

# The Clapham Society Newsletter



Issue 338

June 2011

## Brixton Windmill reopens

On 2 May a colourful procession of over 200 people, many in costume, marched up Brixton Hill from Windrush Square. Was this a political demonstration or a quaint traditional May Day ceremony? It was neither. People of all ages had come to celebrate the reopening of Brixton Windmill, restored to its former glory with the shiny black tower glistening in the afternoon sun. Seven months of intense work had seen the brickwork repaired, strengthened and repainted. The weather-boarded cap had been renewed, the four sails put back and two of them now had shutters to catch the wind. Soon it is hoped that the first flour will be ground since the mill closed in 1934.

Brixton Windmill is the only one in Central London. It was built in 1816 and was known as Ashby's Windmill after the family who operated it throughout its working life. During the 1850s the surrounding cornfields, which supplied the raw material, were replaced by housing which also deprived it of sufficient wind power for effective working. The sails were removed and burnt for firewood. A steam engine was installed but the mill closed in 1934. When the last of the Ashbys died in the following year it passed through a number of hands before being bought by the LCC in 1957. Several cycles of restoration succeeded by vandalism and neglect followed.

The Grade II\* listed mill is now owned by Lambeth Council. In 2003 local people formed the Friends of Windmill Gardens who campaigned vigorously to restore the mill to working order, refurbish the surrounding gardens and build a heritage education centre. With the help of the Heritage Lottery Fund much of this has now been achieved and the mill will open on the second Sunday of each month for free guided tours. There will also be an education programme for local schools.

On 2 May over 500 people gathered in Windmill Gardens to celebrate the reopening. The Brixton Windmill Theatre Company performed a tableau of the mill's history, the Mayor and local MP, Chuka Umunna, gave speeches and there was music and a fancy dress competition for the children. It was a good start to the new life for this fascinating and remarkable survivor.

Visit [www.brixtonwindmill.org](http://www.brixtonwindmill.org) for more information about opening times and the history of the Brixton windmill.

*Derrick Johnson*

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 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 the Franklin Mint.

### Wednesday 6 July

**Summer Party at La Baita café** by the bandstand on Clapham Common. This is an excellent opportunity to have a leisurely chat to other members over drinks and canapés. We hope to have some music on the bandstand for at least part of the evening. We also hope the sun will shine, but just in case we must limit the number of tickets sold, so that in the event of bad weather the party can be held inside the café. We recommend that you **APPLY SOON**. The ticket application form is on the back of the newsletter.

**Our July and August meetings are replaced by the following walks.**

### Wednesday 20 July

**Historic Clapham.** This walk will go to the historic centre of Clapham around Old Town, and will also include some new buildings which are altering our townscape and will provide new facilities. **Led by Peter Jefferson Smith.** Start by the clock tower outside Clapham Common Underground Station at 6.30 pm.

### Wednesday 17 August

**The Secrets of South Side** – with a mystery interior and a Royal visit. **Led by Mary Coales.** Start at Clapham South Underground Station entrance lobby at 6.30 pm and finish near Clapham Common Underground Station at about 8 pm.

### A Walk on the West Side

Don't forget our special walk along Clapham Common West Side for Wandsworth Heritage Festival, on **Thursday 9 June**, leaving at 6.30 pm from Clapham South Underground Station. This walk, led by Derrick Johnson and Annabel Allott, will contain new information resulting from research for the new *Survey of London* volume covering this area.

## Camp Royale



*A good crowd.... outside*

This event, which comprised a camp site, a showing of the Royal Wedding on a large screen, various entertainments and food and drink outlets, turned into a dismal flop. 1800 tents accommodating up to 4000 people were expected but we understand that only about 25 tents were used by campers. What was booked as a three-day event dwindled away on the Saturday. Scarcely any of the promised entertainments appeared and the few visitors were outnumbered by the security staff.

Admission to the entertainment area, which included the screen, was free. However no food or drink was allowed in, so people who had brought picnics either had to throw them away into large boxes provided by the organisers or to stay outside. About 1000 people went inside but a sizeable crowd stayed outside raising safety fears because of the proximity of the Long Pond.

## Bandstand Concerts

An interesting programme of events is planned on Clapham Common Bandstand this summer. All are free of charge. Concerts for June and early July are shown below. Later events will appear in subsequent newsletters. If you would like to hold an event on the bandstand contact Lambeth Events Service on 020 7926 1017 or [bandstands@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:bandstands@lambeth.gov.uk).

