



The Clapham Society

Newsletter

Issue 337

May 2011

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.

Wednesday 18 May

The Thames Tunnel. **Malcolm Orford**, Thames Tunnel Senior Project Manager, will talk about Thames Water's plan to build the Thames Tunnel. At present 39 million tonnes of sewage flushes into the River Thames in a typical year and the problem is getting progressively worse. It is proposed that the tunnel will run up to 20 miles, broadly following the path of the River Thames and will involve digging the deepest tunnel ever constructed in the capital. Along with the Lee Tunnel (under construction), the Thames Tunnel will ensure the city has a sewerage system fit for the 21st century and beyond.

The Bandstand

Planning consent has now been given for the upgrading of the berm around the base of the bandstand so that the vulnerable grass slope can be replaced by granite setts. Work should start within the next month in order to complete it before mid-summer. The residue of the Restoration Fund held by the Clapham Society has been released towards the cost of the project.

On the Common

Prolonged dry weather has led to fears for the young trees on Clapham Common. There was an excellent response to a request for volunteers to water the trees. For two hours members of the Clapham Common Management Advisory Committee, Friends of Clapham Common, the Clapham Society, Lambeth Council and Veolia staff carried buckets and watering cans filled with water from a standpipe, ponds and a truck to thirsty trees across the Common.

Wednesday 15 June

Clapham Portraits. Members of the Clapham Society Local History Sub-committee will give short illustrated biographies of some interesting former Clapham residents. **Peter Jefferson Smith** will talk about the Revd. Henry Whitehead (1825-1896), a curate at Holy Trinity Church, Clapham, who found the evidence to prove Dr John Snow's belief that cholera was transmitted by infected water. **Michael Green's** subject will be the ballet dancer Katti Lanner (1829-1908), a former resident of his house on Clapham Common North Side. **Alyson Wilson** will talk about John Pinches and family, important 19th century medallists, whose works survived in Clapham High Street until the 1970s when the company was taken over by Franklin Mint.

Wednesday 6 July

Summer Party at La Baita café by the Bandstand on Clapham Common. More details and a ticket application form will be in the June newsletter, but **reserve the date now!**

The July and August meetings are replaced by walks on **Wednesday 20 July** and **Wednesday 17 August**. More details next month.



Anna Jefferson Smith, Victor Chin-Kit our Lambeth Parks Officer and Councillor Helen O'Malley

Camp Royale

In our April Newsletter we reported that a meeting was being arranged with the Clapham Common Management Advisory Committee and Lambeth Council to discuss the forthcoming Camp Royale event, which was to include a large campsite on Clapham Common over the weekend of the royal wedding. The meeting was held on 21 March and a wide range of representatives of the community, including the Clapham Society, expressed their concerns. In spite of this we learned, again through the press, that officers had recommended that the event go ahead and that Councillor Florence Nosegbe, the relevant member of the Lambeth Council Cabinet, had formalised the decision.

The local reaction to this proposed event has been unprecedented. The first reaction of the Society was that we should mount a legal challenge. However, the advice we were given, as well as the information that Lambeth had sought the advice of independent counsel before giving the event the go-ahead, convinced us that legal action might achieve nothing and could prove prohibitively expensive.

Assuming that the event does go ahead we would encourage members to send any comments to John Kerridge jkerridge@lambeth.gov.uk copied to annajs@mac.com.

Open Gardens

Trinity Hospice Garden will be open on **Sunday 22 May**. This year the theme is *The Wizard of Oz* and there will be refreshments, entertainment for children, as well as the opportunity to look round this great garden.

Trinity Hospice is also inviting proud gardeners to show off their gardens as part of the Hospice's own Open Garden Scheme. All you need to do is to let them know the date you would like to open your garden and it will be added to their Open Garden Calendar to promote the event. On the day guests will be invited to make a donation to Trinity Hospice.

Already signed up is Ann Dunkley's garden at 4 Maple Close, (off Clarence Avenue) SW4 8LL on **Sunday 5 June** from 2 pm to 4 pm. This is a small garden packed with unusual plants. Teas will be served on the lawn of the close.

