



Around and About

Putting Down Roots! You may have seen planting activity around The Polygon during December. The planting scheme originally conceived for the area by local landscape

architect and Society member, Diana Bell, is finally being implemented, with funding from This Is Clapham. Local charity, St Mungo's, have been awarded the task to replant and maintain these areas. Now we just have to wait for spring. This Is Clapham is also responsible for the hanging baskets that



Photo, Mark Leffler

mysteriously appeared on lampposts before Christmas, as well as the uplighters placed in trees behind Clapham Common underground station.

Rolling out Green Bins. Every Lambeth household not living on an estate of flats should have received details of the new arrangements for recycling domestic refuse, and green wheelie bins are due for early dispatch. These are being introduced to reduce costs of collection, but success will depend heavily on everyone taking responsibility for using the right bin and maximising the recyclable waste. It costs over five times more to dispose of general refuse than recyclable refuse. In some cases the switch from bags to wheelie bins may be problematic, and feedback on this is welcomed.

Update on buses. We recently learnt that the London Assembly's Transport Committee is seeking views to feed into a study into bus services in London with a closing date of 31 January (sooner than expected and too late, sadly, for this edition). The Roads and Transport Sub-committee will be making representations by the closing date incorporating comments made in earlier newsletters, emphasising the important role buses play in linking Clapham to adjoining centres, and in providing a vital alternative to the dangerously overcrowded tube network at peak times.

As always, the Sub-committee seeks comments and feedback on what irks and delights you about our local streetscape, and from any members who would like to get more involved.

Mark Leffler

Convenor, Roads and Transport Sub-committee

Our meetings are held at Omnibus, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW. The bar at Omnibus is open from 7 pm, and meetings commence at 8 pm. Our guest will normally speak for about 45 minutes, followed by around 15 minutes for questions and discussion, and the bar will remain open after the talk. Meetings are free and open to non-members. We recommend that you arrive in good time to ensure entry, since there is a limit on the number the theatre can accommodate.

Monday 27 February

Bandstand Beds: Community Food Growing in Clapham. When parks manager Victor Chin-Kit built a few raised beds next to La Baita café in 2012, he never dreamt the idea of growing food on the Common would blossom into what it has become today. The following year Fiona Law and **Diana Linskey**, set up Bandstand Beds with the aim of promoting food growing to further social, economic and environmental wellbeing. In 2014 **David Dandridge**, took over as Bandstand Beds Chair. David and Diana will talk about the journey, sometimes bumpy, to build Bandstand Beds into a community group that has flourished and put food growing in the heart of Clapham.

Monday 27 March

Up In Smoke: The Failed Dreams Of Battersea Power Station. **Peter Watts**, author of a recent book about Battersea Power Station, will relate the fascinating history of this illustrious building, explaining how it went from unwanted baby-bleaching monster to much-loved riverside ruin. In the process, he will explain why it has taken so long for the building to be saved and ask what the new £8bn development tells us about the future of London.

Air pollution – a toxic issue

Public concern about air pollution has grown greatly in recent years. Although there were improvements until the 1990s, these have since tailed off. While much better than, say, in China and India, pollution from particulates and oxides of nitrogen (NO₂) still knocks off about six months of life averaged across everyone in the UK, which means that many people are much worse affected than that. In the UK, transport is now the biggest source of air pollution. One good development is the growing involvement of health practitioners in air pollution issues.

Action to address the problem is happening at three main levels relevant to Clapham: nationally, London-wide, and in Lambeth. Nationally the Government is strengthening its plans, especially to bring us into compliance with EU limits for NO₂. This follows court judgments requiring additional Government action, and consultation is expected in the spring.

Across London, the Mayor is proposing various measures to restrict vehicles with the worst emissions, especially older vehicles and diesels in particular. We have commented on behalf of the Society, pressing for action. For example, we have challenged his proposals for the boundary of his proposed low emission zone for cars to be just inside the south circular road, since there is significant pollution further out. Other groups have similarly commented; and we await the Mayor's revised proposals.

Locally, Lambeth Council recently consulted on an 'air quality action plan', which recognises more strongly the need for action. The proposals include taking more account of the air pollution impacts of new building development. Brixton High Road is one of the areas proposed by the Mayor for more targeted action, especially on reducing emissions from buses. The Clapham Society is engaging with Lambeth on its plans.

