

HISTORY & SOCIAL ACTION NEWS

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No.16 - 26 October 2009

CONTENTS: H&SA PDF Monographs; Highlighted Events; General Events; History Events; Short News; Shock at Armed Police Patrols in Lambeth; Trade Union News; Paul Robeson - Hero or Villain?

FEEDBACK: 'as usual this is a great resource'; 'So many lectures, so little free time'; 'can you add me to the newsletter circulation? It's awesomely well-informed!' Special thanks to several readers who responded to the Information requests on Prince of Wales Drive and other specific items.

HISTORY & SOCIAL ACTION PDF MONOGRAPHS by Sean Creighton

NEW:

- No. 10. Wandsworth & the Edwardian Roller-Skating Boom.** Extended version of talk at launch of Wandsworth Heritage Festival, 1 June 2009.
- No.9. Bloody Sunday** Extended version of talk at Archives for London Conference Revolting London, 3 October 2009.
- No.8. Battersea Friendly Societies.** Paper used for talk at Sheffield University's Centre for Research into Freemasonry seminar, December 2002.
- No.7. From Exclusion to Political Control. Radical and Working Class Organisation in Battersea 1830s-1918.** Revised talk at Public Record Office Conference "Voice of the Multitude", Radicalism and Unrest in Britain, 1790-1918. 1998.
- No.6. Black Emancipation and the Working Class. 1815-1838.** Talk at HistoryTalk July 2009.

Previous monographs:

- No.5. Sharing Knowledge.** This paper was prepared for use in connection with the Arts & Humanities Research Council event held in Birmingham on 5 May 2009, which I attended on behalf of Black & Asian Studies Association.
- No. 4 - Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens. Its Continuing Historical Influence.** This monograph started off as a review of the Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens Conference held in July 2008, and over the year has slowly expanded into a discussion on issues relating to the spread and management of pleasure gardens, their appeal, and their lasting legacy down to the modern day. It also attempts to integrate aspects of the black experience in Britain: Ignatius Sancho, Juba, William Wells Brown and the Fisk Jubilee Singers.
- No.3. John Archer and the Politics of Labour.** Talk at Belonging in Europe Conference organised by the Equiano Centre, Department of Geography, University College London, 8/9 November 2007
- No. 2. Black Abolitionists and the North East.** Talk at Liberating Sojourn 2 Conference, Liverpool University, 23-25 April 2009.
- No 1. Progressive Battersea: Radicalism and Socialism 1880-1914.** Basis of talk at West London Local History Conference, 21 May 2009.

To order: PDF Monographs will be emailed on receipt of £2 payable to 'Sean Creighton'. Orders for printed copies will be invoiced at cost of photocopying and postage. To order contact: sean.creighton@btopenworld.com. Cheques to Sean Creighton, 18 Ridge Rd, Mitcham, CR4 2ET.

HIGHLIGHTED EVENTS

27 October. 6.45-8.15pm. Here's One': Roland Hayes - first African-American classical tenor. American counter-tenor Michael Harper will discuss Hayes's career, recordings and place in musical history. British Library, Euston Rd. The son of former slaves, Roland Hayes (1887-1976) was the first African-American man to gain fame as a classical singer throughout the world. In 1917 after hiring Symphony Hall in Boston at his own expense Hayes went on to tour Europe many times and received a command performance from King George V and Queen Mary. To book go to: www.bl.uk/whatson/events/event95731.html.

28 October. 6-8pm. The unveiling of the 'lost' Dr. Harold Moody bronze portrait. Peckham Library, 122 Peckham Hill Street, London, SE15 Admission free. Further details contact 020 7525 0212. The event will celebrate the Peckham-based Dr. Harold Moody who was an ambassador for Britain's Black community in the 1930s and 1940s. **Stephen Bourne**, BASA member and author of *Dr. Harold Moody* (Southwark Council), will give a short speech.

29 October 3-6pm. A Social Approach to Politics: Aspects of Communism in Britain and India. Working Lives Research Institute/BASA Seminar. Marx Memorial Library. See flier reproduced on next page.

