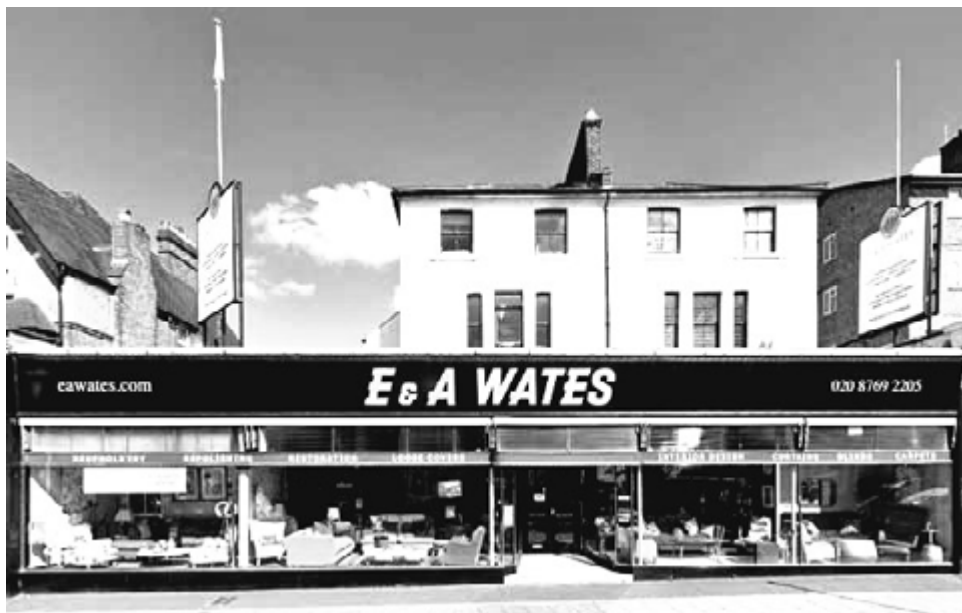




STREATHAM SOCIETY NEWS

Published quarterly

No. 243 Winter 2020-21



E&A Wates 1900 - 2020
Closure of a unique showroom and furniture business
(See p.3)

****YOUR 2020 MEMBERSHIP IS VALID FOR 2021****

GIFT AID FORM ENCLOSED

(See p.34)

STREATHAM SOCIETY MEETINGS & EVENTS

**ALL 'LIVE' SOCIETY MEETINGS AND EVENTS ARE CANCELLED
UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE**

**Our Zoom programme of talks will continue in 2021 with the following
dates conformed - all at 7.30pm:**

Mon Feb 15	The Telford Estate Then and Now by Chris Sluman
Mon Mar 1	London's West End: creating the pleasure district 1800-1914 by Professor Rohan McWilliam
Mon Mar 29	The Suffrage Photographs of Christina Broom 1908-13 by Beverley Cook
Thur Apr 29	Remembering Hester Thrale Piozzi, 200 years on by Cassie Ulph
Mon May 24	The Wandle in the Industrial Revolution by John Phillips

All Zoom talks are administered via Eventbrite and, if the speaker agrees, are recorded and published on our YouTube channel. Please follow us on both Eventbrite and YouTube to receive notifications. Links are available from our website <https://www.streathamsociety.org.uk>

Please get in touch with Mark Bery if you have difficulty (Contacts back page).

A date for your diary:

Sun May 30	Guided Tours of Henry Tate's House
2pm & 3pm	This hugely popular tour has been pencilled-in and is subject to any government restrictions in place at the time. If numbers need to be controlled, the event will be ticketed via Eventbrite.

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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

E&A WATES CLOSURE AFTER 120 YEARS



E & A Wates unique furniture showroom and business on Mitcham Lane, SW16 first established in 1900, is now sold.

The Directors and Staff at E & A Wates would like to thank the thousands of customers who have loyally supported our business over many decades. It is with great sadness that we announce that from early March 2021 our business will close.

For many traditional retailers the last few years have been tough, but with the additional onset of COVID-19 we have taken the decision to close the business and have sold the property.

Over the last 120 years we have greatly enjoyed furnishing thousands of local properties. We have also undertaken restoration and soft furnishing work at embassies, hotels, businesses and institutions such as the Houses of Parliament and the National Trust. Together with our community involvement, we would like to believe we have left our mark in a positive way.

We are now launching our final sale... our Closing Down Sale, which includes hundreds of amazing bargains. This will be a real opportunity to purchase new furniture, accessories, gifts and antiques at one-off prices. Most items are on our website which will be regularly updated: eawates.com and we will operate a click and collect/deliver service or phone: 020 8769 2205 to discuss.

Please be reassured that all customer's existing orders for furniture, soft furnishings and restoration work are secure and will be completed before we close.

Many grateful thanks for your loyal custom and faithful support.

Roger Wates, Managing Director

A Great Loss

For years, a highlight of local events has been the contributions by E&A Wates to the Furzedown and Streatham Festivals. I have visited the guided workshop tours and open days several times with complete enjoyment. These and the crafts courses have displayed the dedication and specialist skills of the team. Accompanied by a warm welcome, nibbles and entertainment, we were also free to browse this wonderful shop.

In an age when traditional skills have been reduced by the purchase of cheap, quickly deteriorating commodities, I have been impressed by the way Roger Wates and his team have adapted to high-end products, an excellent on-line and personal service and good promotional talks and videos. I'm sure these marketing skills have prolonged the life of this unique business and its services. What a tragedy that the current pandemic should finally destroy them.

Another great loss is E&A Wates' wide community sponsorship. I first met Roger Wates when he gave a most enjoyable and informative talk to the Streatham Society. He has always supported local events and groups. In addition to the Furzedown and Streatham Festivals, he has organised sponsorship and events for the Streatham Arts and Heritage Festivals, Streatham Youth Centre and the supply of PPE for the NHS last year, among others.

In 2011 Roger published a history for the Wandsworth Society entitled *Furnishing a Legacy - The E & A Wates Story*. This can be downloaded from their website, accompanied by several historic photographs from each era. Visit this site and the sales catalogue for a wealth of information.

Happily, the new owners will not be demolishing the building.

JH



*E & A Wates
1906 and 1950s Publicity*



WALKS AROUND STREATHAM

Streatham's Saints and Sinners' History Walk

This is one of the 'Great Escapes' walks produced by the prolific Summerstown182 group, and described as "Perfect for mind, body and spirit". Devised to help everybody through the lockdown, the downloadable maps and information sheets take in significant features of historical interest to enjoy on walks in the Tooting, Earlsfield, Wandsworth, Wimbledon and Streatham area.