**Saturday 4 June** at 3 pm. South London Saxophone Quartet. Popular music including jazz, swing, pop and classical.

**Saturday 18 June** at 3 pm. Lambeth Wind Orchestra Concert. A traditional wind performance of light-hearted music and toe-tapping melodies.

**Saturday 25 June** at 3 pm. Morris Folk Choir. Popular music including jazz, swing, pop and classical.

**Sunday 26 June** at 11 am. Becontree Brass Band. A varied performance of traditional brass band marches, jazz standards, classical and popular repertoire.

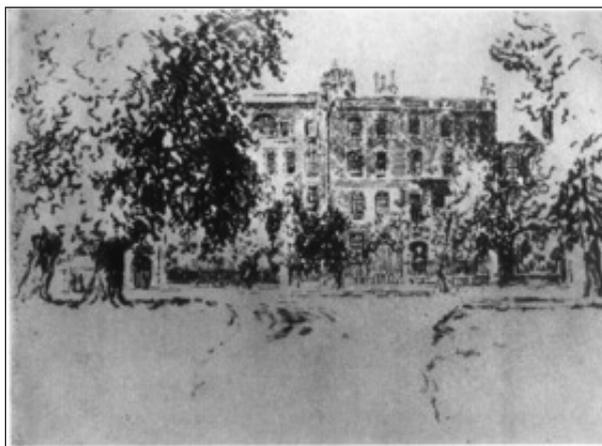
**Sunday 26 June** at 2.30 pm.

South London Concert Band. Varied light entertainment.

**Sunday 3 July** at 12 noon. Methodist Ladies College Perth Concert. Jazz, chorale, barbershop and symphony orchestra.

**Saturday 9 July** at 3 pm. Soutwark Concert Band. Rousing marches, show tunes, children themes and modern interpretations of classic works.

**Sunday 10 July** at 3 pm. Incredible Sax Band. An eclectic performance including swing, funk, blues, pop and classical.



*A reader has asked us to identify the location of this picture. Suggestions to the Editor, please.*

## 'Gateway' Matters

The re-landscaping of Venn Street is due to start on site on 20 June and be completed towards the end of September. This is part of the Clapham Common triangle component of the larger project. At the time of going to press we have no information about any interim plans for the Venn Street Market during that period.

With regard to the Old Town component, the search has continued for a solution to resolve some of the issues surrounding the re-location of bus stands from Old Town to The Pavement without losing sight of the conceptual principles of the project. TfL are still carrying out technical feasibility studies on the currently preferred layout but meanwhile progress has been at a virtual standstill for some time.

*John Adams*

## Live Nation

In our April Newsletter we expressed concern about a Premises Licence application for an event for 52,000 people plus staff which would cover a period of one year. Very little was known about the event and no date was given. We subsequently learned that it was to be 'Sainsbury's Super Saturday' and would have links with the Paralympics as well as being a musical event.

With others, including the Friends of Clapham Common, we appeared at the Licensing Committee as objectors. The length of the licence was time-limited to one day, known by then to be 10 September 2011, and a number of conditions were imposed.

## Concerts at St Paul's, Rectory Grove

**On Saturday 18 June** at 11 am the Moonfleet Trio will perform an hour of fun-filled music for children. Learn to dance the hornpipe, play 'Guess the theme tune?' and help to compose a piece of music!

**On Thursday 23 June** at 7.30 pm there will be a recital by Alba Bosch there will be a recital by Alba Bosch Teixidor (soprano) Anthony Birnie (baritone) Maite Aguirre Quiñero (piano).

These outstanding graduates of the Guildhall School of Music will perform a delightful selection of German lieder, French songs by Fauré and Spanish songs by Falla and Rodrigo as well as opera arias including duets from Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro* and *The Magic Flute*.

Both concerts are at St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DX. Tickets available on the door at £10, concessions £8 and £5 for under 12s.

## New members

We have welcomed the following new members this month: Christine Gunns, Edwina Larsen, Barbara Nicholls and Amanda Sitto.

## An evening at Wandsworth Museum

Our April meeting at Wandsworth Museum was a great success. We had an impressive turn out – around 60 people – on what we had feared could be a difficult day in the week leading up to the long Easter break. There was a party atmosphere as members gathered early in the museum café to enjoy drinks and cakes, and some were even tempted to have supper there.

