



Hibbert Almshouses

This year's summer party is to be held, by kind invitation of the trustees and residents, in the garden of the Hibbert Almshouses in Wandsworth Road.

A tablet on the central pediment of the building records that '*These houses for eight aged women were erected by Sarah Hibbert and Mary Ann Hibbert in grateful remembrance of their father William Hibbert Esq. long an inhabitant of Clapham anno domini 1859*'.

William Hibbert was the younger brother of George Hibbert MP and West India Merchant, well known as an anti-Abolitionist, who lived on North Side. William was also briefly involved with the family's Jamaica plantation but an immense lottery win allowed him to become a gentleman of leisure. He had a house on Clapham Common South Side, from which Mary Ann painted some attractive watercolours of the Common.

The Almshouses, designed by Edward I'Anson and now listed (Grade II), continue to accommodate eight people. The houses are small, but each has a sitting room, bedroom, kitchen and bathroom – and a surprisingly elegant staircase. They are administered by a charitable trust which seeks, within limited resources, to maintain the fabric of the building and to make sure that, as far as possible, the houses meet residents' needs and current standards. The interiors of two houses have recently been substantially renovated, and plans are being drawn up for work on various aspects of the exterior – including the replacement of the missing finial from the western turret.



Photo: Jill Cramphorn

Our regular monthly meetings are held at Clapham Manor Primary School, Belmont Road, SW4 0BZ. The entrance to the school in Stonhouse Street, through the new building, is NOT open for our evening meetings. Use the Belmont Road entrance, cross the playground and enter the building on the right. The hall is open from 7.30 pm when coffee and tea are normally available. The talk begins promptly at 8 pm and most meetings finish by 9.30 pm. Meetings are free and non-members are very welcome.

Wednesday 20 June

A Dream Come True, the history and restoration of Brixton Windmill. Richard Santhiri, Vice Chairman and a founder of the Friends of Windmill Gardens will tell us about the 14-year struggle which has finally led to the restoration of the Windmill.

Restoration was completed with the help of a £2m Heritage Lottery Fund grant, and it has just been announced that the Windmill has won a Museum and Heritage Award for conservation and restoration.

July and August meetings are replaced by the following walks:

Wednesday 18 July

A guided walk along Clapham Park Road to Park Hill and the surrounding area. Led by Peter Jefferson Smith.

Wednesday 15 August

A guided walk round Clapham Old Town, the heart of historic Clapham. Led by Anne Wilson.

For both walks meet at the clock tower outside Clapham Common Underground Station at 6.30 pm. Walks last about 1.5 hours and are free of charge.

Wednesday 4 July

Summer Party at Hibbert Almshouses, Wandsworth Road, SW8 3JF. (See details alongside) **Apply for your tickets now** on the form on the back of this newsletter.

Do not alight here Ben Pedroch, author of *Do Not Alight Here: Walking London's Lost Underground and Railway Stations* will be at Clapham Books, 120 Clapham High Street, SW4 7UH on **Thursday 21 June** at 7 pm. The book highlights London's disused stations, linking them together into 12 self-guided walks, which also cover deep-level shelters, abandoned mainlines, the ghost stations of Southwark and the London Bridge viaduct. The talk will concentrate on walks in and around Clapham.

Clapham Chamber Concerts

On **Friday 29 June** cellist Sophie Rivlin will perform a Haydn cello concerto in Clapham Chamber Concerts first orchestral concert to date. St. Paul's Church, Rectory Grove, SW4 0EA at 7.30 pm. Tickets £10 (concessions £8) on the door. For more details and to join the mailing list email claphamchamberconcerts@gmail.com.

Clapham Old Town Regeneration Project

There was an audience of over 70 for our May meeting designed to update us on this major local project. Councillor Nigel Haselden started the evening with a short review of the history of the project, much as described in the April newsletter (NL 346). It is jointly funded by Lambeth Council and Transport for London (TfL), who need to improve the physical organisation of the bus stops and stands to comply with current codes and standards. In the process TfL are contributing £2.54 million of the £3 million project to rationalise the road space, reduce the dominance of traffic and improve the environment for pedestrians, cyclists and local business.

Stage 1 has taken three years of design and negotiation to arrive at arrangements which are operationally acceptable to them whilst retaining enough potential for Lambeth to improve the public realm. However, TfL have stated that the scheme concept should be looked at again as the focus of the proposed improvements in the Old Town area has changed with the need to address various stakeholders' requirements. Marks Barfield Architects (a local firm celebrated for the design of the London Eye) have joined the team for Stage 2 and are currently working on the review.

