

*YESTERDAY
IS NOW
HISTORY*

Exhibition Catalogue
18th - 23rd June 2014

Introduction

Yesterday is Now History, curated by artist Eleanor Davies and anthropologist/historian Sophie Parker, is a celebration of the everyday objects that we frequently take for granted, or think of as rubbish. These often overlooked objects tell a story of the subtle cultural shifts that underlie our everyday experiences of social and historical change.

The exhibition explores the history of Lewisham, including the days of the foreign cattle market, the battle of Lewisham in 1977, the millennium, and the ongoing protest to save Lewisham's hospital. The unlikely objects brought together prompt a discussion about the nature of archives and their purpose and meaning in a society driven by mass consumption.

This project is supported through the Santander graduate training scheme in partnership with Goldsmiths' Department of Visual Cultures and the Enterprise Fund.



The Lewisham Local History Society Collection

The Lewisham Local History Society was founded in 1961 to promote and encourage the study of local history in the London Borough of Lewisham. In 1969 the Lewisham Local History Society Study Group was formed to focus on hands-on research. They observed history on the ground, visiting demolition sites and carrying out archaeological digs. From these activities the Study Group's collection began to grow:

Items for the collection continued to arrive, either as accidental finds or because of an emergency situation where a demolition site had to be visited with the utmost speed, in order to save as much material as possible

- John West and Sylvia Macartney

In 1971 this ad-hoc collection found its first home in a flat above New Cross Library. Every inch of wall space displayed some item from the collection. It became a 'mini museum', with one corner dedicated to kitchen paraphernalia, another to its cinema collection and one for its set of Deptford Cooper's tools. It soon became clear that the archive needed a proper museum to house its rapidly expanding collection.

In 1974 the society approached the council with the suggestion that a local history museum should be provided for the Borough of Lewisham. The Study Group held an open evening at the flat for local councillors, society committee members and leisure service officers to view the collection. The evening was a success, and the idea of a local history museum for Lewisham was suddenly more tangible.

To realise this ambition, the Study Group decided they needed to expand the range of exhibits in their collection. From the early eighties they sent out a series of targeted appeals for public donations. In June 1987, they requested donations of ‘old writing materials and postal ephemera’. This was later followed by an ‘urgent appeal’ for ‘cartons, tins and bottles’ and ‘ladies’ jewellery - cheap and cheerful’.

They received a fantastic response to these public appeals, and in 1987 the Study Group was able to stage their most ambitious and extensive display to date. For the Lewisham History Festival they adopted the slogan ‘Museum for Lewisham’, and used the latest in sales and marketing techniques to promote the campaign. This included a digital electronic rotating ‘Museum for Lewisham’ sign. Over a thousand people signed the petition for a ‘Museum for Lewisham’ and this was later handed over to the Mayor, Norman Smith.

However, despite the increased interest in the collection and in the cultural heritage of Lewisham, it wasn’t until 2001 that the council published their report, ‘Developing Museum Provisions in Lewisham’. This report set out attendance figures, running costs and the potential locations of the proposed museum.

Following the sudden departure of the council’s Museum Development Officer, the plans for a Museum for Lewisham seem to have stalled. Since this time, the sustainability of the archive has been under threat. The collection survives today due to the dedicated team of archivists, along with generous support received from New Cross Learning Centre and the local charity Bold Vision.

The Disposables

Paper/plastic cups; Lover's Rock & Carlsberg beer can; aerosol cans; bottle tops; takeaway menus, and paper/plastic bags

'The Disposables' are mostly single use objects; we use them once and then throw them away. They are the accessories to consumption - they are the bag that holds our shopping and the paper cup that carries our fizzy cola. These vessels are intimately connected to our consumption patterns. They carry the 'bad' stuff, the guilty pleasures - the greasy pizzas, the indulgent, expensive smoothie, the strong smelling deodorant, and the goods that accumulate during an afternoon shopping spree. These 'carriers' are the remnants of an indulgent act, and the mere sight of them can evoke feelings of guilt. Once these objects become obsolete or defunct, with their contents emptied out, any reminder of their existence, their happening, must be removed, put away, hidden or binned.

These un-kept and throwaway objects are the site where our ambivalence about consumer culture finds its clearest expression. Our fraught relationship with paper cups and plastic bags, become the manageable focus for a wider and more abstract discomfort about 'consumer culture'. David Cameron attempted to tap into this anxiety by suggesting bottle top recycling should be reintroduced as part of his rebranding of the Conservatives.

Despite the evident importance of these objects to our understanding of contemporary society, they remain largely un-archived. However, if a law was passed requiring us to archive one of each disposable, the pile would be physically and metaphorically burdensome, a confrontational record of our excessive consumption.

(Opposite) 'We've never had it so good', The Times Millennium Weekend Edition, 1st January 2000

PROPERTY

Singles who pool their cash to buy family homes

PETS

Breeding matters: where did the peke's nose go?

COLLECTING

Buy right: how to choose tomorrow's antiques

HOME LIFE

Where famous women have their babies

SATURDAY JANUARY 1 2000

THE TIMES MILLENNIUM WEEKEND

We've never had it so good



A family of four with just some of the food they consume in a year. Although British food is more mouthwatering and varied than at any time in history, the struggle to make the national diet truly healthy is by no means over.

FASHION | 5 | FOOD & DRINK | 6.7 | GARDENING | 10.9 | GO | 15 | COUNTRY LIFE | 16 | PROPERTY | 20.21 | TRAVEL | 25-27 | GAMES | 34.32

INS Europe's fastest growing ISP
BRITISH SUPERBIKE CHAMPIONS

DUCATI

WINNING TEAM

JOIN US!

We provide expert support solutions that allow businesses to operate more effectively, increase communication opportunities and dramatically cut their costs. Our customers are won for a reason - they know we are the best and can offer them exactly what they need. If you would prefer to speak to all your internet communications - call us now on 0800 467 626.