Sheila Allen of the Friends of Wandsworth Museum welcomed us and gave a brief summary of the history of the Friends and their activities. She urged us to join them in supporting the museum not only by raising funds but also by contributing time and expertise in the various jobs which need to be done. We were reminded that the museum receives no public funding so is dependent on fund-raising and admission charges. The Friends' lively social programme includes a regular monthly coffee morning and various excursions which have recently covered Dulwich College and the Palace of Westminster. If you are interested in joining the Friends contact Sheila Allen: [wandsworthmuseumgroup@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:wandsworthmuseumgroup@hotmail.co.uk).

The Museum Director, Ken Barbour, then gave an introduction to the museum, telling us briefly about the history and lead-up to the opening of the new museum – which members will have read about in our earlier newsletters. He went on to share with us several pieces of very good news about the future of the museum.

Firstly, an agreement has been reached with the Museum of London to provide Wandsworth Museum with expertise in fundraising, volunteer coordination, marketing and promotion and exhibition development.

Secondly, the De Morgan collection, which is housed in the same building as Wandsworth Museum, but has been closed for several years, is to reopen on **Friday 1 July**. Some members will remember the talk given to the Society in 2005 by Kate Catleugh, creator of the collection, and many of us then visited this outstanding display of pottery by William de Morgan and paintings by his wife, Evelyn de Morgan. It is indeed great news that the collection is to re-open.

Coinciding with this opening an important reredos designed by William Morris for the chapel of Whitelands College in Chelsea, now housed at Roehampton University, is to be installed in Wandsworth Museum.

We heard about the new exhibition entitled *Separation and Silence: stories from Wandsworth Prison*, which is to replace the current temporary exhibition on **Friday 1 July**. The history of the prison will be highlighted by stories of significant people and events: **interesting artefacts, photos and documents will be shown and some will relate to infamous former residents of the prison.**

After the talk we were free to look round the museum in our own time, while Ken Barbour and his colleagues were on hand to answer questions, and to guide us through and explain the exhibits. It was a thoroughly enjoyable and informative evening and we would strongly recommend a visit to those who missed this, and a repeat visit after 1 July. And don't forget the café! The admission charge, which will cover both museums will remain at £3 (over 65s £2).

## Open Garden Squares Weekend

On **Saturday 11 June** and **Sunday 12 June** more than 200 London gardens, to many of which access is normally restricted, are open to the public. Gardens in South London include Trinity Hospice, Eden at St Paul's (see the article in the May newsletter), Stockwell Studios, St George's Hospital Allotments, Durand Gardens, Wandsworth Prison and Nightingale Square. There is an excellent website [www.opensquares.org](http://www.opensquares.org) which has details of all the gardens, opening times, exact locations, how to buy tickets, travel details etc. A ticket which allows you to visit as many gardens as you wish over the two days, and includes a detailed handbook, costs £7.50 in advance (before 6 June) or £10 on the day. If you don't have internet access telephone 020 8347 3230.

## Susan Collier

Many Society members and friends will have already been saddened to learn that Susan Collier died on 7 May. She and her sister Sarah were award-winning fabric designers and their company, Collier Campbell, has a world-wide reputation, having produced some of the most iconic prints of the second half of the 20th century.

She was a long-term and prominent Clapham resident, and was responsible for rescuing and restoring one of Clapham's finest houses in Old Town, though she moved to Peckham a few years ago. An exhibition marking the achievement of Collier Campbell opened at the National Theatre on 23 May and continues to 3 July.

## Photographing Clapham Streets

We are constantly told that we live in a time of rapid change and nowhere is this more apparent than in our streets – particularly the shopping streets. The remorseless advance of the supermarkets and the chain stores has led to the disappearance of many individual and attractive shop fronts. Have you ever walked down a familiar street past a boarded up shop front and wondered what used to be there? Even the pub, which once remained when all about it was demolished, is no longer sacrosanct. Not only may it change its name but it can disappear altogether and be replaced by a block of flats.

The Society's Local History Sub-committee believes it is time to preserve our streets – not as bricks and mortar, that would be impossible, but on film. The project would be to photograph at least the main streets every five years – more frequently if major redevelopments took place. The result would be a panorama of Clapham through the ages – fascinating in itself and valuable to future local historians.

The advent of digital photography has meant that such a project has never been simpler to undertake and, importantly, storage and access of the results is fairly easy. Lambeth Archives would store digital photographs on our behalf and allow access on their Landmark website. However digital images must be arranged in an orderly manner and indexed when handed over.

