



The Clapham Society Newsletter

Issue 320

September 2009

Clapham Gateway

As Councillor Nigel Haselden mentioned in our last newsletter the Clapham Gateway project, first discussed in 2002, has been revived. This scheme aims to improve the area around Clapham Old Town and the 'Station Island' by Clapham Common Underground station. There was a public display about the scheme on site during July, but as it was during holiday time many members were unable to see this. We have therefore arranged for Ian Hingley of Urban Initiatives, the consultants for the scheme, to put up the display at our September meeting and to give a 10-minute introduction to the proposals before the main meeting starts.

If you were not able to view the proposals in July we would strongly urge you to arrive early (from 7.30 pm onwards) at this meeting to have time to look at the display and to give your views. There is still time for our comments to be fed into the design process, so it is important that we take advantage of this opportunity.

Ace of Clubs Open Day

On **Sunday 13 September** the Ace of Clubs, founded in 1995 as a Day Centre to serve homeless and vulnerable people, will be holding its first Open Day. The club, in St Alphonsus Road behind St. Mary's Monastery, will welcome visitors between 11 am and 4 pm.

The club recently gained most votes for the nomination of 'Clapham's Favourite Charity' at Sainsbury's in Clapham High Street. It was also one of the two charities chosen by last year's Mayor of Lambeth, Councillor Angie Meader. When she came to present the resulting generous cheque to the Club she was

impressed by the new initiative of the Bike Club, where members can learn all there is to know about bicycles and cycling.

If any members have old bicycles they would like to dispose of the club would welcome them – contact Anna Jefferson Smith: annajs@mac.com.



Administrator needed

The Old Clapham Library Trust is looking for a volunteer administrator to help develop an exciting project to transform Clapham Library on Clapham Common North Side in to an active new arts and culture venue, when the new library opens on Clapham High Street in 2011. The group, which has the support of Lambeth Council, is just starting to develop serious

plans and preparing to consult with local residents. The Trust team is a small, dedicated and lively group who get things done, but have fun along the way.

If you are interested in the project, have some administrative and secretarial skills (including use of MS Word and Excel) and can spare about two days a week (flexible hours), working from home, why not find out more? Contact ocls4@toucansurf.com.

Our regular monthly meetings are held at Clapham Manor Primary School, Belmont Road, SW4 0BZ. 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 16 September

See alongside for details about the **Clapham Gateway** display and brief introduction to the scheme which will precede the speaker at this meeting.

The Man on the Clapham Omnibus.

Iain Aitch is a London-based writer and journalist. He says 'I generally write about the arts, travel and eccentricity. If I can tie up all three in one story then I am a happy man'. His first book, *A Fete Worse than Death*, tells the tale of a summer spent visiting such events up and down the country. His second, *We're British, Innit*, published last September, takes a sideways look at current preoccupations with Britishness. He will talk to us about the book and, in particular, about his researches into the history and use of the phrase 'the man on the Clapham omnibus'.

Wednesday 21 October

Annual General Meeting. The Guest Speaker will be Martin Linton, Member of Parliament for Battersea, a constituency which includes much of the area to the west and north of Clapham Common.

Wednesday 18 November

A musical entertainment to mark St Cecilia's Day, which falls a few days later. Members of the Clapham Chamber Concerts team will play and sing music by British composers, including some pieces by Purcell (who was born on St Cecilia's Day 350 years ago).

There is no meeting in December.

THE 2009 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 46th Annual General Meeting of the Clapham Society will be held on Wednesday 21 October 2009 at Clapham Manor Primary School, Belmont Road, London SW4, starting at 8 pm.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Approval of the Minutes of the previous AGM (22 October 2008) published in the Newsletter No 313, December 2008/January 2009, and available at the meeting
3. Adoption of the Annual Report for the year ended 30 September 2009
4. Adoption of the Financial Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2009
5. Election of the Officers and Committee Members for the year 2009-2010

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 Martin Linton MP.

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

Up whose street?

Names for new streets have to be approved by the borough in which they are situated, and Lambeth Council has recently agreed to consult local amenity societies before deciding on them. This is a welcome development, resulting from an initiative by the Streatham Society.

New names have to conform to certain policy standards. The name must be one not already in use in Lambeth or the surrounding boroughs and not capable of being confused with one in use. This rule was first set in the 1850s at the behest of the Post Office, and currently the emergency services rightly have an effective veto on names they consider likely to confuse.

Lambeth also has a policy that the name should have a local historical connection with the area where it is to be used. Currently, the redevelopment of the Clapham Park estate is creating a

need for new names. Possibilities include previous residents or landowners, names of the big houses that stood there in the nineteenth century, and former names of locations that have dropped out of use. In the end the choice will be down to the developer and the council, but we are able to influence the choice if we can indicate why some names are more (or less) suitable than others.