David Marks then gave a well illustrated presentation which he stressed was to elicit the views of all present, nothing being yet 'set in stone'. He started by saying that the concept review will include a response to the following questions:

1. What are the problems, opportunities and issues we are looking to address?
2. What are the scheme objectives and benefits we want to realise (e.g. connectivity, vehicle dominance and speeds, personal security, social exclusion, collisions, footfall, accessibility, conditions for cycling, pedestrians, public transport interchange, etc)?

He continued with a visual appraisal of Old Town as it is now, slightly run down, and deficient in a number of respects after decades of neglect. Historic photographs showed a predominantly pedestrian space transforming over time into one dominated by roadways, buses and cars. Excessive speeding is now a frequent safety risk. He likened it to an 'outside room' in contrast to the open character of the Common and drew attention to the essential nature of the connections and the views.

He described the main objectives of the exercise as being to reverse the dominance of vehicular traffic and its negative impact on the environment, resolve the accessibility and organisation of the buses, and to reclaim the 'place' for pedestrians with wider pavements, less street clutter, appropriate paving and street furniture, safe crossings and better links with the Common. It is the next phase of the larger project, the first phase of which has been successfully completed with the upgrading of Venn Street.

To enable a discussion on the bus-standing issue and the respective merits of 'live' and 'dead' bus stands (again, see NL 346) David compared layouts to illustrate the alternatives for buses to wait, stand and manoeuvre into and out of the central space of the Old Town. The 'dead' stand solution consumes less

space, leaving more space for creation of a landscaped area for people. In response to a suggestion otherwise, David confirmed that TfL are 'indifferent' and 'neutral' as to the choice between the main bus options because they both work from an operational point of view, though some in TfL have expressed a preference for 'dead' stands as offering the bus drivers greater flexibility in which stand to use. It is obvious that the design of the environment, which follows on from the bus decision, needs the rethink that TfL require.

To that end David promoted an open-ended discussion about ideas and current thinking. The proposal for a two-way traffic gyratory on the west side of a piazza leading up to the old library, which would take most of the through traffic away from the east side and allow a much quieter carriageway with the piazza better connected to the Grafton Square side, would also serve to slow the through traffic entering from North Side. Not everyone agreed. The means by which traffic coming from the north is effectively diverted has yet to be convincingly resolved. Congestion and parking along The Pavement are an issue, though the problem may have more to do with the organisation of traffic signalling at Clapham Cross. It was generally appreciated that the pedestrian flow is greatest along the east side, which supported the idea of a narrower carriageway there with an overall pedestrian landscape treatment. The need to satisfy the pedestrian cross-flow from east to west and to improve the pavements generally was also expressed, as was the need to make cycling safer along well-used local journey routes.

The management of the 'night-time economy' was raised. Councillor Haselden promised that the Old Town would not be allowed to become the front garden of the three pubs. The design of the space should mitigate this. The choice of outdoor seating and furniture outside pubs and restaurants is also an issue which needs controlling.

David pointed out that the need for landscaping and re-design of these spaces with more thought for people is a real opportunity for major improvement. He showed how the capitalisation of hitherto unexploited views in and out of the centre is a key factor. In particular the opportunities arising from the re-use of the disused toilet block by the Polygon, perhaps as a café with toilets available under the Community Toilet Scheme (a borough wide scheme to improve and increase access to public toilets for residents and visitors across the borough), suggest an opening up of the space and linkage to the Common. Traffic circulation and parking around the Polygon are clearly subject to some debate. There was one popular and heartfelt request for the thinking to come more to terms with the character of Old Town and its surrounding architecture.

This was a largely open-minded discussion which, with perhaps one audible exception, strongly favoured seizing this opportunity of doing something rather than nothing. One member still preferred no buses in the square at all. However the mood of the meeting seemed generally receptive to the principles in mind. We are asked to keep abreast of design development at www.lambeth.gov.uk/ClaphamOldTown and to address comments or questions to the project manager, GWright@lambeth.gov.uk.

The Gas Governor Our mystery photo in the April newsletter was of the gas governor installation now buried outside The Windmill on the Common. The work is taking longer than expected, partly because of work which had to be redone, and partly because of thefts of materials and even very large pieces of equipment necessitating the introduction of CCTV surveillance.

Doctor Cameron The other mystery picture in the April newsletter of Doctor Cameron's car outside his house, was in Elms Road.

New Members We have recently welcomed the following new members: David Cecil, Patrick Eley and Ushi Bagga, Marks Barfield Ltd, Ciaran O'Meara, and Diana, David and James Thompson.

Pamela Hansford Johnson



At the opening of the Pamela Hansford Johnson exhibition at Clapham Library Lady Avebury (on right) gave a talk about her mother's work. Photo: George Owen

The Old Clapham Library on North Side was packed for the launch of an exhibition about local writer Pamela Hansford Johnson. The exhibition, timed to mark the centenary of her birth on 29 May 1912, was opened by her daughter Lindsay, Lady Avebury, on Thursday 10 May.

