



# STREATHAM SOCIETY NEWS

Published quarterly

No. 247 Winter 2021-22

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**Chess in the Rookery - Celebrating the 150th Anniversary  
of the Streatham and Brixton Chess Club**

*(See pages 3 and 30)*

**2022 MEMBERSHIP - SUBSCRIPTIONS NOW DUE**

*(See p.28)*

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# STREATHAM SOCIETY MEETINGS & EVENTS PROGRAMME 2022

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## MEETINGS

**Scheduled 2022 in-person talks may be subject to changes in government restrictions. If so, these could be converted to Zoom.**

**We will notify you by email.**

**Non-members are welcome to all our meetings but are requested to donate £1 to help cover costs.**

*Tues 1 Mar* **Mother Magdalen Taylor: the work of the SMG Sisters in Streatham from 1888 to the present**

Talk by Paul Shaw at St Leonard's Church

*Tues 5 Apr* **Commonwealth War Graves Commission: its history and work**

7.30pm Talk by Julie Chandler at St Leonard's Church

*Tues 3 May* **Evacustes Phipson and his Croydon paintings**

7.30pm Talk by John Hickman and Carole Roberts

*Tues 7 June* **Annual General Meeting** at 6.30pm for members - followed by:

*Tues 7 June* **Streatham Ice Rink** (also for Wandsworth Heritage Festival)

7.30pm Talk by Saki Hajnal at St Leonard's Church

## EVENTS

*Sun 29 May* **Tours of the Grounds of Sir Henry Tate's House in Streatham**  
2pm & 3pm (also for Wandsworth Heritage Festival) Booking essential.

*28 May- 12 June* **Wandsworth Heritage Festival**

Theme: Education or Sports. See website for full programme.

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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.*

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## STREATHAM ROUND AND ABOUT

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### GOODBYE 2021

Below are photographs and reports recording some of the wealth of events in Streatham held from October after the last *Streatham Society News* was issued. (Unless otherwise stated all photos have been provided by MB or JH.)

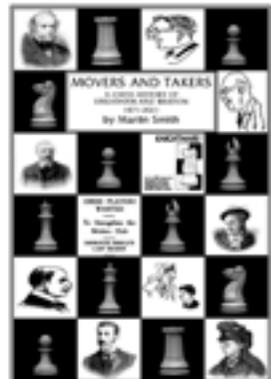
### THE STREATHAM & BRIXTON CHESS CLUB



The Streatham and Brixton Chess Club celebrated their 150th anniversary with a stall at the October Farmers' Market (*above*) held on the third Sunday of the month in the Rookery.

On November 2nd Martin Smith gave his talk *Movers and Takers - 150 years of the Streatham & Brixton Chess Club* to an appreciative audience at a Streatham Society meeting in St Leonard's Church. He launched and sold his new publication (*right*).

This was published for the occasion for the Streatham Society in association with the Streatham and Brixton Chess Club by John W Brown's Local History Publications. (*See page 30 to buy.*)



## OCTOBER'S STREATHAM FESTIVAL WITH STREATHAM ARTS



*Woodfield Arts Festival - Workshop outside the Woodfield Pavilion's exhibition*



*Art exhibition in Streatham Library  
Local scenes by  
Shelley-Marie Stone*

## TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE COMMUNITY GARDEN



Congratulations to all the hard working volunteer organisers and gardeners on making this one of Streatham's most successful projects. After an amazing ten years, when it was transformed from mainly overgrown wasteland, it is now an attractive mix of allotments and community projects.

It is well worth visiting - open to the public on Wednesdays and Sundays 11 - 3. Covid restricted and winter times may vary so please check with their website: [enquiries@streathamcommoncommunitygarden.org](mailto:enquiries@streathamcommoncommunitygarden.org)

## **VETERAN CAR RUN**

November 7th was the 125th Anniversary of Britain's longest-running motoring event. More than 300 late 19thC and early 20thC cars undertook the 60 miles from London to Brighton. One of the routes passed through Streatham.

It was good to see it back on course.



## **TREE ART - EXHIBITION IN THE WOODFIELD PAVILION**

In November I enjoyed visiting another of the Woodfield Pavilion's excellent art exhibitions. This beautifully refurbished community space serves Tooting Bec Common and surrounding areas.

Regular activities and occasional events for all ages are offered including art, crafts, yoga, exercise, drama, dance, music and various therapies - well-organised by a very energetic team. Pay them a visit!

The entrance is at 16a Abbotswood Road SW16. Check their website for details.



## ARMISTICE DAY SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE Sunday 14 November Streatham War Memorial - In Memory of Fallen Comrades

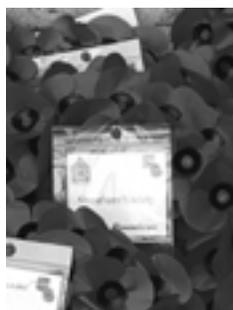


Organised by Roger Bowdery, the occasion was sponsored by AJEX/JMA with assistance and support from the Friends of Streatham Common and Bell Ribeiro-Addy MP along with other groups.

The Service and Prayers were led by the Rector of St Leonard's Church, Revd. Anna Norman-Walker.

Some fifty-six wreaths were laid by local churches, schools, charities, community groups and others.

A sizeable crowd gathered to pay their respects at this moving annual event.



*Photos l-r:*

- Roger Bowdery talking to Revd. Canon Anna Norman-Walker;
  - General view;
  - Civilian Memorial with Andrew Simpson, Shea Richardson (Society Chair) and Judy Harris;
  - Streatham Society's flowers;
  - Streatham Society's wreath.
- (Photos from Mark Bery, Daniel Fieller, Robert Doyle, RD and MB)*

## GRAVEYARD VANDALISM & CHRISTMAS JOY ON THE GLEBE



Before Christmas there was shocking overnight desecration of an ancient tomb in St Leonard's graveyard (*left*).

Happily the adjacent Glebe was tastefully transformed into a Christmas grotto to sell trees by the Pines & Needles Christmas Trees company . This was a haven off the adjacent busy road.

### CHRISTMAS EVENTS

Despite some restrictions there were an admirable number of events arranged as we returned to more normal activities. Although I don't book for any event, preferring a choice for last minute decisions, I still didn't manage to visit all on my list. Those I particularly enjoyed are below. It was a pleasure to observe the enthusiasm and effort involved to attract visitors again.

I was delighted to join a large audience in St Leonard's Church for Streatham Choral's *Gloria!* - their first concert in almost 2 years. St Peter's Church also resumed their most enjoyable lunchtime recitals.