For more information contact Leah Bull on 020 7787 1085 or email lbull@trinityhospice.org.uk.

Sycamore Laundry

This summer we shall be installing the Clapham Society plaque on Sycamore House in Old Town, commemorating the former use of the house as Sycamore Laundry. Do you know anyone who worked at the laundry, which closed on that site in 1994? If so, please contact the Editor, as we would like to invite them to celebrate the unveiling with us.

London on Film

The Minet Library, 52 Knatchbull Road, SE5 9QY runs a film club with free screenings on the first Tuesday of each month starting at 6.30 pm. The current London-themed season includes Antonioni's *Blow up* on **Tuesday 3 May**, Isaac Julien's *Young Soul Rebels* on **Tuesday 7 June** and *10 Rillington Place* on **Tuesday 5 July**.

West Side Walk

On **Thursday 9 June** Derrick Johnson and Annabel Allott will be leading a special walk along Clapham Common West Side, as part of the Wandsworth Heritage Festival (see below). The walk will leave from Clapham South Underground Station at 6.30 pm and finish at the north end of West Side about an hour and a half later.

New members

We have recently welcomed the following new members: Karsten Filt, Michael Griffith-Jones, Matthew Howard-Cairns, Jason Leech, Simon Taylor-Young and Sumi Tikaram.

Planning News

Since January we have been notified of about 95 applications, reviewed some 25 of them and made representations on ten. The principal ones are summarised below.

36 Turret Grove. Objection to an application for an extension on the rear of the building which is so large that it completely swamps the original character and appearance of the house and its small garden.

89-93 Clapham Common South Side. Comments on a much reduced application for this hotel, on the design of a new entrance and lift shaft on the front elevation.

50 Clapham High Street. Objection to a very large mansard roof extension and poorly designed extensions at the rear; they dominate this prominent corner with Edgeley Road and the High Street.

1 Lambourn Road. Objections to three separate applications, all of which involve variations on a theme of overlarge extensions and inappropriate alterations to what is essentially a small cottage.

Café on Rookery Road. Objection to greatly enlarge what was Schmidt's café with covered seating areas on all four sides. The design and materials are very poor (as can be seen from some of the works that have already been started) and the size is excessive in the context of the Common.

36-38 Abbeville Road. Following the refusal of the first application for a Sainsbury's Local on grounds of the shopfront design, we have continued to object to new and modified proposals. The design is still considered unsuitable for the conservation area and the presence of a national supermarket chain will change the character of the street created by the independent traders.

35-51 Bedford Road. Critical comments on an application to redevelop the present builders' merchant with a mixed use scheme of residential and commercial space. The principle of redevelopment has already been adopted in Lambeth planning policy, but the design of the new buildings leaves a lot to be desired and we feel there are too many.

25-33 Macaulay Road. Objection to the third version of this application, on the grounds that it continues to provide very poor levels of accommodation in its residential form, and damages the amenity of neighbours in Orlando Road

1 Crescent Grove. Objection to a proposal for a side extension which unbalances the symmetry of this pair of listed buildings and fills in the gap which articulates the difference between No 1 and the modern building next door.

The Local List

Lambeth Council has invited amenity societies to submit proposals for 'locally listed buildings'. These are buildings which do not have the level of protection of nationally listed buildings but have local architectural and historic interest which the Council will seek to conserve. They can be architecturally distinctive or be buildings connected with important people or events in Clapham's history. We have put forward some 80 individual or groups of buildings.

The Council plans to select appropriate candidates and consult owners in the summer and we will publish further details when they are available.

These were our Sons

At our March meeting Naomi Lourie Klein kept an attentive audience fascinated with the story of her efforts to trace the 574 men who died in the First World War, and whose names are recorded on Stockwell War Memorial. She told us firstly how she did the research, and then some of the heart-rending stories she unveiled.

