

## HISTORY & SOCIAL ACTION NEWS

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**Feedback:** 'They are very interesting but they are coming at a rate faster than I can keep up with!!! .... just slow down a bit....!'; 'I print it off and read it on the Underground.'

### CONTENTS

Page	
1	May Day Marches and Rallies
2	My Talks & History Activities in June Events
4	Linton Campaigns Against High Buildings
5	Wine Tastings in the North East Wandsworth Heritage Festival June
8	Miscellaneous: Black Abolitionists in the North East; Richard Bradbury's <i>Riversmeet</i> ; <i>Call Mr. Robeson</i> . A life, with songs; Asset Transfer in Lambeth; People's History Museum; Caroline Martyn's Grave In Dundee; The Quakers and Darwin; Some Times Planning Lobbying Works!; The Alton Estate Heritage Project; <i>Wandsworth Historian</i> ; Frederick Engels; The Future of Bancroft Library.
9	A Decade of Civil Society under New Labour
10	Calls for History Conference Papers: Transatlantic Routes of American Roots Music; Public History; European Expansion and Colonial Interaction
11	Slavery and the English Country House

### MAY DAY MARCHES AND RALLIES

The Annual labour movement May Day March and Rally in London was started in 1890 to campaign for the 8-hour day. A leading influence in ensuring it took place was Tom Mann. This year a major theme is defending public services with marches and rallies including:

**Brighton.** 1 May. 12 noon. Library Square, Sussex University.  
[www.brightonactivist.net/node/254](http://www.brightonactivist.net/node/254)

**Chesterfield.** 4 May. 10am from Town Hall to Market Place for rally.

**Edinburgh.** 2 May. 11.30am. Market St. With Che Guevara's daughter attending.

**Glasgow.** 11am. George Square. March through City Centre to Old Fruitmarket on Albion St.

**Leeds.** 2 May. 11.30am. Art Gallery to march round city centre.

**London.** 1 May. 12 noon. Clerkenwell Green; march to Trafalgar Square. It will highlight the Communication Workers campaign 'Keep Royal Mail Public'. See:  
[www.londonmayday.org/docs/MayDayA4flyer2009.ppdf](http://www.londonmayday.org/docs/MayDayA4flyer2009.ppdf)

**Mersyside:** 2 May. 12 noon. Seacombe Ferry, Wirral marching to Central Park Wallasey.

**Newcastle.** 2 May. 11.30am. Centre for Life.

**Oxford.** 2 May. 1-3pm. Benn Square.

**Wrexham.** 2 May. 12 noon. Queens Square.

## MY TALKS AND HISTORY ACTIVITIES IN JUNE

June is a busy month for me with talks and walks in the Wandsworth Heritage Festival - see page 5. I would appreciate it if those of you who live and/or work in, or are former residents of, Wandsworth and the Clapham and Streatham Districts of Lambeth which were in Wandsworth up to the mid-1960s, would promote the Festival and particularly the events I am involved in among their friends and networks in the area or those who have moved away. Events I am involved in are highlighted in yellow, as do some talks in the Events section that I will be doing in July and October. Thank you.

### EVENTS

**to 3 May. Fri, Sat, Sun. 2-6pm. Last Chance to see Faye Claridge's Exhibition Descendants of the Unfamiliar** at Danielle Arnaud Contemporary Art, 123 Kennington Rd, London, SE11.  
[www.daniellearnaud.com](http://www.daniellearnaud.com).

**to 5 July. 12-4pm daily. Home Truths.** Exhibition about 250 years of Harewood House, Leeds.  
[www.harewood.org/cgi/events/events.cgi?t=template.htm&a=492](http://www.harewood.org/cgi/events/events.cgi?t=template.htm&a=492). Artists include Sarah Woodfine. Sarah has exhibited many times at Danielle Arnaud Contemporary Art and run workshops as part of school and community activities in Kennington. The website also includes details of the 2007 Abolition of Slavery Commemoration exhibition that was put on at the House.

**1 May, 9pm; 2 May, 1.10pm; 4 May, 10.30pm . Blues Britannia. BBC Four.** Three part documentary on the influence of American blues music in 1950s and 60s Britain.  
[www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00kc752](http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00kc752).

**2 May. Peter Seeger at 90.** 8pm. BBC Radio 4. Tribute to the American radical activist folk singer. [www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/proginform/radio/2009/wk18/sat.shtml#sat\\_archivehour](http://www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/proginform/radio/2009/wk18/sat.shtml#sat_archivehour).