There is also plenty of action that individuals can take to reduce pollution, especially in using public transport, walking and cycling, and, for those who need a car, reducing engine idling and choosing cars with good emissions performance. It is now recognised that the heavy promotion of diesel vehicles on the basis that they were environmentally friendly (because of their possible benefits to climate change compared with some alternatives) was a big mistake: it ignored their toxic impact on air quality. This fault was compounded by the provision by some car manufacturers of false information to regulators.

So, air pollution is set to remain, and probably grow, as a hot topic.

Daniel Instone

Clapham Chamber Concerts

On **Friday 3 February** clarinettist Jonathan Parkin, will be joined by Daniel Bull and Luis Parés to perform a varied selection of trio works for clarinet, cello and piano. These include Mozart's *Kegelstatt* trio, the first work ever composed to include the clarinet in a piano trio combination, right through to the most recent work for this combination: the premiere of *Venus Under Moon* by CCC's composer in residence, David Wallace. St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DX, at 7.30 pm. Tickets on the door £12, £10 concessions and Friends of CCC, £5 children. For further information email claphamchamberconcerts@gmail.com.

125 Business Ambassadors

Do you own or work for a business in Clapham, and want to support a local charity that looks after 1,500 people with life-limiting conditions each year? Royal Trinity Hospice is looking for new '125 Business Ambassadors', a group of supporters committed to enabling patients, families, and carers to live every moment. All you have to do is support Trinity and

raise £125 this year – that's as little as £10.41 a month.

In return for your support, you will receive a certificate to demonstrate your commitment to Trinity, invitations to networking events and a monthly e-bulletin with fundraising tips, news, and upcoming events. To find out more about supporting your local hospice, or to arrange a Trinity tour with our corporate team, please call 020 7787 1022 or visit royaltrinityhospice.london/business-ambassadors.



The Last Journey - Photo, Mark Leffler

February Highlights at Omnibus

Tuesday 31 January to Saturday 4 February at 7.30 pm. *Hearing Things* by Playing ON productions. From award-winning playwright Philip Osment, this play is based on five years of collaboration with both staff and patients in mental health institutions, drawing together stories, dilemmas and challenges faced by the 'healthy' and the 'ill' in communities whose voices are seldom heard. Tickets £12, £10 concessions.

Wednesday 8 February at 7.30 pm. *Forbidden Love*. Singer-songwriter Jessica Walker promises to transport Omnibus' audience to the Weimar dives of the 1920s Berlin, the nightclubs of 1930s Paris and the music halls of Britain and America.

Originally trained in mainstream opera as a mezzo-soprano, Walker graduated from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and has carved a successful career touring her original pieces and new arrangements around the world. Tickets £12, £10 concessions.

Thursday 9 February and Friday 10 February at 9.30 pm. *Stamp* by Spunglass Theatre. Renowned for their bold, authentic and affecting narratives, this riotous, award-nominated play won rave reviews at the Edinburgh Fringe for ripping up the rule book, tackling gender politics and the everyday traumas and triumphs of romantic love. Tickets £12, £10 concessions.

Sunday 12 February at 4 pm. Deco Ensemble. A special Valentine's Day concert with the music of love - tango! Enjoy a unique selection of Piazzolla's most beautiful music, traditional and modern tangos. Tickets £10.

Wednesday 22 February at 7.30 pm. *Fish Eye* by Theatre Alibi. Pam's already got a low opinion of her neighbours, but when someone pinches her Elizabethan sideboard, it's all-out war. Ramping up her operation from curtain twitching to spy cameras, Pam begins to unearth what she already suspects – that everyone around her is thief, a pervert or a terrorist. Tickets £12 and £10 concessions.

Saturday 25 February at 11 am and 2.30 pm. *Ensonglopedia of Science*. 7+ yrs. Tickets £9, £7 concessions and children.

More information and tickets at omnibus-clapham.org, telephone 020 7498 4699 or call in at Omnibus, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW.

The First Clapham Saints a London Village 1600-1720 by Timothy Walker

Historians are familiar with the picture of Clapham as a village of the 'saints', associating it with Wilberforce and his colleagues, fighting the slave trade at the end of the 18th century. Timothy Walker's book is a study of Clapham at an earlier period, when Clapham was home to a large and cohesive group of people to whom the term 'saints' could also be applied.