The Lambeth Horticultural Society were able to hold their annual prize-giving and Christmas celebration in West Norwood's old library. The Telford Park Tennis Club held a craft fair with a variety of attractive stalls.

Streatham's Christmas market and tree lights switch-on attracted plenty of locals to Babington Square. The Friends of Streatham Common served their traditional mulled wine and mince pies before carol singing round the Christmas tree on the common. This was followed by their members' Christmas party in an outside covered area at The Bull.

The Rookery Christmas farmers' market rounded off my social whirl. John Brown sold his local history publications and advertised the Streatham Society from a bookstall at an excellent site at the entrance. **JH**

## FINAL 2021 CONGRATULATIONS...



... to the Rookery for again receiving a Lambeth Green Flag Award for a winning site (among other local awards). Also to the Friends of Streatham Hill Theatre for achieving Historic England Heritage At Risk listing - seen here with campaigners Floella Benjamin and Simon Callow.

## WELCOME 2022 - WASSAILING IN THE ROOKERY



On a bright January afternoon, with the Friends of Streatham Common and the Community Garden, we were entertained by folk songs in the orchard followed by Morris dancing outside the brewery in the community garden.

## TO GO OR NOT TO GO - AND WHERE TO GO? That is a problem...

Congratulations to the Streatham Society's secretary and social media operator, Mark Bery, and his wife Rabinder who have provided a facility for the large band of workmen digging up our roads who need public toilets. Nestled in their front garden for about 9 months, in a desirable residential area of Streatham, has been an unlocked port-a-loo. Builders working at their house installed this but because of Covid problems the work took much longer than expected.

Despite the considerable inconveniences of the building delays, the Berys allowed increasing visits to the loo as word of this facility spread around Streatham's workforce; some even parked outside, blocking their drive.

This is indeed true public-spiritedness. I hope their good reputation with neighbours was not affected if house prices fell as a result. Well done both!

There is increasing difficulty in finding public lavatories, particularly since the onset of Covid restrictions. I have followed with interest and despair the various campaigns to provide them.

There are problems with which I sympathise. The days of supervised conveniences seem to have gone because of the increasing expense and danger to employees. Following a campaign to re-open toilets in Leigham Court Road, I visited twice. Few would choose to enter this large, insecure space, blue-lit to deter drug use. You have to be desperate.



Around our area some facilities opened but soon closed, apparently because of vandalism and use by sex workers, drug users and rough sleepers. A few public toilets are open - but rely on the various local councils' cleaning rotas and are dark, often messy, with vandalised door locks and blocked drains.

Attempts to increase use in rented facilities also face the expense of more cleaning hours. Some users leave a mess and litter, even seen in those cleaned less than an hour previously - not helped by minute sheets of toilet paper unfit for purpose, which are easily scattered onto the floor from useless dispensers.

What is the answer? Large stores such as our Sainsbury's and Tesco are good - but Covid closures have occurred. Smaller stores have closed their café and their toilets. At least two chain coffee shops have installed door security codes to deter non-customers because of vandalism and extra cleaning. Two once offered public facilities but no longer publicise this.



*Bye-bye Port-a-loo!  
(Photos MB)*

Shouldn't large stores provide facilities whether or not there is a café? Public libraries, large health centres and similar venues with a steady footfall should also provide facilities. I occasionally use a pub but I need to know exactly where the toilets are situated first. Many women would not do this. Thus, especially since the pandemic, our movements are restricted. (Get it?!)

**JH**

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## LOCAL HISTORY MATTERS

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### THE TUNNELS OF MYSTERY



*Front of the Shrubbery house in the years prior to its demolition.  
Note the various additions to the original house.*

There is nothing more intriguing than a mystery, and nothing more evocative to the imagination than tales of a house with secret tunnels. Often rooted in local legends, secret tunnels can conjure thoughts of nefarious doings, hidden places and means of escape, and invariably offer ready material for those wishing to embroider or romanticise the past. Such may be the case with two particular houses that once stood in Streatham.

These old houses have a telling story of activity and change, with one going by the lacklustre name of ‘The Tile House’. This building sat with a cluster of low profile timber buildings that together constituted the old village of Leigham. Sitting back from the street and between the parish church of St. Leonard’s and Prentis Road lay the house, accompanied by the usual appurtenances associated with the production of roof tiles. Indeed, it would have been a busy scene of industrial activity with workshops, clay dumps, drying sheds and the smoking kilns.

The origins of this small industrial concern began in 1507 during the reign of Henry VII and under the watchful eye of the Holland family. After two hundred years or so the production of tiles ceased, mainly due to the difficulties in obtaining raw materials and to the growing wish to improve this part of central Streatham. With this change of fortune came the demolition of the ancient Tile House and the clearing of the premises of industrial activity during 1726 and 1727.

Not long after a new building appeared in its place, designed in the latest style as a spacious neo-classical villa which contrasted vividly with its medieval predecessor. This new build, later to be known as the 'Shrubbery', soon became noted for its fine interiors and its landscaped grounds which sloped gently down towards the wilds of Tooting Common.

The house was built by the charismatic Rev. James Tattersall and subsequently became the Streatham Rectory. After many years of being a family residence the house found a new use by becoming the home for the Streatham High School for Girls, who were to occupy the building until the early 1930s. Amid a lot of controversy the decision was taken to demolish the building that had become a picturesque old house, half hidden under a rambling spread of ivy. By 1935 the building had gone. Not only did Streatham see the loss of a prestigious old house but also a place that had spawned the mystery of the tunnels, and the curious tale of the hidden room.

Such is the folk law that clings to the Shrubbery house. But when we scratch the surface of these tales, we do find a kernel of truth about the tunnels and of that intriguing room. In essence these tales lay with the early writers of our local history who believed in error that the Shrubbery was a building of great age and entertained the idea that it may well have been an ancient manor house, due to its close proximity to the parish church. These views invariably enhanced the perceived antiquity of the building and gave some credence to the tales of tunnels and a hidden room.

Beginning with the story of the hidden room, this came to light when certain alterations were said to have been made to the Shrubbery building. During these activities it was recorded that *'a most singular small chamber was discovered'*. The access to this chamber was made through three false ceilings and apparently was well hidden within the structure of the house.

This hidden space was soon embroidered into history with links to the turbulent days following the English reformation and the persecution of Roman Catholics. This was a time when priests' holes were placed in many a grand house, small rooms or cavities to secure the safety of hunted individuals. If it had not been a priest hole, it was speculated the room was for the hiding of royalists during another period of our turbulent history, the English civil war, and when Streatham was apparently sympathetic towards the parliamentary cause.