**3 May. 11am. Tootling in Tooting.** History Walk led by Rex Osborn, with the option of lunch afterwards at *Limoncello* at £10 a head (starter + pizza or pasta - drinks extra). Meet: Tooting Broadway Tube Station. To book lunch contact Janet Smith (Wandsworth Historical Association) on 020 8767 4331 or [janet@tootlinglido.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:janet@tootlinglido.fsnet.co.uk).

**3 May. 2pm. Bob & Roberta's Apathetic Afternoon,** with Wayne Winner and friends. For more information: [info@beaconsfield.ltd.uk](mailto:info@beaconsfield.ltd.uk) or on 020 7582 6465. Bob and Roberta Smith's residency Factory Outlet: This Artist is Deeply Dangerous ends on 31 May. Beaconsfield, 22 Newport Street, Vauxhall, London, SE11 6AY. 020 7582 6465. [www.beaconsfield.ltd.uk](http://www.beaconsfield.ltd.uk)

**8 May. 8pm. Slavery & Abolition in the North East.** John Charlton talks to Redesdale Local History Society. Westbourne Village.

**8 May. 7pm. 'A Charmed Life'.** Film showing with introduction by Patrick Vernon. Nettlefold Hall, West Norwood Library. For details of this film see 12 June event in Wandsworth Heritage Festival programme below.

**11 May. 7pm. Vauxhall - A Little History.** Talk by Ross Davies. South Lambeth Library, South Lambeth Rd. Ross's book *Vauxhall: A Little History* (The Nine Elms Press) will be published shortly. His talk will also include details the Second World War poet Drummond Allison who wrote the cricket poem *The Oval*. The talk is part of May's Lambeth Readers and Writers Festival. Admission is free, but booking is recommended: [readersandwriters@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:readersandwriters@lambeth.gov.uk); 020 7926 0705. Full Festival programme on

[www.lambeth.gov.uk/Services/LeisureCulture/Libraries/ReadersWritersFestival.htm](http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/Services/LeisureCulture/Libraries/ReadersWritersFestival.htm)

**13 May. 6pm. Dispersed or destroyed: archives, the West Indian Students' Union and public memory.** David Clover, Librarian, Institute of Commonwealth Studies. Stewart House, 31 Russell Square, London. WC1. ICS Black History Seminar.

**15 May - 1 June. Fri, Sat, Sun 2-6pm. Laid together on the lookout.** Exhibition by Charbel Ackermann, Jonathan Harker & Beltrain Obregon. Danielle Arnaud Contemporary Art, 123 Kennington Rd, London, SE11.

**16 May. Kelso Cochrane Memorial event.** (see Newsletter 6). Camden Trades Council has now agreed to be an additional sponsor, and Black & Asian Studies Association is donating £100.

**19 May. 5-7pm. Book Launch: George Padmore: Pan-African Revolutionary,** edited by Fitzroy Baptiste and Rupert Lewis. Round-table discussion with two of the contributors, Hakim Adi and Marika Sherwood, and two PhD students, Christian Hogsbjerg and Leslie James. Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 28 Russell Square, London WC1. Hakim and Marika are members of the BASA Committee.

**26 May. 7pm. Gillian Slovo In Conversation - Black Orchids. West Norwood Library. Norwood High St, SE27.** Novelist Gillian Slovo was born in South Africa, the daughter of Joe Slovo, leader of the South African Communist party, and Ruth First, a journalist who was murdered in 1982. She has lived and worked in England since 1964. Her writings deal with the evils of Apartheid South Africa, injustice and inhumanity. Her latest novel *Black Orchid* is a story about the search to feel at home in your own skin. Part of Lambeth Writers and Readers Festival - see 11 May above.

**30 May. 2pm. Spanish Civil War Commemoration.** Dedication of memorial plaque to the anti-fascist British and Irish volunteers who fought in the Independent Labour Party contingent of the International Brigade, and launch of the book *Not just Orwell: the Independent Labour Party volunteers and the Spanish Civil War* by Christopher Hall. Working Class Movement Library, 51 The Crescent, Salford. For further information, please contact Chris Hall, christoff\_hall@yahoo.co.uk

**June. Wandsworth Heritage Festival Events.** See below.

**6-7 June. Wandle Festival.** Celebrating the River Wandle through Wandsworth, Merton and Croydon. For details see: [www.wandlevalleyfestival.org.uk](http://www.wandlevalleyfestival.org.uk). Clashes with some events in Wandsworth Heritage Festival.

**17 June. Africa and the Moving Image: the Role of Libraries and Archives.** SCOLMA, the UK Libraries and Archives Group on Africa, 2009 Annual Conference. Newnham College, Sidgwick Avenue, Cambridge, CB3 9DF. Further details on [www.lse.ac.uk/library/scolma/conference.htm](http://www.lse.ac.uk/library/scolma/conference.htm).

