

The Clapham Society Newsletter



Issue 352

November 2012

Claphamland Winter Fair

The fairground company George Irvin, whose funfair has been an annual event on the Common for many years, is proposing to set up a Claphamland Winter Fair on the Common during the Christmas school holidays. The Fair is to include a skating rink, fairground rides and stalls. The same company is responsible for the Hyde Park Winter Wonderland, so this may be a reduced, South London version. Along with other local groups the Society has been asked for its views.

We commented that we could see what made the event desirable – that it would be fun, perhaps especially for families with children, and that it would raise much-needed money for the Council. But there are aspects of the plans we don't like, and some that we think just must not go ahead. The proposals are for the area of the Common between Holy Trinity Church and Long Road to be fenced off. Including the time taken for setting-up and removal, the Fair would occupy the site from 8 December to 8 January inclusive.

The layout plan shows fences and structures where there are, in fact, trees. We pointed out not only that this is unrealistic, but if they try to make it work, the risk to those trees. The proposals speak of tracking to protect the ground, and a deposit to re-instate it: in the light of past experience and the current example of the morass left by 'Got To Dance', we were not convinced. We described how that part of the Common is a resource for people getting away from Clapham's busiest streets, and we asked whether the Fair really needs to be there, when there are parts of the Common that have hard surfaces and no trees.

Alison Macnair

Wednesday 16 January

575 Wandsworth Road, The National Trust's latest acquisition in London, is due to open to the public in March 2013. To prepare the building for opening, major building works were carried out as well as conservation work on the interiors. This talk will illustrate the work that was done and explain some of the techniques and thought processes behind the decisions that were made. You can check progress on the work now on the blog at 575wandsworthroadnt.wordpress.com.

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 21 November

The Cinema Museum. Martin Humphries, co-founder and Director of the Cinema Museum will give an illustrated talk about the history of the Lambeth Workhouse where the museum is currently housed, where Charlie Chaplin was once an inmate, and the history and development of the museum which is devoted to the history of cinema-going. The museum has a superb collection of objects from cinemas that no longer survive, many of them art deco. They also have a large photographic archive relating to cinema buildings so some material on Clapham cinemas will be included in the presentation.



There is no meeting in December. The full schedule for 2013 will be shown in the next newsletter (December 2012/January 2013) but note the first two meetings of 2013 in your diary now.

Wednesday 13 February

Edmund Bird, Heritage Advisor to the Mayor of London's Greater London Authority and Transport for London, former Head of Conservation at Lambeth and Camden, will appraise the architecture of Lambeth, with a special focus on Clapham, of the period between the wars (1918-1939) – an era of enormous change with new building styles and new building types appearing throughout the borough as Art Deco, vernacular, Neo-Georgian and early examples of the Modern Movement all jostled for position, transforming much of Lambeth.

Greening a Terraced House

Peter and Jenny Cobley will be known to many members as long-standing Clapham residents, and in his second talk to the Society (his first was about Kent windmills) Peter described the process of renovating their mid-Victorian terrace house to meet the sort of environmental standards that we now expect.

The house in question, in Broadhinton Road, dates from the 1860s and its external appearance has changed little since then. Internally, it had been subject to various adaptations over the years, and plainly a good deal of work was going to be needed both to improve its energy performance and more generally to bring it into line with its new owners' needs, while respecting its appearance and integrity. The house was built to a standard plan of the period: basically a 'two up, two down' with a dining kitchen, bathroom and further bedroom in the narrower rear section. Having lived for a year in the house in its unaltered state to get a feel for what worked and what didn't, the Cobleys decided to stick with that broad layout, but to make alterations that would give