Streatham's Saints and Sinners is dedicated to: "all at the Streatham Society who with their lively meetings, newsletter and stream of informative publications do such a terrific job in keeping the extraordinary history of this area alive". Help by our secretary and webmaster, Mark Bery, was acknowledged. Links are given to our website and publications list. (*Thank you, much appreciated - JH.*)

The walk is described as: "A glorious romp round the southern part of Streatham, mixing some intense High Road action with the quieter, quirkier backwater where we all know the strangest things can happen!". It is 4 miles long and estimates a walking time of 50-60 minutes. I suggest this may be a romping speed but a leisurely stroll, perhaps in sections, is my recommendation in order to appreciate the interesting features along the route as well as the highlighted stops.

It is printed on two sides of an A4 sheet with a route map and stops giving a wealth of information. Although the print is very small and tightly packed, the good use of type-face and colour contrast makes it easy to read.

The walk starts at St Leonard's Church and snakes around a westerly route south to Streatham Common Station, then to Streatham Common and, mainly following High Road, back to Streatham Green and the Dyce Fountain. I thoroughly enjoyed my two strolls to complete it.

For information and more walks go to: summerstown182.wordpress.com

A Diversion - Empire Mews

Although I have walked most of the streets of Streatham and West Norwood over the years, new themed walks always lead me to unfamiliar recent developments. One of these is the railway arch development of Empire Mews.

Adjacent to the magnificent Water Pumping Station in Conyers Road is a path leading to the railways arches. In 2016 these disused arches were converted into a creative working space. I first visited the artists' studios there on October 17 2020 at the Streatham Festival's Open Art Studios event.

Despite Covid restrictions, the Festival still managed to host an impressive variety of events. However, not enjoying virtual events or pre-booking, my usual preferred exploration was severely curtailed. In previous years, programme in

hand, I have planned my route, avoiding crowded venues, with plenty of options. This year, of course, it was different.

I enjoyed visiting some of the artist's exhibits in cafés along the High Road but viewing was hampered by distance restrictions. Also, some advertised venues were forced to close at the last minute.

However, my walk to Empire Mews compensated for all. Approaching through the high security gates, I was amazed to enter this delightful complex. Only a very few visitors were there at the opening so I received a personal welcome at the photographers' and nearby artists' studios. Five artists shared the space in the latter, each putting on a display of their work and materials.

There were several other closed studios and an attractive shared outside area. It must be a lovely, peaceful place in which to work. I wish all every success and hope they can reopen to the public in 2021.

JH



*Empire Mews
Entrance and Studios
Streatham Festival Open Art
Studios 2020*

JH



Artists' Studio, Empire Mews

Strolls around Streatham - Streatham's Literary Links

Goldilocks and the Three bears, Jane Austin, Thomas Hardy, Lords Byron and Tennyson, a Nobel Laureate for literature, Dr Samuel Johnson and many more literati have local connections. Now you can download a guided walk to discover Streatham's literary locations for yourself

The Streatham Literary Festival was inaugurated as part of the Streatham Festival 2020. To celebrate our area's rich literary legacy they worked with the Ramblers Association and the Streatham Society to develop two fascinating walks to guide you through some of the key locations linked to famous writers. Along the way the walks include other interesting information and uncover some of our hidden gems.

Both walks are circular and about 5 miles long (with a shorter option of 3 miles for the south walk). Detailed notes give directions and brief information and points of interest and along the way there are lovely places to stop for well-earned refreshments

The North Walk

See the flat where VS Naipaul wrote the book that gained him a Nobel Prize for literature and discover where Raymond Chandler lived with his mother. Pass through the natural beauty of the Unigate Woods and discover the many literary connections of the iconic St Leonard's Church. Show the kids where Goldilocks and the Three Bears was written for the Rector's children by a relation who happened to be the Poet Laureate and where Jane Austin worshipped.

See where Angela Carter went to school and discover why Joshua Reynolds painted a group of portraits dubbed the Streatham Worthies, which once hung above the bookshelves in the library at Streatham Place ...“to preside over the literature that stood highest” in the estimation of the owner.

The South Walk

Covering Streatham and Norbury (SW16), see where Joyce Lancaster-Brisley, writer of “Milly Molly Mandy” and Leila Berg of the “Nipper” series lived. Discover the house where Josephine Tey stayed with her sister, and the home of the prolific author Beryl Kingston. See the house of the “wickedest man in the world”, the infamous Aleister Crowley.

This route includes Streatham Common, the beautiful Rookery and Norwood Grove with its magnificent views to the North Downs and the edge of Biggin Wood. If you opt for the longer route you will see the house where Sir Kingsley Amis was brought up and the Church where Winnie Pooh and Wind in the Willows illustrator, Ernest Shepherd, was married.

Mark Bery



*Some of Streatham's Literary Links:
(l-r) Jane Austen, Namba Roy, EH Shepard and Dr Johnson,*

A Diversion - Unigate Woods and Valley Road Playing Field

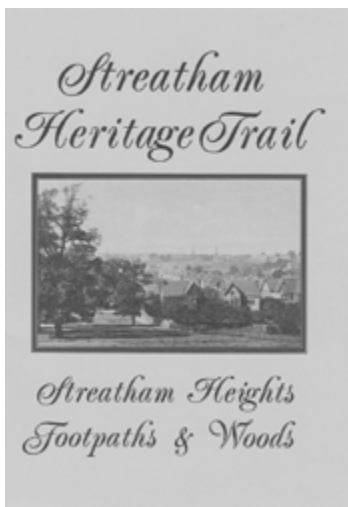


It is worth diverting up Namba Roy Close (off Valley Road, opposite Sunnyhill School), to another ‘hidden’ corner of Streatham, probably unfamiliar to most but the local residents. At the top of the Close, climb the steps to Unigate Woods. This was named after the dairy which was situated here for many years before demolition for the recent housing development.

This small area of attractive woodland is well maintained. A path leads to the Valley Road playing field. Here, seating, a well-equipped children’s playground and adult outdoor gym facility provide a haven from the nearby busy Valley Road. Walk through the playing field and view the variety of well planned housing and open spaces before returning to Valley Road close to the junction with Leigham Court Road.