**2 June. 5.15pm. Public Parks. IHR Seminar. Senate House, Malet St, London, WC1.**

**11 June. 6pm. John Tradescant Walk** from South Lambeth Library to Garden Museum. Led by Jon Newman (Lambeth Archives). Jon's excellent printed map guide published by Parabola Trust and RCDT is available from me: £3 plus 30p postage.

**22-25 June. Britain and the Cold War.** CCBH Summer Conference 2009. Institute of Historical Research. Programme includes: Peter Hennessy lecture on 'Inescapable, necessary and lunatic':

Whitehall's transition-to-war planning for World War III' on 23 June; and witness seminar on 'British Bomber Command & the 1962 Cuban missile crisis'. Further details on [www.ccbh.ac.uk/news\\_frame.php?article\\_id=432](http://www.ccbh.ac.uk/news_frame.php?article_id=432)

**26 June - 26 July. Fri, Sat, Sun 2-6pm. Multiverse.** Exhibition by Jemima & Dolly Brown, Ole Hagen, Alicia Paz, and Plastique Fantastique. Danielle Arnaud Contemporary Art, 123 Kennington Rd, London, SE11. [www.daniellearnaud.com](http://www.daniellearnaud.com).

**7 July. 6pm. Vauxhall Creative Industries.** Walk led by me. Meet outside Royal Vauxhall Tavern, Kennington Lane, opp. Back exit Vauxhall Station.

**13 July. 6.30pm. Politics 1815-1838.** Sean Creighton 'Black Emancipation and the Working Class'; and Tom Vaughn on 'Whigs and Slavery'. Part of series of talks organised by HistoryWalks (Kensington & Chelsea Community History Group), 240 Lancaster Road, London W1. 020 7792 2282. [www.historytalk.org](http://www.historytalk.org)

**3 October. Revolting London: rebels, rogues and revolutions.** Archives for London Conference. London Metropolitan Archives. Confirmed speakers include: David Sutton on the Spa Fields and other early nineteenth century agitation; Sean Creighton on Bloody Sunday and its connection with John Burns; Teresa Doherty on suffragettes with information about available resources at the Women's Library and elsewhere; David Rosenberg on the battle of Cable Street in London's East End. [www.archivesforlondon.org](http://www.archivesforlondon.org).

**21 November. Slavery and the English Country House: Mapping Current Research Conference.** See below.

## LINTON CAMPAIGNS AGAINST HIGH BUILDINGS

I am delighted to be able to report that Martin Linton, Battersea's MP, has started to campaign against high-rise buildings. There are numerous developers schemes to build tower blocks from 24 to 50 plus stories along the Thames and elsewhere in London. Most of the ones that already exist have absolutely no artistic merit. They block off the Thames from its hinterland and inadequate riverside walkways and open space areas are provided. The setting of the 18thC Church of St Mary's Battersea, has been absolutely ruined by the Montevetro Tower that looms around and behind it. Local amenity and other groups have battled against some of the planned schemes, and usually lost. Some have reconciled themselves to it being pointless to oppose, in the hope that the local authority can negotiate a decent sum of Section 106 money from the developers. Ken Livingstone encouraged building high - the same solution advocated by *The Times* Editor when he opened a sub-standard block for the working class in Battersea in the 1870s. Boris Johnson promised that he would oppose high rise buildings but has backed down from that policy.

Yesterday Martin 'initiated a debate in Parliament about tall buildings policy. I am arguing that scrapping the height and density guidelines has frankly been a disaster. I would like to strike a blow not just against mega-towers planned for my constituency, but against the whole idea that we can improve our town centres by building high. Paris, Rome, Venice, Vienna, Prague, St Petersburg consign their tall buildings to defined areas. The result is cities that are elegant and atmospheric as well as economically successful.'

He says that 'this debate has got the Leader of Wandsworth Council worried - he's been emailing briefings to Tory MPs in the last few days.'

He has 'also penned an article published on epolotix today arguing that we need proper planning policies in place to limit tall buildings.' To read the article or vote for or against the Clapham Junction Towers in the poll he is conducting visit his website [www.martinlinton.org.uk](http://www.martinlinton.org.uk).

He wants to know your views.

**Historic note.** Martin's initiative reminds me of the early days of the Conservative administration in Wandsworth. Martin was campaigning against the proposed abolition of the Labour policy to move families out of flats on the higher floors of the high-rise blocks. I helped him produce a leaflet. We included the

names and phone numbers of the local Conservative Councillors. They were outraged because they were inundated with protest phone calls from tenants. Not of course that it stopped them approving the abandonment of the policy. The campaign to get Labour to adopt the policy in the first place was initiated by the Sporle Court tenants on the Winstanley Estate at Clapham Junction.