Inevitably, many of the names chosen will be obscure, and sometimes capable of misunderstanding. Residents of the new development on the corner of Grafton Square and Old Town could be forgiven for assuming that Wingate Square commemorates the Second World War leader of the Chindits, and would be surprised to learn that it is named after Charles Wingate, who in 1855 had a grocer's shop in the Polygon. But we are, after all, a nation of shopkeepers.

Peter Jefferson Smith

New members We are delighted to have welcomed the following new members this summer: David, Katy and Lucy Barnard, Mike Barrow, Iain and Frances Campbell, Hugh and Elspeth Chapman, Roisin Donachie, Daniel Dovar and Nina Murdoch, John Downs, Tim Gosling and Jonathan Coleman, Monique Hood, Davis Norris and Laura Ladd, Simon Rowell, Daniel Sabbagh and Amanda Ellis and Noah Sabbagh, Peter Sawyer and Jessica Cobb, Richard and Miranda Stonor, Debbie Wagstaff and John Shaw, and Amanda Williams.

Windmill Drive

After the publication of the last newsletter we learned that there was to be a public consultation on the closure of Windmill Drive to through traffic, apart from bicycles.

Unfortunately the short notice and period of consultation has meant that we have been unable to consult members to establish their views before the consultation closed. In the past most Society members favoured closure, but people and circumstances change.

To put the issue briefly into its historical context, the first suggestion that Windmill Drive be closed, along with Nightingale Walk, was made in a Clapham Society publication, *Clapham Common – Suggestions for the Future*, in 1976. In 1984 the north/south cycle track was laid on the Common with the undertaking that land from Windmill Drive would be returned to the Common in exchange. This was never honoured by Lambeth Council.

In 1999 a public consultation was inconclusive. The most worrying feature of the drawings that have now been produced is a turning area halfway along Windmill Drive which involves a sizeable incursion into grassed common land.

Lambeth Archives Open Day

On **Saturday 26 September** Lambeth Archives hold their annual Open Day, which is a mecca for local historians in the borough. The theme this year is 'Lambeth in Art. Art in Lambeth'. There is a programme of talks throughout the day, and all local societies in Lambeth (including, of course, the Clapham Society) have stands with special displays, books and cards for sale, and people ready to answer local history queries.

The archive department staff are on hand to give expert advice on research and to explain the resources available. It is a thoroughly enjoyable day for anyone with any interest in local or family history.

Subscription reminder

Do you receive your newsletter by post? Do you pay your annual subscription by standing order? If so, did you remember to increase your standing order to cover the increase in the postage this year? Just to remind you, the annual subscription is due on 1 April each year and the rates are as follows: Individual £6.00, Household (up to three names) £9.00, Postage £5.00.

If you are not sure that your standing order is for the correct amount please contact the Membership Secretary – details on back page.

Future Clapham update

Cathedral, the developers who obtained planning permission earlier in the year to replace Mary Seacole House and the leisure centre, have not yet begun work on either site. The existing leisure centre was supposed to have closed by now, to be replaced in the spring of next year. Many local people have been wondering whether the economics of the project – which depended on the sale of residential units to fund the public amenities – still worked following the effect of the credit crunch on house prices. Will this initiative now go ahead?

The answer is 'maybe', because Cathedral's bid for support from the Kickstart programme has been shortlisted. Kickstart is the Government's attempt to boost the construction industry by supporting currently stalled developments that include affordable housing. Shortlisted developers have to satisfy the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) that their projects will be

achievable, given Kickstart's support.

We are likely to hear in September whether Cathedral have been successful and the redevelopment can start. Whether or not the Kickstart bid is ultimately successful, the future of such a major development at a time like the present must be precarious. We have three reasons to hope that we will, at least, not have to do without any council-supported leisure centre at all. One is that the HCA will not make it possible for Cathedral to go ahead – and demolish the existing facility – without being as confident as they can be that the development is financially viable. Secondly, the arrangement will include a 'step in' provision enabling Lambeth to take over the work (and presumably, look for another development company) if Cathedral get into difficulties. Lastly, we have Lambeth's assurance that the swimming pool and leisure centre will stay open unless and until funding for the replacement is secure.