Streatham Society Heritage Trails

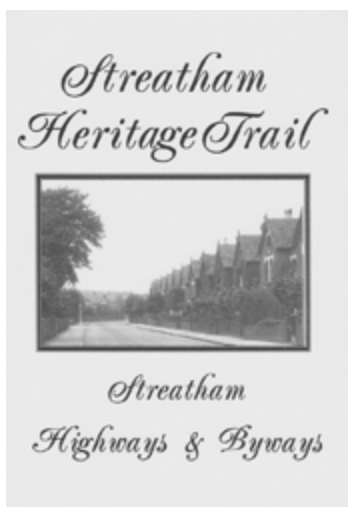
For those of you who wish to explore our area with more detailed information, our twelve Heritage Trails provide this (£2.80 incl. p&p, see our website). Two of these by Graham Gower extend and expand the area around this part of the Literary Trail and the Unigate Woods diversion. All our trails contain a background history, a route map and are well illustrated. As lockdown continues, these provide much exercise and interest; staying local.



Streatham Heights, Footpaths & Woods

Starting at Streatham Station, this continues along Russell's Footpath between Oakdale and Hopton Roads to Valley Road, up Hill Path to Streatham Common North, into Leigham Court Road then Etherstone Road, Wellfield Walk and Strathdale, to the site of the former Streatham Mineral Wells and Unigate Woods.

Evidence of old boundaries and signs are featured and interesting houses, past and present, such as Hill House (demolished), Park Hill, Melrose Mansions, distinctive late Victorian houses in Leigham Court Road, a converted coach house and the Etherstone Green area.



Streatham Highways & Byways

Also starting at Streatham Station, this complements the above walk. It goes into Hopton Road, Albert Carr Gardens, Polworth Road, Farnham Road, Streatham Common North, Oakdale Road, Madeira Road, Valley Road, Sunnyhill Road and Angles Road.

Buildings of note include Century House, Coventry Hall (demolished), the Thrale Almshouses, the Well House and Sunnyhill School. Architectural features on houses and a Victorian wall letter box are listed.

This area has a wealth of attractive streets with much of the early housing extant. Both walks provide a snapshot of Streatham's past, much not included in general histories.

JH

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY - November 8th 2020

Because of Covid restrictions our annual Remembrance Day parade was cancelled. However at 9.30am, Shea Richardson and Robert Doyle (right, carefully distanced) went to the War and Civilian Memorials in Albert Carr Gardens, opposite Streatham Common, to place a wreath and flowers on behalf of the Streatham Society.



Photos Robert Doyle

LOCAL HISTORY MATTERS

KEITH HOLDAWAY (1932-2020)



It is with great sadness we report the death of Keith Holdaway of Leigham Court Road, Streatham, who passed away in 20th November 2020 aged 88. Keith was born on the 6th February 1932 and had early childhood memories of being pushed around the Crystal Palace in a pram, before the building burnt down in 1936.

Keith was a founder member of the Local History Group of the Streatham Society and also, for many years, was the leader of the local history group of the Norwood Society, as well as belonging to many other local history groups and organisations and establishing the South London Local History Group at the Phoenix Centre in Norwood in 2014.

Keith joined the Streatham Society in 1977 and in July 1983 chaired a meeting at which the Local History Group was launched of which he became the chairman. He was among a small group of early pioneers promoting the local history of the area at a time when it had not attracted the popularity and wide-spread interest it has today.

The group quickly flourished and together with Brian Bloice, John Cresswell, Graham and Marion Gower, Gordon Griffiths, Bob Jenner, Kevin Kelly and others a regular monthly workshop was held in the Manor Hall by Streatham Station.

The enthusiasm of this keen and talented group led to a series of talks, walks, seminars and exhibitions being organised promoting the local history of the area. Today, such events are relatively commonplace, but in the early 1980s the group were breaking new ground and in many cases being the first to organise such local events.

An early success of the group was the publication of *Streatham Pictures from the Past* in 1983, which has been reprinted on a number of occasions and copies of which are still available from the Streatham Society bookstall and website.

It was at this time I joined the group and my interest in the subject was greatly encouraged by the warm and friendly fellowship of this small band of local history enthusiasts. Information was freely shared as members discussed their various research projects in an informal atmosphere and each month new and exciting material came to light for members to explore.

At each meeting Keith would bring items for the group to see from his vast collection of old postcards, maps, ephemera and photographs. He was a generous and knowledgeable member of the group, and I mentioned in the last edition of our newsletter his kindness in giving me photographs of a couple of paintings of Streatham made by Evacustes A Phipson which still adorn the walls of my house. He also drew my attention to a series of little-known pencil drawings of the area made in 1888 by P Holland and without his advice I would never have discovered these charming pictures myself.

Much of his material was used to mount local history displays at various Streatham venues. Special display stands were made on which the material could be exhibited, and I remember going to Keith's house in Leigham Court Road on many occasions to retrieve the display panels from his loft. It was not uncommon for 100 such panels to be loaded into his car to be ferried to a church hall or the Phoenix Centre for one of his exhibitions.

These activities probably reached their peak in 1999 when Keith and Brian Bloice, in association with the Norwood Society, The French Institute, and the Emile Zola Society organised a special Zola weekend to mark the French author's association with Norwood during which an English Heritage blue plaque was unveiled on the Queen's Hotel and the Norwood Society published a book of Zola's Norwood photographs. Keith mounted his largest ever exhibition at the Phoenix Centre as part of the programme and played a prominent role in organising the various events held over the weekend.

Keith's interests were not only limited to local history and he had a vast knowledge of the history and development of all forms of transport. His library of rail and bus books was a valuable resource as well as his extensive collection of transport ephemera and pictures. He constructed a model railway in his garden and eventually constructed a magnificent railway layout in his loft the track of which weaved its way around the roof rafters.

Keith was also keenly interested in church history and architecture and in 1974, he and M D Lambert, produced an excellent history of St. Luke's Church, West Norwood, to mark the 150th anniversary of the building. Keith was churchwarden of St. Luke's in 1971-73. He was also associated for many years with St. Thomas's church in Telford Park as well as St. Peter's, which was opposite his home in Leigham Court Road.

In recent years Keith was also a highly valued member of the Monday Church Watch team at St. Leonard's Church, Streatham, where he spent a couple of hours every week picking up litter in the graveyard making a valuable contribution in helping to make the churchyard such a pleasant place to visit.

Keith will be sadly missed by his many friends in the south London local history community.

John W Brown

I'M DREAMING OF A WHITE WINTER

A white Christmas was a common occurrence in Victorian and Edwardian days but now, with the onset of global warming, Streatham has rarely been blessed with a heavy covering of snow during the yuletide season.

One of the heaviest falls of snow in Streatham is now beyond living memory having taken place in January 1882. That event was recalled by George Brind who lived at 109 Wellfield Road and worked in the railway signal box near Streatham Common Station.



