Streatham, Brixton and the Victoria line are just a short bus ride away. The area is served by three train stations: Streatham, Streatham Common and Streatham Hill, making it possible to get to Victoria in 17 minutes and London Bridge in less than 30.

### **Parks and green spaces**

The 66-acre expanse that is Streatham Common offers spectacular views over London and includes areas of woodland and meadow: it has also been designated a local nature reserve and if you're lucky you might see and hear a woodpecker in the woods there.

Just off the common is the Rookery, a hidden gem on the site of one of Streatham's former wells which hosts an outdoor theatre in the summer and also has a rock garden, pond and café. I love that part of the Rookery has been turned into a community allotment after a local project 'SCCOOP' repurposed some local waste land.

### **Arts, leisure and entertainment**

I love Streatham Festival in October and Streatham Food Festival in June/July which has a great selection of tastings, cookery classes and markets.

We have the 8-screen Streatham Odeon to entertain ourselves, as well as Streatham Ice and Leisure Centre which is home to London's only Olympic-sized ice rink and offers access to swimming pools, a 100-station gym, a soft play area and a whole host of sports clubs.

### **Reuben Miller, RM Surveyors**

We have a broad array of shops, cafés, pubs, restaurants, salons and convenience stores for you to explore. This is definitely not a mono high street and we are proud of our diverse and entrepreneurial community. Marrying the needs of a much-loved local High Street with a key arterial red route is not without its challenges, but works to reconfigure Streatham Hill by TfL in 2022 will much improve the public realm in the way that earlier works have done so further south.

Streatham has a great vibe with local businesses investing in their community through the Business Improvement District which pays for the Christmas lights and trees, the fantastic festival programme, markets, the electric cargo bike and so much more. We are so excited to see our high street come alive again now restrictions are being lifted so come on down, because #Streathamisopen.

**Louise Abbotts, Manager of InStreatham BID**

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## LOCAL HISTORY MATTERS

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### MEMORIES OF A RURAL STREATHAM



*Leslie William Brown*

When I was a young boy, growing up in the 1950s, my father (*left*) would entertain my brothers, my sister and I with stories of his childhood in Streatham. He had been born in the back bedroom of our small maisonette at 47 Danbrook Road before the First World War and spoke of a Streatham unrecognisable to us young children who were then living in the modern, bustling, South London suburb which was Streatham in the boom years of post-war Britain.

My father would speak about a young boy's adventures in a semi-rural country town, surrounded by fields and open spaces where livestock and animals shared the town with its human inhabitants.

Dad would talk of the time he was chased across the fields by a wild pig on land now occupied by the Streatham Vale Estate and of helping a dour, old Scots shepherd gather in his sheep which were grazing on the North Surrey Golf Club, now Norbury Park, where they were herded together in a large pen where now stands the car park at the rear of the former Norbury Police Station, before being taken off to the London meat market for sale.

My father remembered chasing cows grazing in the fields off Valley Road belonging to Curtis Dairy and being told off by the cowman for frightening his cattle, and of hunting in the garden and alleyway at the rear of his house for eggs laid by the chickens his family kept to help supplement their diet.



*Streatham Vale 1905*



*Sheep grazing on the North Surrey Golf Club early 1929, now Norbury Park*



*Blake's Follies in Longthornton Road, Lonsome, early 1900s*

He would recall how, when cutting across the fields on the way to Lonesome, you crossed the River Graveney by walking on old railway sleepers that had been slung across the stream as a make-do bridge and how he once slipped on the surface of the sleeper and fell into the water and spent the rest of the day playing in wet clothes.

At Lonesome, he and his brothers would play in the old, deserted “ghost houses”; a row of large, partly built, detached Victorian mansions known locally as “Blake’s Folly”. They had been built in the 1860s by a Mr Blake in anticipation of the railway coming to the area. However, when a chemical works was erected nearby emitting huge clouds of acrid smoke and unpleasant smells, and the railway track was built further north, with Streatham Common station in Greyhound Lane, the partly built houses were abandoned by the developer and left to slowly decay over the ensuing sixty years and were only inhabited by tramps, vagrants and an old donkey.

Father would recall how each Sunday his mother, out of the goodness of her heart, would cook an old man a Sunday dinner, which my father would deliver to him. A second plate would be placed on top of the meal to protect it and help keep it warm and then the two plates would be wrapped together in an old tea towel tied in a knot at the top which the frail pensioner’s arthritic hands always struggled to undo. This aged gentleman, called Mr Woplin, lived in an old, wooden, 17th century cottage in Hermitage Lane and on entering his humble home you went down several steps as the earthen floor of the cottage had been



*Mr Woplin’s 17thC cottage in Hermitage Lane in the 1920s*



*Cows grazing off Valley Road (Curtis Dairy) before WWI - note the twin church spires of English Martyrs' and St Leonard's in the distance (left)*

worn away over the centuries and was now below street level. While the grateful old man consumed his dinner and my father waited to return the plates back home, he would be sent “out-back” of the cottage to fill a bucket with water from an ancient well in the garden.