These enticing tales of tunnels and a room appear to be rooted in the Tile House building, the predecessor of the Shrubbery House, and most likely stemmed from the muddling of local memories originating from the time when the Tile House was extant, or during its demolition. Perhaps by rumour they were transferred to the Shrubbery house as time moved on. Romanticised and no doubt enhanced by local hearsay, we read of the Shrubbery tunnels being described as those '*extraordinary secret passage ways*' which fanned out from the Shrubbery in three different directions.

Of these tunnels one is said to have made its way from the Shrubbery house to the graveyard of nearby St. Leonard's Church and to an unknown vault standing amid the many gravestones and monuments that fill the yard. A tunnel to a vault in a churchyard will of course evoke mystery, true or otherwise, and will inevitably feed an active and lucid imagination. Another tunnel was said to have run from the Shrubbery towards Wood Lodge, a building that stood on the corner of Tooting Bec Gardens and Garrad's Road. This prestigious property, which by 1904 had been demolished, marked the site of a much earlier building named The Nicholas.

This building is known from 1582 when it was built from the felling of some sixty mature elm trees which had been growing on nearby land locally known as St. Nicholas Corner, and so named after a statue in the Parish Church. But what encouraged the idea of a tunnel to this building is anyone's guess. Maybe it was a recollection of the old Elizabethan property which once stood there that justified the reason for the existence of a tunnel. However, the third tunnel from the Shrubbery brings us more interest, harbouring as it does a grain of truth, and leans upon the tale of the black monks and the lost Priory of Tooting Bec.

This story, which still attracts belief today, centres on Bedford Hill, Balham. Here, following the Norman Conquest, a band of black draped monks are by legend supposed to have established a small priory or '*alien monastery*' on land they had been given, and which was destroyed by fire due to the careless action of a monk. Although appearing as imaginative history it does however record a forgotten event. For indeed there was a band of monks who came to Streatham following the Conquest. These missionary monks were from the Benedictine Abbey of Bec in Normandy, France, and established themselves at Tooting Bec where they built a small chapel.

The memory of this event appears to have percolated down the ages and inflated on the way into a Priory. For reasons unknown, the location for this fictitious building was placed at Balham by the 18th century. This was echoed in the naming of a fine neo-Gothic villa called the 'The Priory', built at Bedford Hill in c1812 and noted for the mysterious death of Charles Bravo in 1876. It was towards this building that a tunnel was supposedly built from the Shrubbery house.

The source for these tales of underground tunnels and passages could well lay in the industrial process that took place at the Tile House during its long period of

activity. This would have seen the building of Tile-kilns which by their nature were constructed with arched firing-tunnels and firing holes. No doubt during the clearing of the site during the 1720s all the evidence and paraphernalia of tile making would have been cleared away, as the extensive grounds were prepared for landscaping into what became one of the finer gardens in Streatham. Buried and forgotten, the making of roof tiles in old Leigham village would have gradually faded from memory.

However, Tile-kilns may not be the sole answer, as there are other possibilities for their origins. For instance, we could be looking at lost cellars, a brick feature of many old houses and which often survive various rebuilds to a property. This may be basis for the report of a *'brickwork arch of a large drain'*, seen during the demolition of the Shrubbery building. The mixture of historic drainage work, the possibilities of barrel roofed cellars and the remnants of Tile-kilns found and associated with the Shrubbery site would need some explanation and what better way to feed the imagination than to conjure up tales of house with secret tunnels.

If there is to be one final fling of the imagination, one early Streatham historian made the suggestion that the tunnels were for the reception of smuggled goods – a wild suggestion maybe but seemingly not outlandish. The lesser known pages of history tell us of a pattern of tea smuggling that occurred during 18th century. Among the main routes the smugglers took from the South Coast was along the main southern roads that led into London and which passed through Streatham and Tooting, and also along the winding and secluded trackways of the Great North Wood. Their destination was Stockwell. Here, lying between the cottages of the village were the warehouses where the tea was stored and awaiting collection by tea merchants from the City of London.

This activity was widely known and supported and would have been a feature of local gossip and knowledge among the villagers of Streatham. They would have known of the twenty or more well armed tea smugglers who fought off Custom Officers on Clapham Common in 1743, whilst making their way to the warehouses at Stockwell. Also, of the confrontation at Tooting one Monday evening in January 1773, when Custom Officers confronted a gang of fourteen tea smugglers and a hard fight ensued with deaths and injuries.

Closer to home, in the woods by Streatham, a large and valuable quantity of lace and tea was discovered by Custom Officers one Saturday in October 1775, suggesting perhaps that some Streatham inhabitants had a predilection for smuggling!

Mystery tunnels or not, they do at least give our local history some texture and in their way are part of our local folk history. A plague pit at Streatham Green and a visit to Streatham by Saint Anselm are just some of the other tales from our distance past. Perhaps there is a grain of truth in these?

**Graham Gower**

## MARY LAW, VIOLINIST



*Mary Law*  
(by permission National Portrait Gallery)

The following account uncovers some of the history of the violinist, Mary Law (1888-1919), who, when not criss-crossing countries around the world giving concerts, lived at various addresses in Streatham. Mary's history is entwined with that of George H L Parsons (1867-1921), a chemist and highly successful businessman (also a Streatham resident) who, in one very important respect, acted as a major benefactor to Mary.

The third person to feature in the present account is the Italian violin maker, Antonio Stradivari (c.1650-1737) who lived and worked for the whole of his life in the town of Cremona in northern Italy. Some of Stradivari's instruments – violins, violas, and cellos – are today changing hands at prices which run into many millions of pounds.

Mary Law was born in 1888 at 103 Queens Road, Peckham. Her parents were Jane (*née* Margerison) and Edward Gibbon Law; Edward was a timber merchant. Their first-born child was a daughter, Elsie Kate, who is registered in the 1891 census as being four years of age; Mary (no other given names) is registered as a three year old.

The 1901 census shows a changed situation: the family is living at 19 Conyers Road in Streatham and the head of the family is now stated to be Jane Law, aged 42, 'kept by husband' (which suggests that Edward, for unknown reasons, had left the family home but was continuing to provide financial support for the remaining women). Elsie Kate and Mary are living at home.

How it was that Mary decided that she wanted to learn to play the violin, and how the expense of her lessons was covered, is unknown, but she must have made astonishing progress for she performed at London's Queen's Hall in 1900 (aged 12) and gave a recital at Bechstein Hall (later re-named as the Wigmore Hall) in 1912. By this time her teachers included Johannes Wolff and Max Mossel (in London) and Emile Sauret (in Chicago, USA).