31 October. 1pm. Commemoration of Feargus O'Connor, Chartist Leader. Kensal Green Cemetery, Harrow Road, London W10. Speakers: at the graveside - **Stan Newens** (Chair, Labour Heritage); at the Dissenters' Chapel - 2pm onwards: Glen Benson (Friends of Kensal Green), **Malcolm Chase** (Professor of Social History, Leeds University), **Colin Prescod** (Chair, HistoryTalk), Shaun Cohen (History AGS), Jan Pollock (People's Charter) & **Sean Creighton** (Secretary, BASA) on William Cuffay.

10 November. 6.30-8.30pm. Samuel Coleridge-Taylor: The Neglected Superstar. Evening of music and words devoted to his life and work with contributions from pianist **Julian Joseph**, experimental violinist Adaggio, historian **Jeffery Green**, musicologist Dr John Snyder (University of Houston), author and historian **Mike Phillips** and more. British Library, Euston Rd. To book go to www.bl.uk/whatson/events/event95848.html.

11 November. 5pm. 'Accounting for Ghostly Presences: Caribbean Locale, Contemporary African Atlantic Artists and the Legacies of Slavery'. Caribbean Seminar series. Room L103, Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, Charles Clore House, 17 Russell Square, London, WC1 (corner of Russell Square and Bedford Way). **Alan Rice**, University of Central Lancashire. Alan will examine a range of contemporary African Atlantic artists whose work re-evaluates the history of slavery through dynamic artistic interventions.

12 November. 6pm.. Do You Hear the H-Bomb's Thunder?: the Start of the 'Sixties. **John Charlton.** Newcastle-upon-Tyne Literary & Philosophical Society lecture. 23 Westgate Rd, Newcastle, NE1. For details of John's book 'Do You Hear...' see www.merlinpress.co.uk.

24 November. 6pm. Early Islam in Britain. Steve Martin gives the Black & Asian Studies Marika Sherwood Lecture. Venue to be finalised. Email me for further details.

28 November. 11am-1pm. Society for the Study of Labour History Seminar. Peter Kirby on St Monday and the Miners, 1775-1884; and Keith Shaw & John Griffiths on De-Mystifying T. Dan Smith. Northumbria University, Lipman Building, Sandyford Rd, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The seminar is free and open to the public. It will be followed for SSLH members by the AGM.



B.A.S.A
THE BLACK AND ASIAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION

**The Working Lives Research Institute &
the Black and Asian Studies Association present:**

**A Social Approach to Politics:
Aspects of Communism in India and Britain**

Seminar by Dr Ritwika Biswas

(University of Calcutta's History Department)

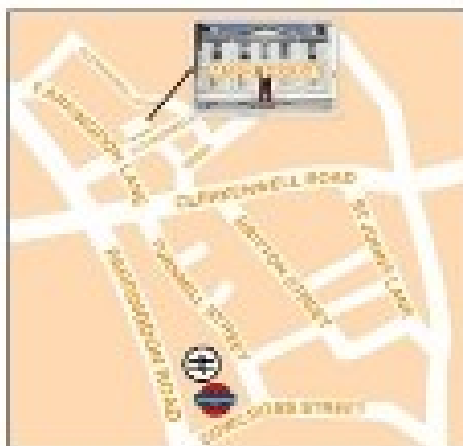
THURSDAY 29TH OCTOBER, 3-6 pm

MARX MEMORIAL LIBRARY,

CLERKENWELL GREEN, EC1R 0DU

The Working Lives Research Institute is hosting the visit of Dr Ritwika Biswas of the University of Calcutta's History Department while she is on a visit to original archive research supported by a Charles Wallace Fellowship for her work on the interaction between the British and Indian Communist Parties, 1920-60. Professor Mary Davis of WLRI is acting as Dr Biswas's academic host.

BASA's interest lies in the inter-action between the two Parties, which will form a major theme of discussion after Dr Biswas's talk. Please make every effort to attend and forward onto anyone you know will be interested.



There will be a short 20 minute tour of this fascinating Library, with its unique Labour Movement collections, at 3pm, before the seminar commences.

Access by public transport: Underground: Farringdon on Circle, Hammersmith & Metropolitan lines.
British Rail: Thameslink, Farringdon
Buses: 55, 63, 243, 259

Call for directions: Tel #44(0) 207 253 1485.

GENERAL EVENTSG

To 7 November. Tues-Sat. 8pm. Trotsky and Diego Riviera. Frida Kahlo Viva La Vida!. Play. Oval House Theatre, 52 - 54 Kennington Oval. For booking details of this and the rest of the current programme see www.ovalhouse.com.