When hard up and in need of pocket money my father and his brothers would grab their buckets and shovels and roam the Streatham streets filling their pails with horses’s “doo-dah” deposited on the roadway which they would then sell door to door for residents’ gardens at the cost of a penny a pail.

To us young children his boyhood reminiscences were so alien to our own experiences of Streatham we thought he may have made them up, but then, when speaking to our aunts and uncles, they too would repeat some of the same stories to us confirming their veracity.

So it was, over 60 years since my brothers and I were enthralled by my father’s tales of life in “old” Streatham, I found myself on a sun-kissed Sunday afternoon conducting a tour at Park Hill for the Streatham Society and recalling the time when I was a young boy and remembered the farm that was still in operation in the grounds of the house in the 1950s on a site now occupied by Bishop Thomas Grant School. This was Streatham’s last, surviving farm where ducks and chickens roamed freely in the farmyard and cows grazed contentedly in the neighbouring field. Above the noise of the quacks, clucks and moos of the live-



*St Michael's Convent Farm 1955  
(below) Chickens and a large heap of hay*



stock one could hear the strange sound of an ancient tractor ploughing the fields there or, in the autumn months, reaping at harvest time when a large hay rick would be erected in the farm yard.

As I recounted my childhood memories I was reminded of the rural reminiscences of my father and so on coming home examined my Streatham archive to see if I could find confirmation of my recollections. There, buried in several box files of information on the history of Park Hill, I found what I was searching for. An article published in *The Sphere Magazine* on 5th February 1955 entitled 'Rural

London'. Written by Barbara Jones the feature was headed 'Near the Heart of the Capital are Unexpected Scenes of Farm and Village which give the appearance of the distant English countryside'.

Accompanying the item was a selection of photographs taken by W.G. Davis showing various rural farm scenes which, at first glance, appeared to have been taken in the midst of the English countryside but on closer examination showed agricultural images of Streatham's last surviving farm at Park Hill in the mid-1950s.

Above is a picture of an old farmyard occupied by numerous chickens and a large heap of hay, was the caption 'A scene which appears to be remote country but is actually only five miles from Trafalgar Square: The farmyard is on the high ground at the top of Streatham Common, in South London. The farm is exactly as one imagines a farm should be - with outhouses, cows, hens and all the true rural picturesqueness. This is only one of the many surprising rural scenes in London. They are reminders that the Metropolis is still basically a group of closely-linked villages.'

Another photograph showing a giant haystack is captioned 'Haystacks and a plough: This is another rural picture of the farm above Streatham. The house to



which this land belongs has a landscape garden, which adds to the rural illusion’.

W. G. Davis’s third photograph in his trio of rural vistas of Streatham shows the lane leading to the farm with a small dog standing in the middle of the path. Beyond the mongrel stands the old Victorian Folly among the hedgerow and is captioned ‘The folly which is now a granary: It is in the centre of the picture. One would imagine that beyond the farm’s entrance lay a village street and not the crowded suburb of Streatham’.

Further delving through my archive resulted in the discovery of an earlier feature on the farm published in the *Streatham News* on the 24th August 1951, when once again a journalist had been fascinated by their discovery of rural activities in suburban Streatham.

Headed **Farmyard Scene of Streatham – Little known rural spot** the writer waxed lyrical about the many charms the farm had to offer. The article reads:

‘Farm-hand John Roche was up early this morning, as usual. For he had plenty of work to do. There were the cows to milk, hundreds of chickens, ducks and geese to feed, the pigsty to clean out. Then the tractor needed a check-up before it could be used.

And where is this busy little farm where John Roche works?

There are not many people know it is within stone’s throw of a 49 bus stop at Streatham Common North.

Owned by St. Michael’s Convent it occupies about nine acres of the Convent grounds, and is one of the only two farms in the borough of Wandsworth.

Walk through the Convent gates, take a sharp turn to the left past a picturesque



*St Michael’s Convent 1955  
Haystacks and a plough (above)  
The folly, now a granary*





*Herding sheep down Green Lane,  
Norbury, in early 1900s*



*River Graveney early 1900s before the  
stream was enclosed in a concrete culvert*



*A wild pig being fattened up in Streatham  
ready for dinner in WWI*

lily pond and to those privileged visitors allowed to enter, there comes upon them a sudden rural atmosphere - an uncanny feeling after threading one's way through London's busy traffic just a short time before.

Cows graze contentedly on the sloping field adjoining Valley-field Road, and if they should get tired of grazing, they can always view the roof tops of Streatham laid out in panorama below them!

### **At milking time**

Milking time sees Spot, the farm's chief dog - busy rounding up the cows. And he knows his job. He was only too glad to group them together for the photographer - then pose for a shot of himself!