SW11 Literary Festival

This annual festival organised by Waterstone's and the Clapham Junction Town Centre Partnership, starts on **Monday 7 September** and runs for nearly three weeks. The programme includes Melvyn Bragg talking about his new book on the Radio 4 series *In Our Time*; Peter Robinson and Sophie Hannah discussing their views on writing crime fiction; Chris Patten on his updated bestseller *What Next*; Alan Titchmarsh on the second volume of his memoirs, and Kate Williams and Miranda Carter on their personal methods of writing historical biography. There is also a poetry workshop, storytelling, creative writing workshop and a literary pub quiz.

Most events take place at Waterstone's, 70 St John's Road, SW11, but some are at other venues including St Mary's Church, Battersea Power Station and Battersea Arts Centre. Details are available and tickets may be purchased from Waterstone's, 020 7627 3182, or on line at www.clapham-junction.com.

Garden Partners

Age Concern Wandsworth has launched a new garden-share scheme linking older garden owners with people who want their own growing space.

People over the age of 60 who need help to manage their garden are linked with volunteers who tend the garden regularly to grow vegetables, fruit and flowers. Many of the volunteers are also on Wandsworth Council's allotments waiting list, where they face an average three-year wait for a plot. The partners form a team to plan how the garden will develop and share the produce.

The scheme is funded by NHS Wandsworth for its health benefits. Garden owners are at less risk of falls and accidents in the garden, while the volunteer gardeners can improve their fitness. Both partners can eat more healthily of the fruit and vegetables.

For information on the Garden Partners scheme go to the Age Concern Wandsworth website: www.ageconcernwandsworth.org.uk or telephone 020 8877 8946.

Stockwell Festival

On **Saturday 26 September** from 12 noon to 6 pm the Stockwell Partnership is holding a free day of family activities in Larkhall Park, Courland Grove. There will be stalls, stunts, workshops, a children's carnival parade, music and many other attractions. For full details go to: www.lambeth.gov.uk/artsfestivals

Summer Party

This year's summer party took place at Lambeth Academy on a very warm July evening. Though less well attended than in some years, members particularly enjoyed an imaginative selection of delicious canapés provided by North Street Deli.

The party was held in the main atrium, where we were welcomed by the Principal, and small groups were shown round the school by senior members of staff. This was a welcome opportunity for many to see inside the school for the first time, to meet some members of staff and to learn about the many facilities offered by the Academy.



De Morgan Centre

As a result of Wandsworth Council's cost-cutting decision to close Wandsworth Museum and two libraries, the lease of the De Morgan Centre which is based at one of those libraries, has been terminated. Since its opening in 2002 the Centre has housed, and displayed beautifully, a rare collection of work by the ceramicist, William De Morgan and of pre-Raphaelite paintings by his wife, Evelyn de Morgan.

The Centre closed to the public in July to allow for conservation work on both ceramics and paintings prior to moving and to prepare to tour highlights of the collection. More details of venues and dates will be announced soon.

Meanwhile, the trustees of the De Morgan Foundation are looking for a permanent home for the collection.

The Phoenix Suburb

This book about the history of Norwood which was first published in 1972 has recently been re-printed.

The author, local historian Alan Warwick, lived in Norwood all his life and the book has always been popular with local residents.

However, it may also be of interest to Clapham residents since it has a considerable amount of information about the developer of Grafton Square, Thomas Ross, a noted resident and developer of Norwood.

The Phoenix Suburb (price £9.99) is available from Anna Lines, Secretary of the Norwood Society Tel: 020 8653 8768 email: secretary@norwoodsociety.co.uk or on line at: www.norwoodsociety.co.uk.

More Clapham Scientists

It certainly does not feel like eight years since David Singmaster brought us his first tranche of eminent scientists with connections to the Clapham area. At that time, he had found 42 such people. Further work since then has brought to light another 21, and at our June meeting he introduced us to the lives and work of some of these.

The youngest, and the one who has had arguably the best-known impact, is **Tim Berners-Lee** (b1955), who attended Emanuel School. While working at CERN in Geneva, he formulated some ideas on hypertext; later, he came to the view that scientific literature was becoming unmanageable, and in March 1989 he combined these concerns into a proposal for linking the email functions of thousands of computers. During the following months, he framed what we now know as the HTML, HTTP and URL systems and constructed the first web server and browser. Within a couple of years, one beautiful and cleverly-developed idea had gone global: since then, the world wide web has changed all our lives.