Photos: Tooting Bec Common c.1910: Skating; Sledging; Milk Cart; Chatting

He was on duty on the night the snowstorm hit Streatham and so deep was the fall he was trapped there and unable to leave the box. It took nine hours for his relief to dig his way through the snow to rescue him.

Some drifts in the area were over 6 feet high and as the roads were cleared the snow was dumped in huge piles on Streatham Common where it was still to be seen some two months later, taking over 8 weeks to melt away.

Such heavy falls of snow meant that there was always a good trade to be had in the winter for youngsters clearing garden paths of snow for which householders would make the traditional payment of a penny.

The cold Victorian winters also saw the ponds on Streatham Common freeze over and they became popular venues for skating. A larger skating rink was to be had on Tooting Bec Common where the lake there provided a sheet of ice on which hundreds of people could skate.



Tobogganing was popular, especially among young boys, and the steep slope of Streatham Common made an ideal venue for this sport. Scores of people would be seen dragging their sledges up the hill ready to enjoy the thrill of the downward ride.

Boys from poor homes often wore boots with hobnails on the soles to increase the life of the shoe. As a result this footwear was ideal for running and sliding on the ice which covered the pavements in the built up area of the town.

Snowball fights were commonplace and Arthur Roach recalled his experiences of a massive snowball fight in Streatham which occurred among schoolboys in the winter of 1908/09:

“Snowballing was not an official game, but one in which we indulged as often as snow fall allowed. Apart from battles amongst ourselves, boys from other schools who came to the carpentry centre for instruction were well and truly pasted. This was taking a most unfair advantage as they were completely outnumbered.

“I’m not sure, but it was probably the winter of 1908/9 that there were heavy falls of snow. The Eardley Road School boys were at the carpentry centre (in Sunnyhill Road School) and they had been under fire during playtime, and as they left for home, they were again pelted.

“Their way home was down Valley Road, and as we passed Wellfield Road, I expect most of our lot lived there, many of them peeled off to go home to tea.

“I only wish that I had, because when the battle got to Hobb’s field on the corner of Gleneldon Road, the Eardley Road mob were reinforced by a few very much older boys who had long since left school, and with this injection of strength, we were routed.

“Unhappily, I was the youngest of our lot and as we fled I couldn’t outpace the enemy and was caught. They rolled me in the snow, rubbed my face in it and finally pushed it down my collar - it was most unpleasant!”

I remember the heavy falls of snow in Streatham in my childhood in the 1950s and 60s and how on one occasion drifts of snow on Norbury Park came up to my chest and I could hardly walk through it.

There was also the time one winter when my two brothers and I donned our hand-knitted balaclava hats, scarves and gloves, and ventured onto the park where we rolled a giant snowball which steadily grew to be bigger than the three of us combined!

Today local snowfalls rarely do more than cover the ground with just an inch or more of snow. However, a heavy fall of snow in February 2009 reminded residents what it must have been like to experience the joys of a traditional white Christmas.

Streatham looked clean and bright under a heavy carpet of snow and as you approached Norwood Grove you could hear the screams of laughter of local children playing on the field fronting Covington Way down which a man was skiing!

Streatham Common was full of families making the most of the conditions and dotted all over were snowmen glistened in the morning sunshine with three giant snowmen dominating the centre of the Common.

A wide variety of toboggans had been brought into use to gain the maximum fun from the slope of the hill. These ranged from the traditional wooden type to modern plastic designs, old tea-trays, green recycling waste boxes, and even one young man was seen, most aptly, using a Lidl's freezer bag as a sledge.

All around people were enjoying themselves just as would have been the case a century and more ago when Streatham youths would rejoice at the opportunities for fun a heavy fall of snow and a frozen pond would provide.

*Photos: The Rookery;
St Leonard's Churchyard;
Streatham Common.*



JWB

EARLY ONE MORNING JUST AS THE SUN WAS RISING



*St Leonard's Church
with wooden spire and weathervane 1790s*

This year winter is a particularly dim and dismal season, weighed down as it is with the restrictions imposed due to the Covid pandemic. However, with the roll-out of the vaccine and the promise of spring close at hand hopefully brighter days lay ahead for us to enjoy.

Winter has always been a stormy season, and 180 years ago, in 1841, Streatham experienced one of the

worst storms the village had endured for many a year.

At around 7am on the morning of January 3rd, as thunder echoed overhead and lightning flashed in the darkness of a mid-winter dawn, Streatham residents awoke startled and frightened as the storm settled immediately above them.

This was one of the most violent storms experienced in London and lasted about an hour and half. Adding to the dread of the event was the fact it was accompanied by a fall of large hailstones which bounced off roofs and pavements adding greatly to the ferocity of the tempest.

Shortly after 7am on that violent Sunday morning, a massive flash of lightning struck the steeple of the town's ancient parish church of St. Leonard.

A young boy passing the church saw the steeple ablaze and ran to tell Mr. Street, the parish clerk, who lived in the nearby forge close to St. Leonard's, at the junction of Streatham High Road and Mitcham Lane.

Street, accompanied by George Sandy, a bell-ringer, gained entry to the church and climbed the spiral staircase to the belfry where they could see the fire raging just beneath the ball of the weather vane.

Thinking he could successfully douse the flames Sandy collected a bucket of water and mop, reclinced the stairs and attempted to extinguish the blaze but with no success.

Fire soon engulfed the old oak shingles covering the spire and when the Streatham fire engine arrived its task seemed hopeless. A rider was immediately

sent galloping up the high road to fetch the Waterloo Road fire engine and when this arrived, along with three other pumps, the fire was eventually brought under control.

Although the spire was completely destroyed the fire fighters successfully prevented it from spreading to the main body of the church.

George Sandy, who had so valiantly fought the blaze with bucket and mop, was born in Streatham on 29th October 1801 and was baptised at St. Leonard's Church on 15th November. He was a farm labourer and lived in Leigham Lane, now known as Sunnyhill Road. He died in 1859, aged 57, and was buried in the churchyard on 27th February.

Later that year a new spire was erected on the church at a cost of £650. It was built of bricks and covered in Roman cement in keeping with the design of the church which had been rebuilt ten years earlier in 1831.

To commemorate the events of that violent Sunday morning a small plaque was placed on the tower of the church, beneath the belfry window, which can still be seen today.

Although the inscription has been badly eroded over the past 180 years one can still just about make out the wording that recalls the events of that early January day which are chiselled into the face of the plaque which reads:

The late spire of this church
was destroyed by lightning
on the morning of the 3rd January
1841

and the present spire was erected
during the same year.