On 4<sup>th</sup> April 1908 the *Norwood News* enthused over Mary's talent for playing the violin, and added:

‘In Streatham, where she resides, Miss Law’s musical prowess has already rendered her a popular exponent of high-class violin skill, and in May last we recorded the phenomenal success she gained at Mrs. T. A. Fryer’s concert in the Town Hall. So that, though the lady is only 18 years old, she is already a musician of whom greater triumphs may be confidently predicted.’

In September 1908 the *Norwood News* printed a lengthy article:

### **Miss Mary Law and Royalty**

‘Miss Law was the solo violinist at the first Sunday concert of the season at Queen’s Hall last week, where she had a great reception. But she is particularly delighted because quite recently she had the honour of playing at a private party before H.R.H. the Duchess of Albany, to whom, at the Duchess’s special request, she was afterwards presented. H.R.H. was very complimentary, and asked the hostess for another violin solo after the programme was finished.

‘Further, Miss Law tells me she is engaged later on in the year to play at Munich and Rotterdam, so that our young violinist is getting known and appreciated. It is always a great delight to follow the careers of young artistes who have made their start in life in our own neighbourhood, and amongst that number we all hope and expect that that of Miss Law’s will be a happy and fortunate one.’

The following year Mary performed for Queen Alexandra, an event that was reported by the *Norwood News* on 27<sup>th</sup> February 1909:

‘[...] On being presented to her Majesty, Miss Law was assured by the Queen that she had much enjoyed the fair violinist’s playing and begged Miss Law to play again. Afterwards, her Majesty graciously said Miss Law’s playing had so much “soul” in it that it made her “feel” the melody and the charm of it.’

In the 1911 census the address for the Law family has changed once again: 48 Streatham Hill. Mary’s name appears first on the census form, aged 23, single, her Personal Occupation defined as ‘Violinist’, her freelance status indicated as ‘Own Account’.

The *Surrey Advertiser* reported (14<sup>th</sup> February 1914) that Mary had performed at a Chamber of Trade dinner:

‘Miss Mary Law, a young violinist of considerable artistic ability, played with much success Hubay’s “Zephir” and Schubert’s “The Bee” (for which she was encored), Sarasate’s “Zigeunerweisen” and Kreisler’s “Caprice Viennois” and was subsequently presented with a lovely bouquet [...].’

In November 1914 the *Surrey Advertiser* announced Mary Law’s appearance at the Theatre Royal, Guildford: ‘the Celebrated Violinist, and her Genuine Strad.’ [‘and her genuine Antonio Stradivari violin’].

Mary’s theatre performances were spread across the whole of the United Kingdom, including locations as far apart as Portsmouth, Sheffield, Burton on Trent,

London, Mansfield, Plymouth, Liverpool, etc. Her agents publicised Mary's recent performance at the London Coliseum with review extracts culled from *The Times*, the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Sunday Times*, and *The Referee*.

To present-day eyes the reviews read as damning with faint praise but perhaps that is a 21<sup>st</sup>-century reaction to the language used:

'The programme included amongst its musicians Miss Mary Law, an effective and accomplished violinist.'

'[...] Miss Mary Law, a clever young violinist [...] her neat, tasteful and fluent playing proved thoroughly to the liking of [the] patrons.'

'[...] Miss Mary Law, a clever young violinist [...] her fluent and resourceful technique and musicianly interpretations gained warm favour.'

'Miss Mary Law, the young English violinist [...] scored a pronounced success.'

The marriage between Mary Law and Hugh Sewell Kingdon (1882-1940) took place on 24<sup>th</sup> July 1915 at St. Leonard's church in Streatham. Hugh Sewell is described as a 'business manager', Mary as a 'violinist' (and now residing at yet another address in Streatham: 13 Becmead Avenue).

Mary travelled to Australia in late 1915 for a concert tour; the *Melbourne Argus* newspaper printed this notice in their 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1915 issue:

'Just Arrived, Direct from London, Under Special Engagement, and First Appearance in Australia of Miss MARY LAW, The Notable English Violinist. Miss Law has been honoured with Royal Commands galore, and can claim the distinction of having played before most Members of the Royal Family.'

By mid-1916 Mary was back in London where her son, Hugh Gervase, was conceived.

Between 1913 and 1918 Mary recorded violin recitals on 78rpm discs for Zonophone, including two discs for the company's 'Celebrity' label. These recordings feature piano-and-violin arrangements of melodies from popular operas. In September 1917 His Master's Voice gramophone company advertised a new recording with Mary performing a *Moment musical* by Schubert, a *Mazurka* by Wieniawski, and the first movement of De Beriot's *Concerto*, Op. 76.

The 'Court Circular' of *The Times* newspaper for 1<sup>st</sup> April 1919 reported that 'Mrs. H. S. Kingdon (Miss Mary Law) is in a critical condition from pneumonia following influenza.' The newspaper's report was slightly behind reality in that Mary had died the previous day, 31<sup>st</sup> March. Her son, Hugh Gervase, aged 2 years and 9 months, died a few days later, on 6<sup>th</sup> April, of septic pneumonia.

A very brief obituary appeared in *The Musical Times*:

'MARY LAW, the violinist, who, while earning her chief successes in the music-halls, endeavoured to raise the taste of her audience to the level of good music.'

Since Mary died *intestate* Letters of Administration were issued to her husband, Hugh Sewell Kingdon, on 4<sup>th</sup> November 1919. Mary's probate document shows that the Gross Value of her Estate amounted to £2,440; the Net Value amounted to £1,275.

George Henry Lewis Parsons was born in 1867 into a wealthy and highly successful family of chemists and manufacturers of homeopathic medicines (Ashton & Parsons). At his death in January 1921 the Net Value of his estate amounted to £118,000. He and his family lived in Aldrington Road, Streatham Park, one mile from Mary Law's home on Streatham Hill.

In January 1910 G H L Parsons, evidently aware of the burgeoning national and international fame of his female neighbour, and wanting to help her, bought an Antonio Stradivari violin, label-dated '1692', and presented it to Mary, on loan for as long as she needed. Mary wrote to Mr Parsons:

'I do not know how to thank you enough for your great kindness but I hope you know how very grateful I am. I have had a new bridge fitted [to the violin] at Hills [London's premier violin dealers and restorers] and the violin sounds most beautiful now. I should like to bring it to you soon, so that you can hear it.'

In November 1916 Mary sat for four photographic portraits, made by Bassano Ltd., Royal Photographers, of Old Bond Street, London. The four portraits are now held at the National Portrait Gallery. In all four photographs Mary is shown holding a violin; given the date when the photographs were made it is assumed that the violin is the 1692 Stradivari which G H L Parsons had bought six years earlier and then loaned to Mary. Since the violin disappeared at an unknown point after 1921, and has never been seen again, these four photographs may well be the only surviving visual evidence for the existence of the instrument.

