



# The Clapham Society Newsletter

Issue 340

September 2011

## Our First Green Plaque

The first plaque in the Clapham Society's green plaque scheme was unveiled by local celebrity, Dame Vivienne Westwood, on 12 August, at Sycamore House, 4 Old Town. The ceremony was followed by a splendid party hosted by Tim Gosling, owner of Sycamore House and designer of the plaque.

The scheme is designed to mark historic buildings in Clapham which have changed their use over the years. Sycamore House was built in 1787 as a private house, was the home of the Sycamore Laundry from 1898 until 1994 and has now been restored to residential use. Tim arranged an interesting display of photographs of the laundry for the opening event.

We hope that the next plaque, which will be on the remaining wing of Eagle House in Narbonne Avenue, will be in position by the end of the year.



*Dame Vivienne Westwood and Tim Gosling beside the newly unveiled plaque, with photographs of the old laundry behind.*

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 your 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 21 September

**The right way to improve the thermal performance of traditional buildings.**

**Iain McCaig**, Senior Architectural Conservator at English Heritage will explain ways in which the energy efficiency of traditional buildings can be improved, whilst maintaining their special character. He will discuss the range of renewable technologies available and consider their financial implications and grants available. This is the talk that was postponed from January this year.

### Wednesday 19 October

**Annual General Meeting.** See agenda overleaf.



*Guests enjoying Tim Gosling's hospitality in the courtyard of Sycamore House.*

## Visit a Victorian house south of Clapham Common on Wednesday 26 October

Although tens of thousands of middle-class terraced houses were built in south London at the end of the 19th century, few have retained their character and fittings through changes in fashion and the passage of time. This is a rare chance to see the colourful and atmospheric interiors of a Clapham house of the 1890s along with the collection of antiques, arts and crafts and contemporary furnishings which the owners have built up over twenty years. Christopher Claxton Stevens will give an introductory talk and there will be a tour of the house, followed by wine and nibbles.

A maximum of 18 people can be accommodated at a charge of £5.00 per head from 6.30 pm to 8.30 pm. So early booking is recommended although a second visit could be organised if more than 18 people apply. Please contact Maev Sullivan on 020 7498 9205 or [maevsullivan@gmail.com](mailto:maevsullivan@gmail.com) to book a place.

## Miriam Margolyes

Apply without delay for your tickets for Miriam Margolyes' show *An Evening with Charles Dickens, Miriam Margolyes and Others* at Clapham Library, 1 North Side, SW4 0QW on **Saturday 3 September** at 7.30. Tickets at £10 are available from Clapham Picture House or the Box Office 0871 902 5727.

This event is organised by Omnibus, the local residents' group planning to take over the library building when it closes this autumn. You are invited to complete a survey about this proposal at [www.surveymonkey.com/s/SavingOldClaphamLibrary](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SavingOldClaphamLibrary).

## Calling all choral singers

On **Saturday 8 October** the Whitehall Choir is holding its fifth 'Come & Sing' at the Church of the Holy Spirit, Narbonne Avenue. Paul Spicer, the choir's conductor who will lead the event, accompanied by Robin Kimber, chose Haydn's *The Creation* for the unfailing popularity of its rousing choruses. Singers from all over London (and beyond) are welcome. As in previous years, the day will take the form of a relaxed yet inspiring rehearsal, followed by a concert. Registration opens at 10 am, singing starts at 11 am and the concert takes place at 5 pm.

For full details, including (refundable) music hire, and to apply for tickets, £15 to sing for the day, £2.50 for concert audience go to [www.whitehallchoir.org.uk](http://www.whitehallchoir.org.uk).

## New members

We welcomed the following new members to the Society this summer: Mr and Mrs T Bancroft, Elizabeth Drelin and David Hansford, Sheamus Maher, Mark and Samantha Mifsud, Tony and Win Solway, Monica Tross, Anton Truter, and Dame Vivienne Westwood.

## Trinity Hospice News

Trinity Hospice is recruiting new volunteers in various roles, both in the hospice itself – on reception, in the Mulberry Café and helping to sell selected donations on Ebay – and in the 22 shops throughout south London. One shop which particularly requires volunteers is the one that has been recently refurbished and reopened as a fashion and lifestyle boutique at 9 Old Town.

A minimum commitment of three hour per week is required for all roles. If you are interested contact Anne-Marie Zaritsky, Voluntary Services Manager at Trinity Hospice on 020 7787 1042 or [volunteering@trinityhospice.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@trinityhospice.org.uk).

## Clapham Methodist Church

Local readers of the newsletter will have seen that the Methodist Church now has a glass frontage extending out towards the High Street. This is one of a number of improvements described by the minister, Rev. Norman Grigg in our newsletter last December. The present church opened in 1961 to replace the Victorian church damaged by bombs in 1940. The effect of the new extension is to reduce any perception of barriers between the church and the people around it – in keeping with Methodism's traditions of outreach and involvement among the whole community, including those we might now call marginalised.