## WINE TASTINGS IN THE NORTH EAST

When Ann and I were holidaying in the North East two years ago, a friend of ours took us to a wine-tasting evening about Greek wines organised by Helen Savage. A very pleasant evening it was, and the retsina Helen blind tested on us defeated my abilities to recognise what it was. So for my North East readers, or anyone visiting the North East this summer, it is well worth considering booking on one of this summer's tastings. They include a lunch or dinner to complement the wine.

**Real Rosé. 18 May & 1 June;** 10.30am, Tynemouth or 7pm, Durham.

**Secret Germany. 20 May.** 6.30pm, Newcastle.

**BBQ Wines. 15 June.** 10.30am, Tynemouth or 7pm, Durham.

**Vintage 2000. 17 June.** 6.30pm, Newcastle.

**Catalonia. 1 & 8 July.** 6.30pm, Newcastle.

For further details and to book contact Elizabeth Brown at Vine Visit Ltd. 0191 259 1280; [elizabeth@vinevisit.com](mailto:elizabeth@vinevisit.com). [www.vinevisit.com](http://www.vinevisit.com)

## WANDSWORTH HERITAGE FESTIVAL JUNE

**1 June. 7.30pm. Launch of Festival.** I will be talking on the Edwardian Roller Skating boom. Battersea Library, Lavender Hill, SW11. Free, but booking in advance essential: 020 8871 7466.

**3 June. 6.30pm. From Brewery to Gasworks.** I am leading this walk around Wandsworth Town. See Note 1.

**6 June. 10am-4pm. Festival Open Day.** Stalls and displays by local groups. I will be running a bookstall. Putney Library, 5/7 Disraeli Rd, SW15.

**7 June. 2pm. From George Eliot to Queen Mary: the making of modern Southfields.** Walk led by *Wandsworth Historian* editor Neil Robson. £5. See Note 3.

**7 June. 2pm. Watery Battersea.** Walk led by Rachel Kolsky. £5. Meet at Pagoda in Battersea Park. £5. See Note 2.

**8-12 June. 8pm. 250 Years of the Leather Bottle.** 8 June: film *The Duchess*, 9 June 128<sup>th</sup> poker competition; 10 June, boules tournament; 11 June themed quiz; 12 June, 18<sup>th</sup>C themed food evening. Leather Bottle, 538 Garratt Lane, SW18. 020 8946 2309. [www.leatherbottlepub.co.uk](http://www.leatherbottlepub.co.uk). See also 13 June.

**9 June. 6pm. Round the Town.** Walk around Wandsworth Town led by Bob Lilliman, local librarian. Meet outside former West Hill Library, 38 West Hill, SW18. Free. See Note 4.

**10 June. 7pm. History of Heaver Estate and its conservation.** Talk by Barry Sellers, Council Senior Planner. Balham Library. Free, book in advance 020 8871 7195.

**11 June. 7pm. A War Graves Walk** led by military historian Paul McCue. Meet at entrance gates of Wandsworth Cemetery, Magdalen Rd, SW18. Free, see Note 5.

**11 June. 8.30pm. Corporal Ted 'Tiny' Foster VC - the heroic dustman.** Illustrated talk by Paul McCue. Earlsfield Library, Magdalen Rd, SW18. Free, see Note 4.

**12 June. 7.30pm. A Charmed Life.** Documentary film about London resident Eddie Martin Noble (1917-2007). Historical perspective on colonisation of the Caribbean, racism in the RAF during the war, the colour bar and racial inequality in post-war Britain and the legacy of Windrush. African Caribbean Community Library, Battersea Library, Lavender Hill, SW11. Free, booking essential: 020 8871 7466.

**13-14 June. Open Gardens Weekend** events taking place at same time - see below.

**13 June. Leather Bottle and the Mayor of Garratt.** All day garden party with 18thC games, boules, live music and food and at approx. 4pm Mayor of Garratt Election. See 8-12 June, plus [www.mayorofgarratt.com](http://www.mayorofgarratt.com).

**14 June. 2pm. A history walk of Tooting** led by local resident Rex Osborn. £5. Meet at Tooting Broadway Tube Station. Book in advance 020 8871 6369.

**14 June. Lavender Festival.** Organised by the Lavender Hill Business Association. Special events include food festival, French Market and heritage trail.

**16 June. 6.30pm. The development of the Lavender Hill Area.** **I am leading this walk.** £5. See Note 1.

**17 June. 7pm. Archaeology of early Wandsworth.** Talk by local archaeologist Pamela Greenwood. Putney Library, Disraeli Rd, SW15. Free, book in advance 020 8871 7090.