Born in London, Pamela lived with her mother's theatrical family at 53 Battersea Rise until she was 22, the year that she wrote her first novel, *This Bed Thy Centre*. (Her father, who worked for the Baro Kano railway on the Gold Coast, now Ghana, died when she was 12.) She attended Clapham County Girls' Grammar School, and had her first poems published while still a pupil, continuing to write while later working as a stenographer for a bank. As a teenager, she was briefly the girlfriend of the poet Dylan Thomas but went on to marry first Neil Stewart in 1936 and then the novelist CP Snow in 1950.

A prolific writer, her lifetime output included 27 novels, seven short plays for the theatre and radio, short stories, critical works, sociological studies and a memoir.

The exhibition includes family photographs, documents, hand-written manuscripts, original copies of some of her books, posters, and even her own typewriter, a vintage Imperial Good Companion.

Some 60 people attended the opening party, organised by Omnibus, the organisation hoping to run the old library as a community-led arts centre when the library is relocated to the new building on Clapham High Street. Many took advantage of the discounted price to buy copies of *This Bed Thy Centre*, which has just been reissued by Five Leaves Publications. A story about adolescent love and sex (which Lady Avebury explained her mother had imagined, being a virgin still when she wrote it), the novel caused a stir when it first appeared – for its content, its title (endowed by Dylan Thomas) and the author's young age – and was banned from Battersea Rise Library.

Curiously, the visitors' book for the exhibition includes the entry: 'Aeronwy Thomas, May, North London. Thanks for the pleasure of seeing my father's photo, circa 1934'. As Dylan Thomas's daughter Aeronwy died in 2009, Omnibus is intrigued to know who signed the book in her name.

Omnibus has submitted its bid to run the Old Library as a community-led arts centre. Lambeth Council is now considering all the shortlisted bids for both community and commercial proposals, and expects to announce the successful bidder in early to mid-June.

Ruth Ling

An evening of Ballet

On **Wednesday 20 June** the London Russian Ballet School will perform in the gardens of Trinity Hospice. A champagne and canapé reception at 6.30 pm will be followed by a stunning gala performance at 7.15 pm with the event

finishing at around 9 pm. Tickets are £20 (Concessions £15). There is also a family ticket available for £45 which permits entry for 2 adults and up to 3 children. Go to www.trinityhospice.org.uk/ballet to purchase your tickets, call Catherine on 020 7787 1012 or email csykes@trinityhospice.org.uk

Clapham Common Bandstand

The following events will take place on the bandstand during June:

Saturday 2 June South London Saxophone Quartet

Sunday 3 June The No Frills Band

Saturday 9 June Paddy Egan Band

Sunday 10 June London Consorts of Winds

Saturday 16 June London Gay Symphonic Winds

Sunday 17 June South London Concert Band

Saturday 23 June Merton Concert Band

Saturday 30 June In Spiral Saxes

All concerts start at 3 pm and are FREE. For any changes and details of future events go to www.lambeth.gov.uk/bandstands or see signs near the bandstand.

Going for Gold

On **Sunday 24 June** from 11am to 5 pm a summer party for all the family will be held to celebrate the Olympics at Dulwich Picture Gallery, Gallery Road, SE21 7AD and at Herne Hill Velodrome, a legacy site from the 1948 London Olympics.

There will be music in Christ's Chapel and bands in the Gallery garden with performers from the local schools, traditional fairground amusements for children and ArtPlay in the Sackler room. Falcons will fly at 12.30 pm and 3.30 pm and they should circle the giant sculptures by Philip Haas in the garden.

A grand parade of veteran cycles, including penny-farthings, will leave the Velodrome at 11.30 am going along Burbage Road to the Gallery. They will then be on display in the Old Grammar School field. Tommy Godwin, a winner of two bronze medals in 1948 will speak in the Linbury room, where memorabilia from the 1948 Olympics will be on display, and he will lead the parade back to the velodrome at 2.30 pm. Films of cycling events will be shown throughout the day.

The gallery café will be open and there will be food stalls and bars in the garden. Entry by Gala Programme (£1 per family) includes entry to the permanent collection at the Gallery and to the velodrome. More details on the website www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.

The new Library

There is still no definite date for the opening of the new library in Clapham High Street. More news next month, we hope.

Hike and Bike

Hike and Bike the Borough of Lambeth takes place this year on **Sunday 24 June** from 10 am to 4 pm. This free, family event will combine the Festival of Walks with Bike the Borough to provide a day of fun for everyone. A well-signed cycle route will be set out around Lambeth which can be ridden independently or with a led group.