We are therefore looking for someone with computer and digital photographic expertise to coordinate such a project, which would start with the main streets and extend as time and energy permit. If you are interested in the role, or would like to learn more, please contact me on 020 7223 1172.

*Derrick Johnson*

*Convenor, Local History Sub-committee*

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## The Devil's Garden

On **Wednesday 8 June** at 7 pm at Clapham Library Edward Docx will talk about his new novel set on a river station in the South American jungle, the last inhabited point before the impassable interior, where his hero is studying the forest glades known by the local as 'devil's gardens'. The book has been well reviewed, and the hardback will be on sale at this event for £11.50 instead of the normal price of £12.99.

## Clapham Steam & Sailing Club



Underneath the arches at Embankment is a shop called Ocean Leisure which sells equipment and clothing for water sports. It also has a small window display of memorabilia, mainly associated with the sea. At present this includes an information and honours board of Clapham Steam & Sailing Club. Its headquarters is given as Alexandra Hotel, Clapham Common, SW, the Commodore is G.F. Young and the Honorary Secretary is R. Martin Weaver. There is a heading Sailing Section but no entries. The board probably dates from the 1930s and is for sale at £179.

**Wandsworth Heritage Festival** The festival, which started in May, continues until 12 June. Among the highlights (apart from our West Side walk mentioned on the first page) are a talk by Timothy Walker about his book, *Twixt the Commons*, on **Wednesday 8 June** at 7 pm at Northcote Library, a Tooting walk on **Saturday 11 June** and a Balham walk on **Sunday 12 June**. For the full programme pick up the booklet at any Wandsworth Library, telephone 020 8871 7753 or email [heritage@wandsworth.gov.uk](mailto:heritage@wandsworth.gov.uk).

**Trinity River Walk** Join a walk (6 km or 11 km) taking in wonderful views along the Thames towpath on **Sunday 3 July**. Bring family and friends and show your support for Trinity. For more information call Zahra on 0207 787 1044 or go to [www.trinityhospice.org.uk/riverwalk2011](http://www.trinityhospice.org.uk/riverwalk2011).

## New Covent Garden Market

Plans for the redevelopment of the New Covent Garden Market site in Vauxhall are due to be submitted to London Borough of Wandsworth this summer following extensive local consultation over the past 18 months by Covent Garden Market Authority (CGMA).

The Garden at New Covent Garden Market will see a modern new fresh produce market for traders and their customers built on the main site in Nine Elms. This will include five new buildings for wholesale and catering distributors, alongside a dedicated new flower market building, relocated from its current location at the Northern Site.

There is also a wider vision to create a new food centre for London known as the Garden Heart - a new building, close to Vauxhall interchange, which will be a hub of activity and focus for food outside of the Market. This will also provide a base for a host of facilities supporting the Market and be open to the public with exhibition space, cafés and possibly a public market.

Through these plans a number of sites not needed for the Market and suitable for development will be freed up including the Northern Site. The plans for the Market therefore also include 1,750 new homes arranged around a new park which will run throughout the Northern Site, with seating areas, play areas and other amenities. This will act as the start of the new 'linear park' for the area connecting Vauxhall at one end to the Entrance Site and Battersea Power Station at the other, linking with the proposed US Embassy public plaza along the way.

Around the parkland will be six new residential buildings ranging from 8 to 15 storeys, with three buildings of between 25 and 46 storeys to the east of the site, where planning policy specifically supports taller buildings. The tallest of these will include a hotel and serviced apartments on the lower floors with residential apartments above.

Alongside new shops, cafés and restaurants, a new supermarket is also proposed with access off Wandsworth Road offering more choice for local people and to support the growing population in this area. Two new junctions will help traffic move into and out of the site, linking to both Nine Elms Lane and Wandsworth Road.

In tandem with the planning process CGMA have also been running a procurement process to select a private development partner to help them build the new Market and from a shortlist of three a final developer is due to be selected later in the year. For more information visit [www.newcoventgardenmarket.com](http://www.newcoventgardenmarket.com).

*Helen Evans, Communications Manager, CGMA*

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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:

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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](http://www.claphamsociety.com).

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## Ticket application form:

Summer Party at La Baita Café, by the bandstand on Clapham Common, on **Wednesday 6 July** from 6.30 pm to 8.30 pm. Drinks and canapés.

Please send me ..... tickets @ £15 each. Cheque payable to **The Clapham Society** for £..... with a stamped addressed envelope to Maev Sullivan, 2 Fitzwilliam Road, London SW4 0DN.

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

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