Rev. Henry Blunt MA Rector

Samuel Jasper Blunt

Joseph Hartnell Churchwardens

Old pictures of the church show that a weathervane with a large copper ball, 2½ feet in diameter, used to sit

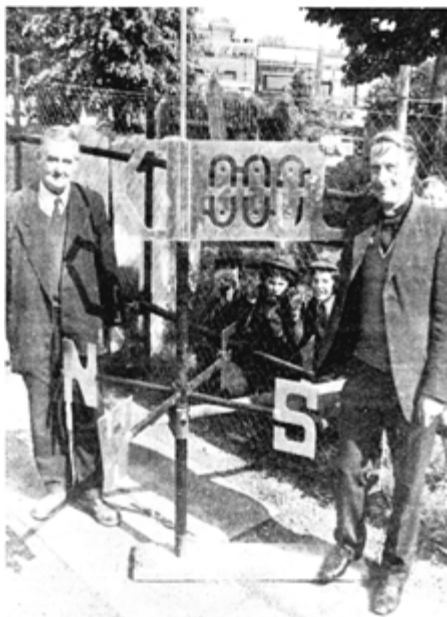


Tower Lightning Plaque

atop the spire and in 1795 12 guineas (£12.60) was paid for regilding the ball, vane, clock face and hands.



Old Church Cross



Weathervane 1976

Sixty-two years ago, on Sunday 4th January 1959, just after evensong, the weathervane and cross that then sat on top of the spire came crashing down onto the porch roof.

It was later discovered that machine gun bullet holes in the base of the cross, dating back to the Second World War, had significantly weakened the structure over the years, causing the metal to rust badly and finally give way.

The vane and cross were replaced with a large metal cross which survived until the fire that gutted the church in 1975. This cross can still be seen inside the church today, where it is kept in the clergy vestry.



In May 1976 a new weathervane, finished in gold leaf and designed by Douglas Feast, was placed on top of the spire where it remains today telling passers-by in which direction the wind is blowing.

Now, even in the worst storms to rage over Streatham, the steeple, spire and tower are protected by a lightning conductor which ensures that the tragedy which struck the church in the early hours of Sunday 3rd January 1841 should never occur again.

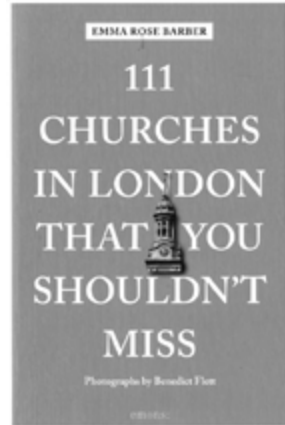
JWB

ST. LEONARD'S, STREATHAM, LISTED AS ONE OF LONDON'S TOP 100 CHURCHES TO VISIT

Streatham's ancient parish church of St. Leonard is one of South London's architectural and historic treasures which is recognised in its Grade II listed status by English Heritage.

That it should be included in a listing of London's top 100 churches you should visit emphasises its stature and importance when the listing includes many of the exceptionally fine churches in the City of London by architects such as Christopher Wren.

Actually, the listing comprises 111 London churches of which St. Leonard's is number 100 in the inventory. It appears in the recently published book *111 Churches in London That You Shouldn't Miss* compiled by Emma Rose Barber and featuring photographs taken by Benedict Flett.



Published by Emons Verlag GmbH the book is one of a series of guidebooks that detail 111 places in Britain and on the continent you should visit.

Following a fire which gutted the church in 1975, St. Leonard's was rebuilt within its original Georgian walls and many of its ancient features, some of which date back to medieval times, were incorporated into the new building. St. Leonard's now provides a fascinating environment which skilfully combines past and present features that exhibits its historic relics in a modern-day setting.

St. Leonard's entry in the 111 Churches in London guidebook reads as follows:

No 100 St. Leonard's, Streatham - Monuments Galore

Like so many churches, this building has layers of architectural history, from Anglo-Saxon foundation to the medieval, the early 19th century to the 1970s when there was a dreadful fire.

Enter today through a vestibule (which used to be part of the church), with a classicalising monument to John Howland, where cherubs and a skull sit side by side and a Renaissance monument of a man and wife who face one another, called the Massingberd memorial.

The church is a treasure trove of historical gems.

There are monuments to the Thrale family, local landowners, who lived in Streatham Park. Some of the family's illustrious 18th century luminaries are buried in the vault in the crypt. Henry Thrale (1724/9-81) and his wife Hester were close friends of Dr (Samuel) Johnson (1709 - 84), the legendary essayist and famed for his dictionary. He used to visit the church. Hester Thrale wrote the An-



St Leonard's Font

ecdotes of Dr Johnson, who, incidentally, loved the 14th-century structure of the church (now gone). In the south aisle is what is called a 'mourning tablet' to Henry made by Joseph Wilton, who made the stagecoach for the coronation of George III. John Flaxman carved a beautiful relief in a small monument to Sophia Hoare, Henry's daughter. The relief shows mourners beside a dead body, but you cannot see the head, as it is obscured by grieving figures!

Below a stained glass window made by John Hayward, with grisaille portraits of Dr Johnson and Samuel Boswell and one of the Master of Revels to Elizabeth I - Edmund Tylney (d. 1610) is a small triptych icon of St Leonard (d. 559CE, patron saint of prisoners and Abbot of a monastery in Limoges) with St Laura and a prisoner (Leon Liddement, 1998). St Laura, from Cordoba, became an Abbess. But she was thrown into a cauldron of molten lead by

Moorish conquerors in 864. Like many martyrs, she is seen with a martyr's cross.

(The Triptych referred to is a memorial to Laura Wilcox, the eldest daughter of a former Rector of St. Leonard's, Geoffrey Wilcox, who sadly died on 30th October 1995 from a brain tumour at the tragically early age of 21.)

Current Covid regulations mean the church is open for worship on Sundays but weekday openings have had to be restricted to 12noon - 2pm on Mondays and Wednesdays. Should you be in Streatham during these times do take a few moments out of the day to enjoy the peace and tranquillity of this ancient building and discover why it is one of London's top 100 churches to visit.



111 Churches in London That You Shouldn't Miss, and other titles in the 111 places guide-book series, can be obtained via the internet or by ordering copies from WH Smith in Streatham.

JWB

DEAR STREATHAM,

If you had walked along the High Road opposite the common in days gone by, you would have passed a row of little shops that were very old, dating back to - who knows when.