INS
We make the NETwork™

www.insnet.net superbike@insnet.net

Paper & plastic cups

The newspaper article - in the photograph below - was kept in the same box as the drinking cups. At first perplexing, under closer inspection, it becomes clear why these seemingly unrelated items have been kept together. In the article, coffee cups take pride of place in both images. It is a recognition of the 'coffee to go' culture we operate in. The coffee cup is an emblem, representing a class of fashionable, metropolitan, hard working and 'important' people. We use it as an accessory to play out this role.



Newspaper article, 'Leaders' focus switches to field of running mates', The Times Friday, Ben Macintyre, 10th March 2000



Paper & plastic cups, 1999-2000

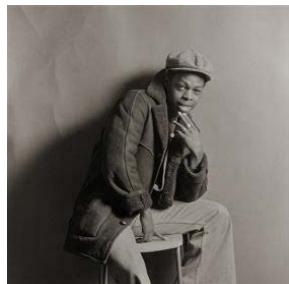
Lover's Rock

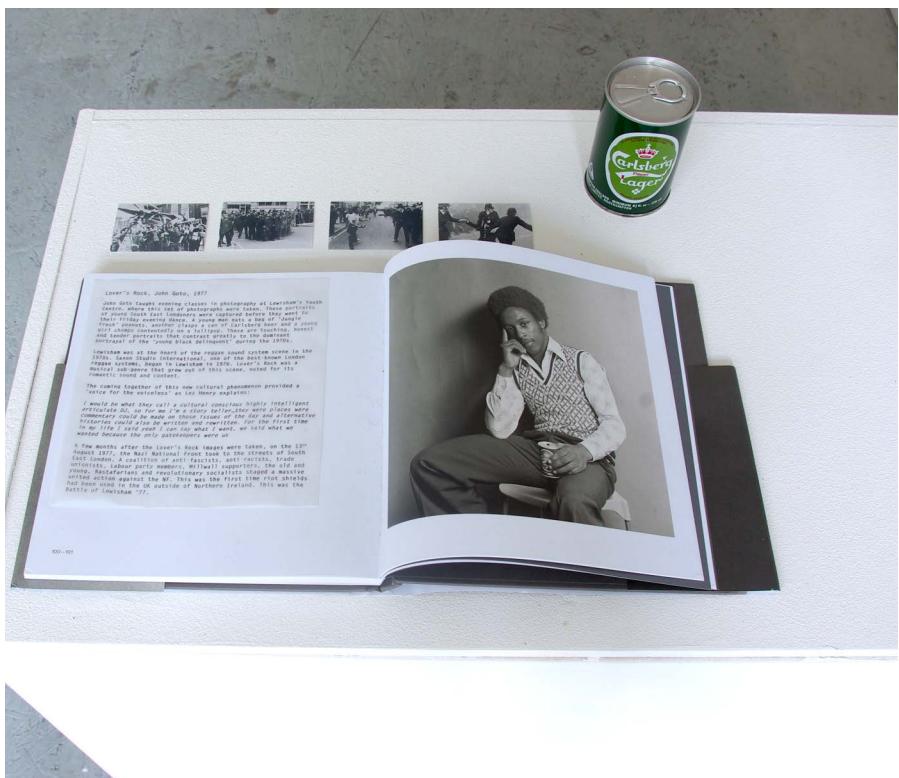
John Goto taught evening classes in photography at Lewisham's Youth Centre, where this set of photographs were taken. These portraits of young South East Londoners were captured before they went to their Friday evening dance. A young man eats a bag of 'Jungle Fresh' peanuts, another clasps a can of Carlsberg beer and a young girl chomps contentedly on a lollipop. These are touching, honest and tender portraits that contrast greatly to the dominant portrayal of the 'young black delinquent' during the 1970s.

Lewisham was at the heart of the reggae sound system scene in the 1970s. Saxon Studio International, one of the best-known London reggae systems, began in Lewisham in 1976. Lover's Rock was a musical sub-genre that grew out of this scene, noted for its romantic sound and content.

The coming together of this new cultural phenomenon provided a 'voice for the voiceless' as Lez Henry explains:

I would be what they call a cultural conscious highly intelligent articulate DJ, so for me I'm a story teller...they were places where commentary could be made on those issues of the day and alternative histories could also be written and rewritten. For the first time in my life I said yeah I can say what I want, we said what we wanted because the only gatekeepers were us...





Lover's Rock, John Goto, 1977, Carlsberg can, 1975

A few months after the Lover's Rock images were taken, on the 13th August 1977, the Nazi National Front took to the streets of South East London. A coalition of anti-fascists, anti-racists, the old and untold, trade unionists, revolutionary socialists and Rastafarians staged a united action against the NF. This was the first time riot shields had been used in the UK outside of Northern Ireland. This was the Battle of Lewisham '77.



Assorted aerosol cans, 1972-1995



Bottle tops mounted on display card, undated



Local takeaway menus, 1991-2003

Paper and plastic bags

In the 1940s, it appears that the general public still did not understand these new materials and treated plastic in the same way as they would have treated more traditional materials, such as metal. Tales are told of plastic colanders put over hot saucepans...such occurrences made people suspicious of these new materials and gave plastic a bad name.

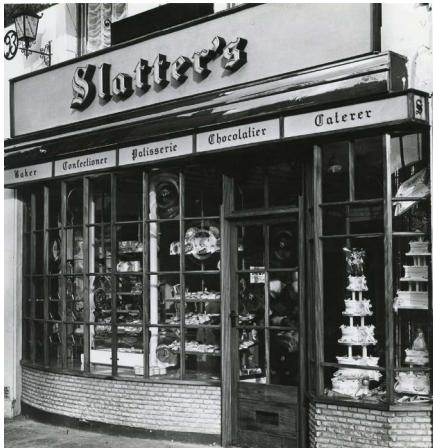
- Susan Mossman, Fantastic Plastic, 2008



Assorted paper & plastic shopping bags, 1975-2014

Slatter's Bakery

Slatter's Bakery was founded in Brockley in the early 1900s by self-taught baker, Tom Slatter. Slatter's son Ken, expanded the business to a number of shops across South East London. Ken Slatter's cakes became a regular feature on Bruce Forsyth's 'Generation Game'. Contestants were often left covered in Ken's cake goo. Slatter's also supplied confectionary to Buckingham Palace garden parties and Wimbledon Tennis events for over thirty years.