Absolutely central to her research was the internet. We were interested to hear of the rich resources widely available to researchers on the internet. Her starting point was the various military records which can be accessed on home computers through a subscription service, www.ancestry.co.uk, or at public libraries which subscribe to the service (Clapham Library is one). She found the Commonwealth War Graves Commission database useful and, most importantly, the 1911 census. Local newspapers were also invaluable. Of course, she could not trace all the men. The fact that only initials and not first names are shown, and neither rank nor regiment is recorded, made the task more difficult. Clearly the less common names were easier to trace.

Unusually, rather than wait to publish her finished work, as she acquired information she published it as 'work in progress' on her website. This led to people contacting her with more information, and with queries which assisted further research. Along the way she made friends with some of the families, who were generous in sharing family records and photographs. One particular friend was Sheila Dartnell whose great-uncle, Christopher Dartnell, was killed in action in 1917, aged 20. She provided a moving memoir written by his sister.

We also heard about some of the names she followed up, which provided interesting stories but about the wrong person! Such is the nature of research. Naomi Lourie Klein's book, *These were our Sons*, lists each name with as much information as she has found, and a few marked 'Not identified'. Maybe some of these will be identified as a result of the book.

Naomi is now researching other local war memorials, one of which is that at Holy Trinity Church, Clapham. In connection with this she introduced Marietta Crichton Stuart, who has investigated the story of the three Burleigh brothers, whose names appear on this memorial. The brothers were sons of an extraordinary character, Bennett Burleigh, a war journalist and adventurer. Marietta related the sad story of their widowed mother's appeal in *The Times* for the return of her lost handbag which contained the only photograph of her lost sons.

It was a sobering evening and the stories we heard of the tragic loss of young lives caused the audience to reflect on the First World War, and its effects on families in our area. We are grateful to both Naomi and Marietta for their well-researched presentations.

For a full list of the names on Stockwell War Memorial and to find out more about the war memorials project visit www.stockwellwarmemorial.co.uk. To purchase the book, *These Were Our Sons*, go to www.elephantbooks.com.

If you missed this talk you have another opportunity to hear it as part of the Lambeth Readers and Writers Festival (see below), at Durning Library, Kennington on **Monday 16 May** at 6.45 pm.

A concert for all the family

On **Saturday 21 May** at St Luke's Church, Thurleigh Road, SW12 8RQ the London Mozart Players will be giving a Family Concert entitled *So you want to be a composer...* The orchestra, which has performed before at St Luke's, returns for something completely different – an opportunity to experience first hand what it takes to create these wonderful performances, in a hilarious, interactive concert for all the family! This concert is designed for anyone aged six years or over ... with no upper limit!

Tickets are £5 and £10 from the Box Office: 07951 791619.

Note this concert starts at 6 pm.

Wandsworth Heritage Festival

This year's festival runs from **Saturday 28 May** to **Sunday 12 June**. The festival covers a wide selection of events – walks, talks and open days – organised by Wandsworth Heritage Service and several local societies. These include a Tooting Bec Common Walk on **Sunday 29 May**, a Queenstown Road walk on **Tuesday 31 May**, a Northcote Road walk on **Wednesday 1 June**, a visit to Sambrooks Brewery on **Thursday 2 June**, a Wandsworth on Film evening on **Monday 6 June** and many more goodies, as well as our own West Side walk on **Thursday 9 June** (mentioned above).

To celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Festival of Britain there will be an exhibition by the Festival Lakes in Battersea Park throughout May and June, and a plaque will be unveiled there on **Tuesday 24 May** at 7 pm at the launch of the Heritage Festival. The full programme is available at Wandsworth Libraries, telephone 020 8871 7753 or email heritage@wandsworth.gov.uk.

Graham Greene plaque



Caroline Bourget unveiling an English Heritage blue plaque to her father, Graham Greene

On 1 April an English Heritage blue plaque was unveiled on 14 Clapham Common North Side, the home of novelist Graham Greene from 1935 to 1940. The ceremony was performed by his daughter, Caroline Bourget, who had hazy memories of the house since she was only five years old when her father evacuated his wife and family to his parents' house in Sussex in August 1939. She recalled the magnificent staircase and the fact that well-known writers, including John Betjeman and Evelyn Waugh, visited the house, and later recalled seeing her there when she was a small child.