These earlier generations lived in Clapham from about the 1630s. They were mostly City businessmen, 'generally successful financially, overwhelmingly Nonconformist, Whig, and active in overseas trade'. In Clapham they built 'retiring houses', places to which they and their families could retreat for weekends and the summer months in which the City was at its most lethally unhealthy. Many London villages had such houses: what made Clapham different was the high proportion – about a third of the total in the village, with about half its population. The houses spread from the old village centre, near the Church and Manor House, southwards towards the Common, and by the early 18th century had spread along North Side and South Side.

The merchants tended to have common bonds, for some the parts of the City where they lived and traded, for others the nature of their trade. They were often related by marriage. Two of them had financial stakes in *The Mayflower*, and others had trading links with North America. In religion almost all were Puritans, and after the Restoration of Charles II most were Nonconformists, supporting independent ministers.

They are not well-known names; the best known is Samuel Pepys, who as a Royalist loyal to James II was untypical. On the Puritan side, the most eminent politically was Gwalter Frost, Secretary to Cromwell's Council of State. The Gaudens did well out of supplying the Navy. The Lethieuliers were a prominent Huguenot family. But for the most part, the merchants of Clapham inhabit the footnotes and small print of 17th century history.

Despite this, Timothy Walker has discovered much about them. He has drawn on a range of materials, including parish administrative records, wills, property inventories, and some sources of a personal nature, such as letters and diaries. In the later chapters of the book, he pieces together the information to paint a vivid picture of what life was like in the Clapham of those days. The merchants and their families lived unostentatious lives, but they lived in comfort, in large and well-furnished houses. In their wills, they asked for modest funerals, the outstanding exception being Dame Rebecca Atkins, whose enormous monument filled the Manorial Chapel in the old Church. They were active in running the parish, and it is to their endeavours that we owe the village school which was the forerunner of the present Macaulay.

Timothy Walker's account of these earlier saints is packed with detail and well referenced. But he also finds room for engaging quotations. In his will, Daniel Gould hoped his heirs would avoid litigation 'wishing there was more justice and less law in the world'. Sir Roger L'Estrange, Charles II's licenser of the press, summed up Clapham in the 1680s as a place 'which the Phanatiques (as Everybody knows) have turned into a kind of Whig-warren.' As Britain prospered and religious enthusiasm waned, Clapham became a place of wealth and indulgent comfort, to the distress of the later saints we call the Clapham Sect. But that is another story.

The First Clapham Saints: a London Village 1600-1720, by Timothy Walker, price £15, is available from the author (tehwalker@uwclub.net), Clapham Books or Amazon.

Peter Jefferson Smith



Flaming June This stunning picture by Frederic, Lord Leighton, which was found in Clapham in the 1960s and sold to a museum in Puerto Rico where it still lives, has returned to London for a short time. Until early April it is on display at Leighton House in Kensington, Lord Leighton's studio, where it was painted. The painting has another Clapham connection as the model was almost certainly Dorothy Dene, Leighton's favourite model who lived in The Chase. For details of Leighton House opening times see leightonhouse.co.uk and to learn more about the intriguing life of Dorothy Dene read the article on our website claphamsociety.com/Articles/article2.html.

The Avenue Cookery School

Do you fancy learning to cook or just need some bright new recipe ideas? Maybe you need a different night out or a fun hands-on private or corporate party?

The Avenue Cookery School, established in 2004, is a family-run kitchen. We host a vast range of cookery classes in our brand new kitchen, from day and evening classes for all ages and abilities, from two-hour workshops to one and two-week courses for those wanting to complete their DofE Residential, want to be a Chalet Host or just want to learn this invaluable life skill. We also offer more specialist subjects e.g. butchery, baking or vegan classes for those who want to learn something more specific.

As a school, we take a fun and laid-back attitude to food and teaching. Our aim is to help people to understand food, to move away from the cookbook and to gain confidence in the kitchen. A class at The Avenue will equip you with the skills and knowledge to whip-up a delicious meal, hassle-free, with just the leftovers in your fridge.

Book now online to take advantage of our fantastic range of classes. Or give us a call to have a chat about which class might suit you best. theavenuecookeryschool.com or 07958 171787.

Alice Taylor, The Avenue Cookery School

The Arts Society Clapham Common (formerly CCDFAS)

The inaugural meeting will be held on **Wednesday 15 March** at 10.30 am at Clapham Picturehouse, 76 Venn St, SW4 0AT. Antony Penrose's lecture, *The Boy who Bit Picasso*, is an entertaining and amusing account of life around Picasso who first visited the Penrose family home, Farley House in East Sussex in 1950.