“Doing a Ratner”

Ratner's was a successful jewellers in the 1980s. The chain of shops aroused the attention of shoppers by employing an unusual, brash and bold labelling system. Deals and low prices covered their shop front from top to bottom. This method of display set them apart from the more decorous jewellers on the high street and proved a successful marketing strategy.

However in 1991, at the Institute of Directors, the Chief Executive, Gerald Ratner remarked:

People say, “how can you sell this for such a low price?” and I say “because it’s total crap...it’s cheaper than an M&S sandwich, but probably won’t last as long!

This remark resulted in Ratner's near collapse and lead to a loss of five hundred million pounds in the company's value. The terms the “Ratner effect” and “Doing a Ratner” were coined.

Cash railway systems

I can remember Draper's haberdashery shop, the Draper brothers. When you paid your bill they'd put them in a container with overhead wires, pull the handle and it would shoot across to the cashier

- Doreen Cooper

Going shopping in Hinds was quite an expedition... They would wrap up the money in the bill and put it in one of those round things on a wire and it would go across the shop floor, above your head. The cashier would take the money, sign the receipt and push it back.

- Age Exchange, Blackheath





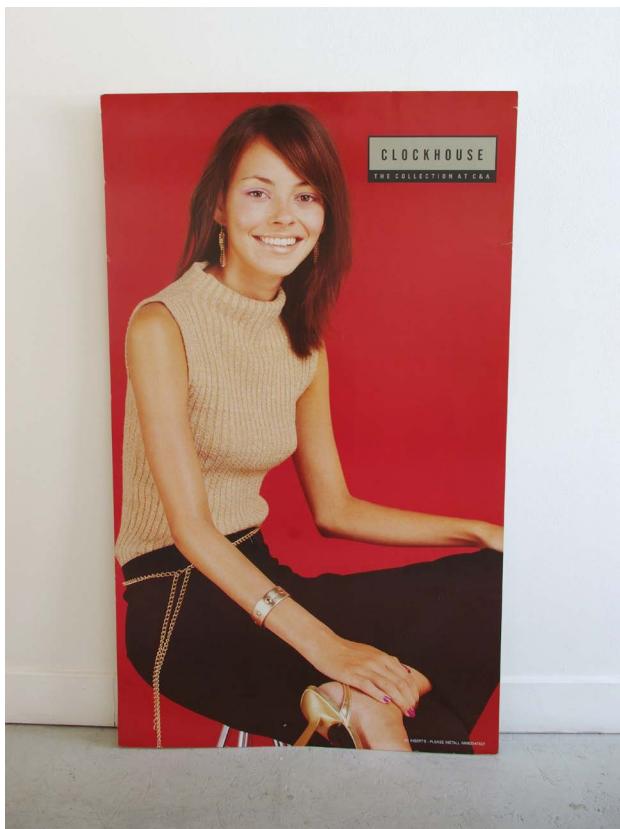
We Give Green Shield Stamps

Green Shield stamps were highly popular in Britain in the 1960s and 70s. Stamps would be collected after purchasing goods or services from participating businesses. Stamps could be exchanged for gifts, and typically 1,280 stamps were needed to fill a book. Customers could flick through a vast and exciting catalogue to choose their gift. Every luxury imaginable seemed in close grasp.

In 1965, you were able to exchange one full book of stamps for a set of six pastel coloured mugs or for a pair of stainless steel salad servers. However, the initial excitement of this scheme soon turned to disenchantment, as customers realised that most gifts were unattainable. In 1976, 375 books were needed to receive a Philips Colour TV. Richard Tompkins, who pioneered the scheme in the UK, later launched the Argos Catalogue Showroom in 1973.

C&A girl!

The poster was donated to the archive by two C&A Sales Assistants on the 25th April 2001 - the day the Lewisham store closed down. C&A, colloquially known as 'coats and 'ats', was founded in 1841 by two Dutch brothers, Clemens and August Brenninkmeyer. Reportedly the Brenninkmeyers spoke to their head office staff in a code language, which employees had to sign an oath of secrecy to never share with outsiders.



'Clockhouse, The Collection at C&A', window poster, 2001

Sainsbury's Lewisham

In 1955, the largest self-service shop in Europe, at 7,500 square feet, was opened by Sainsbury's in Lewisham. It was also the first Sainsbury's to stock apples, citrus fruits, grapes, bananas and potatoes. It featured a state-of-the-art, glass walled ventilation room for cutting and wrapping produce, and customers were treated to "behind the scenes tours".



Sainsbury's Lewisham, 1955



Members of the Lewisham Women's Social and Political Union
c1910



Sainsbury's advertise blankets and flannels on dogs at their drapery store in Lewisham
c1910 © J Sainsbury Ltd

Sainsbury's put on a 'special exhibition of dresses and blouses in the Suffragette colours of green and purple' in their drapery store on Lewisham High street in 1908 (*Iris Dove, Yours is the Cause: Suffragettes in Lewisham*, 1988). The Suffragette movement was well supported in Lewisham. Lewisham Borough News is reported to have been one of only a 'few local newspapers that was sympathetic to women's suffrage' (Dr Paula Bartley, *Access to History: Votes for Women*, 2007). The Museum of London holds in its collection, a Suffragette banner of the Lewisham branch of the Women's Social and Political Union. The photograph shows four Suffragette prisoners - Miss Clara Lambert, Miss Warwick, Caroline Townsend and Miss O. Llewellyn standing before the banner.

Outspan

Outspan was the leading international supplier of South African citrus fruits for over fifty years - with Great Britain as its largest customer in the 1970s. In the 1960s, Outspan focused its attention and spending on brand building and overseas marketing campaigns. Paper bags like this one in the collection, featured Outspan advertising and were sent to green grocers to pass on to their customers. The tagline reads 'everyone wants a piece', and the image shows a suited gentleman eating Outspan oranges from a plate, while a mother and child look on longingly.