Situated on the corner, just by the entrance to Factory Square was a Corn Chandler's, slightly bigger than the other shops. To the rear of the property was stabling for horses, with a hay loft above, where I once played with some children who lived locally. The stables were reached via a cobbled yard to the side of the shop, which had chickens pecking around. Stepping into the Chandler's, you'd have been greeted by the musty smell of camphor, and an array of brooms, mops and buckets suspended from the ceiling, while on the well trodden, wooden floor to the left side, and taking up a lot of space, were bails of hay piled on

top of one another, with loose straw all around. From floor to ceiling every nook and cranny was crammed with goods of all kinds, and usually there was a small pile of white candles on the long wooden counter, but my favourite thing was the line of glass topped biscuit tins in a neat row in front of the counter, filled with such delights as shortbread, ginger nuts and custard creams, and which were just the right height for a little girl to peer into.

At the other end of these shops, and abutting the church garden, was a bicycle shop, and next to this was a Saddler's. Taking pride of place in its window display was a beautifully made, highly polished, rich brown saddle. It was there for years. All the goods were made on the premises, and I still remember the wonderful smell of real leather, caught as you passed the open door on a warm summer's day.



*Streatham High Road, opposite the Common
November 2020*





Western Terrace and Church Place



High Road Nos 460 - 468



High Road Nos 454 - 470

But the shop that I found most tantalising lay somewhere in the middle of the row. It was a quaint 'Olde World' tea shop, which could have come straight out of Dickens. To enter this charming little shop you had to climb the three shallow stone steps, which were quite steep, and dipped in the middle from years of wear by generations of feet, they were aided by a spindly wrought iron handrail on one side. Placed in its picturesque window, between the prettily draped lace curtains, was a two tiered, china cake stand, which only occasionally seemed to bear any cakes. I thought it was such a pretty shop and as a child, I longed to go in there, but to my dismay, my mother always walked past.

In later years, however when I was working in an office close by, I eventually did fulfil my childhood desire, as for a while, a friend and I decided this was the place to take our Friday lunches. It did not disappoint. Despite the interior not being very big, they had managed to furnish it with several small tables, each laid with a clean white tablecloth, the surrounding decor was warm and welcoming, which created a

cosy, friendly atmosphere. There was always a buzz on a Friday, when the clientele seemed to be mostly ladies, and the two or three waitresses were kept very busy, scurrying to and fro, and yes, they wore those little white aprons! It was a very popular venue, for at times you were lucky to get a table, and once a week Pat and I had our favourite meal of, egg, chips and peas, accompanied by tea (heavenly). Such memories!

These shops were part of 'old' Streatham, and had a character and charm all their own. Now sadly, all these gems have been lost to us forever, swept away by the broom of progress. To this day, I still love little tea shops such as this, and always look for them whenever we visit other towns on day trips and holidays. Unfortunately, however, they have mostly disappeared from the land, as large chains increasingly dominate every town in the country.

I cherish the Streatham of my youth, which now only exists in memory, but then, this is a condition common to us all as we grow older.

Yvonne Watkins

(Rt) No 482 Shepherd Cycle Shop

(Courtesy Diana Shepherd)

(Below) Bank Parade Streatham Common

(Early views courtesy JWB)



High Road 456 - 458



STREATHAM POSTCARDS

Streatham Common North c.1905



A busy scene captured by a local photographer in the early 1900s showing a number of horse and carts and local residents on Streatham Common Northside, near the junction with Leigham Court Road. On the right can be seen a signpost pointing the way to Streatham Hill Station which is located at the end of the Road.

The picture was probably taken on a Sunday when people were enjoying the delights of the common on their day off including a man wearing an impressive top hat who can be seen strolling just by the signpost. On the left of the road, where a number of men are loitering, is a large drinking fountain and underneath the tree another gent wearing a top hat is seated on a park bench enjoying the view across the common. Note the pram on the extreme left with a mother/nursemaid standing close by.

This postcard is another of Streatham Society member Frances Partridge's collection of old postcard views of Streatham which she has donated to John W Brown's Streatham archive. John has captioned the cards for us.

Many postcard views were produced of fashionable areas such as Streatham. Thousands sold as sending a card originally cost half that of a letter's 1p stamp. The standard of photography was excellent, as is this one. The detail when magnified is remarkable.

We shall reproduce more in future issues.

CELEBRITY GREETINGS FOR THE OPENING NIGHT OF THE STREATHAM ASTORIA



I have written before of the debt Streatham owes Andrew Hadden for his efforts in rescuing from obscurity fascinating items relating to the local history of our town. He, together with Colin Crocker, have helped preserve a unique collection of memorabilia relating to bygone Streatham which hopefully, one day, will form the basis of a local museum for Streatham.

Details of some of the items in their collections are given in our book *Streatham Museum in Print*, copies of which are available from the Streatham Society book-stall and website (£7.80 incl. p&p).

Andrew's latest acquisition is a wonderful collection of signed photographs of celebrities sending their best wishes on the occasion of the opening of the Streatham Astoria Cinema on 30th June 1930. The cinema survives today as the Odeon.

What a fascinating collection of tributes these pictures provide, the existence of which I was totally unaware. I suspect it was customary at the opening of a new major cinema in London for such celebrities to send signed photographs as a means of obtaining publicity for themselves and their studios as well as wishing the new enterprise well. Such greetings were no doubt on display in the foyer of the cinema, or exhibited along the first-floor gallery, to impress patrons and promote the prestige of the new enterprise.



Although none of the ‘stars’ featured are known to me by name, no doubt they would have been recognised by the cinema going public of the day. Theo Alban, a man who has previously escaped my attention, had an impressive list of recordings to his credit and I note that Lillian Taiz, wearing a spectacular hat, had appeared in *The Jazz Singer*, credited as being the first ‘talkie’ motion picture to be screened in 1927. The lovely Constance McKay frequently appeared in Broadway productions from the late 1920s through to the early 1940s and although I have been unable to find out any information concerning J Auerson Thomas, his photograph depicts all the hallmarks of a great matinee star of the period.

Sadly, I have not been able to trace any reference to the photographs in the contemporary reports I have of the opening of the Astoria on 30th June 1930. By all accounts, the gala night was one of the highlights of Streatham’s social scene that summer. 2,500 attended the event and watched with awe the screening of the colour talking film *Paris*, starring Jack Buchanan. The programme also included various live variety acts among which were the xylophone player Teddy Brown and Sandresi and Copelli, billed as The Peculiar Pair.

Again, other than Jack Buchanan, (whose sister ran a cake shop called Mary Page at 1b Leigham Court Road), the names of Teddy Brown (no relation), and the wonderfully titled Sandresi and Copelli, probably no longer resonate with the public.

Fame can be fleeting. One moment your name is well-known by all and sundry then, with the passing of the years, you fade from view and join the legions of the anonymous.