5 November 9.30am-12.30pm. Policing the G20. MPA Civil Liberties Panel Open Meeting. Living Room, City Hall, The Queen's Walk, London, SE1. The MPA is keen to engage with as many individuals and groups as possible who would like to comment on the events which took place on 1/2 April 2009, particularly first hand accounts from those who were actually there. Themes: pre-event planning between organisers, the police, the public, the local businesses, and the media; policing on the day (various marches/demonstrations; and communications: prior to the event, during and afterwards from the public, police, organisers, media and local businesses perspective. If you would like to be involved, please contact PPO@mpa.gov.uk by 3 November. Written submissions (no more than 2 pages).

7 November. National Action Day against the BNP. Over 60 events taking place around the country. For details see <http://action.hopenothate.org.uk/november7th>.

9 November. 7.30pm. Support the Postal Workers. Battersea & Wandsworth TUC Public Meeting. Public and Commercial Services Union Head Quarters, Falcon Rd, Clapham Junction. www.bwtuc.org.uk. BWTUC also runs the Workers Beer Company, the Bread & Roses pub in Clapham Manor St and Ethical Threads - fair trade clothing. On 12 October it launched the Red/Green Alliance. www.bwtuc.org.uk. See also: www.greenpeace.org.uk/groups/south-west-london/event/building-red-green-alliance.

HISTORY EVENTS

IHR Seminars: unless otherwise indicated these take place at IHR, Senate House, Malet St/Russell Square, London, WC1.

28 October. 5pm. Slaveholders in Jamaica: Colonial Society and Culture during the Era of Abolition. Seminar & Book Launch. Christopher Petley, (Pickering and Chatto: 2009) Caribbean Seminar Series. The Court Room, Senate House, 1st floor.

29 October. 7.30-9.00pm. North East Muslims Life Stories Project. Nuns Moor Children's Centre, Studley Terrace, Arthur's Hill, Newcastle. Hengameh Emami, project worker with the Islamic Heritage Project will introduce the work of the project in collecting life stories from Muslim people living in the North East. Supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the project will gather testimonies from people about their childhood, work, lifestyle, education, family, traditions and culture. The results will be lodged with the Tyne and Wear Archives for the social and educational benefit of the whole community. There are also opportunities for people to become involved with the project as volunteers and be trained in how to undertake oral history alongside professional historians. The project is managed by the Pakistan Cultural society, one of the leading ethnic arts voluntary organisations in the North East, and the Hidden History event has been organised by the Workers' Educational Association (WEA). Free; All welcome. For more details contact WEA on northeast@wea.org.uk or 0191 212 6100

2 November. 10.30am-4.30pm. Symposium: Sources of Evidence for Garden History. £50/£40 Museum Friends & Birkbeck Students. Includes lunch. Joint event with Birkbeck College. For booking details see www.museumgardenhistory.org.

2 November. 5pm. The Abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade: Effects on the Indian Ocean. Shihan de Silva. IHR Imperial History Seminar.

2 November. 5.15pm. 'The first music-seller in the land': the professional street ballad singer in pre- and early-industrial society. Vic Gammon. IHR Music in Britain Seminar.

2 November. 7pm. Coin Street Chronicles. Launch of Gwen Southgate's memoir about growing up in 1930s and 1940s Coin St area, including wartime evacuation, and then escape from the culture of poverty. Waterloo Library. For more information contact Tim O'Dell on 020 7926 1105 or email to'dell@lambeth.gov.uk

4 November. 5.30pm. Uncle Tom on the ballet stage: Italy's Barbarous America, 1850-1900. Axel Komer. IHR Modern Italian History Seminar.

4 November. 6pm. 'Black GIs in Britain in the Second World War'. Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester. Showing of Documentary film, *Choc'late Soldiers from the USA* (2009). Commentary by Alan Rice (Reader in American Cultural Studies, University of Central Lancashire).

5 November. 5.30pm. Ceylon's 1848 Disturbances in Historical Perspective. Prof. Peter Peebles. IHR Comparative Histories of Asia Seminar. Room G37 South Block, Senate House.