In 1973, the Boycott Outspan Action group (BOA) launched an extensive consumer boycott against Outspan. They educated consumers worldwide on the extremely difficult and poor working conditions for labourers on the citrus plantations in South Africa. Stickers with the warning ‘Beware! Product of the Apartheid’ were placed on thousands of oranges in supermarkets between 1972-74.

To distract attention away from the BOA campaign in 1972, Outspan employed a group of ‘Outspan Girls’ who toured Western European countries promoting Outspan products. The women were exclusively white South Africans, ‘attractive enough to wear short skirts’ and selected ‘according to the methods of the “Miss World Contests”’. The girls promoted ‘Outspan diets’ and hosted ‘slimming galas’. They were strictly advised to stay out of political discussions and to focus instead, on promoting the oranges and presenting gifts such as balloons and hats to customers.

In response to this, BOA introduced the ‘Inspan Girls’ - a group of multi-ethnic female activists. This group directly and deliberately engaged in political debate and discussion. They were a clear and direct contrast to the Outspan Girls. They hijacked the Outspan Girls’ tours, campaigned outside supermarkets and publicised their views widely in the press.

The Outspan Girls’ tours were brought to an end in June 1973, no doubt in some part due to the deluge of bad press and controversy generated by the Inspan Girls campaigning. The Outspan paper bag in this collection provokes the retelling of this campaign, a campaign that is described as one of ‘the most effective campaigns ever launched in a European country against apartheid’.

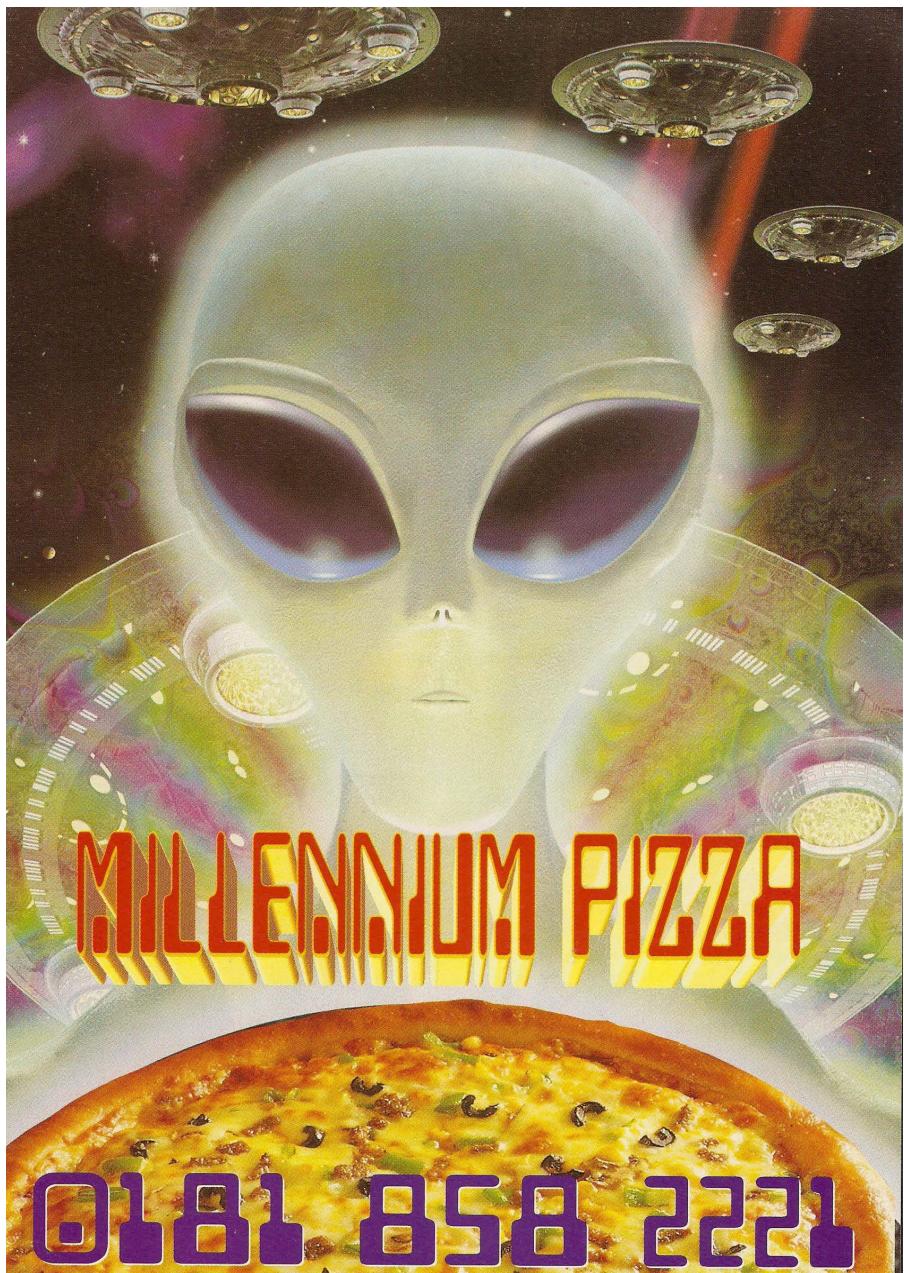
Transient Objects

Charles and Diana milk top; Duo Can and trial container; foreign cattle market gauge; millennium pizza menus; Nicola's pencil case, and production-marked goods

It's a truism to say that all objects are historically situated - the result of cultural, scientific and economic factors. What is particular to 'Transient Objects' is that they evoke specific moments in time more immediately. Transient objects make the temporality of the situation that brought them in to being more evident. For example, the production-marked goods in the collection capture the shift in Britain's relationships with other nations. Nicola's pencil case, chosen in anticipation of a new term, marks the often uneasy beginning of selfhood.