Typical of most farms, there was an air of organised untidiness. Chickens were everywhere, scores of ducks waddled off to their pond, while a couple of turkeys basked in the glory of admiration for unexpected visitors. Dumped in the centre of the cobbled yard was a load of new-mown hay.

In the nearby cowsheds a heifer was "on the sick list" after getting a nasty cut against some barbed wire.

Produce from the farm is to be exhibited at the forthcoming Borough of Wandsworth Horticultural Show at the Town Hall.

### **And vegetables**

Livestock, although the hub or

the farm's activities, is not its only consideration. There are acres of potatoes, cabbages and other vegetables growing there, under the care of John Norris, the Convent's gardener. It is his job to look after the greenhouses and market garden, which yield a remarkably large amount of produce annually. One and a half tons of tomatoes are grown each year from this comparatively small concern. The garden supplies the Convent with many of its needs, and any surplus vegetables and fruit are sold.

The Convent owns and runs a public laundry, in which girls are employed. It is a fairly big business and is run on modern and hygienic lines.

All employees live within the Convent's grounds. The laundry's engineer, for instance, occupies the main gate lodge, while the farmhand, Mr. Roche, has an attractive little house just off the farmyard.

### **The Convent**

And what of the Convent itself? Built in 1870\* the beautiful building at one time was the private home of the Tate family. The breath-taking panel work and ornamental ceilings in the rooms give an idea of the luxurious splendour of society life at the end of the last century.

The nuns took it over as a Convent about 25 years ago. They cultivated an impressive winter garden adjoining the house, but the bombing destroyed many of the rare plants. But even to-day it is a place of beauty.

Later a chapel was built as an extension to the house, and the public are allowed to worship there at Sunday service.'

\*The journalist took the date from the plaque on the Lodge which was rebuilt in 1870. The house occupied by the nuns was in fact built c1830 and was designed by the famous architect John Papworth.

I am left wondering what feature of present-day Streatham will be recalled in three score years and ten when elderly parents remember their childhood in the locality to their children. Will it be the huge Covid testing centre at the top of Streatham Common; the Inkspot brewery hidden away behind the Community Garden at the Rookery, or enjoying an evening of Jazz at the Hideaway club on Streatham High Road, now sadly closed.

Or perhaps I am too old fashioned and out of touch with modern life and instead they will remember waiting for a bus on the High Road when they reached level 100 playing Gameboy on their iPhone, or running round the common listening to Dave's award winning rap on their headphones or dare I dream, reading about farming in Streatham in days gone by in their parents' dog-eared copy of the Streatham Society journal!

**John W Brown**

## STAND AND DELIVER



*Dick Turpin - "Stand and Deliver!"* "Pieces of eight! Pieces of eight!"

Such a difference between fact and fiction also applies to highwaymen. Dick Turpin is often seen today as a gallant "gentleman of the road" robbing only wealthy, arrogant travellers and allowing young, attractive women to keep their jewels in exchange for a kiss. His heroic ride to York on Black Bess is a glorious tale of endeavour rather than a desperate flight from capture of a brutal thief.

Turpin, together with the members of the Gregory gang with whom he rode, were in truth a bunch of ruthless thugs, who cared little for the lives of their victims, the modern day equivalent of whom are the merciless muggers who attack lonely travellers today and think little of beating up a defenceless pensioner for the few pounds they may have in their pocket.

I am not aware of any connections Streatham may have with pirates of the past, or present. Our town's location far from the sea makes this unlikely. However, the association of highwaymen with our parish is well documented, including connections with the infamous Dick Turpin.

Turpin was born over three hundred and fifteen years ago and was baptised in September 1705. There is strong evidence to suggest that a robbery that took place in Shirley on 18th January 1735 involved him and members of the notorious Essex or Gregory Gang. A contemporary account of the incident tells of the horrors that befell Mr Sheldon that night:

'Last Saturday the house of - Sheldon, Esq. at Shirley at Croydon in Surrey, was entered by five rogues, masked and armed with two pair of pistols each, they knocked at the door and were let in by the servants, whom they bound, they afterwards robbed Mr Sheldon and his lady of their money, jewels, laces &c. and

plundered the house of their plate and what other movables they could carry away in five sacks, which they filled, they returned Mr Sheldon two guineas begging his pardon for what they had done and rode off with their booty. It is supposed they are the same gang who committed the late robberies in Essex and Kent.'