Notwithstanding Mary's gratitude to Mr Parsons, in or around 1918 she bought for herself another Stradivari violin, label-dated '1687', and Parsons' 1692 violin was placed on sale with a London dealer; unfortunately there was no-one who wanted to buy.

Following the death of G H L Parsons on 18<sup>th</sup> February 1921 his heirs sent the 1692 Stradivari violin for auction at Puttick & Simpson's rooms at Leicester Square, central London; the auction was scheduled for 14<sup>th</sup> July 1921.

The title page of the Puttick & Simpson auction catalogue announced the following:

**CATALOGUE** of VALUABLE Violins, Violas, Violoncellos & Bows  
INCLUDING A Violin by Antonius Stradivarius, 1692

The Property of the late G. H. L. Parsons, Esq., of Streatham Park  
[...]

*Which will be sold by Auction*

by Messrs. Puttick and Simpson, 47, Leicester Square, W. C. 2

On Thursday July 14<sup>th</sup>, 1921

AT TEN MINUTES PAST ONE O’CLOCK PRECISELY

Lot 142 was the final instrument to be auctioned and the details were presented on page 8 of the Catalogue:

THE PROPERTY OF THE LATE G. H. L. PARSONS, Esq., of Streatham Park.  
(By order of the Executors)

142 A VIOLIN, BY ANTONIUS STRADIVARIUS, CREMONA, 1692.

The back in two pieces of medium curl, the table of fine grain, in two pieces. Brown orange varnish and measures 13<sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in.

With Messrs. Hart & Son’s guarantee.

For various reasons no-one in the auction room bid for the violin despite the auctioneer starting the bidding at the rather low price of £500. In the face of this complete lack of interest Puttick & Simpson had no choice but to remove the violin from the auction and return it to the owners.

What happened to the violin after the auction is entirely unknown. Should anyone reading the present account have any information about the violin’s post-1921 journey this writer would be very pleased to hear from them.

As already indicated, everything that Mary Kingdon (Law) owned at the time of her death passed to her husband, Hugh Sewell Kingdon. It is all but certain that he sold Mary’s 1687 violin to an American dealer who, around 1920, was living in Hove, Sussex. The dealer took the violin back to the US where it passed through various hands; in 2020 it was loaned by a group of philanthropists to the 17-year-old violinist Yesong Sophie Lee.

**Nicholas Sackman**

*Nicholas Sackman writes:*

I am a retired university academic who, for about the past 10 years, have been researching the history of some very old, very rare, and very expensive violins; please see my website: [www.themessiahviolin.uk](http://www.themessiahviolin.uk)

Back in the spring of this year I began to research the history of an Antonio Stradivari violin that was used by the violinist Mary Law (who had a long association with the Streatham area). During my research I came across a page published by your Society on the centenary of Mary’s death.

Eight months later I have finally finished a substantial research article ‘John Lawson, Mary Law, George Parsons, and two Stradivari violins’ which is posted on my website and free-to-read by any one.

Perhaps some of your members might find my work of interest?

## **THE EARL OF STREATHAM - WILLIAM MILDIN KING OF THE JUNGLE**

We continue Thomas Llewellyn Jones' tale of the Earl of Streatham - William Mildin King - who ran away from home when he was 11 and obtained a berth as a cabin boy aboard the four-masted sailing vessel, Antilla, bound for African ports-of-call and the Cape of Good Hope.

Tragically, this vessel sank off the coast of French Equatorial Africa but, fortunately, the young William Mildin was washed ashore and was the only survivor of the sinking. There he was befriended by the apes and we continue here his account of his subsequent adventures.

"I was unusually strong and agile for my age," he wrote. "Without too much difficulty I gathered branches and saplings and managed to make myself a crude tree-house."

He also obtained a knife, spear and bow and arrows by raiding a native village about two or three miles inland. The possession of these crude weapons made him feel more safe and secure, he declares. And, credibly enough, they also served to give him new stature and even power among the apes. With these weapons he obtained food of his own choice, hunting by moonlight.

The boy never gave up hope of rescue. He went often to the beach and scanned the horizon for passing ships. He did this for nearly eight months, by his own reckoning, without result.

Then in 1869, as can be verified by checking detailed histories of Africa (that of Edwin Pearsall and Marion Donamy for one), the tribes of Western French Equatorial Africa began a three-year-long, savage war of annihilation against each other. The Jungle swarmed with blood hungry groups of warring natives.

"My ape 'friends' and I were forced to remain fugitives during that entire time," he writes. "I knew that I did not dare show myself in the jungle whenever any of the rampaging tribes were nearby. They would have killed me instantly."

He stayed with the apes. They accepted him and allowed him to live among them. No, William Mildin did not "learn the language of the apes" as did the fictional Tarzan several decades later in the books of Edgar Rice Burroughs. He did, however, manage to establish a primitive form of communication with the animals.

"After a time, I did pick up a number of basic, guttural sounds, which meant specific things to the great beasts. There was even one sound that I eventually learned was a call or signal especially for me. It can hardly be rendered in English, but the nearest rendition would be: "Okhugh". This was my signal - or, if you prefer, my 'name' among the apes.

The great apes marvelled at the way their human ward hunted, that he ate meat - and above all that he could build fires. These apparently supernatural, flickering

blazes they feared greatly at first, but then accepted and finally began to enjoy for their warmth.

“I built the fires with flint and steel I had stolen from a native village,” Lord William admits. “The brutes came to look upon me, not as a leader - for I could not match their feats of strength and endurance - but as a sort of mute but well-intentioned and helpful counsellor. I found new and easy ways to root under rotten logs for grubs and could dig for roots more easily with a sharp-tipped stick than they could with their anthropoid hands.

“When one of their number was injured - accidentally or in a quarrel, of which the apes had many - I would wash the wound and do what I could to ease the pain, using cool moss or some wet mud. The beasts were humbly, almost pathetically grateful for these services and would make happy sounds, point to me and dance up and down in approving joy.”

Bright, resourceful, industrious, William Mildin learned to make his own bows and arrows. Living in the open, with senses made keen by the purity of his natural life, he was able to pick up the faintest animal spoor and track his prey for miles through the jungle.

When the internecine conflict among the native tribes finally subsided in 1872, he was almost 15, a lean muscular youth who dressed himself in animal skins and roamed through the jungle as confidently as if he were strolling through Piccadilly.

“It was then that I entered a period during which I gave up all hope of rescue,” he relates. “I resigned myself to remaining in Africa. I had no way of knowing how, or where, I could go to make contact with white people. I was aware of the enormous size of the African continent and the vast distances involved. Truth to tell, I even exaggerated the distances in my mind so that I probably tripled or quadrupled them.”