The house was seriously damaged by a bomb in October 1940, but it was unoccupied on that night as Greene was staying with his lover in Bloomsbury. The shell of the house survived and the interior was rebuilt after the war. The incident was used by Greene in his novel, *The End of the Affair*, which is set in Clapham and in which various local places including St Mary's Church can easily be identified.

Clapham's best kept secret?

Regular users of the Matrimony Place passageway between Rectory Grove and the Wandsworth Road will be familiar with the Eden Community Garden along its east side. But how many other Clapham residents are aware of this little gem – a garden run on ecological principles, using only rainwater, organic planting and bio-diversity?

Over the last eleven years the garden has developed into a mature shape, looking so good now with the fresh spring leaves and flowers, the pond full of spawn and the bees foraging for their new brood in their two hives. Raised beds are being prepared by local residents for their new season's crops, while local school and community groups visit and a Caterpillar club is active. The garden is developed and maintained by our long-term visionary and gardener, Stephen Barney, and a number of volunteers. Eden, a home for local wildlife, is justly proud of its Fifth Green Pennant – a prestigious national award. Every year the summer and winter solstices are celebrated with a party in the Garden, attended by the Volunteers and Friends of the garden.

Eden is open for use by all. This year we are further celebrating with a tree planting by Kate Hoey, MP. Clapham Society members are invited to join us for the ceremony during the St Paul's Summer Fair on **Saturday 11 June**. This will be a chance to visit our plant stall and acquaint yourself with this best kept secret.

The Eden Community Garden, a charitable trust, is currently supported by: the Western Riverside Environmental Fund, Lambeth Council, St Paul's Church and Community Centre, and the Friends of Eden.

If you would like to get involved in the project, contribute any help or skills, or become a Friend of Eden, please contact me on 07803 608385 or philippajgould@btinternet.com.

Philippa Gould
Chair of Eden



Inspecting frogspawn at Eden Community Garden

Trinity's Team Challenge

Would you like to put together a group of colleagues, clients, friends and family to participate in Trinity's Team Challenge on **Thursday 16 June**? You will compete against other teams in a series of fun games and challenges on Clapham Common to become Trinity's Team Challenge Champions 2011. There will also be the chance to receive Trinity's Golden Team 2011 award for the team that raises the most money. Wind down and celebrate afterwards in Trinity's gardens with well-earned drinks and canapés! For more information, go to www.trinityhospice.org.uk/teamchallenge or call Sheena Oughton: 020 7787 1087.

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
www.claphamsociety.com

Lambeth Readers and Writers Festival

Lambeth Libraries' annual Readers and Writers Festival commences on **Monday 16 May** with a Waterloo Walk, entitled *Marsh, Markets and Masterpieces*, led by Lambeth Archivist, Len Reilly, starting from Waterloo Library at 6 pm.

The festival has become a regular highlight in the library calendar and goes from strength to strength. This year there is another month of events to suit all tastes whether you enjoy reading, writing, discussion or simply sitting back and listening. Come and join in and express yourself! You'll be amazed at the fun you can have in your local library. Highlights of the programme include the following.

On **Monday 16 May** at 6.45 pm at the Durning Library there is another opportunity to hear Naomi Lourie Klein talking about her book, *These were our Sons*. On **Tuesday 17 May** at 7 pm at the Minet Library Ian Smith will talk about his biography of Edward Whymper, whose ascent of the Matterhorn in 1865 captured the headlines and earned him fame and notoriety due to a catastrophic accident on the descent which killed four climbers. On **Friday 20 May** at 7 pm at Brixton Library a panel of women writers including Lotte Daley, Gillian Hudson and Helen Smith will discuss their work, and if you missed Courttia Newland at Clapham Books last month there is another chance to hear him talk about *A Book of Blues* on **Wednesday 25 May** at 7 pm at Brixton Library. The one event at Clapham Library is on **Wednesday 8 June** at 7 pm when Edward Docx will talk about his latest novel, *The Devil's Garden*.

For further details pick up a leaflet in your local library, visit www.lambeth.gov.uk/libraries, email readersandwriters@lambeth.gov.uk or phone 020 7926 1075.