Another account of the incident, written a little time later, paints a more vivid report of events:

'On Saturday the 18th of January last, Turpin, Fielder, Walker and two others, made an appointment to rob Mr Sheldon's house near Croydon in Surrey, and for that purpose agreed to meet at the Half Moot Tavern at Croydon, which they accordingly did in the evening about 6 o'clock, and about 7 went to Mr Sheldon's. Walker, having some knowledge of the house, going at the head of his companions into the yard, perceived a light in the stable, went thither, where they found the coachman dressing the horses, him they bound, and going from thence met Mr Sheldon in the yard, whom they seized, and compelled him to show them the way into the house; where, as soon as they entered, they bound Mr Sheldon, and the rest of the family, and fell to plundering the house; and took from Mr Sheldon eleven guineas, and several pieces of plate, jewels, and some other things of value, which they carried off with them; but before they left the place, they returned Mr Sheldon two guineas of the money back again, asked pardon for what they had done, and bid him Good Night.'

The gang then made their escape from Sheldon's Shirley house and the following Thursday 23rd January two members of the group are believed to have taken part in a bungled raid at Rev. Dyde's house at Great Parnedon in Essex. Gregory's gang subsequently made their last full-scale raid in Essex in February 1735. On February 18th three members were caught, one of which, John Wheeler, turned informer and three further members of the band were in custody within the week. Samuel and Jeremy Gregory were later apprehended at Hindhead trying to flee to the continent.

Only Dick Turpin and Thomas Rawden escaped capture and they operated throughout Kent and Surrey as highwaymen until they split up just before Christmas 1735. It may be that it was during this period that Turpin hid out at the reputed home of his aunt and uncle at Heath Cottage at Thornton Heath, later to be known locally as "Dick Turpin's Cottage".

At this time Thornton Heath was an isolated and desolate spot, much frequented by highwaymen. To deter this activity a gallows was erected opposite the pond as a warning to felons. It was here that numerous brigands were executed as a punishment for their crimes and as a warning to others.

On March 31st 1722 a mass execution took place when six men were strung up at the Thornton Heath gallows, and the following year four footpads dangled from their nooses at the same spot.



*Map of Thornton Heath showing the gallows (under Thorn hill) in 1729*

The Croydon parish registers tell us that on April 7th, 1753 ‘William Hurley executed at Thornton Heath for murder, and his body given to the surgeons to be anatomised’.

The gibbet was a well-known sight on the London Road and early maps refer to the area as “Gallows Green”.

Other local legends have Turpin seeking refuge some distance from the gallows at Thornton Heath in an old cottage in Hermitage Lane, Streatham, where relatives of his mother, Mary Parminter, were said to have once lived.

This ancient house faced the King’s Head Inn, where Dick is said to have quenched his thirst on a number of occasions. This old hostelry was later known as the Blackboy, then the Princes Head and subsequently as the William IV public house under which name it survived until 2003 when it was demolished.

In the 18th century, the pub’s isolated position made it an ideal meeting place for a number of felons who frequented the locality. The adjacent stretch of road, lined with thick hedges and isolated fields, provided a perfect place for them to rob lonely travellers and demand coach drivers to “Stand and deliver!”.

When coaches travelling along the London to Brighton Road halted for refreshment at the inn, the local ne’er-do-wells would absent themselves from the bar and journey down the road to conceal themselves in the hedges ready to waylay the travellers after they had resumed their journey.

Turpin would have therefore been in good company had he supped pints at the old King's Head in Lower Streatham. The tavern's reputation as a haunt of felons continued on into the 19th century until 1817, when the then publican, Richard Powell, had his licence taken away.

Adjacent to the tavern was a forge, or blacksmiths' shop. It appears that it was here that the highwaymen and robbers arranged for the gold and silver jewellery and watches they had stolen to be melted down.

The resulting ingots were then freely sold with all traces as to their illegal source obliterated.

However, when this practice was discovered, the magistrates were quick to snatch the inn's licence away and at a stroke the local villainy were deprived of a meeting place and processing centre for their ill-gotten gains.

Twenty years after Turpin's execution at York in 1739 his dastardly deeds were still well remembered in and around Streatham. In 1760 a local villain, John Blundell, was nicknamed the "Young Turpin" after undertaking a spate of highway robberies in the locality.

These reached their climax that September when on the 17th he robbed three persons. However, Blundell's reign as Turpin's successor was short lived and the following day,



*Map showing the Prince's Head pub at the junction of the High Road and Hermitage Lane in 1826*



*Old cottages in Hermitage Lane where Dick Turpin might have hidden in Streatham*



*The Greyhound pub by Streatham Common  
Painting by Patrick Nasmyth 1827*



*Home of Dick Turpin, Thornton Heath  
By W.W. Acock c.1890s*

©Croydon Art Collection, Museum of |Croydon

after robbing Joseph Solomons near his home at Streatham, the “Young Turpin” was apprehended and committed to the New Goal to stand trial for his crimes.

Seventy years later “highwaymen” were still active in Streatham. In October 1832 Mr and Mrs Walsh were returning from Croydon Fair in their carriage when they were attacked near the Greyhound pub by two ruffians. Mr Walsh fought them off until a second gig arrived when the men made off across the Common.