In 1874, he encountered his first human being face-to-face in more than six years. He approached a native village with the intention of raiding it, but was surprised in the act by a group of warriors.

“To my astonishment, they were friendly and made me welcome,” Lord William wrote. “I stayed with them for that day and then went back to the jungle laden with gifts. I returned to the village about a month later and remained there for nearly five years.”

The story he tells is astonishing. He remained with the native tribe and lived as one of them, marrying, as was the custom of the tribe, five of their women and begetting children by four of them. “To my sorrow, the headman, N’dunda, informed me that my barren wife would have to be killed by the elders of the tribe, in accordance with the time-honoured tradition of their people,” Lord William reveals. The woman, he says, was speared to death as penalty for her sterility in a ritual murder.

“In the meantime, while I lived with the tribe, I often visited with the apes who had saved my life and befriended me. They often came close to the village and announced their presence by calling and bellowing. As soon as I knew the language of my adopted tribe well enough, I told the elders the entire story. They saw some supernatural significance in it and decreed that henceforth no member of the tribe could kill an ape, save in self-defence.”

In 1880, 12 years after the shipwreck, another internecine war began between the native tribes. William fought with “his” people and his nimble, European brain, invented tactics which enabled them to score decisive victories against their enemies. “I taught them how to make quiet, surprise attacks instead of rushing through the undergrowth announcing their onslaught by shouting and screaming,” he states. “I showed them how to feint and make diversionary attacks.”

He tired of the fighting, however. While accompanying the tribal warriors on a campaign several score miles to the north of the village, he decided to desert them. Soon thereafter, he made his way alone to a point some 250 miles further northeast. There he encountered a tribe which spoke a dialect somewhat similar to the one he had already learned. Inquiring if these natives had seen any other white people and receiving a negative reply, he decided to stay with them.

“It was a repetition of my former experience. This tribe, the Lunugalas, was even friendlier and more hospitable than the first one. I “married” again - but this time I had only two wives. In a year, both were pregnant.”

*To be continued...*

**John W Brown**

## **VILLAGE STREATHAM - CHURCH PLACE & WESTERN TERRACE**

We continue John Brown’s account of the small cluster of cottages by Immanuel Church, Streatham Common, known as Church Place and Western Terrace.

The Revd. Stenton Eardley was the first vicar of Immanuel Church, Streatham Common, and took up his appointment there in 1854. A keen worker for the temperance movement, it was his zeal that led to the building of the Beehive Coffee Tavern, next door to the Pied Bull, in the hope that men would prefer “the cup that cheers” to a pint of bitter. The Beehive survives today as a solicitor’s office, whilst people continue to quench their thirst at the Pied Bull as they have done for more than 250 years.



*Revd. Stenton Eardley*

Yvonne Watkins mentions in her article the old saddlers business which occupied Nos 1 and 2 Western Terrace (460 and 462 Streatham High Road). This was established by William Adams in 1883. At some time previously, the ground floor of the neighbouring cottage, at the end of the terrace, had been demolished to make an opening to the cobbled yard at the rear of the premises where Adams operated a livery stable.



*Beehive Coffee Tavern 1884*



*Adams Travel and Sports Goods Shop  
(Photo 1960s Graham Gower)*

This was known locally as “Donkey’s Alley” and suggests perhaps donkeys were also housed in the stables at the rear of the property.

After the First World War, William’s son, Charles, took over the saddle and harness making business which he diversified to include luggage and sporting equipment. The passageway leading to the stables was subsequently filled in and became a small shop at the end of the terrace.

I remember Adam’s shop and once again we are indebted to Graham Gower for taking a photograph of it in the 1960s before it was demolished.

In the early 1960s, when my two brothers and I started secondary school, our mother took us there to get our school briefcases. As my mother had to buy three, one for each of us, Mr Adams gave her a discount for making a bulk purchase!

Also seen in Graham’s picture is the York Tearooms, much loved and appreciated by Yvonne Watkins. As young children in the 1950s my brothers and I would often stare in through the small bay window to watch the diners there. As a family, we rarely visited such establishments as my parents seldom had money for such treats.

However, I remember one occasion, when we were with our aunt and cousin, we ventured inside and so small was the premises, I, my

two brothers, our sister, parents, our cousin and aunt, virtually completely filled the shop leaving little room for other patrons.

At 5 Western Terrace, later known as No. 468 Streatham High Road, John and Elizabeth Abbiss opened South Streatham's first sub-post office in the late 1850s. In the front of the shop they would sell newspapers, stationery and confectionery and at a special counter at the rear of the premises you were able to buy stamps and postal orders. Later, a public telephone was installed inside the shop from which members of the public could make calls.

Mary Abbiss, their daughter, served customers here for over 65 years until shortly before her death in January 1922 aged 71. Bertha Chittenden then took over the business and she published a set of six local postcard views for sale in the post office. Three of these showed the High Road by the common, one of which includes a view of her shop. The other three cards depicted scenes of the Rookery Gardens, which are a popular visitor attraction at the top of Streatham Common.

It was around 1850 that George Clowser moved into the house at the northern end of the terrace, next to Immanuel Church, from where he ran his building business. On taking up residence there he discovered an elderly gentleman lodging in the attic of the building. Locals knew little about the man except that he was a "stranger" and kept himself very much to himself. He rarely left the house and spent most of his time in his room.

When Mr Clowser met his lodger he found the hermit quite agitated and fearful of being evicted from his attic home. Being the kindly soul he was, George assured the elderly man that he would not disturb him and he could continue to live there for as long as he wished.

Some months later when speaking with the old man, Mr Clowser, who was born in Merton in 1812, mentioned how his father was one of the few people who saw



*York Cottage Tea Room  
(Photo GG)*



HIGH ROAD, STREATHAM COMMON, SHOWING EMMANUEL CHURCH.



One of the postcards published by Bertha Chittenden showing her shop at 468 Streatham High Road



*468 Streatham High Road*

Lord Nelson leave his villa in Merton to join the Victory at Portsmouth for his final mission.

Much to George's astonishment the old man told him that he had served with Nelson on the Victory and was in fact the seaman who had steered the ship during the Battle of Trafalgar. To

prove his point, he produced papers in his possession to affirm this which he showed Mr Clowser.

These documents were likely to be the Prize Money certificates which all sailors on the vessel received after the battle, detailing their share of the value of the captured French and Spanish ships.

Using the Muster Rolls of the Victory and various parish records I have tried to identify this seaman, alas without success. The 1851 census shows George and his family in residence at the property, but no one else is detailed in the house. I can therefore only presume the old helmsman had either died or by the time of the census had moved to other lodgings outside the parish.