Some of these transient objects are fanciful, and offer up momentary and playful interruptions of our daily activities. The millennium menus and the Charles and Diana milk top are particular examples. Others, like the trial container - an idea that didn't catch on - never reached the consumer en masse. They embody a kind of bittersweet, hollow promise.

Although these objects have significance and value at the time - to the maker or consumer, they often disperse as quickly as they appeared. As the mis en scene - the mood of the time - changes, transient objects are washed away. They become caught up in the stream of other disposables, and all those little, seemingly insignificant bits of rubbish which come through your letter box.



-Millennium Pizza takeaway menu, November 1999

The Millennium

During the build up to the millennium celebrations, takeaway menus in Lewisham were customised with alien emblems and ominous looking camouflaged millennium domes. One menu asks - what will you remember? In another, pizzas resemble pound coins, and fall from the sky as though a sudden and unexpected windfall is due at the dawn of the millennium. Speaking to residents of Lewisham, it seems this menu takeover went unnoticed. Instead, dramatic headlines of impending 'millennium bug' doom were the focus of attention.

Life-saving hospital equipment and 999 services in London face total breakdown on January 1st 2000

- London Evening Standard

Banks could collapse if they fail to eradicate the millennium bug from their computer systems

- The Guardian

National health service patients could die because insufficient time and thought have been devoted to the millennium bug

- Daily Telegraph

Riots, terrorism and a health crisis could follow a millennium bug meltdown

- Sunday Mirror

All trace of pension contributions could be wiped out in businesses failing to cope with the millennium bug

- Independent

Fears about the millennium bug, originated in concerns that centuries had not been written into computer programming code, and therefore, computers would be unable to process the date change from 1999 to 2000. In 1996, a batch of tinned corned beef, with the use by date of 00, was rejected by a computer, which wrongly assumed they were ninety-six years out of date.

Incidents like this accelerated the systematic checking and updating of computer programmes, to ensure a smooth start to the new century.



(Top) Millennium pizza menus, Lewisham, 1998-2000
(Below) Millennium memorabilia, 1999-2000



News Shopper, Lewisham & Catford, Millennium edition, 29th December 1999

Staff expected to work during the millennium celebration were paid up to twelve times their usual salary, and those on standby, under oath to stay sober, were offered seven and a half times their salary. All in all the millennium was a non-event - no planes fell out of the sky and aliens didn't take over the planet. However in the process the British government spent £396 million on Y2K protection.

The takeaway shops' creative exploration of the menu format expresses an entrepreneurial spirit. It provides them with a way to participate in people's experience of the millennium. In appropriating the millennium imagery - the alien, the dome, the takeaways have inadvertently transformed their menus into commemorative objects of the oddest sort.

Gut Girls

Before refrigeration, cattle were imported live and processed on arrival. From 1870, Deptford's docks provided the final pit stop for these live cattle, after the City of London Corporation - who had been given exclusive local authority for the processing of imported foreign animals - chose Deptford as the ideal site. Covering twenty-three acres, the market served as the principle reception point for foreign cattle entering London from Canada, the United States and South America.

At the market's peak in 1907, 184,971 cattle passed through Deptford's docks. In total, over four million cattle and sheep were slaughtered on site, with the majority of this work being carried out by women. Working twelve-hour days and considered rowdy, foul-mouthed and unruly these women acquired the nickname the 'Gut Girls'.

However, only five years later in 1912, the quantity of livestock had dropped dramatically with only 21,547 cattle passing through the docks. This precipitous decline was the result of rapid developments in refrigeration technology and increased restrictions on the movement of livestock. The market ceased trading two years later, when the War Office acquired the land. With this, the Gut Girls dispersed and the Ewart's Cattle Gauge - John Ewart's unique version of a slide rule, a tool that had been in use since the 17th century - became obsolete.

Instructions on how to use the slide rule:

First take the length from the foremost upper corner of the shoulder blade bone in a straight line to the hindermost point of the rump by the tail, and next the girth behind the forelegs. And the measures carefully taken will, with the assistance of the sliding rule, tell the weight of the forequarters.

- Peter Hopp, The National Museum of Computing

"It is an area that has largely neglected until the five years—that the situation is changing and becoming better to the rise of women."

Many of the extracts quoted were taken from books, "Maternity," "Life as We Know It," a pamphlet written by women in the Wom Co-operative Guild—a group of Bass members in the 1880s.

It was the first of its kind, and it put on its working conditions, b anti-natal care and all sorts of things.

By the first world

32,000 women had joined

Frances Widdowson, of the organization, said it was quite difficult to get exhibited together because of the way the women buried and scattered.

Frances and Anna will take up their residence in the past to get in touch through the telephone.

Telephone Anna on 5275, and Frances on 0947.



Ewart's Foreign Cattle Market Gauge, 1899

Production-marked goods

‘Foreign’ stamp marks were used from 1888 to mark goods made outside of the United Kingdom. ‘Empire made’ stamps were commonly used during the 1950s and 60s but were superseded by the ‘Made in England’ stamp when Britain entered the European Community in 1973.

Although these marks are small and often hidden, they have been subject to much legislative quibbling and debate. They are the site where anxieties about national identity and moral dilemmas are played out.

Mr. KEBTY-FLETCHER: asked whether Coronation mugs coming into this country from Germany should have the mark “Made in Germany” on each mug?

Mr. BUXTON: The reply to this question depends entirely on the nature of the marks or designs, which the mugs bear. If these are such as to give an impression that the mugs are of British manufacture they must be marked with a definite indication of the actual country of origin... There is no general obligation to mark all foreign-made chinaware and earthenware or other manufactured goods with an indication of their foreign origin.

- Extract from Hansard, 17th May 1911



Production-marked goods, c1888-1970

'Foreign' stamp marks were used from 1888 to mark goods made outside of the United Kingdom. 'Empire made' stamps were commonly used during the 1950s and 60s but were superseded by the 'Made in England' stamp when Britain entered the European Community in 1973.

Although these marks are small and often hidden, they have been subject to much legislative quibbling and debate. They are the site where anxieties about national identity and moral dilemmas are played out.