**18 June. 6.30pm. The Heart of Old Battersea.** **I am leading this walk** through Battersea High St and Square to St Mary's Church. £5. See note 1.

**21 June. Northcote Summer Fair** organised by Northcote Business Network. Northcote Rd, SW11.

**21 June. 2pm. From George Eliot to Queen Mary: the making of modern Southfields.** See 7 June.

**23 June. 7pm. Putney Vale Cemetery and Crematorium.** Walk led by Clive Andrews (Council Parks Officer). Meet at main cemetery office near Stag Lane entrance. Free. Book in advance: 020 8788 2113.

**24 June. 7pm. Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens.** Talk by Battersea resident Professor Penny Corfield. Northcote Library, Northcote Rd, SW11. Organised by History & Social Action Publications. **I will chairing and selling the pamphlet on the Gardens.**

**24 June. 7pm. Du Cane Court - a colourful past.** Talk by Greg Vincent, author of book on its history. Balham Library, 16 Ramsden Rd, SW12. Free, book in advance: 020 8871 7195.

**June 27. BASA AGM Conference** in Wandsworth. Includes talks on John Archer and Black Edwardians. Archer was Mayor of Battersea 1913-14. **I will be speaking about Archer and the Black Atlantic.** Venue to be finalised. Details from me - see Note 1.

**June 27. 2.30pm. History of Battersea Park.** Walk led by Jennifer Ullman. Battersea Park Library. Free, book in advance 020 8871 7468.

**June 27. 12-5pm. Making History in Furzedown - an oral history event.** Furzedown Project, 91/93 Moyser Rd, SW16. Part of Furzedown Festival. [www.furzedown.net](http://www.furzedown.net).

**June 28. 2pm. SOS: Soldiers, Orphans and Spies at the Royal Victoria Patriotic Building,** Wandsworth Common. Free, booking essential: [simonmcr@aol.com](mailto:simonmcr@aol.com)

**June 28. 2pm. Saris, Spice and Splendour.** Walk between Tooting Bec and Boadway led by Rachel Kolsky. Meet outside Tooting Bec tube station. £5, See Note 2.

**June 30. 7pm. 'Candles from Coconuts'.** Talk by Jon Newman (Lambeth Archives) on the history of Price's Candles. York Gardens Library, 34 Lavender Rd, SW11. Organised by History & Social Action Publications. **I will be chairing and launching the next HSAP tile** - Jon on Price's Candles. Free, booking essential 020 8871 7471 or Note 1.

**Note 1.** Booking preferred: 020 8640 2014; [seancreighton@btinternet.com](mailto:seancreighton@btinternet.com)

**Note 2.** Booking preferred 020 8883 4169; [info@goeastlondon.co.uk](mailto:info@goeastlondon.co.uk)

**Note 3:** Booking essential. 020 8871 6388

**Note 4:** Booking in advance 020 8871 6389

**Note 5:** Booking in advance 020 8871 6289

**Find your family history on the Internet sessions at local Libraries:** 3 June, 11.30am, Roehampton, 2 Danebury Ave, SW15; 8 June, 10.30am, Battersea Park, 309 Battersea Park Rd, SW11; 18 June, 10.30am, York Gardens, 34 Lavender Rd, SW11; and 24 June 2pm, Southfields, 300 Wimbledon Park Rd.

#### **Exhibitions:**

Wandsworth at War. Battersea Library, Lavender Hill, SW11.

Mapping Putney. Putney Library, 5/7 Disraeli Rd, SW15.

In the footsteps of Henry Taunt: photographs of the Thames revisited. De Morgan Centre, 38, West Hill, SW18. Days and times variable. 020 8871 1144. [www.demorgan.org.uk](http://www.demorgan.org.uk)

Development of Alton Estate. Roehampton Library, 2 Danebury Ave, SW15.

Lord Wandsworth 1844-1912. (Sydney James Stern). Putney Library from 22 June.

#### **Open Garden Squares Weekend - 13-14 June:**

HM Prison Wandsworth. Both days. 10am - 4pm.

HM Prison Wandsworth Linden Lodge. Ditto.

Nightingale Square. 14 June. 11am-5pm

Share Community Horticultural Project, Springfield University Hospital, SW17. Both days. 10am-5pm.

For fuller details see [www.opensquares.org](http://www.opensquares.org)

**Wandsworth Green Plaques.** Wandsworth is starting its own blue plaque scheme. The first will be put up in the Festival. Ring 020 8871 6369 for further details. The Festival brochure shows one to Clem Attlee.

The well produced Festival brochure will start circulating over the next few days. Wandsworth Council's website is [www.wandsworth.gov.uk](http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk).