Among other significant 20th century Emanuel alumni were the engineer **Owen Saunders** (1904-1993), notable for his work on aircraft engines and on the enquiry into the Ronan Point collapse, and **Denis Noble** (b1936), a physiologist who, as well as having developed the first simulation of the heart's action, plays the guitar and lectures in six languages, including Japanese and Korean. **Peter Goddard** (b1945), whose early years were spent in the Springfield Estate, was intrigued by a question about whether the angles of a triangle add up to 180 degrees in space. This interest led him to become a cosmologist and mathematical physicist, and one of the founders of string theory. For the greater part of his talk, David focused on **Joseph Needham** (1900-95) who was born in Westbury Gardens,

Loats Road (now Kings Avenue). The son of a surgeon, he developed an early interest in biochemistry. At Cambridge, he met and married Dorothy Moyle, also a biochemist; both later became Fellows of the Royal Society. Needham had a photographic memory and was a gifted linguist; among his other interests were gymnosophy and morris dancing. In 1936, three Chinese scientists came to work with him, stimulating an interest in Chinese scientific thought and development; one of them (Lu Gwei-djen) became the third part of a long-lasting Needham *ménage à trois*. Needham's consuming interest in China is evidenced in *Science and Civilization in China*, a mammoth undertaking begun in 1948 which eventually expanded to 28 planned volumes, of which Needham wrote 15. His international interests led to his appointment in 1946 as director of UNESCO's scientific division. During the 1950s, his career was tainted by political controversy; a lifelong left-winger, he discovered evidence of US biological warfare in Korea which was later found to have been planted, and Needham's international reputation took some time to recover. His contribution to Western understanding of Chinese scientific thought was, however, immense, and continues through the work of the Needham Research Institute in Robinson College, Cambridge.

Finally, David returned to a figure mentioned in an earlier talk – **Charles Pritchard** (1808-1893), head of Clapham Grammar School (and earlier inhabitant of the Clapham Society newsletter editor's house) and noted the importance of his stress on the development of scientific thinking. Since several of his pupils (who included four of Charles Darwin's and three of William Herschel's sons) went on to distinguished scientific careers, this focus clearly paid dividends.

Once again, David Singmaster provided both enlightenment and entertainment: his appreciative audience

had many more questions than could be managed in the available time. Perhaps they can be saved up for a third instalment – in 2017, maybe?

Trinity Hospice Dine at Mine

Dine at Mine is an easy way to organise a party with friends, neighbours and colleagues, whilst raising money to support the terminally ill who need Trinity's support.

You can do your Dine at Mine fundraising event any way you wish, from a simple tea party, drinks and nibbles, take away and a DVD to a summer barbecue or grand banquet! Just ask your friends to support your event with a fixed donation or perhaps ask them to donate what the meal would have cost in a restaurant. Dine at Mine hosts will receive a free celebrity cookbook donated by Quadrille Publishing, a 30% discount at Jamie Oliver's Recipease, a blank Dine at Mine menu, invitations, place cards and a free prize draw for all who join in the party. For more information visit www.trinityhospice.org.uk/dine-at-mine, email fward@trinityhospice.org.uk or call 020 7787 1086.

London Open House

Don't miss this fantastic opportunity to see behind the scenes at buildings all over London on **Saturday 19 September** and **Sunday 20 September**. Amongst the buildings open in our area are the new extension of Clapham Manor School, the Garden Pavilion at 44 The Chase, Lambeth Town Hall, the new classroom block at Thomas's School in Broomwood Road, Brixton Windmill, Will Anderson's Tree House in Lyham Road and an extension at 21 Lambourn Road.

The full programme, giving details of all participating buildings with opening times and booking details (where appropriate), is available on line at openhouse.org.uk/london or at local libraries.

If you have any queries about **The Clapham Society** or have news of local events, please contact the appropriate person below:

Chair **Alison Macnair**

119 Clapham Manor Street SW4 6DR

Email: alisonmacnair@fastmail.co.uk

Meetings and Events **Maev Sullivan**

2 Fitzwilliam Road, London SW4 0DN

Tel: 020 7498 9205

Email: maevsullivan@gmail.com

Treasurer **David Brown**

15 Turret Grove, London SW4 0ES

Tel: 020 7720 7536

Membership Secretary **Jennifer Everett**

30 Trinity Close, London SW4 0JD

Tel: 020 7627 4770

Secretary

Jill Cramphorn

552 Wandsworth Road, London SW8 3JX

Tel/Fax: 020 7720 3343

Planning Matters

Philip Ashford

45 Rodenhurst Road, London SW4 8AE

Tel: 020 8674 1727 Email: pjashford@yahoo.co.uk

Common and Open Spaces **Anna Jefferson Smith**

22 Iveley Road, London SW4 0EW

Tel: 020 7622 8285 Email: annajs@mac.com

Newsletter and Publications **Alyson Wilson**

22 Crescent Grove, London SW4 7AH

Tel: 020 7622 6360 Fax: 020 7622 7899

Email: alysonwilson.sw4@virgin.net

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