Mr. KEBTY-FLETCHER: asked whether Coronation mugs coming into this country from Germany should have the mark "Made in Germany" on each mug?

Mr. BUXTON: the reply to this question depends entirely on the nature of the marks or designs, which the mugs bear. If these are such as to give an impression that the mugs are of British manufacture they must be marked as such. There is no general obligation to mark all foreign-made chinaware and earthenware or other manufactured goods with an indication of their foreign origin.

- Extract from Hansard, 17th May 1911

Production-marked goods, c1888-1970

Charles and Diana milk top

The Charles and Diana silver foil, milk tops appeared on bottles in July 1981 on the week of their wedding. At the time of dispersal they acted as a subtle point of difference to the usual plain silver, gold or red foil top. The silver tops congratulate the couple, and demonstrate the poignant quality commemorative objects can take on when things do not play out as expected.



Charles and Diana commemorative milk top and balloons, July 1981



Nicola Macartney's pencil case

Nicola Macartney is the daughter of Sylvia Macartney, a member of the Lewisham Local History Study Group since its formation in 1961. Nicola's pencil case was donated to the archive on the 28th March 1996. The entry in the 'Acquisitions book' reads 'a set of pencils, rubber, pencil sharpener in pink zipper container'. Although this is an accurate description, it doesn't convey the full meaning of the object.

Looking at this object you are reminded of your own pencil case. The well-worn pink fluffy fur and stuffed case, bulging with its array of coloured pencils - each labelled carefully with Nicola Macartney's name - seems familiar. You wonder which rubber worked best, or what pen was borrowed from a friend. It is an evocative object that is inherently personal to its owner.

A pencil case is an assemblage of all the things you need in order to be a pupil and to survive school. To own one is a rite of passage, you need it to progress to the next stage of life. Once it has fulfilled this purpose, it breaks down; parts disperse, as they are no longer needed. This pencil case has been preserved before that moment of dispersal, and as such, it acts as a powerful token of the transition to independence.



Nicola Macartney's pencil case, donated on 28th March 1996

Food Containers

The ‘Duo Can’ - the ready meal for one, was introduced in Britain in 1969. The can is double ended; one end contained rice and the other pre-cooked curry.

The ready meal was an exotic and exciting concept in the 1960s. The British firm Bachelors, launched their ‘Vesta Curry’ ready meal range in 1961. One advert reads ‘Come on a Vesta Package Tour’ advertising a beef risotto from Italy, a chow mein from China, a paella from Spain and a beef curry from India.

The rise of the ready meal in the late 1960s and early 1970s in the UK was largely due to the greater number of women in work, and the rising numbers of divorced couples. Men had to learn how to cook for themselves and adverts directly targeted this audience. The ‘sad’ image of the lonely man eating his ready meal for one, along with increased questioning of the quality and ‘authenticity’ of the ready meal, lead to the downfall of this once ‘aspirational’ commodity. There have been many attempts to rebrand the ready meal since - one of the most important was shifting ready meals to the ‘chilled’ section, giving an impression of freshness.

Carol Sherry, an employee at the ‘Museum of Failed Products’ in Michigan, describes the deep pathos of products that are discontinued:

Every failure embodies its own sad story on the part of designers, marketers and salespeople. It is never far from her mind that real people had their mortgages, their car payments and their family holidays riding on the success of products such as A Touch of Yogurt shampoo.

- Oliver Burkeman, The Guardian, 15th June 2012

*Every failure embeds
and salespeople. It
motivates people, their car
of products. Such as*
- Oliver Burkeman,
2012



Duo-Can, c1969, Trial container, June 1989 donated by June Thorpe

Archive Boundaries

Ken White's pottery; stamps; wallpaper rubbings; door finger plates; street name archive; LLHS display labels; kaleidoscope

'Archive Boundaries' refers both to the physical boundaries of the archive - the meticulously drawn boundary lines of the borough of Lewisham, used to define what's in or out - and to the boundaries that exist within archival practice.

The LLHS archive grew out of a desire to capture and record the history of the immediate area as houses were being demolished and businesses closed down. This makes it an archive of chance finds, sudden bounties, spur of moment reconnaissance, tip offs and improvisations. Out of this enthusiasm and openness the Lewisham boundaries became an important way of maintaining focus and rationale, whilst simultaneously the boundaries of the process of archiving became ever more blurred.

An ideal museum should be a collection of instructive labels, each illustrated by a well-selected specimen.

- Sir William Fowler, 1831-99

Archival practice is a world dense with procedures, systems and rules. Archive objects should be handled as little as possible and their original condition should be preserved. Their structure should be hierarchical. Those entering the archive must never moisten or lick their fingers to turn pages. For those starting an archive afresh, there is an extensive range of taxonomies and approaches available for adoption and replication.

The objects in the 'Archive Boundaries' collection show that archiving can also be the subject of creative freedom. You may choose to collect broken pots out of which facsimiles can be assembled; you may collect objects

whose origins are impossible to discern; you might pluck objects from obscurity and provide them a noble and safe home because you felt they deserved one. In a context where faith in the linearity of historical progress is not what it used to be, and high and low culture fold into one another, there is a strong case for the inventive approach to archiving demonstrated by the LLHS Collection's archivists.

The Ken White collection



South Villas wallpaper rubbings, undated

The ‘South Villas’ were houses on Malham Road and were built around 1858. They were part of the West Kent Park development and were mostly built for tradesmen, craftsmen and labourers. The houses were demolished in the 1970s, but before being pulled down, the archivists salvaged key items of historical interest. The wallpaper rubbings are the result of the physical and immediate act of making an imprint. They evoke the urgent recording of something moments before it is lost.



Repaired china, undated



Selected stamps in chronological order, 1962-1995



Assorted door finger plates from Lewisham, 1960s-present



Street name archive, Lewisham 1974

In January 1974, the LLHS Study Group set out to create a card index of every street, road and lane in the Borough of Lewisham. The group realised this would be a lengthy and endless project as each year old roads disappear, and new developments take place. However they hoped that their record would ensure that 'old names will never be forgotten'.