## MISCELLANEOUS

**Black Abolitionists in the North East.** An edited version of my talk at the Liberating Sojourn 2 Conference in Liverpool 23-25 April about black abolitionists in Britain in the 1840s and 1850s, is available in PDF format at £2. To be sent a copy please email me on [sean.creighton@btinternet.com](mailto:sean.creighton@btinternet.com).

**Richard Bradbury's *Riversmeet*.** *Riversmeet* is a novel consisting of an imagined collection of letters the fugitive slave black abolitionist Frederick Douglass sent home to his wife in the United States. At the Liberating Sojourn 2 Conference the novel's author Richard Bradbury read passages about Douglass meeting the black Chartist activist William Cuffay. The letters are well written and come across extremely well when read to an audience. But more important from my point of view was that there is a ring of truth about their encounters, even though we do not know whether they met in real life. Richard turned the book into a play *Become a Man* commissioned by the Greater London Authority as part of the 2007 Slavery Abolition Commemoration being performed at City Hall and later at Hackney Empire. The novel is published by Muswell Hill Press: [http://muswellpress.com/MP/Richard\\_Bradbury.html](http://muswellpress.com/MP/Richard_Bradbury.html).

**Call Mr. Robeson.** *A life, with songs* is a show written and performed by Tayo Aluko, which looks at Robeson's life and highlights how his radical activism caused him to be disowned and disremembered, even by the leaders and descendants of the civil rights movement. It was performed at last year's Brighton Festival, and this March at Oxford House, Newcastle's People's Theatre, the Liverpool Community Arts Centre, and in Oxford. I met Tayo and had a brief chat with him at the public lecture held at the Liverpool Museum of Slavery as part of the Liberating Sojourn 2 Conference.

**Asset Transfer in Lambeth.** On 27 April Hazel Blears attended an event organised by the Development Trusts Association to launch a project on asset transfer with Lambeth Council. The DTA is the lead agency for supporting asset transfer to community and voluntary under the Government's programme.

Three projects are being considered in Lambeth, including 13-15 Stockwell Rd as a potential base for Stockwell Partnership and others. My evaluation of community buildings in Stockwell has helped inform the Partnership's discussion with the Council to gain inclusion in the programme. I flagged up the lack of independently owned community buildings in the area. I suggested ways in which the asset transfer programme could be looked at for properties and land in addition to 13-15 Stockwell Rd. If similar evaluations were undertaken elsewhere in the Borough I am convinced that there would be plenty more buildings and sites which could also be beneficially subject to asset transfer. From my work in Kennington & Vauxhall sites include Beaufoy Institute and the former Lilian Baylis School.

**People's History Museum.** The museum has a temporary home at the Museum of Science & Industry (MOSI) while the new museum is being built. PHM @ MOSI is free to visit and is open from 10am-5pm every day.

**Caroline Martyn's Grave In Dundee.** The Working Class Movement Library has received an email thanking it 'for providing information which has helped spur a group on to track down and tend the grave of Caroline Martyn, a leading figure in the British Labour Movement of the late 19th century. She was a committed Christian Socialist and an inspirational public speaker in her day, addressing huge crowds particularly in the mill towns of Lancashire and Yorkshire.' She 'had been in Dundee for just over a week when in July 1896, she fell ill and died at the age of 29. She had been lecturing and recruiting women into the Dundee Textile Workers' Union, her diary recording her determination to carry on her work despite feeling unwell. Her grave has very recently been located in Dundee's Balgay Cemetery following local research, and is currently being cleaned and its lettering repainted by local trade unionists.'

**Friends Library.** Details about the Library of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) can be seen on [www.quaker.org.uk/library](http://www.quaker.org.uk/library). The Library dates back to 1673 and covers Quaker

history and thought, as well as topics in areas where Quakers have been active, such as peace, anti-slavery and relief work. It also holds the central archives of the Society of Friends in Britain (Britain Yearly Meeting) and rich manuscript collections.

**The Quakers and Darwin.** The Friends Library has started a newsletter. The latest, and third issue, announces its new exhibition on Quakers and Science, inspired by the 150th Anniversary of Charles Darwin's *On the origin of species*; the completion of the pre-1801 printed material cataloguing project and the launch of the next phase - the printed Peace Project. It discusses a 17th century Quaker woman's books. The newsletter in PDF format is sent to readers and friends of the Library. Further details from [libnews@quaker.org.uk](mailto:libnews@quaker.org.uk).