There will be a guided walk from each of the hubs – Archbishops Park, Clapham Common, Streatham Common and Brockwell Park. The Clapham Common walk, organised by the Clapham Society and led by Derrick Johnson and Jennifer Everett will leave from the bandstand on the Common at 2.30 pm. A brief history of the Common will be followed by information about the trees and wildlife. Our free map of the Common and new free guide to the trees on the Common will be available.

All participants can pick up a passport from any of the four hubs. Once stamped, the passports go in to a prize draw to win a bike and other goodies. Get on your bike or out on a walk and discover the beauty of Lambeth. To find out more and to register go to www.biketheborough.co.uk.

Trinity's Toddle

On **Friday 29 June** Trinity Hospice will hold its second annual sponsored Toddle. Meet at Trinity at 9.15 am and set off for the Toddle across the Common at 10 am, finishing at the bandstand where all children will receive a certificate to celebrate their achievement. If you would like your toddler to take part telephone Catherine on 020 7787 1012 or email csykes@trinityhospice.org.uk.

On the Common: Events

After our May Newsletter had gone to press we learned that the Pride House event, which was expected to run from 25 July until 12 August, had been cancelled by the organisers. The reasons given were lack of sponsorship and withdrawal of headline acts. The Eastern Electrics event which had been booked for Saturday 4 August under the same Premises License returned once more to a 'secret location'. We will continue to follow up the legality of such sub-letting. This means that the only confirmed large event for this summer will be the South West Four music/dance event which will be held on the August Bank Holiday weekend.

On the Common: Problem Dogs – and their owners

Law-abiding dog walkers, of which there are many on Clapham Common, are becoming increasingly concerned about the London wide problem of uncontrolled status dogs. Mr Ali Zaffar has taken the lead in setting up a group to try to ensure the safety of all members of the community, including the dogs. The group includes a highly respected local vet, an experienced dog trainer, the Safer Neighbourhood Police, Lambeth officers and representatives of bodies such as our own. The next meeting of the group is on **Saturday 2 June** at the bandstand starting at 11 am. Ali Zaffar can be contacted at zaffarmeister@gmail.com. Linked in with this initiative will be a micro-chipping event organised by Battersea Dogs and Cats Home, probably during the last week in June.

Open Gardens

Under the National Gardens Scheme the garden at 17 Crescent Lane, SW4 9PT, is open on **Sunday 17 June** from 3 pm to 6 pm. This is a mature tranquil garden, which starts with a long lawn, edged with borders, and opens out into a large square lawn, surrounded by roses, shrubs and trees, with a pond, backed by a yew hedge. Homemade teas and wine.

On **Saturday 9 June** and **Sunday 10 June** over 200 gardens are taking part in Open Garden Squares Weekend. The full list is on www.opensquares.org where you can also book a ticket for £9, valid to visit as many gardens as you can manage in the two days. Among the many gardens open in south London are the Queen Elizabeth Hall roof garden (SE1 8XX), Trinity Church Square in Southwark (SE1 4HT) and Durand Gardens in Stockwell (SW9 0PS).

Art + Cake in SW4

The next local event for lovers of art, craft and cake is on **Saturday 30 June** from 9.30 am to 6.30 pm. This market offers designs from local artists, a chance to indulge in some tea and cake and get to know local artists and designers. Art + Cake is at Clapham Methodist Church, 121 Clapham High Street, SW4 7JR. To join the mailing list email artbazaar@thesw4magazine.co.uk.

Wandsworth Heritage Festival

There are still many interesting events to come in this festival, including a talk by Peter Jefferson Smith about the local long-distance runner Violet Piercy, on **Wednesday 6 June** at 6 pm at Battersea Library, 265 Lavender Hill, SW11 1JB. Details of the festival which continues until 10 June are at www.wandsworth.gov.uk/libraries.

Chairman

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If you have any queries about **The Clapham Society** or have news of local events, please contact the appropriate person below:

Planning Matters

45 Rodenhurst Road, SW4 8AE

Email: pjashford@yahoo.co.uk

Common and Open Spaces

22 Ivey Road, SW4 0EW

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Newsletter and Publications

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Details of meetings, activities and a full list of our publications are on **The Clapham Society** website at www.claphamsociety.com.

Ticket application form

Summer Party at Hibbert Almshouses, 715-729 Wandsworth Road, London, SW8 3JF on Wednesday 4 July from 6.30 pm to 8.30 pm. Drinks and canapés.

Please send me.....tickets @ £12 each. Cheque, payable to the Clapham Society, for with stamped addressed envelope to: Alyson Wilson, 22 Crescent Grove, SW4 7AH.

Name.....Telephone number.....