The two assailants were described as “in the garb of sailors and had the appearance of those wandering vagabonds who infest the roads round London, soliciting charity for distressed tars unable to procure a ship; their only clothing was loose pantaloons and check shirts”, so perhaps, in a way, we did have pirates operating in Streatham after all.

**JWB**



## WORLD WAR 2 AIR RAID SHELTER

As a young boy growing up in Streatham in the 1950s the Second World War still cast its shadow over my daily life. Bomb sites could still be found in the locality and my parents would often refer to the conflict in their conversations, frequently using it as a reference point in time by “topping or tailing” their comments with the phrases “before the war” or “during the war”.

When walking down the alleyway between Danbrook and Colmer Roads, a couple of old Air Raid Shelters could still be seen at the bottom of the gardens there where the house owners had purchased them from the council after the war for use as garden sheds.

However, over the years these once ubiquitous shelters have slowly disappeared and now few remain in Streatham. We are therefore grateful to Miss Ana Costos of Gleneldon Road for donating the remains of an old Anderson shelter in her garden to the Society. Our thanks also go to Christina Watkins for kindly agreeing to store the shelter for us and to Colin Crocker for taking the time and trouble to dismantle the shelter and transport it for storage on behalf of the Society.

Gleneldon Road suffered badly from bombing in the war. An unexploded bomb fell in the street at No 63 on the night of the 27th September 1940 when three bombs also exploded outside No 59, and in the gardens of No 65 and Nos 71-73. After the war four prefabs were temporarily erected on the sites of Nos 63-65 and 71-73 before new, permanent council housing was erected on the site of Nos 63-73 which we see to-day.

The shelter gifted by Miss Costos was situated close to the bomb that fell at Nos 71-73 and must have provided much valued safety for the



*Donated Air Raid Shelter, Gleneldon Road  
(Photo Colin Crocker)*





Road between Lewin and Natal Roads, has recently been reclaimed for housing and a block of flats called Buchanan Lodge has been erected there. Formerly known as No 396 Streatham High Road, the property is now No 2d Lewin Road



occupants of her house at the time of the raid with four properties nearby being totally destroyed by the bombing.

Some weeks later, on the night of 1st November 1940, two unexploded bombs fell at No 104 and another at No 191 whilst on the 5th November a high explosive bomb fell at No 179 and on 10th November 1940 a bomb fell at the junction of Gleneldon Road and Streatham High Road opposite St. Leonard's Church.

Today few bomb sites remain in Streatham. Possibly the most notable stands opposite Streatham Common on the southern junction of Lewin Road, where the site is occupied by large advertising hoardings.

An adjacent bomb site, on the High Road between Lewin and Natal Roads, has recently been reclaimed for housing and a block of flats called Buchanan Lodge has been erected there. Formerly known as No 396 Streatham High Road, the property is now No 2d Lewin Road and is named after a famous Victorian poet, novelist and dramatist, Robert Buchanan. He wrote plays for the famous actress Mrs Patrick Campbell, as well as for Lilly Langtree, the favourite of King Edward VII. In 1900 he suffered a stroke whilst strolling along Regent Street and became bed-ridden. He subsequently came to 90 Lewin Road where his sister nursed him for eight months prior to his death at her home on 10th June 1901.



*Buchanan Lodge  
2d Lewin Road  
and  
Robert Buchanan*

**JWB**

## STREATHAM SOCIETY REPORTS

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### WE ARE BACK! IN-PERSON TALKS SET TO RETURN

The last 15 months have been very difficult for all of us, and we have maintained a good programme of zoom talks, events and self-guided walks but we know that many have missed our in-person talks.

The Executive has agreed that in-person talks will return this Autumn commencing with a fascinating talk by John Clarke on *Brookwood: The Necropolis Railway*. This is a Lambeth Heritage event which was postponed from 2020.

We are also moving our programme of in-person talks (now first Tuesday of each month) to a new location, St Leonard's Church, which allows for social distancing if this is a requirement at the time.

Although the latest government announcement indicated there will be no restrictions we are conscious that the rules could change. If this is the case (or if the venue has a limit on numbers) we will need to ticket our talks. If this is the case members can book via Eventbrite <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/streatham-society-31488784265> or by email message [StreathamSoc@gmail.com](mailto:StreathamSoc@gmail.com) and for those who do not have access to a computer you can text or phone 07880 602 082 or contact us by post 14 Woodbourne Ave, SW16 1UU.

For those who do not feel comfortable returning to in-person events we hope to continue holding monthly talks on zoom. The majority of these are available to watch at a later time on our YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbt-aAeER6yPQa1cl-MDZrg>

**Mark Bery**

### NEW MEETINGS' ARRANGEMENTS

For some time now it has been apparent that our meetings' frequency and venue at the Woodlawns Centre, Leigham Court Road, do not meet the needs of our expanding group and pose an increasing strain on the depleted group of members organising the space.

