



The Clapham Society Newsletter

Issue 362

November 2013

Parking in Clapham

The Roads and Transport Sub-committee is looking at parking controls in Clapham and would be interested in feedback from members.

A Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) is an area where on-street parking is controlled, and parking is only permitted in designated parking bays with the remaining kerbside space subject to yellow line restrictions. The main aim of a CPZ is to discourage commuter and long stay parking by people from outside the area. Aside from Red Routes, which are controlled by Transport for London, we have a range of CPZs covering groups of residential streets, with a wide array of times of operation. As the jurisdiction of Clapham's streets is divided between two different councils, different rules and charges apply across the area and to different types of vehicle.

When CPZs were first introduced, a process of consultation was conducted with local residents to discuss the prevailing local issues and possible hours of operation. In many cases these arrangements have remained in place without review. In others modifications have been introduced. The cost of parking permits (short and long stay) is reviewed each year, generally upwards.

In several streets around Clapham parking restrictions apply from 8.30 am to 8.30 pm. Clearly, in some streets there is concern about pressures generated by Clapham High Street and various business uses. However a recent survey of residents of Broadhinton Road and Turret Grove indicates that a majority there feel these hours are excessive and make it difficult for friends, family and trades people to visit. They also have concerns about the space available to Business Permit holders.

Lambeth Council has been approached with a view to making a local change, but it would appear that a wider review is currently underway. It should be noted that in parts of Clapham a one or two hour restriction to deter commuters seems to operate reasonably successfully.

The Sub-committee intends to hold further discussions with Lambeth Council about parking, particularly around the 8.30 am to 8.30 pm controls, and would welcome members' views on the matter (to Jenny Cobley, email jennycobley@aol.com).

Mark Leffler and Jenny Cobley

Clapham Opera Festival

Clapham's popular new opera festival continues in November with an afternoon of humorous arias from comic operas and operettas on **Sunday 10 November** and a semi-staged shortened version of *Don Pasquale* on **Sunday 17 November**. Performances start at 3 pm in the Church of the Holy Spirit, Narbonne Avenue, SW4 9LQ. Refreshments are available and there is a chance to meet the singers after the performance.

Go to claphamoperafestival.com for more details and to buy tickets (£20 with concessions available). But hurry because tickets are selling fast!

Clapham Books

Clapham Books is still open for business at 120 Clapham High Street, and hopes to remain so until Christmas. As we have reported in our newsletters over the last year, the bookshop can no longer afford the extortionate rent demanded for their present premises, but they are still fighting to stay in Clapham to serve the loyal customers they have built up over many years. If you know of any suitable premises, or sources of funding, please contact Nikki at shop@claphambooks.com. We shall keep members informed of progress and hope to have better news soon.

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 November

The Survey of London and Battersea. November marks a great step forward in the study of local history and architecture, with the publication of the first volumes of the *Survey of London* to cover our area of South London for over fifty years. The two forthcoming books on the history of Battersea, Volumes 49 and 50 in the celebrated series are the result of five intensive years of research, writing and illustration. Colin Thom will talk about the work on these elegant and learned books which are available at a discount to members of the Society and will be a must for serious students of Clapham.

The retail price of each volume is £75, and the price to members £60. For both volumes bought together the retail price is £135, and £110 to members. Prices include free postage and packing (in the UK only). Orders may be placed online at yalebooks.co.uk and on checkout you should enter the promo code SLB13. You may also order by telephone: call 020 7079 4900, ask for Sales and quote the code above to receive your discount. All orders will be fulfilled on publication in November.

There is no meeting in December.

The programme for 2014 will be published in the next newsletter.

Clapham's Night-time Hub

At weekends Clapham is a popular night-time venue for around 10,000 people, mostly in their early 20s, looking to celebrate and party with friends in the assorted pubs, clubs and restaurants around Clapham High Street and Old Town. Whilst some are local, others come from far and wide. Events on the Common can swell these numbers further.

For the most part their activities are joyous and cause no harm, however it is perhaps inevitable, particularly in the early hours of a Saturday or Sunday morning, that some alcohol-fuelled revellers cause mess, become rowdy, and can be violent. Others become confused and isolated, and so vulnerable to accidental injury, or predatory robbery, and assault. This brings misery to the victims, nuisance to residents, and imposes pressure on emergency services.