6 November. 6 for 6.30pm. An Epic Journey from the Island of Spice. Readings by Maureen Roberts, Poet and Bernadine Evaristo, Author. London Lifeline Academy. 72, Uxbridge Road, Hanwell, W7 - nr. Golders Green.

9 November. 7.30pm. Tooting Local History Group meeting. The Sellkirk, 60 Selkirk Road, Tooting, SW17. Discussion: forthcoming history walks and history talks, conservation work with Wandsworth Borough Council, family and oral history work with Tooting Library, local churchyard projects, other activities. Quiz with prize - bring answers to the meeting:

1a) Which famous mariner is Selkirk Road named and 1b) what (if anything) is that mariner's connection with Tooting?

a) Which Prime Minister had an uncle in Tooting who ran a large brewery on the corner of Selkirk Road and Tooting High Street and 2b) where is that uncle buried?

3a) Shoe Zone, the shoe shop in Tooting High Street, faces Selkirk Road but how did it play a part in the naming of Selkirk Road and 3b) what is Shoe Zone's connection with Joshua Oldfield House in Mitcham Road.

9 November. 8pm. Channel Four. Not Forgotten - Soldiers on Empire. Channel Four film documentary by Wall on Wall Productions. It features Stanley Stair, the last living Jamaican soldier from the British West Indian Regiment (BWIR) in WWI, who died in May 2008 aged 107. (Thanks to Nola Stair, his granddaughter, for this information.)

14 November. 6.30pm. Not Forgotten – Soldiers on Empire. Channel Four repeat (see 9 November).

19 November. 5.30pm. The Tagores, Okakura and Pan-Asianism in Calcutta. Prof. Partha Mitta. IHR Comparative Histories of Asia Seminar. Room G37, South Block. Senate House.

23 November. Closing date for HLF Regional Committee nominations. See Short News items section below.

27 November. 6.30pm. Making the Human Gesture: History, Sexuality and Social Justice. Jeffrey Weeks. The Raphael Samuel Memorial Lecture 2009. Bishopsgate Institute (opposite Liverpool Street Station). Free, no booking required.

28/29 November. 10.30am-4pm. Generation to Generation. British Caribbean History & Culture Weekend. Victoria & Albert Museum. Very full programme see www.vam.ac.uk/activ_events/events/Black_Heritage_Season/index.html.

30 November. 5.15pm. Lidos and the Lido Movement in Twentieth-Century England. Helen Pussard. IHR Sport & Leisure Seminar.

30 November. 5pm. We Shall not be Free Until South Africa is Free! Black British Solidarity with the Anti-Apartheid Movement. Elizabeth M Williams. IHR Imperial History Seminar.

1 December. 5.30pm. Women don't count, don't count women: Suffrage, citizenship and the battle for the 1911 census. Jill Liddington. IHR Archives & Society Seminar.

2 December. 5.30pm. Naturalists in the metropolis: the quiet pursuits of London apothecaries. Valantina Pugliano. IHR Metropolitan History Seminar.

3 December. 5pm. The Bethnal Green tube disaster of 1943: censorship and commemoration. Simon Dettman. IHR British History 1815-1945 Seminar.

8 December. 5.30pm. Defining Identity and Community: Implications of Indigenous Missionaries in the Nineteenth-Century British Empire. Tolly Bradford. IHR Christian Missions in [Global History Seminar](#).

8 December. From Minster to Morley. Music, Musicians and Music Making in Southwark and Lambeth. Len Reilly, Archive Manager, Lambeth Council. Southwark & Lambeth Archaeological Society AGM & Presidential address. Light refreshments. £1 donation requested. The Housing Co-op Hall, 106 The Cut.

14 December. 5.15pm. Competing against Segregation: Sport and Leisure on a 'Problem' Council Estate in South East England since the 1930s. Mark Clapson. IHR Sport & Leisure History Seminar)

20 December. 2.30pm and 7pm. Crystal Clear. Music-making at the Crystal Palace featuring the life and work of Sir August Manns at Finchcocks, a living museum of historic keyboard instruments. Written and performed by **Leon Conrad** (as Manns), and Maureen Lyall as his daughter, with vocal music from Greg Tassell (prize-winning Tenor) and Gary Branch (historic keyboard instruments) and sing-along carols. Further details: www.finchcocks.co.uk. Tickets available in advance from 01580 211702 or on the day.

