



## Lambeth Riverside Festival. A Review of 2005 & Planning for 2006



'Brilliant job.' 'Well organised.' 'Very enjoyable and worthwhile.' 'It seemed to go really well.' 'Even if some turnouts were poor everybody seemed to know where and when things were happening.' 'Quality events.' 'Families have been well catered for.' 'The programme has been wide-ranging meeting a diverse range of interests.'

These are just some of the positive comments made about the Lambeth Riverside Festival held in July 2005.



Kennington Park History Walk

### The 2005 Festival Activities

Local residents had a wide programme to choose from between 9 and 24 July:

- Exhibitions at Cleaver St, Danielle Arnaud Contemporary Art, and Beaconsfield Galleries, Museum of Garden History and the Camera Club
- history walks: Kennington Park and Vauxhall Black History
- Black history talks: Paul Robeson in the UK, African Civilisations
- The Vauxhall Pleasure Gdns history talk at St Peter's
- 'A Five's Worth of Courage, a play about Elizabeth Fry at Lambeth Mission
- Workshops in writing, computing, circuit training, drama and film/stage combat
- Bluebeard's Wives radio installation at St Peter's
- Consequences, a play reading at St Anselm's

- Charlie Chaplin films at Walnut Tree Walk School
- 'Too Desperate for Words', women's comedy nights at the Dog House Pub
- Two Jazz events at Bonnington Centre and St Peter's
- Open Days at community buildings/spaces: Roots & Shoots, Vauxhall City Farm, Sure Start, Vauxhall Gdns Community Centre, Harleyford Rd Community Gdns and All Nations Centre
- An evening of song by Rosemary Ashe
- World Music events at South London Pacific
- Lots of activities for families with young children organised by Sure Start and Vauxhall City Farm
- Community action projects run by All Nations Centre
- Healthy living activities with circuit training and health checks and a personal trainer sessions competition
- A writing competition for primary school children
- Children's and young people's groups had opportunities to perform music and dance to adults and their peers.



Sure Start Party

All this on virtually no central funding and no specially funded staff resources. The programme was put together by the voluntary efforts of dozens of individuals supported through the co-ordinating role of the Trust.

Financial support was provided by St George's plc, Cross River Partnership, RCDT, and Lambeth Endowed Charities. Lambeth Council printed the Festival brochure for free. Many organisations and individuals covered their own costs or provided free venues.

Many people expressed disappointment at the low attendances at some events, but a key factor in suppressing attendances was the concerns many people had about being out of doors for other than absolutely necessary purposes following the bombings on 7 July and the attempted bombing at Oval Station.

#### RCDT Community Chest

With the help of an auction run during the World Music Events at South Pacific Bar, Riverside Community Development Trust was able to launch and raise £560 for its proposed Community Chest to provide funds and loans for local groups.



Festival Launch

## Review of 2005 Festival

A meeting was held on 6 September at Roots & Shoots to review the Festival. Although the attendance was low there were a large number of apologies from individuals who and organisations which had taken part in the Festival and who wanted to take part in next year's one. Many people also sent into comments by email.

### Organisational Limitations

- As co-ordinator the Trust had limited staff time to devote to earlier planning of the Festival. Detailed staff time could only be devoted from beginning of May
- The Planning Group was mainly made up of people who were involved because they were organising individual activities

- The lack of a central team that could devote time to central aspects of organisation
- A comprehensive programme for Family Fun Day 23 July proved impossible to put together
- It was not possible to organise activities especially targeted at the elderly
- Leaflets did not reach everyone in the local area. Although about an 80% household distribution was achieved in the main Festival area south of Lambeth Rd, it did not prove possible to do more than a limited distribution in the Oval part of the Festival area. The new apartment blocks from Vauxhall Cross to Lambeth Bridge proved particularly problematic to obtain entry to.
- Children's events do well.
- Some people at holiday at the time of the festival but to have it earlier would mean clashing with school fetes and other end of term events.

**Organisational strengths** included: the commitment by wide range of organisations, residents and groups; substantial house to house delivery by volunteers especially those from All Nations Centre; full details on RCDT website; Festival ENews; Festival newsheets at events; targeted special leaflet delivery in some areas where events were taking place.

There is a lot to be learnt from the 2005 Festival. Continuity of co-ordination will assist ensuring the lessons are take into account in the organisation of 2006. An earlier start to the planning and fundraising will help to ensure the 2006 Festival is put on a firmer footing. The creation of a central planning group and team of volunteers would be helpful.



Harleyford Community Gdns Family Festival

## Planning the 2006 Festival

The Festival review process generated lots of ideas on the planning and organisation of, and for activities/events for 2006.



Steel Pans at Festival Launch

### Some key Questions:

How long should the Festival be for? 2005 – 2 weeks/3 weekends?

When should the Festival be held? July or August?

Should there be a big multi-activity event on an open space to kick-start or end the Festival?

How can organisations that did not feel able to take part in 2005 be encouraged to take part in 2006?

Can there be more events which are jointly organised by a partnership of organisations to encourage more mixing across social, ethnic and cultural groupings?