**Some Times Planning Lobbying Works!** It's nice to know that sometimes planning lobbying works. The shopkeeper who runs my local Sub-Post Office recently applied for planning permission to install an ATM. Merton's Planning Officers recommended refusal, partly on the grounds that it would be too near a bus stop! A petition and a number of people, including myself, writing letters, led to the Planning Committee rejecting the Officers' recommendation and approving the installation of the ATM.

**The Alton Estate Heritage Project.** The Alton Estate was built in the late 1950's. A project has started to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Alton Estate in Roehampton. There are plans to turn the stories and experiences of local people into a film and exhibition that will preserve the area's heritage.

**Wandsworth Historian.** The latest issue (No. 87. Spring 2009) of *Wandsworth Historian*, the journal of the Wandsworth Historical Society,

contains articles on the Shrubbery, a Georgian property in Lavender Gardens; C. J. Stewart's, master butchers of Putney; the heraldic statues of a lion and a unicorn at St George's Hospital; and Anglo-Saxon Battersea and Wandsworth. There are notes on Adam Faith earning his first money as a skiffler in the Borough, and William Wilberforce at school in Putney. Reviews include Battersea Labour Party's *Red Battersea* DVD, *A Positive Contribution: The Story of the 70<sup>th</sup> London Company of the Boys' Brigade 1908-2008* (Tooting) by Chris Buss; and of Judith Goodman (ed). *Coal and Calico: Letters and Papers of the Bennett and Leach Families of Merton and Wandsworth*, published by the Merton Historical Society. Copies of the Journal can be ordered from Hilary Sims, 112 Putney Bridge Rd, London, SW18 1NJ.

[www.wandsworthhistory.org.uk](http://www.wandsworthhistory.org.uk)

**Frederick Engels.** 'Far more than just Marx's 'buddy', Engels was one of the most impressive and most underrated philosophers, propagandists and activists of modern political history.' So concludes Tristram Hunt in his reassessment of the life of Engels in the May issue of *BBC History*. His book *The Frock-Coated Communist* is being published by Penguin Books on 1 May.

**The Future of Bancroft Library.** After last year's successful public campaign to save Bancroft Library in Tower Hamlets, the Council's Cabinet approved £255,000 for improvements in the 2009-2010 budget on 8 April. There will be a Steering Group which will meet twice a month and have representatives of the campaign group and East London local history groups on it. A Heritage Manager is being appointed. The aim is to turn the Library into a fully operational Tower Hamlets Local History Centre by 2012. Further details can be seen on the Campaign website: [www.savebancroftlibrary.org.uk](http://www.savebancroftlibrary.org.uk)

## A DECADE OF CIVIL SOCIETY UNDER NEW LABOUR

For some time I have been arguing that the Labour Government's policies were damaging the independence of the community and voluntary sector. It is good to see that some serious research work has now been undertaken which confirms this. The following

comes from the April Newsletter of the National Coalition for Independent Action.

'If you want to know where we are coming from in the Coalition, this is **indispensable reading**. Colin Rochester's presentation at the

British Academy ARVAC event on the 24<sup>th</sup> February powerfully argues our case that:

“After a decade and more of New Labour the need for a healthy and vigorous civil society is clearer than ever. Overall the government has signally failed to create a better, more just and more democratic society and the need to address inequality and injustice is as strong as ever. At the same time, the impact of New Labour’s policy towards the voluntary sector can be seen as neutering the ability of voluntary agencies to address that agenda.” You can cop the whole magnificent piece by following this link

<http://www.independentaction.net/civilnewlabour> and the response it brought from the Guardian here

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/joepublic/2009/feb/25/public-sector-voluntary-sector>

The Coalition has begun a joint project with AdviceUK to help local advice and rights agencies resist their co-option by Government policies and local authority actions; and regain independent agendas which promote and enforce rights.

Kevin Curley from NAVCA has called on local councillors to stop small charities being sidelined by commissioning strategies. He blamed ‘crude competitive tendering’ for the destruction of local organisations, and said that it was wrong to assume competitive tendering automatically improved services.

Meanwhile, NAVCA, on behalf of the Local Grants Forum, has published a pamphlet of resources that can help local groups convince councillors and commissioning officers of the importance of grants. Printed copies of ‘Defending Local Grants - resources you can use’ are also available free by emailing [resources@navca.org.uk](mailto:resources@navca.org.uk). Or have a look at <http://www.navca.org.uk/publications/defendinggrants>.

Birmingham City Council has extended the grants of a number of voluntary organisations in the city after a successful legal challenge to its commissioning process.’

Further information about the National Coalition can be seen on [www.independentaction.net](http://www.independentaction.net).