We moved to Woodlawns, then the Darby & Joan Club, over 20 years ago when a maximum attendance of 40, in the two main rooms only, was stipulated. In recent years our attendance has been c.50 - 80 and we have spread into two more rooms. Initially a group of about 10 people (plus the refreshment team) took 30 minutes to set up the room which required moving all the heavy chairs into place and bringing our large book stock downstairs.

The decreasing number of helpers and Covid restrictions have caused us to reassess our capabilities and the comfort of our members. We needed a much larger

area, already arranged, so that all could circulate and members and visitors could hear and see presentations easily.

We have therefore decided to hold one 'live' meeting on the first Tuesday of the month at St Leonard's Church (another group has a long-standing booking on Mondays), hopefully followed by a later monthly Zoom meeting for everyone; perhaps especially for distant members and others unable to attend meetings.

St. Leonard's provides a large space and comfortable seating. It is central and served by all buses passing through Streatham. Recently the church has undergone renovations, including better disabled and kitchen facilities, to make it a user-friendly venue for varied community events. The Rector, Canon Anna Norman-Walker, has made us very welcome.

We realise that some members will be disappointed at these changes but we hope that the advantages will outweigh the disadvantages. Since Covid restrictions started in March 2020, we have gained 34 new members - nearly all living locally and many within walking distance of the church. We hope to meet them at our meetings.

We thank Woodlawns' manager Cheryl Edwards and staff for their hospitality.

### **No more raffle!**

Recently I have found my increasing responsibilities for the Streatham Society onerous and time-consuming. The past year has given me space to rethink and I have decided to relinquish all involvement in running meetings and events. I shall in future concentrate on producing the *Streatham Society News*, supplying our expanding publications orders, and being membership secretary.

I plan to continue these through 2022 when, hopefully, normal services will have resumed and others may wish to take over. In November 2022, I should like to produce issue 250 of the *News* which seems to me a satisfactory time to relinquish this if necessary. (Relevant submissions for this issue are very welcome.)

I must admit that since the death of my partner, chairman Brian Bloice, I have not enjoyed taking on some of his role, particularly being jolly, sociable and organising - too much like being back teaching 9 -11 year-olds!

I started running the raffle to subsidise the venue hire of the then local history group, held on the first Monday of the month. This has been a steady source of income but times have changed. Generally, older members are down-sizing and others have different uses for their living space. Although the prizes have been much better than the out-of-date packets and battered tins of food regularly donated in the early days (thanks to recent generous donors), I feel our raffles are now dated and time-consuming.

Of course if anyone wishes to hold a raffle on a special occasion, this could be welcome - luxury food and wine are popular!

**Judy Harris**

## RECENT TALKS AND EVENTS

Our recent Zoom talks were:

**The Wandle in the Industrial Revolution** (May 24) by John Phillips; 68 attended.

**History of the Order of the Knights Templar** (June 21) by Oliver Lewis; 77 attended.

**Rus in Urbe - bringing the Countryside to the City** (July 19) by Barbara Wright; 37 attended.

Our first live events of 2021 are listeded p.4 - 8

MB

## PUBLICATIONS

When restrictions started in March 2020, all our bookstall events ceased. These had provided most of our sales, particularly at Society meetings, on Kite Day and the crowded Henry Tate tours.

However, as reported in Issue 243, lockdown sales via our website suddenly escalated and in 2020 we unexpectedly sold about half our usual total sales. This year has followed a similar pattern, although sales are slowing as life returns almost to normal. We look forward to resuming our bookstall sales.

Unsurprisingly, there have been no volunteers (since 2008) to take over our stock and sales. As I have 60 titles totalling over 4,000 copies stored in my house, this is hardly surprising. Our increasing number of new publications resulted in much increased sales - but also increased stored stock. (Warning: never volunteer to store anything bulky. I naively agreed to store 1,500 old stock c.1990. Despite sales of thousands, I now have well in excess of that!) However, as lockdowns eased and I adapted to processing orders only, matters became much easier and I now enjoy it. (That is not to say I'm not open to offers to relinquish the all!)

I am particularly pleased that so many who buy send congratulations on my speedy service. A same-day service is available if orders are collected in person. If a BACS payment is received on the same day as an order, I post the books the next day and they usually arrive within two days.

**New publications** are *The Story of Immanuel & St. Andrew Church of England Primary School* by Arthur Williams (see p.9), a reprint of *Park Hill, Streatham* by Brian Bloice, Graham Gower & Daphne Marchant, with a new cover, and a reprint of our *Streatham Village Heritage Trail* by John W Brown. Thanks to John for editing and producing all these at short notice.

See p.34 to order all our publications which are listed on our website.

JH

## MEMBERSHIP

We welcome new members Warren Williams, Penny Nasrin, Ingrid Haskal, Sam Szczepanski, Maureen Tarroni and Colleen Lue. We hope they enjoy our events.