These previously unknown photographs make a marvellous addition to our Streatham archive and Andrew is to be congratulated on their discovery and in rescuing them to remind us of that glamorous night, ninety years ago, when the great and the good gathered to celebrate the opening of one of Streatham's most iconic buildings.

John W Brown



THEO ALBANY
SIGNED PHOTOGRAPH OF BEST WISHES
FOR OPENING OF THE ASTORIA CINEMA IN STREATHAM 1906



LILLIAN TAIT
SIGNED PHOTOGRAPH OF BEST WISHES
FOR OPENING OF THE ASTORIA CINEMA IN STREATHAM 1906



CONSTANCE MURPHY
SIGNED PHOTOGRAPH OF BEST WISHES
FOR OPENING OF THE ASTORIA CINEMA IN STREATHAM 1906



J THOMAS
SIGNED PHOTOGRAPH OF BEST WISHES
FOR OPENING OF THE ASTORIA CINEMA IN STREATHAM 1906



NORAH DARING
SIGNED PHOTOGRAPH OF BEST WISHES
FOR OPENING OF THE ASTORIA CINEMA IN STREATHAM 1906



ELISSA LANTI
SIGNED PHOTOGRAPH OF BEST WISHES
FOR OPENING OF THE ASTORIA CINEMA IN STREATHAM 1906

HORACE ELLIOTT, ARTIST IN POTTERY, STREATHAM

I am writing a book on the works and career to Horace Elliott (1851-1938) who made his living from Art Pottery, as a designer, partial maker, and retailer for over 50 years between 1880-1934+. Having initially sold through someone else's shop on Great Russell Street from 1880, Elliott had various London retail premises in Bayswater, Chelsea, and St. James, before moving to 69a Streatham Hill where he was to spend most of his career. Elliott was designing wares and having these made at Ewenny [1], Denby [2] and Brannam [3] and other potteries in the UK and Europe.

My objective in writing is to seek help from fellow members of the Streatham Society to clarify the dates of the retail premises at 69a Streatham Hill; see if there are any images of the premises; and ascertain whether any of his drawing and designs survive in any local archive.

When was Horace Elliott in Streatham?

Previous authors on ceramics have Elliott active in Streatham between 1905-1934. I am keen to try and confirm these dates. The first primary source reference I can find to Horace in Streatham comes from the South London Press on Saturday 11 February 1905, under the title - Always on Exhibition:

‘Visitors to this great shopping centre should make point of making their way down this busy Atlantic-road and inspect the windows and show-rooms of Mr. Arthur White. In the vicinity of Streatham Hill there are some very smart shops, which have not long been built, few of them still, unfortunately for their owner, being unlet. One of them is, I am certain, absolutely unique even in London. It is occupied by an artist potter named Horace Elliott, at Ye sign of the Amphora, No. 69a Streatham Hill. The whole shop front has been lifted back about 3ft. leaving space for outside shelves and brackets, which are placed great vases of unglazed pottery.

‘All kinds of Quaint and Barbaric Pottery, some of it enamelled in strong colour are exhibited in the window and in the shop interior. Scottish motto pottery is a strong feature, all the shapes having been designed personally by Mr. Elliott. But pottery of a highly artistic and decorative order is not the only speciality of this firm. Many of the quaintly-shaped pots are filled with the most delicious of home-made marmalade, schoolboy toffee, candy, mincemeat, and other delights. As the electric tram and 'buses pass the door, it is no trouble to visit this charming shop, and I am satisfied that those who do think, it well worth the little journey.’

The newspaper article confirms Elliott was active in early 1905, but leaves open the possibility that he moved in 1904, given that by the time of the South London Press article Elliott appears well established.

With regards to a closing date for the retail premises, the last Trade Directory in which I can find Horace is the 1934 London Post Office directory under Art

Pottery Manufrs. He is listed with Doulton, Thos Forester, the Pilkington Tile and Pottery Co Ltd, Susie Cooper Productions, Tooth & Co. Ltd and Charles Vyse.

Elliott designed Denby Pottery wares are known with dates after 1934, and one possibility is that he continued in business for a further few years. According to the Norwood News of Friday of 1 March 1938, 69a been taken over by the THE STELLA MILLS SCHOOL of ballroom dancing (late Ballerina School)... (who) announces the opening from March 19 of larger premises at 69a Streatham Hill (entrance Cricklade-avenue). It is therefore possible that Elliott remained in business in Streatham Hill perhaps until 1937.

Elliott was not living on the premises, which appears to be a street level shop and a basement. According to the Norwood News of Saturday 8 October 1927, Elliott was living at 52, Oakdale-road, Streatham – he was advertising for Italian lessons.

The Streatham Shop

I would really like to find a photograph of 69a Streatham Hill between 1905-1934 when it was occupied by Horace Elliott.

We know from correspondence dated 3rd October 1930 between Elliott and Dr Fox, the Curator of the National Museum of Wales, that Elliott had 12x13 inch Ewenny Pottery tiles above his shop spelling out HORACE ELLIOTT with the Fleur de Lys in the centre, the name he registered for his pottery in 1883 [4].

Elliott explains that: “All those large Glazed tiles which are fixed up over my shop front on the fascia board were made in the year 1885 - stood not only the fierce storms + sunshine from the West at Queen’s Road Bayswater, and Chelsea – but also the fierce storms + the Zeppelin air raid which shattered every window for ¼ mile from the place where it dropped that awful bomb.”

I assume that these tiles have been discarded but live-in hope that they may be somewhere around Streatham or indeed, still on the shopfront covered by a new fascia board.

Shapes & Registered Designs

In a post-script to another letter from Elliott to Dr. Fox, written on the 2nd Sunday of Advent 1930, Elliott alludes to the existence of drawings of shapes and registered designs which were sent to Dr Fox in Cardiff and then returned, seemingly uncopied, to Elliott in Streatham – “Post Scriptum - I shall be very pleased to let you see a quantity of my beautiful shapes + Registered designs if you will consent to return them when it is convenient.”

Horace died on the 9th December 1938, at St. James’ Hospital Battersea, aged 87. According to his death certificate, he was living at 4, Holmewood Road, Brixton – his occupation is listed as a “pottery designer”. His wife Kate has predeceased him, and his death certificate was witnessed by Beatrice Y Prall, his half-sister-in-law, living in Spencer Road, Battersea. He did not appear to leave a will, and the lack of any children probably meant his archives of designs and papers was prob-

ably discarded or destroyed. If any member of the society knows otherwise, please let me know.
Jonathan Gray

Notes

Jonathan Gray is an Honorary Research Fellow at the National Museum of Wales, and writes on Welsh and related ceramics. His interest in Horace Elliott comes from the work undertaken at the Ewenny Potteries near Bridgend, which Horace started in 1880 and continued to at least 1918. He can be contacted at jdgray@talk21.com or on 020 3648 0951.