## CALLS FOR HISTORY CONFERENCE PAPERS

**Transatlantic Routes of American Roots Music.** This Conference being held at the University of Worcester on 12 and 13 September will examine the impact and significance of American folk music(s) in Britain. Keynote speakers will be Professor Paul Oliver (*Blues Fell This Morning; Conversations with the Blues; Blues off the Record*) and Tony Russell (*Country Music Originals the Legends and the Lost; Country Music Records Discography 1921-1942*). Papers are requested which deal with American roots music as performance, in textual representations, and as received by British audiences in both historical and contemporary settings. Topics could cover: Folk and roots revivals; protest; sacred and secular; rural and urban; Song catchers (Child, Lomax, Sharp); Reverse diasporas; Relationships between producers, promoters and consumers; Native American music and British interfaces; Blues - process and effects of the export of African American music to Britain; censorship of black

origins; public memory; Country Music - ‘American’s truest music’ (Malone) and its transatlantic connections; Radio, TV, literary, artistic, representations of American roots genres in Britain and imagined communities. Papers should be 20 minutes long. **Proposals and CVs should be urgently sent** to Dr Jill Terry, Institute of Humanities and Creative Arts, University of Worcester (conference convener) [j.terry@worc.ac.uk](mailto:j.terry@worc.ac.uk) and Prof Neil Wynn [nwynn@glos.ac.uk](mailto:nwynn@glos.ac.uk). Neil Wynn organised the 2004 Conference out of which came the book *Cross the Water Blues* in which I have a chapter on Robeson in Britain developed on from my talk at the Conference - see my website.

**Public History.** Rebecca Conard and Holger Hoock are organising a session on “Structuring the Discourse of Public History Practice” for the 2010 NCPH conference in Portland, Oregon. They ‘scouting for public historians to present strong case studies that critically

examine the practice of public history in a variety of settings and for a variety of purposes (e.g., policy creation, institutional memory, resource preservation and management, civic engagement, cultural identity). Case studies should examine the theoretical frameworks that inform inquiry and analysis; methodologies employed; and the relative roles that historian, audience (or end user), collaborators, partners, or governing bodies play in shaping the processes of inquiry and interpretation.' For more information or to propose a case study concept contact: Holger Hoock - [H.Hoock@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:H.Hoock@liverpool.ac.uk) or Rebecca Conard - [rconard@mtsu.edu](mailto:rconard@mtsu.edu). Hoock is Reader in British History & founding director of the Eighteenth-Century Worlds Research Centre at the University of Liverpool: [www.holgerhoock.com](http://www.holgerhoock.com); [www.liv.ac.uk/18cworlds](http://www.liv.ac.uk/18cworlds).

**European Expansion and Colonial Interaction.** FEEGI: Forum on European Expansion and Colonial Interaction Biennial Conference is organising its 8<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference for 19-21 February 2010 in North Carolina about the

causes and consequences of increased global interaction in the period between 1450 and 1850. The organisers 'welcome papers that explore any facet of early-modern encounters. We especially encourage proposals that offer an imaginative re-framing of "European Expansion and Global Interactions" in the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Ocean Worlds. We are eager to read a wide range of proposals, including work that takes an interdisciplinary approach (including art, literature, economics, gender studies, environmental studies, for example) and papers that present African, American, Asian, or Australian/Pacific Islands perspectives on this period of expansion.' Panel and individual papers will be considered. FEEGI hopes to provide some financial support to graduate students who are on the program. Proposals should be submitted by 1 September 2009. For further information, questions, comments, & submissions, contact Laura Mitchell, History Department, UC Irvine [mitchell@uci.edu](mailto:mitchell@uci.edu). FEEGI website: <http://feegi.org/conference2010.hhtm>

### **SLAVERY AND THE ENGLISH COUNTRY HOUSE: MAPPING CURRENT RESEARCH**

As part of the legacy of the 2007 Bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade, English Heritage, the National Trust and the University of the West of England (UWE) are jointly sponsoring this one-day conference on 21 November at the London School of Economics. It will explore the links between the country house in Britain and the Atlantic slave trade. Papers on Harewood House, St. Vincent and country house owners, Liverpool merchants and their 'rural retreats', Normanton Hall and Gilbert Heathcote, Bristol and Nevis, using slave compensation records, contesting the political legacy of slavery in Britain's country houses, slavery at the Codrington sites, stately homes in Bexley, Marble Hill, Northington Grange, and the West Country. Speakers include Caz Bressley and Cliff Pereira (both BASA members), James Walvin, and Madge Dresser. **Early booking is recommended to avoid disappointment.** For further details contact Ros Tatham: 020 7973 3351; [slavery@english-heritage.org.uk](mailto:slavery@english-heritage.org.uk). English Heritage, 1 Waterhouse Square, 138-142 Holborn, London, EC1N 2ST.