The redeveloped church was opened and dedicated on 25 June. The building was packed with members of the congregation and visitors. Rev. Lord Griffiths preached, and groups of young people from the congregation sang and performed on saxophone, guitar and keyboard. The ceremony was a truly happy occasion, marking this advance in the Methodist Church's long and active history of ministry in Clapham.

*Alison Macnair*

### THE 2011 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 48th Annual General Meeting of the Clapham Society will be held on Wednesday 19 October 2011 at Clapham Manor Primary School, Belmont Road, London SW4 0BZ starting at 8 pm.

#### AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Approval of the Minutes of the previous AGM (20 October 2010) published in Newsletter No 333, December 2010/January 2011, and available at the meeting
3. Adoption of the Annual Report for the year ended 30 September 2011
4. Adoption of the Financial Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2011
5. Election of the Officers and Committee Members for the year 2011-2012

Chairman	Treasurer
Vice-Chairman	Solicitor
Secretary	Membership Secretary

A maximum of ten further Committee Members
6. Re-appointment of the Independent Examiner
7. Any other business and announcements

*After the formal business there will be a break for refreshments.*

Following the break the guest speaker will be **Tim Cook OBE**, director of the City Parochial Foundation from 1985-98. A long standing Lambeth resident, Tim Cook has worked in the London voluntary sector since 1962, and continues to do so in a voluntary capacity. He has been a trustee of many London focused charities and is currently chair of the Grants Committee of the Lambeth Community Fund, a historic charity recently relaunched. He will be talking about the role of charities in an age of financial austerity, in which government looks to the voluntary sector to take an increased role.

#### NOMINATIONS

Nominations for the election of Officers and Committee Members must be made to the Secretary at least 14 days before the Annual General Meeting. Every nomination must be in writing, supported by a seconder. The consent of the person nominated must be obtained.

*Jill Cramphorn, Hon Secretary, 552 Wandsworth Road, London SW8 3JX*



## Our June meeting

On 16 June three members of the Society's Local History sub-committee provided us with splendidly entertaining accounts of their recent research into three relatively unsung Clapham residents.

Peter Jefferson Smith began the evening by introducing us to **Henry Whitehead**, senior curate at Holy Trinity in Clapham from 1856-64, but previously involved in significant developments in public health in mid 19th century London. In 1854 there was a severe outbreak of cholera in the Broad Street area of Soho. Dr John Snow, a London epidemiologist, was unconvinced by the widely-held belief that the disease was spread by foul air. He carefully mapped victims' homes, finding a clear cluster round the Broad Street pump – the sole source of water for poorer people in the area. In September 1854 he persuaded local Poor Law guardians to remove the pump handle: the epidemic then steadily declined. The General Board of Health refused Snow's request for an enquiry, but the local vestry appointed a somewhat doubtful Whitehead, then curate at St Luke's Soho, to carry out house-to-house interviews. He found that only two of 56 fatal cases had not drunk water from the pump; that the only fatalities outside the immediate area had bottled water from the pump delivered to them; and that childless old women with no one to fetch water for them had not succumbed. This strengthened Snow's case, but Whitehead could not firmly link the pump handle removal on 8 September to the end of the outbreak, which had peaked before 3 September. He then found that washing water from the napkins of a baby who had died on 2 September had been tipped into a leaking cesspool which had contaminated the well: after that the well-water became more dilute and less infectious. Whitehead's painstaking work thus helped prove Snow's case; by now convinced, he helped trace the source of later outbreaks – though his vicar made him pay for a locum curate.

## Kilvert and Clapham

We have recently added a new article to the Local History Series on our website. Written by historian, John Toman, it traces the links between the Rev. Francis Kilvert, best known for his diaries describing rural life, and Dr Charles Pritchard, Headmaster of Clapham Grammar School, and other Clapham residents.

Alyson Wilson then gave us a potted history of the medal-makers **John Pinches**. While Birmingham may be the traditional centre of this craft, John Pinches looked further afield and moved from there to London in 1836, studying and working with William Wyon, a member of an important family of medallists. Wyon designed, and Pinches' newly-established company minted, the Queen Victoria Coronation medal of 1838 – which the Queen liked so much that it was reproduced on the Penny Black stamp. The workshop was initially located near the Haymarket; in 1903 it moved to custom-built premises at 21 Albert Embankment. These were damaged in World War II, leading to a move to Clapham where in 1935 the firm had bought several buildings including the former chapel of Clapham Grammar School and the Surrey Conservatoire of Music in St Luke's Avenue, by then converted into the Clapham Reform Club's meeting room and billiard hall.