Captions (l - r):

1. Horace Elliott designed Ewenny Pottery vase with two handles, 14 inches tall, marked with Elliott's Fleur de Lys impressed mark to side, underneath Glamorgan Ware 1908 in ink, in Elliott's hand. Photo by Sylvain Deleu © Jonathan Gray

2. Pair of Elliott designed Denby Pottery candlesticks, 13 inches high, marked with Elliott's Fleur de Lys impressed, together with ELLIOTT and LONDON impressed, c1900-1910. Photo by Sylvain Deleu © Jonathan Gray

3. A Brannam Pottery vase shaped like an Amphora, decorated with fish by Horace Elliott. 14¼ inches tall, marked with the Fleur de Lyn impressed with ELLIOTT impressed underneath. Photo by Sylvain Deleu © Jonathan Gray

4. The sketch of the large Ewenny tiles which were above his retail premises since 1885, moved to 69a Streatham High Street in c1905. © National Museum of Wales



STREATHAM SOCIETY REPORTS

STREATHAM SOCIETY ZOOM TALKS AND EVENTS

It seems very probable that 'in person' talks will not be possible for some time. Since the last newsletter we have held the following talks:

Nov 16 2020: *The Match Girls Strike and my Great Grandmother's role in it* by Sam Johnson. We reached our limit of 100 registrations and 66 attended.

Dec 14: *Dr Page's War episode 2, Northern Russia 1918/9. Dr Page* by Ray Coggin. 25 attended

Jan 18: *Great Exhibition and Great Expectations: the everyday and the unexpected at the Crystal Palace - 1851 to present day time* by Phil Emery. 100 registrations, 9 on waiting list, 79 attended.

Mark Bery

NEW YEAR'S HONOURS LIST

The Society was pleased to learn that one of our former speakers, Christopher Mann (who talked to us about *Heraldry in South London*) has been honoured in the New Year's Honours List. He has been appointed a Member of the Royal Victorian Order (M.V.O.) in recognition of his many years' service to the Crown.

Russell Henman

MEMBERSHIP

We welcome new members Chris Sluman, Michael Dunton from Somerset, Richard Fowler and Eddie Carter from Maldon, Essex.

Our final 2020 membership is 272. This is 17 fewer than last year but, considering our planned programme ceased in April, this is good. We welcomed an average 30 new members and received over £450 in donations with subscriptions from some long-term members. Over 40 members did not re-join, a much higher number than usual. Probably this is because several usually pay at meetings.

Some 1,600 people have logged into our excellent Facebook page. In addition others will read the public site, without joining. It is most interesting to read the posts of memories of Streatham. These include many from people who must be over 70. It is good to see that Covid has brought an additional method of communication and interest to the older generation.

One of these is Yvonne Watkins from Reading. She is a long-term member of the Streatham Society who regularly writes articles for the *Streatham Society News* (see p.23). She also frequently posts on Facebook comment and accounts of her early years in Streatham. Along with several other members, she sent messages of appreciation for this magazine and the efforts of the committee and others who run our Society. Thank you - an example to us all.

JH

Communication

We have many members' email addresses and this facilitates communication between newsletters. If you have not registered your email address please contact me. If you have registered an email address and have not received any emails from me please contact me (markbery@hotmail.com) as it is possible we have incorrectly transcribed your details from the handwritten form - there are a number of emails that are 'bouncing' back.

Subscriptions and Gift Aid

In the Summer 2020 Newsletter (number 241) Liz Burton our Treasurer advised members that we will not be collecting subscriptions in 2021, normally due January 1st, because our normal programme of talks were suspended for much of 2020.

In common with many charities, we will be claiming tax from HMRC for the first time. We will be doing this for the 2020 membership subscriptions and retrospectively for previous years. This is allowed as a subscription can be treated as a gift for gift aid provided the donor/member is a UK resident and has paid sufficient tax in the relevant year to cover the repayment.

Members on our email database will be invited to register their subscription as a gift. Those not on our email database should complete the Gift Aid form enclosed with this issue. Please return to me as soon as conveniently possible as the return has to be compiled and submitted to HMRC before the end of this tax year - early April

With many thanks for your cooperation which will provide funds to support your Society.

MB

PUBLICATIONS - LOCKDOWN SALES 2020

As we have been unable to sell our publications at meetings and events since March, nearly all our sales have been online via our website. I have a large book stock stored at my home (*see website*) and Covid restrictions have given me time to improve my processing of orders.

Post offices have stopped providing a grey collection sack for pre-stamped parcels; I understand this was because too many had insufficient postage, especially after annual charges increased significantly. This meant I often had to queue to have packages weighed.

I therefore purchased a large stock of stamps of varying value, letter scales and width and depth measures. Since April, I have posted all orders (except our smaller booklets), marked clearly DO NOT BEND, into a wide-mouthed post box, only found outside post offices or former post offices. To save on package costs, I use two re-cycled large envelopes (C4) for our A4 book orders. (Thank you Jill Dudman and Jill Smith for providing most of these. More are welcome - they can be left on my doorstep.) As yet, no recipient has complained.

The March lockdown brought a 12-week closure of my nearest post office in West Norwood and the next at Streatham Hill, resulting in long queues elsewhere, which I was not prepared to join. I then decided to offer doorstep collection. This involved a box and plate in my porch. Buyers emailed me with their order, methods of payment (usually cash) and collection times were arranged. Walkers, joggers, scooterists and cyclists were soon flocking to my door. Our twelve Heritage Trails proved particularly popular. Sales dwindled after the first lockdown ended.

The sudden November lockdown and approaching Christmas, helped by the Facebook promotion of John W Brown's *Streatham Streets* and *A Streatham Christmas*, caused an avalanche of 36 orders (plus Spam) for 66 publications. Unfortunately, only 20 payments materialised for 46 books. (Why?) Interestingly, orders were for a wide variety of titles not just those advertised. Posting involved 16 trips to my nearest post box outside West Norwood post office (which had very long queues until Christmas).

You may say the 15-minute walks downhill and 20-minute back uphill were good exercise for me - but were they essential journeys? I am hoping orders decrease as usual after Christmas, despite lockdown boredom. But at least I have something different to write about when I contact friends!

JH



*A Sign of the Times - Covid Testing Station on the Rookery Car Park,
Streatham Common*

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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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