LLHS badges, programmes and display labels, 1960-present

Lewisham on Film

Learning New Cross, Malcolm Fernandes - a film about New Cross Learning Centre and its volunteers.

Thirteen Dead (Nothing Said), Johnny Osbourne - a tribute to the thirteen youths who died in the New Cross fire.

Lewisham Rail Crash - news reel footage of the aftermath of the Lewisham train crash which took place on 4th December 1957. 90 people were killed and 173 injured, making it the third worst train crash in UK history in terms of death toll.

The Millennium Bug - live BBC footage at the dawn of the new millennium.

Voice for the Voiceless - Dr. William ‘Lez’ Henry and Prof. Les Back discuss the Sound Systems scene in South East London in the 1970’s.

Lover's Rock 1977 - John Goto's portraits of youth in Lewisham. Accompanied by Louisa Mark's ‘Caught you in a lie’.

Panorama Millwall 1977 - BBC Panorama episode exploring the identity of the Millwall “hooligan”.

The New Cross Fire, Black Community Response - A documentary about the feelings and tension felt amongst the black community across the UK after the New Cross Fire.

Buddy Rich in Concert 1983 - recorded for Radio 3 at Lewisham Concert Hall. Buddy Rich was described by Jazz legend, Gene Krupa, as “the greatest drummer ever to have drawn breath.” He was a close friend of Sinatra and played for the queen, Franklin Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan.

BBC News Report on the Save Lewisham's A&E march - on 24th November 2012, 15,000 people marched against the planned closure of Lewisham's A&E.

Lewisham's Operation Blue Boro, Chiba productions - a documentary looking at the underground music community based within Lewisham.

Entertainment Ephemera

Flyers are, arguably, the ultimate ephemeral object - frequently thrown away moments after being read and their information absorbed. They are a low-cost form of mass marketing and an effective means of imparting information. They are a good way of promoting products, events or ideas and can be used by individuals, businesses or organisations.

Flyers and posters have withstood the test of time. They are popular within the digital marketing world because of their ability to target a diverse cross section of the public. Promotion through the use of flyers has a longstanding tradition, stretching back to the 15th century when the Johannes Gutenberg's printing press was created.

Creativity knows no bounds where a flyer or poster is concerned; they inspire art movements, represent a way of life and reflect the popular culture of the time. This collection amply demonstrates this ability, showing the diverse variety of activities, interests and issues and their evolution in the Borough.



Assorted flyers, posters and leaflets from Lewisham, c.1900-2014

Lewisham's People Day

This year it will be celebrating its 30th anniversary, People's Day is a celebration of everything that is great about the borough. It features entertainment from hundreds of performers ranging from musical styles such as hip hop, music hall, reggae indie to arts and crafts, sport activities, a fun fair, children's entertainment, community stalls and international food and drink.

Spike Fest

This comedy festival honours the great Spike Milligan who was a resident of Catford. When asked about heaven Milligan said "I'd like to go there, but if Jeffery Archer is there, I would rather go to Lewisham."

Lewisham Concert Band

Founded in 1967 and still performing to this day. They found fame in the 70's and 80's on Radio 2's 'Friday Night is Music Night' and 'Listen to the band'.





Cyril Smith and Phyllis Sellick

Cyril Smith and Phyllis Sellick were a married couple who performed as a duet on the piano together, Cyril only played with one hand when, in 1956 while in the city of Kharkov in Ukraine at the start of a concert tour of the Soviet Union he suffered a stroke that paralysed his left arm. Notable among the works composed for them was Malcolm Arnold's Concerto for Two Pianos (3 hands).

South Pacific

Programme for Eldorado Operatic Society's performance of South Pacific from 1972. Attached is a note to the archive describing a bomb scare which took place during the performance. It reads: "The programme was interrupted about 9:45. The concert hall was cleared following a phone call, that a bomb had been planted in the building. Everybody filed out calmly and then waited outside the theatre until dispersing for home."



Whitbread beer bottle, United Dairies milk bottles

Forest Hill brewery

Forest Hill Brewery began around 1867 in Perry Vale, between The Foresters' Tavern (now All Inn One) and Church Vale. In 1924 it was taken over by Whitbread & Co who owned over 60 public houses in London including the Anchor Brewery on Lewisham Road. In 1926 the building was taken over by United Dairies and converted into a bottling plant.

United Dairies

In 1915, the war resulted in a shortage of men and food supplies for cows and horses. This resulted in the increase in running costs. As a result three of the main dairy wholesalers in the London region: Wiltshire United Dairies, Metropolitan and Great Western Dairies, and the Dairy Supply Company, decided to merge. They called themselves United Dairies and, by the end of the war they had an 80% share of whole sale trade and a monopoly on the market. In 1917 they were accused of keeping the price of milk artificially high. However, by the 1920's it was thought that as a result of this it had actually helped keep many smaller firms with higher costs in business. In the 1920s/1930s despite facing growing competition they still managed to dominate the market. But, in the 1950's the company became too large and suffered from poor management and, as a result, talks began with Cow and Gate to merge. In 1959 Unigate was formed.

The bottling plant in Lewisham closed and the building was vacant from the mid 1930's until it suffered severe damage during the war. As a result the rest of it was torn down and a housing estate was built on the site during the 1950s/60s.

Lewisham's lost cinemas

The first ‘moving pictures’ were shown in Lewisham on the 18th September 1896 at the Lewisham Art Club and from there the number of venues grew. In 1930 it had over twenty, with local residence visiting the cinema up to three times a week. As the Television became increasingly popular the number of cinemas began to decline. This eventually led to Lewisham becoming one of the only two boroughs in London not to have a cinema.

Prince of Wales Picture Playhouse

Formally the site of the Electric Palace, the Prince of Wales Picture Playhouse opened on 9th October 1922 and had a maximum capacity of 2000. It was the 27th cinema designed by prestigious cinema architect John Stanley Beard. The grand opening was performed by the Major of Lewisham and attended by Hollywood star Mae Marsh. Marsh claimed the cinema was, ‘quite as beautiful as any that they had in America’. In 1929 the Picture Playhouse ran an advert saying;

See and hear our screen speak and sing... Commencing June 10th ... Al Jolson in ‘The Singing Fool’. It’s so lifelike, so different, so human.