Among the company's 19th century products were the 1854 Crystal Palace souvenir medal, the Diamond Jubilee medal of 1897 and – endearingly – the National Institute of Agricultural Botany's medal for services to Potato Husbandry; later came war medals, those for the 1948 London Olympic Games, the 1965 Churchill memorial medal and pieces commissioned by a wide range of bodies such as the Inner Temple, the Cyclists' Touring Club and the Institute of Physics; wartime work included the production of small components for Sten guns. By the 1960s, the company employed more than 100 people, but there were no family members to take over from the third John Pinches and in 1969 the company was bought by the Pennsylvania-based Franklin Mint which, predictably, shut down the UK operation and ceased production of the medals for which Pinches had built a fine reputation over 130 years.

Finally, Michael Green related the

story of previous (and perhaps lingering) inhabitants of his North Side house. The dancer and choreographer **Katti Lanner** was born in 1829: her father, Josef Lanner, was director of ballet at the Imperial Court in Vienna. She gained an early reputation as a fine dancer, and travelled throughout Europe. In Hamburg, she met and married Johann Geraldini; they had three daughters in quick succession, during which time Katti turned to choreography, making seven ballets for the Hamburg Stadttheater. In 1869, having had another daughter, she formed her own ballet company in Vienna. During later travel to the US she met another dancer, Giuseppe de Francesco, and they moved to 49 Lansdowne Gardens in 1879. She established a ballet school in Tottenham Court Road, and worked in several London theatres and music halls. The family moved to 183 Clapham Road; when in 1892, de Francesco died, Katti moved to 40 North Side where she set up a dancing school. In the late 1890s and early 1900s, she choreographed numerous works for the Empire Theatre's ballet company, working with the new man in her life, composer director Leopold Wenzel. It seems that by now the North Side ménage comprised Katti, two daughters, a granddaughter, one dog and five cats. Katti died in 1908; her dog died a few hours before her.

That much is known; what cannot be stated with certainty is the identity of the lady in black holding a candle who has been encountered in 40 North Side walking through a now-blocked doorway; nor why a limping man, accompanied by a strong smell of tobacco, also appears from time to time. Michael Green suggests that things may have turned sour when, after Lanner and Wenzel had produced 35 short, topical and successful ballets, Wenzel was sacked in 1904: perhaps their emotional turmoil is reflected in these occasional spectral reappearances.

*Jill Cramphorn*



*Bill Emmett*

*Clapham fights back – volunteers have been collecting items to help people left homeless after the recent riots. Here, Ellie Cope and Jo Harris are seen with donations at their pitch on the Common.*



L Lavers

## All Aboard for Stockwell

An architectural education charity called Our Hut has been awarded a Heritage Lottery Fund grant of £49,400 to run a programme of events focusing on the heritage of Stockwell Bus Garage, timed to coincide with the 60th anniversary of the garage and the 2012 Olympics.

The Grade II\* listed garage built in 1952 boasted, at the time, the largest unsupported area under one roof in Europe. Its design and construction as well as its history as a major employer in the area are of considerable importance.

The project will involve school and local community groups in activities including artwork and music inspired by the garage, and oral histories recording memories of those involved in the design and construction of the building and those who worked there.

Volunteers will be recruited, and trained to work on the project. More information will be available shortly, but in the meantime if you are interested in finding out more email [ourhut@hotmail.com](mailto:ourhut@hotmail.com).

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)

## On the Common

As our members will know Lambeth Council have lifted their self imposed restrictions on events in parks and open spaces this summer. This has had a considerable impact on Clapham Common. The last two music events, on two days over the August Bank Holiday and on Saturday 10 September are scheduled to leave only two clear days between taking down and starting to set up the next event. We regard this as unacceptable. The latter, Sainsbury's Big Saturday, is expected to attract 40,000 people and will cover a much larger area than previous events.

On a more positive note the Clapham Society had a tent promoting Clapham past and present throughout the Ben and Jerry event. A lot of interest was shown and as usual there were visitors from whom we could learn.

## September Concerts on the Bandstand

**Sunday 11 September** Crystal Palace Band. Traditional brass band music with light classical and popular favourites.

**Saturday 17 September** Southwark Concert Band. Rousing marches, show tunes, children's themes and modern interpretations of classic works.

**Sunday 18 September** South London Jazz Orchestra. Classic swing, modern jazz and Latin.

**Saturday 24 September** South London Saxophone Quartet. Popular music including jazz, swing, pop and classical.

**Sunday 25 September** Incredible Sax Band. Swing, funk, blues, pop and classical.

All concerts start at 3 pm and are free.

## Romantic and Beyond

Battersea Choral Workshops will run another workshop on **Saturday 1 October** building on the success of the first two in March and June. The theme for this year – Tallis to Whitacre – and this workshop, *Romantic and Beyond*, will continue the journey through the choral masterpieces.

If you are a reasonably experienced choral singer, who wants the chance to sing in a smaller group than most choral societies can offer please join in.

The workshop takes place at St Mary's Church, Battersea and is directed by Scott Inglis-Kidger, supported by expert vocal coach, Ghislaine Morgan. For all details see [www.batterseachoral.co.uk/home](http://www.batterseachoral.co.uk/home).