Whilst Lambeth Council has taken measures to curtail the opening of further nightspots and extension of licences, the night-time economy is now an established feature, and the challenge is to ensure that people can enjoy their night out safely and without causing grief or nuisance to others. It should be noted that many of the problems with drunkenness result from people arriving in Clapham already drunk and being asked to leave an establishment or refused entry.

In December 2012 an important local initiative was set in motion, based at the Clapham Methodist Church, right at the heart of Clapham High Street. With the enthusiastic support of the Revd Norman Grigg, a refuge was created for people feeling vulnerable, with minor injuries, or needing help between the hours of 11 pm and 5 am on Friday and Saturday nights. This is Clapham's Night-time Hub. The Hub offers somewhere safe for people to seek shelter, have a cup of tea, sober up,



Weekend revellers in Clapham

and get help if they've become separated from friends, or need assistance getting home safely. Qualified medical staff from St John's Ambulance are available to provide first aid, and security staff are on hand if anyone is threatened. Success of The Hub also relies heavily on volunteer helpers prepared to forgo their beds to help run it and to provide a friendly welcome, as well as a band of volunteer Street Pastors who patrol the full length of Clapham High Street from the Common to Clapham North and can offer on the spot first aid, as well as flip flops to young women hobbling barefoot because they have a broken stiletto heel.

The Hub assists about eight people a night on average, on occasion rising to around 20, with the busiest peak around 2 am on a Sunday morning. After ten months operation many young people are now grateful for having been patched up and helped home safely after a night out that had started to go seriously wrong. The Hub has also undoubtedly helped save considerable cost to the public purse.

While sterling work is being done on a limited budget, the resources to keep

The Hub in operation in the long run will remain a challenge given the pressure on public finances. It got off the ground initially largely thanks to the secondment by Lambeth Council's Community Safety team of an especially determined officer, and the Council still provides office support.

The Methodist Church provides an ideal visible and secure base. In addition to the funding of St John's Ambulance personnel by the NHS, and security and cleaning services provided by The Mint Group, owner of Inferno's, The Hub receives some financial support towards its running costs and assistance in kind from a handful of local businesses. The selfless volunteers, some of whom live quite a distance away, come from a range of local churches.



Volunteers at Clapham's Night-time Hub

Both the Clapham Society and the nascent Clapham Business Community potentially have important roles to play in raising the profile of The Hub, and seeking to ensure the resources for it to continue its valuable work, as well as for the maintenance of a strong policing presence in Clapham High Street at critical times.

Mark Leffler

Clapham Chamber Concerts

Chamber Concerts mark Benjamin Britten's centenary year by semi-staging excerpts of one of his most exquisite operas, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The evening will focus on the enchanted world of Oberon, Tytania and Puck, and on the plight of the human lovers. Directed by Emma Rivlin, with William Towers as Oberon (counter tenor); Yvette Bonner as Tytania (soprano), Louise Lloyd as Helena (soprano), Holly Marie Bingham as Hermia (mezzo-soprano), Tom Elwin as Lysander (tenor) and Johnny Herford as Demetrius (baritone). The singers will be accompanied by pianist, Jessie Maryon Davies and on the flute by Kate Wakeling.

After the performance the audience is warmly invited to join the performers, Friends of CCC and guests for drinks. The performance is at St Paul's Church, SW4 0DX at 7.30 pm (doors/cash bar 7 pm) Tickets at door: Adults £12, Friends/concessions £9, children £5. Check the website claphamchamberconcerts.org.uk in case of any unforeseen changes to programme, performers, or venue.

On Friday 15 November Clapham

Fireworks moved to Brockwell Park

In a press release on 26 September Lambeth Council announced that the Fireworks Display scheduled for Clapham Common on 5 November is to be moved to Brockwell Park. It appears that the influx of an expected 100,000 visitors to the Common had given rise to concerns about traffic disruption and safety. We regret this decision as it will affect local traders as well as disappointing the local community.

Omnibus opens

Omnibus, the arts centre in the old Clapham Library on North Side, opened its doors on 19 September in celebratory style. A large gathering of supporters packed the building, for tours, performances – and much socialising.

The old library has been renovated and transformed. On the ground floor there are three spaces.

The main one is an auditorium with tiered seats for 90 people, for theatre, music and talks. Next to it is a large café-bar, whilst a room at the front can be used for smaller events and activities. Displayed in that room are several prints and a large oil painting of historic Clapham scenes, donated by Bernard Battley. Upstairs is a multi-purpose room, light and spacious – a transformation from the cluttered meeting space there used to be.