SHORT NEWS

FSRG Newsletter 17. The next issue of the PDF format newsletter of the Friendly Society Research Group compiled by Dan Weinbren and I will be available shortly; email me to be sent a copy.

International Newsletter of Communist Studies Online. Freely downloadable from www.mzes.uni-mannheim.de/projekte/incs/onlinenewsletter.html.

British Library British Fascism Bibliography. The British Library has recently produced this bibliography.

Anita Pollock's Book *Wreckers or Builders*. (see Issue 15). ISBN number 978-0-9556202-9-4. Order through Turpin Distribution 01767 604951. £20 including p&p.

Putney Society Local History Publication. The Putney Society has published a new edition of its book, *Putney and Roehampton: a Brief History*. The normal selling price is £9.95. For further details please contact sue.rolfe@fsmail.net .

Family History Monthly. December issue (price £3.75) will include 'My Search for Billy Brooks'. BASA member **Stephen Bourne** promised his adopted Aunt Esther that he would solve a family mystery that haunted her until her death in 1994: namely, what happened to her older, white half-brother Billy Brooks?

Beaumarchais. A new biography of Mozart's collaborator by Maurice Lever was published in May

(Farrar, Straus; 9780374113285).

John Francis Bray. Transatlantic Radical. Book by Jamie Bronstein published by Merlin Press in September. Bray was a radical, Chartist, writer, farmer and democrat: a man hailed in later life as the 'Benjamin Franklin' of American labour. Bronstein surveys Bray's experiences and ideas, and the impact he had in England and in the USA from the 1830's to 1897. See www.merlinpress.co.uk.

North East Labour History. The new issue of *North East History* (No. 40) contains articles about the 1972 C. A. Parsons dispute; rural employment 1950-2000; local government in the North East in the post-war years; seaside reminiscences; origins of Live Theatre; and General Elections in Durham 1885-1910. There are three poems by Keith Armstrong. Continuing coverage on slavery & abolition from the 2008 issue Ruth Blower contributes an article based on her undergraduate dissertation on anti-slavery in the North East 1787 to 1807 using local newspapers. In a review of **John Charlton's** *Hidden Chains*, Nick Howard's generous review highlights the importance of the 1807 'as the focus for the suppression of rival empires.' Bearing in mind John's book is the first serious attempt to analyse the slavery business in the North East, it is inevitable that Nick points out that there are 'areas of study into which the book does not reach', particularly 'the link from the profits of slavery to the exploitation of the mineral resources ... and subsequently to the growth of heavy industry, nor how much of the financial resources of the landowners accumulated through the trade went initially into canal building and subsequently into railways.' He points out that this investment could be in any part of the country not just the North East. For details of how to order *North East History* 40 see www.nelh.org. *Hidden Chains* and *North East History* 39 (with several articles on slavery & abolition, inc. mine on Black People in the North East) can be ordered through me.

North West Labour History. The new issue of the journal of the North West Labour History Group (No. 34) contains articles on William Cobbett and Henry Hunt, Catholic responses to the 1926 General Strike, the radical press in Salford, researching First World War working-class soldiers, a cultural history of the Voices magazine, and Philip Snowden's conversion to socialism in 1893. For further details see: www.workershistory.org. Or send cheque for £10 payable to 'North West Labour History Group'. for membership inc. journal to John B. Smethurst, Membership Secretary, NWLHG, c/o 81 Parrin Lane, Winton, Eccles, Manchester, M30 8AY.

The Left and Folk Music. The new issue of *History Workshop Journal* (Autumn 2009) contains a critical review by **Alun Howkins** of two books on the left and folk song: Ben Harker, *Class Act: the Cultural and Political Life of Ewan MacColl*, Pluto Press, 2007) and **Victor Gammon**, *Desire, Drink and Death in England: Folk and Vernacular Song, 1600-1900* (Ashgate, 2008). Gammon is giving an IHR seminar on 2 November.

Socialist History News. <http://socialisthistory.wordpress.com>. This socialist history blog is being put together by members of the Socialist History Society and the London Socialist Historians' Group as a message board for listings and information about forthcoming events, and as a forum where questions related to socialist history can be discussed. Comments and listings from its readers are positively welcomed.