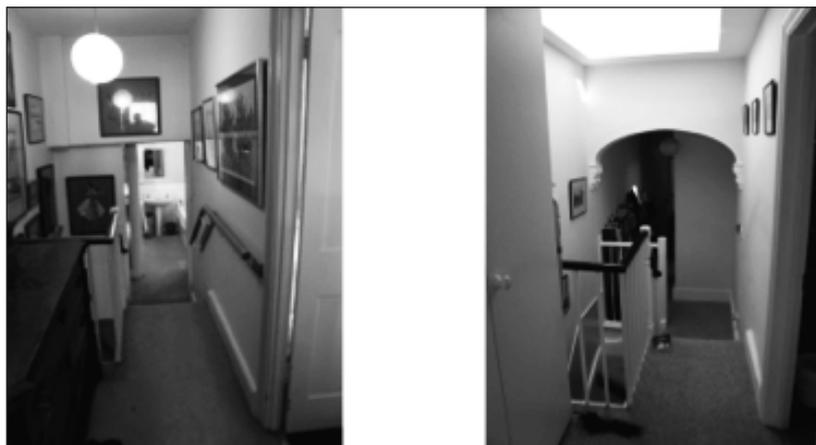
- more light in the rear rooms
- an en-suite shower/WC for the main bedroom
- a modern open plan kitchen/dining area
- a way of preventing a through view from the street to the back of the house
- a better view of the garden from the house
- a contemporary design at the rear, while retaining the character of the frontage.

They then looked around for sources of help and advice. Having been rejected by Grand Designs as 'too well organised', they found useful guidance on Lambeth's website about the probable acceptability of various design possibilities, and used this in preparing a 'design statement' encapsulating their objectives. As an architect, Peter was well-placed to develop plans to meet the overall objectives; but to achieve the further aim set out in the design statement of minimising the house's running costs, he had sought specialist help from Susan Venner, of architects Venner Lucas, who then told us about various ways in which the house's environmental impact had been reduced. Her starting point was 'insulation, insulation, insulation', and the first steps had been heavy-duty roof and wall insulation and efficient (under-floor) heating, followed by the creation of a green roof and an underground rainwater storage tank allowing 'grey' water to be used in the low-flush loos. She stressed that while there was huge interest in retrofitting energy-saving devices such as solar and photovoltaic panels, wind turbines and heat pumps, such measures needed to be carefully chosen to suit each house. None should be considered until the basic steps (insulation first!) had been fully implemented, and the likely impact and value for money of each needed careful evaluation.

So far, the Cobleys reckoned that their house was working well, and that their original objectives were generally being met. There would always be scope for improvement – further green measures in hand included increasing bio-diversity by planting more fruit trees and setting up a bee-hive – but even after a short time, it was clear that energy and water consumption had been significantly reduced while comfort and amenity had improved – and the 'before and after' photos of the frontage showed that this had been achieved at no detriment to its appearance.



The rear view - before and after



The landing - before and after



View from the first floor window - before and after

From the many questions that followed the talk, it was plain that members reckon they have a lot to learn from this very successful project.

Jill Cramphorn

Peter Cobley has compiled a list of contractors and suppliers used for this work. If you would like a copy send your email request to Maev Sullivan maevsullivan@gmail.com

Eden Garden

The Royal Horticultural Society's annual Dig Together Day is on **Sunday 25 November**. A hedge of 60 mixed native British saplings will be planted in the garden and a Royal Oak! To mark the event, there will be activities for young children and refreshments available. Do come and join in. It should be a fun morning! All morning from 9 am at the Eden Community Garden, Rectory Grove, SW4.

Wandsworth Museum

Wandsworth Museum is currently showing 60 watercolours from its permanent collection in an exhibition entitled *Painting Wandsworth*. The works, dating from 1770 to 1925 trace the transformation of the borough from a series of villages to an industrialised suburb. It includes pastoral landscapes, long-demolished buildings and vanished riverscapes. This is a fascinating exhibition and well worth a visit.

The Museum has several activities planned: for half term the *Big Draw* on **Tuesday 30 October** and **Wednesday 31 October** from 1 pm to 4 pm, when families are invited to make their own drawings inspired by the paintings in the exhibition. On **Saturday 24 November** *Flying Machines* celebrates the fact that Battersea was the home of the first aeroplane factory, and Wandsworth Gas Works was a popular launch point for hot air balloons in the 1880s.