In the first six months of this year we have registered 19 new members which compares well with previous years. As these are nearly all local people, as were those in 2020, this suggests good attendance when our full programme returns.

### 2022 subscription renewals

Renewals for 2022 will be collected from November. Details will be published in Issue 246. Life and new 2021 memberships can be registered at any time.

### Life Membership

Have you considered paying £180 life membership? As we have had no subscriptions, raffle or refreshment income this year, for the first time our annual expenditure exceeds our income. Life membership, especially with gift aid, would be an additional source of income.

Our life subscription started in 2002, John W Brown being our first life member. As our annual subscription then was £6 he would have been in profit this year - except we waived payment. Sorry, John!

Take-up was slow. However about four years ago I noticed some of our oldest (80+) members were taking out life membership. Now that I'm close to that age myself I realise why: no hassle, no wondering whether I've paid and knowing much of it will be a donation in these difficult times (we can collect gift aid on this) - and you can donate more in future years as well!

Yes, I'll set an example and pay £180 this year but as I'm several years older than John I'll never have the pleasure of his celebrations next year. **JH**



## STREATHAM HILL PLANTING

Attractive planting but does it work?

For many years this has been a problem: a litter trap, high maintenance needing early morning closure of one lane to weed and maintain, spoilt by agile people jumping across and making gaps. Taken on July 19th convolvulus was already covering some of the plants and gaps were visible.

An extension of the trees and paving lower down the High Road seems preferable.

## KAREN MORFEY

*Karen Morfey, local campaigner, died on April 14th 2021, aged 70, after suffering from dementia for four years. Her funeral was held at Lewin Road Baptist Church. We send condolences to her husband, Mike, and family. Mike writes:*

I first met Karen in 2003 after I responded to a local advert inviting local residents to a public meeting at Granton School. This was to talk about our local park, Streatham Vale which at that time was looking like a veritable jungle, and the idea was to do something about it. The meeting attracted some 20+ people and at the end Karen asked those who would like to form a committee to which 6 or 7, including myself, responded to further the cause. We called the group 'The Friends of Streatham Vale Park' and Karen offered to be chair. Lambeth Council provided some funding for a start-up and with the help of private funders we set about the task.



That started our friendship and soon we organised Community Fun Days in the park attended by over 200 people on a good day with many children in attendance for whom we provided bouncy castles, games and face painting etc.

*Mike's favourite photo of Karen*

Karen was a prominent figure in the community having been a primary school teacher, including at Immanuel & St Andrew's CofE Primary School, Streatham, in her earlier days and then involved in local issues. She had a big part in bringing about the location for a new surgery in Streatham Vale, opened by the now retired Streatham MP, Keith Hill.

Karen loved to hold Summer and Winter parties at her house, many of which I attended, and it was at the 2007/8 Christmas/New Year one that we had a conversation as to what we were both planning to do for New Year's Eve. Karen replied, "See the fire-works on the South Bank". I



*Mike and Karen  
Streatham Vale Snow Wardens 2012*

replied, “That’s what I had in mind too”. (Honestly everyone, as I had done that for many years previously! )

That proved to be the start of our relationship! By the time of Karen’s Summer party of 2009, I had already proposed to Karen (Lizzie (*Mike’s younger daughter*) wanted me to ask her hand while she was present) and I did it again in front of 37 attendees that day.

One person asked, “Have you set a date?”. I said, “As it happens, we have and you are all invited”. That person was the late, great and highly respected twice Mayor of Lambeth, Daphne Marchant.

Karen loved animals, there were always a dog and cats in the house, but she also had a fear of some other type of animals. Once at a party she screamed, and we all thought she’d hurt herself. Alexander (*Davies, her son*) calmly said, “Probably a mouse,” and he was right. Once in the early days of our friendship she called me one morning (I lived 5 minutes away) to say she could hear sounds coming from the cupboard under the stairs. I said I’m on my way but



*Lambeth Civic Awards Ceremony 2009*

*Including Streatham Society members: former chairman, the late Brian Bloice (back row 3rd from left) present Acting Chair Shea Richardson, receiving an award for her late husband, Gordon, and Karen Davies (Morfe) behind (left and right) of the former Mayor Cllr Angela Meader*



found nothing. Another time a crow managed to fly into the house and landed under a table and Lizzie had to deal with it. Years later after we were married, Karen said to me, "There's an animal down there!". Evidently our cat had brought a rat up to the bedroom! I said, "OK, I'll deal with it!".

In 2009, Karen was presented with a Lambeth Civic Award for her voluntary work in the local Community. She worked for Place2be, the Mental Health Charity, for many years, in various schools across several Boroughs, as a Counsellor, working with children and adults.