Charlie's Chaplin Film Show

### When Should the Festival take place?

Discussion points: If over a shorter period of time it may be difficult to fit all the events in. Should all of our organisations aim to provide something family specific in August? Many organisers & volunteers are away during August. Do not want groups clashing over event dates – this may happen if Festival was held over a 1-week period. Avoid end of term as this is already a difficult & busy time for schools with lots of their own activities taking place. Very little happens in August during holiday time for those that cannot go away. - Do we need family specific events during August/end of July? It would be difficult to stretch the festival over a longer period of

time as event organisers may have other commitments.

It was agreed by those present to should keep the festival in July and that the length should remain at 2 week/weekends. There should be separate activities in August. Need to get date & length of festival information out early & check for possible clashes with other events.

**Planning and organisation:** start planning earlier; the earlier the dates are set the better; organise central team operating on topic/task basis. Active approaches to organisations and businesses to take part. Use the 'personal' approach to encourage people to take part rather than just writing to them.

Make use of our own networks. Involving schools needs to be well planned in advance. Have an earlier brainstorm of events especially where you know events are happening already in order to better promote the festival at these events. e.g. posters in parks, SE1 website.

Must consider budgetary constraints, time constraints, lack of people to publicise and that we cannot force organisations to publicise – these aspects will all have an impact.

**Publicity:** need to 'capture audiences', create more press awareness and publicity; window competition for local businesses to advertise festival, with prize for the best; make use of peoples' existing networks to publicise and get help. Need banners or bunting to promote festival. Would need to be have limited, unchanging information to enable re-use every year. Approach organisations to 'host' banners or large signs. Fly post in areas you know people will see things. Target specific groups. e.g. next to the bins on estates. Use London SE1 website. Special offers from local businesses. Local press. Local community newspaper proposal – not yet agreed upon, but if goes ahead then could use that. Lambeth Council newspapers: need to have lots of information and be submitted earlier; could help with distribution by linking to existing drops. Festival ENews - keep regular updates and ensure they are easy to view and do not require downloading to the hard drive.

**Funding:** Need funding to be able to participate. Need to work on financial aspect now. Lambeth Council will not be providing funding for festivals next year but will print leaflets. Allow organisations good time to fundraise.

**Volunteers:** need more volunteers – at events and beforehand BUT also need to

have a back-up plan as people can need to withdraw at short notice due to other commitments. Use specific, limited goals for volunteers rather than open-ended 'help us'.

**Audiences:** need to go further to provide events and activities for a large audience, especially teenagers and young adults. Need to target people early & specifically, according to talents, interests etc. Make use of good ones from 2005. More fun things, more music. Encompass more of Lambeth to attract larger audience and funding, publicity and organising. More variety of performances to appeal to a wider audience. More activities for elderly people.

**Community Cohesion:** more joint local organisation activities to encourage more mixing. More events which are designed to bring different sections of the community together

**Council Estates:** need to engage the tenants organisations. Repeat and improve focus along Lambeth Walk. Hold activities held on the estates.

**Venues:** Liaison with T&RAs about accommodation bookings for festival events. Need earlier venue bookings as some venues already booked this year. ADI Lambeth Road is under new management – investigate using premises there. Make use of pubs and clubs to hold events in main venue area and involve landlords, managers to boost attendance figures.

**Licencing:** Hold meeting with the licencing official at Lambeth Council very early in planning stage.



Comedy Nights

### Planning Committee 2006

RCDT will establish a planning group for the Festival which will be open to anyone to take part in.

To discuss the 2006 Festival contact Sean Creighton, RCDT – Riverside Community Development Trust, 20 Newburn St, SE11 5PJ. Tel: 020 7820 0555. [info@rcdt.org](mailto:info@rcdt.org)

For full details of 2005 Festival events see [www.rcdt.org](http://www.rcdt.org)

### Specific activity proposals

Cycle Race: Close Kennington Rd for Tour de Kennington Cycle Race

Photography: exhibition of local photographers on Kennington & Vauxhall; children's photography competition; display of Kennington & Vauxhall photos down the decades loaned by local people

Fun run

Sport and drama. e.g. free coaching, mini five a side tournament, especially for teenagers

Day outings for all age groups

Tea dance

Film shows

Thanks giving in local church

Music and song: music of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor; music that was performed at Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens; blues evening; integrated talk/performance of works by famous

musicians/composers/song writers born and bred in Kennington/Vauxhall/Lambeth; talk on Elizabeth Welch – black singer and actress; songs about Lambeth; performance of music

hall songs that were put on at the former Kennington Theatre; spirituals and gospels

Joint Exhibition by Local Artists

Events in shops – quiz, competition, puppets.

Launch event: aim for Parish fete type event.

Weekend of activities on an open space:

- Live music
- Refreshments
- Area for local organisations and business with stands for public information
- Sports events, like a schools sports day – fun family races, tug of war, egg & spoon,
- Sponsored fun run
- Health screenings and circuit training
- Performances and workshops
- Tasters of other Festival events
- Bouncy Castle
- Wandering entertainers