The new arts centre is the outcome of seven years toil by a dedicated group of local people, led by George Owen. As he pointed out at the opening, it is also to the credit of Lambeth Council, which supported and encouraged the community bid to purchase the building. If that bid had not succeeded, the outcome could have been yet another block of flats. As it is, a building which had served the community for over a century will continue to do so in new and exciting ways.

For more information, see omnibus-clapham.org.

Peter Jefferson Smith



Piano and clarinet duo entertain donors at the opening of Omnibus on 19 September.

... and its programme

Omnibus launches its first season on **Sunday 3 November** with the award-winning Bernadel String Quartet performing Haydn, Bartok and Beethoven. The Spiral Saxophone Quartet follows on **Sunday 17 November** playing an extensive repertoire of film and dance music. The Fournier Piano Trio, winners of the 2013 Parkhouse award and Jesse Sebastian's Flamenco Trio – a traditional Peña style Flamenco join us in December – more details to follow. All music recitals start at 4.30 pm.

We are delighted to host Tony Britten's acclaimed film; *Benjamin Britten – Peace and Conflict* on **Monday 18 November** at 7.30 as the first film in our monthly film night series. Tony Britten's moving and thought provoking feature length drama/documentary tells the story of the pacifism that was at the core of Britten's life and work. The drama is framed by commentary from friends and historians and performance by artists including James Gilchrist, Iain Burnside and the Benyounes String Quartet. Legendary

actor John Hurt narrates and appears in this radically new film testament. More details next month about our surprise guest celebrities in *Tales of Christmas*; mulled wine, mince pies and multi arts!

We are also delighted to announce our forthcoming production of Georg Büchner's *Woyzeck*; a centennial version by Robyn Winfield-Smith, translated by Michael Ewans. *Woyzeck* runs from 19 November to 7 December, Tuesdays – Saturdays at 7.30 pm, Saturday matinee 2.30 pm. Tickets £15.00 and £12.00 concessions. £10.00 for all previews. 100 years since its first performance, Omnibus presents Georg Büchner's timeless masterpiece in this the bicentennial year of his birth. Hailed as the forerunner of modern drama, this play celebrates *Woyzeck* as a proletarian hero, and steals a glimpse at the futility of man's battle with his inner world.

All tickets at omnibus-clapham.org or telephone the box office on 020 7498 4699. I look forward to welcoming you to our brand new arts centre.

Marie McCarthy

Get Involved

Omnibus requires volunteers for various duties, both day time and evening. If you have a few hours to spare and would like to become part of this exciting new local venture contact Gena Gilbert (zzgilbert@aol.com). This is a good opportunity for young people to add to their CVs and the experience can qualify for Duke of Edinburgh Awards, so please pass on the contact to local schools and colleges.

Freeze Snow Board and

Ski Festival

Previously held in Battersea Power Station this five-day event is scheduled to be on the event site from 27 November until 1 December. Because of all the equipment involved it will be on the grassed area for twenty days, so environmental damage will be inevitable. The grass is unlikely to regenerate in December.

We have submitted an objection to a Premises Licence for various reasons, but in particular because alcohol will be sold throughout the event from four bars and the closing time is 11 pm on each day apart from the Sunday. There are already serious problems of alcohol abuse, drug taking and antisocial behaviour on Clapham High Street between 11 pm and 5 am at the weekend (see page 2) and these are likely to be made worse by some of the people leaving the event. We have suggested that the event closes at 8 pm as would have been the case when the (now scrapped) Lambeth Events Policy was in force.

Wandsworth Historian

The autumn edition of Wandsworth Historian is now available, with its usual selection of interesting articles. Amongst these are *The Story of Wandsworth's Meritocrats*, who include Thomas Cromwell, George Eliot, Emma Hamilton, John Burns and Ernest Bevin. A special insert celebrating Wandsworth Historical Society's 60th year, is a reproduction copy of the London Argus of 30 April, 1898, which features Wandsworth in its series *The London Parishes: Their History Monuments, Peculiarities & Modern Aspect*. More details from Neil Robson, ngrobson@tiscali.co.uk.