Karen supported her son, Alex, who has been a Liberal Democrat Councillor for Streatham Wells and has herself gone for Council, just failing one Election year to secure enough votes to be elected. The family home was often an HQ for campaigning efforts at election times with Karen making tea and coffee and feeding everyone to keep us all going.

Karen had been diagnosed with Coeliac disease a long time ago and a few years before we were married, Emma (*her daughter*) overheard me telling someone about my also having been diagnosed at the time. Emma remarked to Karen, "Now you have got to get together both of you!". Karen was able to tell me what I could eat and drink - one of the many reasons I married her!

Karen and I shared many of the same interests such as music, theatre and cinema, and went fairly frequently. We were fortunate in that we were able to see much of the world on holiday to distant places and a number of cruises, travelling being another mutual liking.

Another of Karen's many talents was that of dressmaking - for my last five London marathons, she made costumes for me, so I ran in fancy dress while raising money for various charities.

**Mike Morfey**

## **PAUL SOWAN**

We are so sad to report that Paul Wenning Sowan passed away on 4th June 2021 at the age of 81.

Paul was a prominent and honorary member of Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society for very many years. He was a Past President and recently he has been our Hon. Librarian and Archivist.

Paul was also was a member of a large number of local groups. He was a long-term member and supporter of the Streatham Society to whom he gave several talks.

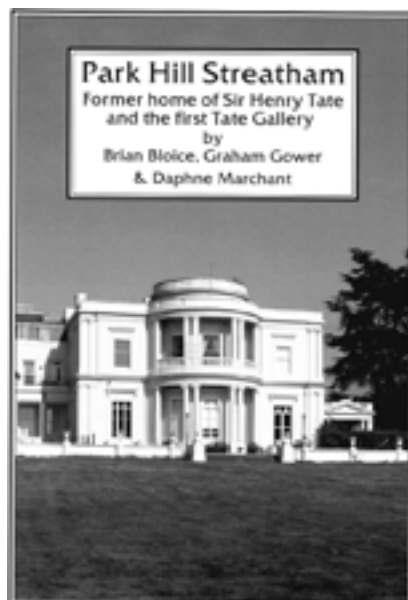
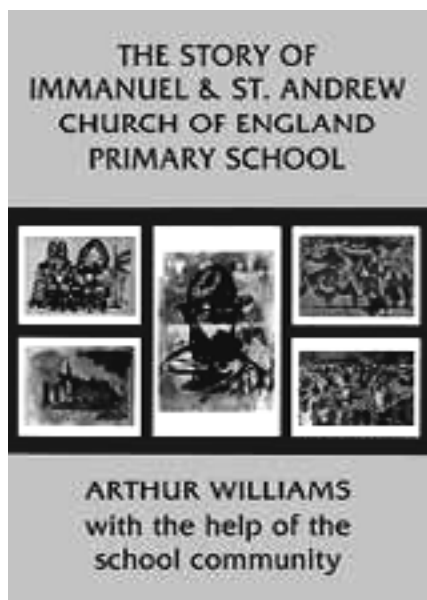


**Ian Payne,**  
**Company Secretary, Croydon Natural History & Scientific Society.**

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## RECENT PUBLICATIONS

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**THE STORY OF IMMANUEL & ST ANDREW CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL** by Arthur Williams.

New publication. £5 (£7.50 including p&p).

**PARK HILL STREATHAM** Reprint with a new cover. £5 (£6.80 incl. p&p).

**STREATHAM VILLAGE HERITAGE TRAIL** Reprint. £2 (£2.80 incl. p&p).

**All available from our website and book-stall or directly from Judy Harris.**

Payment by BACS, cash or cheque to The Streatham Society. (*Contacts p.36*)

## MORE DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

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### SEPTEMBER

#### Lambeth Heritage Festival 2021

This will be a hybrid of live events and on-line talks.

It is held in conjunction with Lambeth Archives to portray Lambeth's rich culture.

#### Sat 4th Lambeth Local History Fair

10am-4pm St. Mark's Church, Kennington

Talks and stands with displays including history, publications and information from Lambeth's societies and museums.

The Streatham Society will have a bookstall.

### OCTOBER

#### 8th - 17th Streatham Festival

**To date, we have no further information of the rescheduling of live events following the recent easing of lockdown restrictions.**

**Please see websites for more details.**

#### JULY 19th 2021 - FREEDOM DAY?

*Pigeons gather on Streatham Green to coo and play Snakes & Ladders to celebrate the lifting of unsociable social distancing.*



### SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE NOT DUE UNTIL 2022

**Have you sent us your email contact and returned your gift aid form?**

For information please see our website or contact Mark Bery  
(Contacts back page)

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**<https://www.streathamsociety.org.uk>**

### *Society e-mail for general enquiries*

**[streathamsociety@gmail.com](mailto:streathamsociety@gmail.com)**

### *Facebook*

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

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

**Registered Charity 283297**