The Milibands and the Recession - A Chance To Rethink. Merlin Press has republished David and Ed Miliband's father Ralph's books *Parliamentary Socialism* and *The State in Capitalist Society*. Time for us all to re-read? www.merlinpress.co.uk.

Quaker Library Newsletter. The fourth issue of the Newsletter of the Library of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) can be seen on www.quaker.org.uk/library-newsletter. This edition celebrates the opening of the Quaker Centre at Friends House and looks at the history of Quaker centres around the world. The new edition of Beck and Ball's 1869 *London Friends' Meetings* is welcomed. The Library's plans for online access to the manuscript, archive and photographic catalogues are revealed, and a look at the revamped Library website. BeFriend a Book and preservation news describes continuing improvements in the preservation of the collections and

recent conservation work.

London Buses. Further to the story in Issue 15 Ann has received the following further brilliant(!) response: 'No publicity to passengers was necessary as the changes to the designation of some stops does not require passengers to change the way they use buses. Passengers on the bus and wishing to alight should continue to use the bell to indicate this to the driver. Bus drivers have been instructed to serve a stop if passengers are waiting there since November 2008. The changes do not require passengers to use the bus network any differently, so no publicity is necessary.'

Why Not Join SSLH in 2010? 2010 is the 50th Anniversary of the Society for the Study of Labour History. In addition to the normal three issues of *Labour History Review*, members will receive a free copy of *Marking Labour History* a supplement tracing the development of labour history societies in Britain, Scotland, Ireland and Wales. (For non-members it will cost £10.) To take advantage of this offer you need to be a paid up member before 1 April. The subscription is £28: But if that is not enticement enough then members will also be receiving a free copy of *Histories of Labour: National and International Perspectives*. This will be published on 1 May 2010 by Merlin Press. Edited by Joan Allen, Alan Campbell and John McIlroy, it surveys the historiography of global labour. In addition to chapters on Britain, Ireland and the United States, there are chapters on Canada, Australia, Germany, India, and Japan. ISBN 978 0 85036 686 0 £50. Hbk. A paperback version will be published in Spring 2011 (£18.95). There will be a Conference 'Fifty Years of Labour History: Past Achievements, Future Prospects' on 15 May 2010 in the new People's History Museum in Manchester. To join SSLH subscriptions@maney.co.uk.

British Library. One of the comments I received on the story in Issue 15 about the changes of access to the British Library's newspaper collection at Colindale states: 'We've all got our annoyances with service policy and mine is that the Northern site is in Boston Spa, rather than in a more public transport-friendly place such as nearby York or Leeds. The good news regarding the closure of Colindale is that the magazines there will then all be accessible in St Pancras, whether they're stored there in the 'deepest hole in London' or sent down from Yorkshire when requested, like many of the books and journals are already. The downside of regional papers being only accessible in Boston Spa will just have to be endured.' The BL St Pancras site now has *The Guardian* and *Observer*, *The Scotsman*, *The Irish Times* (Dublin) and *The New York Times* in full-text electronic mode - runs extending back to first issues and are keyword searchable, like *The Times* has been for the past six years or so.'

HLF Looks For Regional Committee Members. The Heritage Lottery Fund has a £180 million a year to fund a wide range of projects supporting heritage, learning, conservation and participation. It is looking for people to join its Regional Committees in helping communities celebrate, look after and learn more about the UK's diverse heritage. The Committees make decisions on grants in the region, represent HLF at events and act as advocates for the value of heritage to modern life. HLF is looking to appoint a Chair and Member to each of its East of England, South East England, South West and West Midlands Committees, and Members to its North East and North West Committees. It welcomes interest from people with diverse backgrounds and experiences who can demonstrate they can apply their skills to, and have enthusiasm for, the roles. If you are interested and would like further information about the vacancies or how to apply, then please visit www.hlf.org.uk or contact it via decisionmakers@hlf.org.uk or 020 7591 6014. The closing date for applications is 23 November 2009 with the appointment starting on 1 April 2010.

History of Vauxhall. *Vauxhall: A Little History* by local resident, author and journalist Ross Davies is a new history being published by Nine Elms Press. Ross explains: "When I came to live in Vauxhall years ago, I looked for a book about here not only to read myself but to give to our children, and as a present to family, friends and visitors. I never did find such a book, so I wrote it myself.' His book covers the area from Blackfriars in the north to Brixton and Clapham in the south. 'What many of us here have in common today is that we came here knowing little about we live or work, and that's a shame because our local history is colourful and often turbulent.'