Sadly Church Place and Western Terrace are no more. They were demolished in 1963 when P B Cows extended their factory complex and pulled down these

ancient, old cottages. P B Cows, in its turn, disappeared in the late 1980s when Sainsbury's acquired the site and erected a supermarket here which opened in 1989.

JWB

*Map of Church Place 1860s*



**STREATHAM POSTCARDS from the Frances Partridge Collection**  
**Streatham High Road looking north from the White Lion towards**  
**Streatham Library c1905**

This is a lovely old view of Streatham at a time when it was slowly being transformed from a small Surrey town into a bustling southern suburb of London. The White Lion public House on the left of this view was erected in 1895 by E Purchase and William Perham who took over the licence of the establishment in 1891.



Its size and elaborate design exhibits the confidence the late Victorians had in the future of the town which at that time was becoming a popular residential locality for the aspiring middle classes of the day. In the distance can be seen the newly built Streatham Library, which was opened here on 17th April 1891. The two parades of shops with accommodation above on the right formed part of the mid-Victorian development of Streatham. These buildings were subsequently demolished when this section of the High Road was redeveloped with modern shops with flats above in the opening decades of the 20th century when the town had become a fashionable local shopping centre.

JWB

# STREATHAM HOMEFINDER 1956



*Homefinder Magazine April 1956*

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**STREATHAM, S.W.16**

**Local Authority :** Wandsworth Borough Council.  
**Distance from London :** 6 miles.  
**Population :** About 70,000.  
**Subsoil :** Clay and gravel.  
**Rates in the £ :** 19s. 0d. **Water :** 9d per cent. per annum of rateable value.  
**Gas :** 3s. 10d. per therm.  
**Electricity :** 4s. 10d. rate 1d. per unit plus standing charge. Flat rate : 5d. per unit for lighting and 13d. for heating.  
**Transport Facilities :** Frequent trains to Victoria, London Bridge and Holborn. Quarterly season ticket to Victoria £5 2s. 0d. Numerous bus services to City and West End.

Streatham is a good class residential suburb in south-west London. It is considered an excellent shopping centre, and there are ample educational facilities to meet all needs. There are a variety of amenities for recreational and sporting activities including the ice rink and swimming baths as well as Streatham Hill Theatre and cinemas.

Although a built-up area, the Surrey Hills and countryside are easily reached.

**Estate Agents :**  
**CALLOW & CO., F.Y.A., 1, Leigham Court Road (facing Streatham Hill Station), S.W.16. Est. over a Century. Tel. : STR 9185-4.**

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“Streatham is a good class residential suburb in south-west London,” so begins an advertisement placed in the All England Homefinder magazine in April 1956. A copy of the magazine was recently discovered by Richard Holdaway in the attic of his home in Leigham Court Road, where it had remained hidden in the house since 1956 when Richard’s parents moved into the property later that year.

As to whether Richard’s father, the well-known local historian and Streatham Society Local History Group founder member, Keith Holdaway, had been swayed to move to our town by the advert remains unknown, but Keith’s enthusiasm for the area, and his extensive knowledge of the history of our part of south west London, was evident through the many walks, talks and exhibitions he arranged during the years of his residence here.

The advert was placed in the publication by Callow & Co., a long-established local estate agent whose offices stood opposite Streatham Hill Station at 1 Leigham Court Road.

We are grateful to Richard for allowing us to feature a copy of the advert here and, although Callow & Co. no longer have an office in the town, I am

sure any of the many other estate agents in Streatham will be pleased to highlight the numerous modern attractions of our suburb for those wishing to move into the area 65 years after the ad was placed.

**JWB**

## MEMORIES OF THE 1940 BLITZ

My brother and I are wondering whether you might be interested, on behalf of the Local History section of the Streatham Society, in seeing a diary account of the 1940 Blitz in Streatham which our father, Eric Scarre, wrote at the time and which we have recently transcribed from his notebooks into typescript.

It's a lively document, several thousand words in length, and it details the thoughts and experiences of a young man from the North-East (Darlington, to be precise) who lodged at Number 1 Brancaster Road (*right*) from the start of the war through to early 1941, from which he commuted every day to his work at a solicitor's office in the vicinity of Moor-gate. This is actually the first 'volume' of an extensive series of war diaries which follow his later war service in a number of countries, and while he wrote these initially for his own circle of family and friends, we think that in the course of 80 years they have acquired a certain amount of more general historical interest.



*1 Brancaster Road,  
Streatham (Photo JH)*

At any rate, if you think that they might be of some interest to present-day citizens of Streatham, we would be glad to send you a sample or more of the document so that you can judge for yourself whether it might be worth disseminating in some form to a wider audience. However, if you feel that there is already quite sufficient material of this kind in the archives, then please feel completely free to say so!

*(Edited, following my replies:)* I'll discuss with my brother the prospect of extracting or compiling a <2000 word section of my father's memoirs of wartime Streatham into something suitable for the newsletter. I can't quite promise that this will prove feasible, since the 'hard details' relating to Streatham are embedded in an account of personal responses to the bombing and of the psychological reactions of Londoners during the Blitz as my father saw them, the whole document, running to around 12,000 words approx. But we'll see what we can do, and bear in mind your deadlines for receiving material. It may be that we should consider making the whole document available online, instead or in addition. If my brother and I were to consider that option, how might that affect the idea of publishing an extract in the newsletter? *(Fine, good publicity. JH)*

It's a great thing that local history societies and individuals strive to keep the past alive. A community that has forgotten its own roots has at best an imperfect sense of its own identity.

**Geoffrey F Scarre**

*In addition to being published here, this has been passed to our archivist, John W Brown. Hopefully it will encourage a response. More memories please! JH*

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# STREATHAM SOCIETY REPORTS

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## MEMBERSHIP 2022

**New members:** We welcome Doug Dunn, Bill Boyd, Ros Sluman, Alison Gallant, Hetty Banks, Jan Kurus, Jo Cantell & household. We have received several subscriptions from lapsed members. We hope they enjoy their membership.

**Subscriptions** can be paid via our website or to me by post or at meetings.

**2022 subscription renewals:** By the end of 2021 I had already received a very pleasing higher than usual number subscriptions for 2022. However, about half our listed members have yet to pay.

I have received sad news of deaths and serious health problems resulting in loss of members. Please inform me if you know of others. It can be very distressing for relatives and friends if I continue sending requests for payment.

To receive our quarterly *Streatham Society News* uninterrupted, your subscription should be paid by March 31st 2022. Payment details are repeated below.

**2022 payments** last until December 31st 2022. Annual subscriptions remain unchanged at: Individual £10; Household £15. Life membership £180.