Festival Chorus

On **Saturday November 30** at 7.30 pm Festival Chorus and Sinclair Sinfonia, conducted by David Fawcett present a concert comprising Brahms' *Begräbnisgesang*, Schumann's *Requiem* and Schubert's *Mass in E flat*, with soloists Katy Hill (soprano), Patricia Orr (mezzo soprano) Andrew Dickinson (tenor), Edward Ballard (bass) at St Luke's Church, Ramsden Road/Thurleigh Road, SW12 8RQ. Tickets £12, concessions £8, on the door or from Northcote Music, 155 Northcote Road, SW11 6QB.

Sew Over It

At our September meeting Lisa Comfort, founder of Sew Over It the sewing café at Clapham North, and entrepreneur *par excellence* gave a fascinating presentation about her hugely successful career.

She told us that from the age of nine she was interested in sewing, but her parents insisted that she take an academic degree, so she did – in French and Italian. She then moved to London, took a job in an office – a life which she soon decided was not for her – so she enrolled at the London College of Fashion. On graduation she went to work for Bruce Oldfield and then for couture bridal designer, Phillipa Lepley, and struggling to survive on the low pay characteristic of the fashion industry, started giving home sewing lessons in the evenings.

Before long she realised that young people were interested in sewing, that it was becoming ‘cool’, and the time was ripe to find premises and set up regular classes. She found a shop in Landor Road, convenient for the underground but off the High Street, and her parents agreed to fund her with her unused ‘wedding fund’. Sew Over It was set up in May 2011, with a small ground floor corner shop, one classroom upstairs and one in the basement, and 10/15 different classes. In August – with business already booming – she was featured in a section on entrepreneurship in the *Evening Standard*. This resulted in five calls from publishers for a book, and having speedily found a literary agent, a bidding war ensued resulting in a two-book deal with Ebury Press. Her first book was published in September 2012, the second is due later this year. With an appearance in Kirsty Allsopp’s show *Vintage Home*, and a live appearance in

Alan Titchmarsh's show, Lisa's TV career was launched.

Meanwhile, Lisa has been approached by leading stores for in-store demonstrations and workshops, mainly in customising. There is clearly an appetite for making standard items distinctive by customising, and after a three month stint at Selfridges, she is working with other stores – Gap, H & M, River Island, Cath Kidston and John Lewis. And when she finds suitable premises she plans to open a second shop, in East London!

Lisa modestly attributes her success to 'the right thing at the right time', feeding on the 'make do and mend' culture, nostalgia, the search for a simpler life, the creation of something tangible which gives pleasure in the process as well as in the result. She hesitated to mention that extremely hard work, long hours and total dedication are a large part of the equation.

In answer to questions Lisa confirmed that she designs and makes her own patterns, which customers get to take home with them; classes cost around £40 for a three hour class with between four and seven people (fewer for more advanced classes), £45 per hour one-to-one; she has classes in dressmaking, knitting, curtain and cushion making, but not upholstery; almost all students are women; she plans links with local schools and colleges.

We are most grateful for a really engaging evening, which even the few men present found totally absorbing. You are strongly recommended to check out the website sewoverit.co.uk, and preferably go and take a look at the pretty shop at 78 Landor Road, SW9 9PH.

Christmas Fair

The Wandsworth Friends of Trinity Hospice are holding their Christmas Fair at Battersea Town Hall on **Wednesday 13 November** (9 am to 2.30 pm) with a special preview on **Tuesday 12 November** (6.30 pm to 9 pm). Tickets for the preview can be bought at a discount – two tickets with a glass of wine and nibbles for £18 – before 8 November at trinityhospicechristmasfair.org. There will be 50 stalls selling toys, books, clothes, food and lots more, as well as a silent auction.

The Good Neighbour

Battersea Arts Centre is celebrating the 120th anniversary of its home in the former Battersea Town hall in Lavender Hill, with a variety of events including an audio tour adapted from an original commission performed live last year by the brass band, Uninvited Guests. The tour spills out into the streets to places where Battersea's radical past collides with the present. The tour, which costs only £5, continues until 26 November. To book go to bac.org.uk.

Photographs and documents about the history of the building, which has had many different uses over the years, will also be on display throughout the month.

Recital On Sunday 17 November at 2.30 pm Adrien Mastrosimone (counter-tenor) and Keisha Nurse (soprano) accompanied by Gavin Roberts on the piano will give a recital of music by Bizet, Duparc, Handel, Legrand, Monteverdi and Mozart, at St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DX. Tickets £5 on the door.

New members We have welcomed the following new members this month: Liz and John Garratt, Sorcha Graham and Aoife Stajkowski, Vicky Pryce and Peter and Lydia Huhne.

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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