Starting on **Thursday 8 November** activities for under 5-year olds will be held on alternate Thursday mornings. For information about all these events, opening hours, and charges go to www.wandsworthmuseum.co.uk or telephone 020 870 6060.

Light up a Life

Trinity Hospice's popular annual Light up a Life event on is on **Thursday 13 December** this year. The evening is an opportunity for the local community to come together to celebrate the lives of loved ones and remember those who are no longer with us. Everyone is welcome – simply arrive at Trinity Hospice at 6.45 pm for the lighting of the tree before joining a candle-lit procession to Holy Trinity Church for the service at 7.15 pm. The evening will include guest speakers, and guests are encouraged to stay afterwards for a glass of wine and a mince pie.

For more information about this event please contact Rose Tyler on 020 7787 1087 or rt Tyler@trinityhospice.org.uk or visit www.trinityhospice.org.uk/lightupalife.

Get involved The Friends of Windmill Gardens are looking for volunteers to help keep Brixton Windmill open to the public regularly. There are many different ways to help: stewarding, guiding, fundraising, gardening, first aid and teaching.

The Windmill is open from April to October and guides and stewards are asked to be available for four to six days during that period. They will receive training in guiding, the history of windmills, and the necessary health and safety rules. For details email info@brixtonwindmill.org.uk, telephone 07587 170029 or go to www.brixtonwindmill.org.

Clapham Chamber Concerts

This group's next concert is on **Friday 23 November** at 7.30 pm, when The Rubix Ensemble (Amanda Lake - violin; Jessica Maryon Davis - piano; Sophie Rivlin - cello; Romola Smith - clarinet) will play Bartok's *Contrasts*; Ravel's *Duo for Violin & Cello*; Ades's *Catch*. St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove, London SW4 0DX. Tickets on the door: £10, concessions £8 and children £3. Cash bar for wine and soft drinks.

Amanda Lake and Jessie Maryon Davis, locally-educated, young professional musicians, have established an annual series of chamber concerts with the aim of bringing a broad range of affordable and accessible music to the community they grew up in. The Rubix's last concert for CCC was a stunning performance of Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time*. For details of future concerts and to join the mailing list go to www.claphamchamberconcerts.co.uk.

The Good Neighbour

Battersea Arts Centre, the former Battersea Town Hall, is offering an unusual opportunity to discover the hidden stories of Battersea – an adventure which might take you through the hidden passages of the former Town Hall or out into the streets of Battersea. There are three performances daily until 4 November. For more details and tickets go to www.bac.org.uk/whats-on/good-neighbour/ or telephone 020 7223 2223.

Sew Over It

Lisa Comfort who runs our local Sewing Café has recently published *The Sew Over It Book*, which is full of sewing projects to enhance your wardrobe, from ideas for customising clothes to making accessories. This is in addition to the various classes, individual tuition and events she offers at the shop at 78 Landor Road, SW9 9HP, where you can, of course, also buy the book. Telephone 020 7326 0376 or email info@sewoverit.co.uk.

Winter Walking

Now that the south London guided walk season is over why not try a guided walk just across the river? *Trails of the City* offer historic walks in Westminster, St James's Park and Marylebone. For full details go to www.trailsofthecity.co.uk.

The many French people living in our area, or others wishing to improve their language skills, may be interested in French guided walks offered by *A Nous Deux Londres*. Some walks are devised and led by our member and Blue Badge guide, Mary Coales, who regularly leads our own Clapham walks. Areas covered include Westminster, Southwark, Covent Garden, the City and St James's. Details and bookings at www.anousdeuxlondres.co.uk.

Another alternative, of course, is to take yourself on a self-guided walk of the Clapham area. We now have seven self-guided walk leaflets, which have evolved from walks led by Clapham Society local historians over the last few years. Each leaflet costs £1 or you can buy all seven for £5.