**Payment** via BACS is to The Streatham Society (business) account: Sort Code 30-84-68 a/c no 39526068. If you use BACS, please email me confirmation of your payment as I do not have immediate access to the Society's account.

Payment is also accepted by cash or cheque, payable to The Streatham Society, to me at meetings or posted to 125 Thornlaw Road, West Norwood SE27 0SQ.

If you prefer, or if your details have changed, our membership application form can be downloaded then posted or scanned to me.

**Gift Aid declaration:** Boost your subscription and any donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1. A form can be sent to you on application or is available on our website to email or post to our secretary.

**Your email address:** Please supply this for our contacts list as it is now our only method of communication, apart from our magazine. Your details are not passed on to any other group or individual without your permission, as stated on our privacy policy (see our website - <https://www.streathamsociety.org.uk>).

**Subscription acknowledgement:** Membership cards are no longer issued. Online payments will be acknowledged by email; in-person payments will have been recorded at meetings. I shall enclose a final reminder with the next (May) *News* issue. If you are still receiving copies after that - you've paid!

**Streatham Society News:** Our quarterly magazine is posted to your address, not emailed. Back copies are available on our website.

## **Life Membership**

Life membership for a couple at the same address is £180. Especially with Gift Aid, this is a very welcome source of income, particularly with our losses since March 2020 because of Covid restrictions.

We now have 33 Life Members, a good percentage of our membership. Particularly welcome to the list are our older members. They may not benefit financially but much will be a donation - with the added bonus of not having to remember to pay annually!

## **MEMBERS' CONTACTS LIST - Are you receiving our regular updates?**

Unless you object, your email address is added to this on joining or emailing the Society. It is a secure site. If you are not receiving regular updates, please contact our secretary Mark Bery with your current email address (contacts page 32).

Some people on our list are uncontactable. A few addresses 'bounce' back and one is blocked. I have tried to contact some of these members.

## **FACEBOOK AND SOCIAL MEDIA MEMBERS**

We now have over 2,700 members on our popular Facebook page. Many are also Society members and others have been attracted to pay their 2022 subscription to join us. Our Twitter (c.950 visitors) and Instagram (c.1,200 visitors) pages also attract pleasing numbers.

## **MEETINGS - NO MORE SIGNING IN!**

Our 'welcome desk' list is for recording in-person subscriptions and donations. We do not need a signing-in sheet. Previously at Woodlawns this was only for fire safety regulations. Churches don't need or want to monitor their visitors!

## **RECENT TALKS**

Our final two Zoom talks *The Regent's Canal* by Professor Lester Hillman on October 5th and *The Manor of Norbury* by Michael Gilbert on November 29th each attracted 31 and 40 visitors respectively.

Our meeting on November 2nd *Movers & Takers 150 years of the Streatham & Brixton Chess Club* by Martin Smith to launch his book (*see p.30*) at St Leonard's Church attracted c.40 members and visitors.

Our meeting on January 4th *David Jacobs: the Streatham connections of a popular TV presenter* by Mike Morfey also attracted an audience of c.40. This number was particularly pleasing as new distancing and mask wearing had just been advised. There is plenty of seating space in St Leonard's Church and distancing was easily observed without need to monitor.

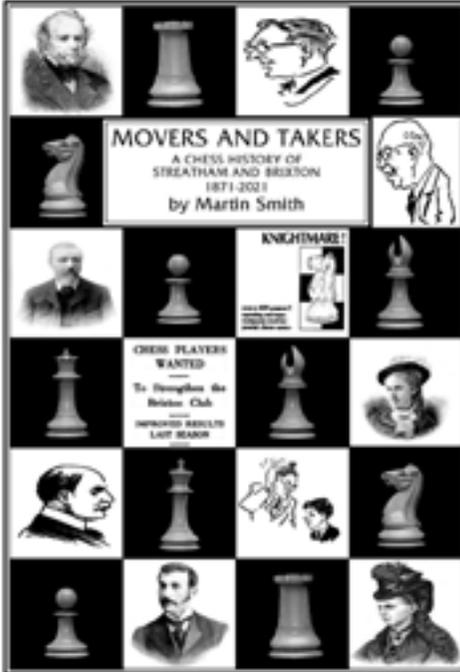
**Judy Harris**

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## NEW PUBLICATIONS

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### MOVERS AND TAKERS - A CHESS HISTORY OF STREATHAM AND BRIXTON 1871-2021 by Martin Smith



This excellent 116-page A4 book is packed with information and illustrations.

It begins with two separate Victorian clubs in north Brixton and Streatham amid an outburst of enthusiasm for chess in the expanding suburbs. The two clubs amalgamated halfway through the story.

With a background of influential national events and the changing face of our districts, *Movers and Takers* charts the victories, defeats and the characters who contributed to the clubs over a century and a half to the present day.

The Streatham and Brixton Chess Club remains in good health with over 60 active members today.

It has a very full programme of events with two or three matches most weeks during the league season and social chess all year round. They have several teams in the London Chess League, the Surrey Chess League and the Croydon & District Chess League.

Their local venue is Streatham Library where all, including young people, are welcome at their Tuesday sessions. Information is available on their website.

*Movers and Takers* costs £12.50 + £2.50 p&p. It can be ordered by emailing [SFChess@btinternet.com](mailto:SFChess@btinternet.com) - bank transfer is preferred and account details will be sent out on application. Please include your postal address with your order.

Congratulations to Martin Smith and all who have contributed to this book and the club's history.

## FINALLY - SIGNS OF THE TIME - LET'S END ON A LAUGH!

### Two more street signs:

The Norfolk House Road sign was posted on our Facebook page by Mark Bery with the caption:

“Oh Dear, Lambeth, really!!”

Observe the post code; Roupell Street SE1 in Waterloo is one of my favourite walking areas - some 25 minutes bus ride from Streatham.

The second sign was sent by Janet Smith from neighbouring Tooting - in Wandsworth.

Perhaps both boroughs need copies of an A - Z and a dictionary?



### Check your automatic spell-checker!

Sharp-eyed member James Gravell spotted this howler on-line recently.

His comment: “Is this how rumours start nowadays!”

I hope Nicola Sturgeon didn't spot it. It originally read Earl of Strathearn.

You can read about another Earl of Streatham on p.19.

We love it - more please.

Happy New Year!



Getty Images

3/9

In This Photo: [Prince William, Earl of Streatham](#)

Prince William, Earl of Streatham, Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland speaks during the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland 2021 on May 21, 2021 in Edinburgh, Scotland.

(May 21, 2021 - Source: Andrew O'Brien/Getty Images Europe)

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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**