Ross has had books published on First World War poets. *Vauxhall* is being published by his imprint Nine Elms Press. £8.99 from nineelmspress@aol.com. For my Wandsworth readers this is not the Nine Elms Press that was run by former Wandsworth Librarian and Putney resident **Harold Smith** who spent several of his final years supporting Marx Memorial Library.

Cardiff TV Company Seeks Help. The Indus TV company based in Cardiff is making a new series for BBC2 called *Snowdonia Farmhouse*. The series is a follow up to BBC living history series, *The Coal House* (BBC4) and *The Coal House at War* (currently being repeated on BBC2). Between mid-March and Mid-April it will be filming 2 families trying to live and work a smallholding of the 1890s in North Wales. The families will live in tyddens near Rhosgadfan. The women will run the cottage, looking after the animals and tending the land, whilst the men and boys work in a local slate quarry. Indus is looking for anyone who is an expert in the farming methods of the 1890s to get in touch, who can train our families, show them the tools and the working practices of running a farm in North Wales in the late Victorian era. This is a very hands on role and would involve being on camera teaching the families. It is also looking for family stories of living in North Wales in the 1890s, from **Friendly Societies** to working the quarries, living as hillside farmers or playing in brass bands. If you can help or know anyone who can please contact Vikki Rogers on 02920 022617.

The Invisible Empire. White Discourse, Tolerance and Belonging. This new book by Georgie Wemyss of Goldsmiths, University of London offers an anthropological account of the cultural hegemony of the West through investigations of the central and pivotal constituent of the dominant white discourse of Britishness - the Invisible Empire. She demonstrates how the repetitive burying of British Empire histories of violence in the retelling of Britain's past works to disguise how power operates in the present, showing how other related elements have been substantially reproduced through time to accommodate the challenges of history. The book combines ethnographic and discourse analysis with the study of connected histories to reveal how the dominant discourse maintains its dominance through its flexibility and its strategic alliances with subordinate groups. It has a particular focus on London's East End with chapters: 'Terra nullius to the shrouding of Milligan: White histories on the Isle of Dogs'; 'Competing colonial anniversaries in 'postcolonial' Blackwall: White memories, White belonging.'; 'Subjects of the invisible empire: 'outside extremists', 'White East Enders', 'passive Bengalis'; 'The East End' marketing strategy and the consolidation of the White East End'; 'Tolerance, the invisible empire and the hierarchy of belonging 'Lascars', colonial genealogies and exclusionary categories'; and 'Conclusion: exposing the invisible empire: towards commonality and metropolitan belonging'. Publication: December. Hardback. ISBN 978-0-7546-7347-7. £55. (Ebook: £44 978-0-7546-9154-9). For further details see www.ashgate.com. There is a discount on online orders.

SHOCK AT ARMED POLICE PATROLS IN LAMBETH

I am pleased that my former employer the Community/Police Consultative Group for Lambeth acted quickly to express concern about the introduction of armed police patrols. Its press release states:

'Lambeth's Community-Police Consultative Group reacted with alarm to proposals for armed police to become a regular feature on Lambeth's streets. Chair Anna Tapsell said "Of course we must all be concerned about the levels of gun crime in our borough and across London generally and support initiatives which have a demonstrable chance of tackling the menace. But, given the nature of these shootings, it is hard to see how the presence of some armed police on the streets will achieve that. Meanwhile, we expect such a presence will only move us further away from the sort of community policing which people in the borough have been working for over the past 25 years and heightens the risk of tragic, unintended consequences"

She went on 'It is of particular concern that the first the people of Lambeth heard of this was when we picked it up on the newswires earlier today and then subsequently on the broadcast news. From reports, it appears that even the Metropolitan Police Authority and the Mayor of

London had been kept in the dark over this”

CPCG is urgently seeking a justification of the tactic from the borough commander Chief Supt Nick Ephgrave as well as an explanation of why he chose not to raise the issue at the Group’s last public meeting with him and his superior, Commander David Zinzan, at the West Norwood Old Library just two weeks ago. Ms Tapsell added “We will also be asking our local democratic representatives and the Safer Lambeth Partnership if they were also left unaware of these developments”.’