The ‘Talkies’ had arrived in London and the Prince of Wales was the first to show them.

Lewisham Odeon

Originally named the Gaumont Palace it opened in 1932. It had 3,050 seats and was among the UK’s largest cinemas. It was near key bus, tram and train stations so easily drew the crowds necessary to fill it. After a fire, in 1962 the building re-opened under the new name of the Lewisham Odeon.

As well as showing films, it was also a music venue. Artists such as Nat King Cole, Johnny Cash and The Rolling Stones, played there. In 1963 the Beatles performed there twice. Residents claimed that the screaming fans could be heard from half a mile away. With cinema attendance on the decline the Odeon struggled to fill its huge number of seats. It eventually closed on February 14th 1981. The final film showing was 'Prom night' and 'Love at First Bite'. The building was demolished in 1991 to allow for road widening.

Lewisham Hippodrome

The Lewisham Hippodrome Theatre opened on the 13th February 1911 and had a seating capacity of 3,222 and played host to many of the big names of the day. In May 1927 the Theatre was taken over by Granada Theatres who converted it into a Cinema in September 1927. It was then turned back into a live venue in 1930, only to close completely in March 1931. In 1933 it was being used for live theatre, with films only showing on a Sunday. After this it had a string of opening and closings and its use frequently changed back and forth from a music hall to a cinema. It was badly damaged during the war and was pulled down completely in June 1960.

New Cross Palais de Danse

The New Cross Super Kinema was a purpose built cinema and opened in 1925, a cinema on the ground floor and New Cross Palais de Danse on the first. In the 1950's it became known as the Gaumont which closed in 1960. The Palais de Danse became an Irish dance hall called The Harp Club which then became the Venue - which it remains to this day. The Venue has played host to bands such as Oasis and Hole, a performance which Kurt Cobain was in the audience for.

Salus Populi Suprema Lex

The Borough of Lewisham's motto translates, as 'The welfare of the people is the most important consideration'. The people of Lewisham have a long history of standing up for what they believe in. The community of Lewisham played an important role during the general strike of 1926. Workers joined the only general strike Britain has ever seen, supporting the miners who had been locked out of the pits until they accepted drastic wage cuts.

On 30th May 1977, the police staged dawn raids in South East London. They arrested twenty-one black youths, claiming they were responsible for 90% of the street crime that had taken place in the area during the last six months. Appearing at Camberwell Green Magistrate's Court, they were charged with various felonies including conspiracy to rob. Shortly afterwards 'The Lewisham 21 Defense Committee' was set up in protest against these heavy-handed police tactics. These events reflected the racial tension that was growing at the time, tension that would eventually lead to the demonstration now referred to as, 'The Battle of Lewisham' which took place on the 13th August 1977.

On the 18th January 1981, an arson attack on a house party in Lewisham resulted in thirteen young people being killed. On 25th January, a meeting was held in New Cross, attended by over one thousand people. The meeting concluded with those in attendance marching to the scene of the tragedy, and blocking New Cross Road for several hours. As a result, 'The New Cross Massacre Action Committee' was set up. Membership numbers grew when the police investigation announced that there was no evidence of arson and that the fire was believed to be accidental.

In February, the government and the royal family sent messages of condolence to the families of the victims of a Dublin nightclub fire. No such messages of support or concern had been sent to the Lewisham families and this caused great anger and resentment. In response the committee organised a demonstration on 2nd March. Twenty thousand people marched from Fordham Park to Hyde Park in an attempt to draw national attention to what had happened.

In 1979/80 the local area health authority refused to accept central governments cuts of £5.25 million to its health services - their stand was successful. History repeated itself in 2012 when the hospital was threatened with the closure of many of its services, including A&E and maternity. As a result the group 'Save Lewisham A&E' was set up, involving local organisations, residents, doctors, nurses, therapists and patients. The Government was taken to court and after numerous demonstrations, including a march involving twenty five thousand people on 26th January 2013, the High Court found that the closures were unlawful. The issue is still unresolved, as on the 22nd August 2013 the Government lodged an appeal against the Lewisham judgment.

It is not only Lewisham hospital that has been facing huge cuts, many other services across Lewisham have been hit hard by the Coalition Government. Amongst them was New Cross Learning Centre. Fortunately for the residents of New Cross, two friends Kathy and Gill, refused to allow it to disappear. They came up with a plan supported by a petition, signed by nearly six thousand people. This ensured that the library would survive and as a result it is now open four days a week.

The unwavering fighting spirit of Lewisham is demonstrated through the objects shown here...

Save Lewisham Hospital films

A Victory for Lewisham Hospital, is a Victory for Everyone, Stuart Monro - a short film that documents the hard work that went into winning the fight against the government and acknowledges that the fight is not yet over.

Report of Lewisham People's Commission - on Saturday 29th June 2013 the Save Lewisham Hospital campaign held the Lewisham People's Commission of Inquiry, chaired by Michael Mansfield QC, into government plans to downgrade Lewisham Hospital. The People's Commission heard evidence about the downgrading of Lewisham Hospital and what it will mean for the community. Evidence from the following was presented to the panel, Professor Colin Leys, Professor Allyson Pollock, Leading GPs, hospital clinicians and nurses, Patients and patient representatives, Lewisham Council, Church and community representatives.



Save Lewisham Hospital protestors, January 2013

We would like to thank the archivists at the Lewisham Local History Society Collection; Sylvia Macartney, Steve Grindlay, Daphne Treverton and George Arthur. Their support, generosity and encouragement throughout the project has gone above and beyond what we could have hoped for.

We would also like to thank Dr Jenny Doussan for her support and input. Thanks also go to Alison McGregor from the Goldsmiths' Careers service, the Goldsmiths' Enterprise Fund, Santander and Kathy and Gill from New Cross Learning Centre.