Future lectures include Linda Smith on *Great Tarts in Art, High culture and the oldest profession* in April and Peter Medhurst on *Vivaldi in Venice* in May.

Entry is restricted to members and numbers are limited. For further information and to join, email claphamcommondfas@nadfasc.net.

The Hibbert family of Clapham

The speaker at our last meeting in 2016, Dr Katie Donington, gave an interesting account of the life and business activities of the Hibbert family, concentrating mainly on George Hibbert (1757-1837). Her talk was based on her PhD research which was part of the Legacies of British Slave-ownership project at University College London.

She first showed us the fine portrait of George Hibbert, by Sir Thomas Lawrence, which is now in the Museum of London in Docklands, marking the fact that he was Chairman of the West India Dock Company which constructed the West India Docks. The fortune amassed by the Hibbert family business, of which George eventually became the head in London, was based on the slave economy in Jamaica. The family traded in both enslaved Africans and slave produced commodities so it is hardly surprising that as an MP George Hibbert opposed the bills to abolish both the slave trade and later slavery. It was surprising, however, to learn that George never went to Jamaica. That end of the business was conducted by other members of the family.

Katie quoted astonishing figures about the abolition of slavery following the 1833 Act of Parliament: there were 46,000 claims for compensation from slave owners, the total paid out to them was £20m of which the Hibbert family received approximately £103,000 – using the Retail Price Index this sum would be the equivalent of £8.9 million in today's money.

Former slaves over the age of six were redesignated as 'apprentices', and their servitude was abolished in two stages.

George Hibbert lived on Clapham Common North Side in a large house (roughly on the site of the present Royal Trinity Hospice) with extensive grounds, stretching back to Wandsworth Road. He was a keen gardener and plant collector. In fact, several plants he was responsible for collecting, were named after him and we saw them illustrated in contemporary garden magazines. He was also a noted book collector with an extensive library, and he had fine furniture, china and pictures.

Katie also spoke briefly about William Hibbert, who lived on Clapham Common South Side. Locals know his name because the Hibbert Almshouses in Wandsworth Road were built in his memory by his two daughters. It was a timely gesture that at the end of Katie's talk the Chairman of the Trustees of the Hibbert Almshouses donated an early drawing of the Almshouses to Omnibus.

Some interesting questions followed the talk, and discussion in which it was agreed that although Clapham is known for the Clapham Sect and the Abolition of the Slave Trade, the bicentenary of which was celebrated a few years ago, in fact, it is likely that at the time many locals would have been sympathetic to the merchant slave-owners. We are grateful to Katie Donington for an interesting and thought-provoking talk.

Bandstand Beds

In its short life since it began in 2013, Bandstand Beds Association (BBA) has gone from strength to strength, and really became established last year when volunteers created the food growing space on the corner of 'the dump'. Throughout the summer this community garden was a hive of activity on Saturday mornings. People pitched in to plant and tend a plethora of fruit and veg, which was picked and shared at the weekly sessions or used for one of the regular summer picnics – and the fantastic harvest feast on Windmill Drive in October. And anything that couldn't be consumed immediately was made into pickle or jam and sold at events such as This is Clapham's fete or Christmas market to raise money to help sustain the garden.

All in all 2016 was a truly productive year for Bandstand Beds, and 2017 looks to be even more promising. The group now has more than 90 members, and through CCMAC it has secured funding from Lambeth's levy on large events on the Common to install pathways, making the garden accessible to everyone in the community.

In January, BBA was selected for the Tesco Bags of Help scheme and a possible grant of £5000 will go towards buying materials to kit out the new shipping container, funded by the Clapham Bid and donations, with food preparation facilities. This 'kitchen' will be used for workshops in the summer, where people will be able to pick, cook and eat the food they have grown. And some of the group's budding chefs also plan to hold a supper club to while away those warm summer evenings that seem so far off right now.

If this sounds like your idea of fun and you'd like to get involved in this amazing community venture, email ccbantandbeds@gmail.com. Alternatively, just pop along to the garden on Windmill Drive on any Saturday morning between 10.30 and midday to see things for yourself!

For more information visit bandstandbeds.org.uk or follow @bandstandbeds on Twitter, and come to the meeting on **Monday 27 February** (see details on front page).



Cabbage Patch Corner - Photo, David Dandridge

David Dandridge, Chair, Bandstand Beds

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