CPCG for Lambeth. admin@lambethcpcg.org.uk. 020 7733 0878. www.lambethcpcg.org.uk.

TRADE UNION NEWS

The LabourStart website provides a trade union perspective on what is happening around the world. Recent postings include:

- coverage of the British postal workers industrial action
- Nestle’s refusal to discuss wages with the union representing its workers in Indonesia, because they are a commercial secret
- the General Federation of Iraqi Workers seeking world wide support to prevent the Iraqi government attempting to wrest control of the unions.
- the action by the Mexican Government using thousands of Federal Police to seize control of hundreds of installations of the state-owned Central Light and Power Company which supplies electricity to Mexico City and several neighbouring states, and the announcement that the company was being liquidated and the 40,000 unionized workers dismissed.
- 35 years ago the 28 year old American trade unionist Karen Silkwood was murdered because of her campaigning on health and safety issues at the plutonium processing plant where she worked. The book *The Killing of Karen Silkwood* can be ordered through LabourStart.

www.labourstart.org.

PAUL ROBESON - HERO OR VILLAIN?

An American blog attacked my essay on Paul Robeson in the UK in the book *Cross-the Water Blues* as being a hagiography, and attacked Robeson for his uncritical support for the Soviet Union. One of my readers shares that perspective saying the following:

‘I like seeing how the left wing refuses to move in the light of fresh discoveries and still adulates Robeson. His blindness when in Kolyma was second only to Roosevelt’s VP but how an intelligent and caring man could remain fond of Stalin is a serious question. I had the privilege of meeting a doctor who had worked as a medical assistant on Martin Luther King’s freedom marches, and he and friends admired Robeson because of his peace advocacy. They were unhappy with the blind adulation of Stalin - of course Robeson was by far from being the only one. When I found a copy (14th edition or so) of the book *Sanders of the River* I saw that the Bosambo role was obviously a stooge - even the bloody name gave a clue. Robeson was a trained lawyer. One over serious film critic said of the film that *Nine Mae McKinney* couldn’t act....she was in fact parodying the cliches for she was a very experienced actress and singer.

But there we are, some people still admire M Thatcher, Cecil Rhodes, and General Reginald Dyer of Amritsar.

I pointed out that everyone has their faults, which is why I believe in biographies warts and all. You can recognise achievements, flaws and blind-spots all at the same time. I doubt there is anyone who has not been flawed to the extent that some people will have no time for them. Robeson’s blind spot for Stalin was shared by millions of people all over the world. His faults by no means add up to the scale of damage undertaken by Thatcher, Dyer and Rhodes. So on the balance sheet of positive/negative contribution he is due more respect and celebration than

others. And some of his songs still move and inspire people.

My friend has pointed out that Franklin Roosevelt's Vice- President Henry Wallace 'swallowed the Soviet line in the late 1930s' as did 'the dreadful US ambassador who refused to consider helping the hundreds and hundreds of US citizens who migrated to the USSR in the 1930s escaping the depression in the USA, wanting to participate in the Soviet achievement, and who also manned the US vehicle and equipment factories for the Soviets. Their story is a sad one.'

Andy, another reader, did not understand the cryptic note about Churchill in Issue 15 so I wrote back to explain that it was a little comment that the Tory wish to bring him back into the National Curriculum should include warts and all. I had cited items of public hostility towards Churchill which had recently been provided to me. Citing my response re-Paul Robeson above, I said that I was continually having to argue that everyone is flawed; remembrance of them must be warts and all. Andy replied:

'Robeson was made into such a sad man. I've never really understood what the Right's anti-Communist (and Left) hysteria was all about in the 1950s. A mate's father lost his job in a Zenith radio factory, so far removed from being a wicked school teacher that he couldn't have infected young minds. This was America's prosperous period, when everyone could buy a car (and stay broke) and a tv. The one time the CP had a shot at American influence was in the 1930s and it didn't happen. So for Paul Robeson to be hounded until he died was so unfortunate. It's not as if he was ever going to be as popular again as he had been in the 1930s, but to prevent him from comparatively tiny gigs Stateside was cruel. I hear he was almost mad at the end.'

What do you think? And is interest waning in Robeson? The V&A evening about him on 6 November has been cancelled due to lack of bookings; or does the V&A need to re-think its publicity?