For details of the area covered by each walk, and how to order, look at the back page of the Annual Report which was distributed with the October newsletter or go to the publications page of our website: www.claphamsociety.com/clapsocpublications.html.

The Soprano Returns

Local soprano, Patricia Ninian, presents an evening of singing at St Pauls Church, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DX on **Friday 16 November** at 7.30 pm, in aid of the St Paul's Community Appeal. Tickets £18, concessions and under 16 £12, to include wine and nibbles, available on the door or in advance from niniansleigh@btinternet.com.

Bonfire Party

The annual Bonfire Party at St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove is on **Saturday 3 November** at 6 pm. Tickets are available from the Parish Office. Check opening times on 020 7622 2128.

New Members

We have recently welcomed the following new members: Peter Johnston, Duncan and Katherine Lillie, John Ost and 575 Wandsworth Road (National Trust).

Wandsworth Historian

As always, the current issue of *Wandsworth Historian* has some fascinating articles. The story of a V2 Incident in Usk Road in 1945 is accompanied by some evocative war-time photographs, including one of a small boy in the wreckage of his bombed out street, cuddling his toy elephant.

And how many of us knew that the French philosopher, Voltaire, lived in Wandsworth in 1726-28, where he led '... an obscure and charming life... without going to London, and quite given over to indolence and friendship.' Recent research indicates that the house was located roughly on the site of the present Sainsbury's in Garratt Lane.

The *Wandsworth Historian* is published by the Wandsworth Historical Society, and copies are available price £3.00 plus £1.50 for postage and packing from Neil Robson, 119 Heythorp Street, London SW18 5BT or by emailing ngrobson@tiscali.co.uk. Cheques payable to 'Wandsworth Historical Society'.

Festival chorus

On **Saturday 24 November** at 7.30 pm the Festival Chorus, under their Musical Director, David Fawcett, will perform Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* at St Luke's Church, Ramsden Road, SW12 8QR. Tickets £12, concessions £8, on the door or from Northcote Music, 155 Northcote Road, SW11 or St Luke's Music Society box office 07951 791619 or www.slms.org.uk www.festivalchorus.co.uk.

The Star Ball

Join a night of sparkle and celebration to benefit Trinity Hospice at the Star Ball on **Saturday 8 December** at Planit, Victoria Embankment Gardens.

Guests will enjoy a cocktail reception, three-course gourmet dinner and post-dinner entertainment, an auction with fantastic prizes, including a stay at the Sanderson Hotel, a VIP box at the O2 Arena to see Michael Buble and a chance to win a diamond.

Prices start at £1,300 for a table of eight. All the money raised will help support the vital work of Trinity's nurses. If you are interested in taking a table, volunteering at the Ball or donating an auction prize, please email starball@trinityhospice.org.uk or call 020 7787 1085. For more information visit www.trinityhospice.org.uk/starball.

Fireworks

There is no Lambeth Fireworks display on Clapham Common this year, but on **Friday 2 November** there will be fireworks on Streatham Common and in Brockwell Park at 8 pm, with entertainment from 4 pm onwards.

Wandsworth's annual fireworks display in Battersea Park is on **Saturday 3 November**. Gates open at 6 pm, the bonfire is at 7.30 pm and fireworks at 8 pm. Admission is by advance purchased ticket only, available in the park or telephone 020 8871 8677.

No to Hate Crime Campaign

Jody Dobrowski was a young gay man beaten to death by two men in 2005, in the wooded area on the west side of the Common ('Battersea Woods'). This hate crime was the subject of a Channel 4 film in 2007.

As part of the 'No to Hate Crime Campaign', which commemorates hate crime victims of all types, local Constable Darren Sims, with Mark Healey of the Campaign, helped to organise fundraising for a bench and small bed of flowers to be installed in the same wooded area. In all, £2,897 was raised, of which £1,000 went to this installation. At a ceremony on 14 October, Wandsworth Borough Commander in Chief, Chief Superintendent David Chinchin addressed a group of supporters and local councillors.



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

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