

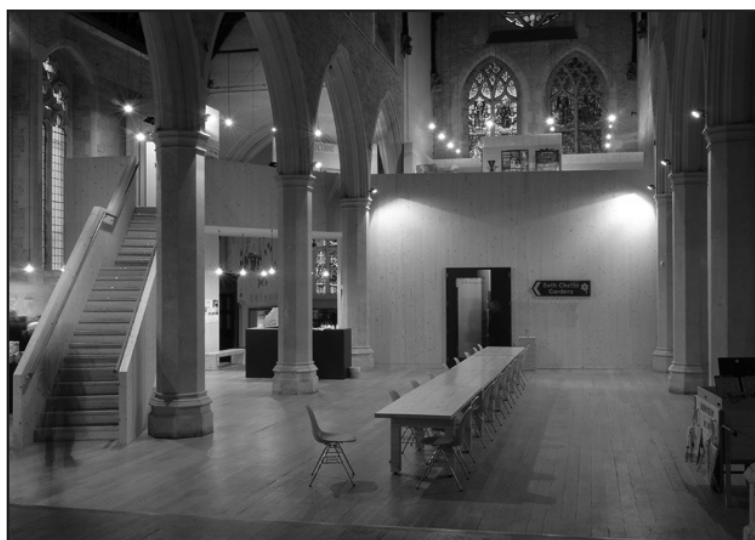
The Clapham Society

Newsletter



Issue 327

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The Garden Museum

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 19 May

The Garden Museum. Christopher Woodward, Director of the Garden Museum, formerly the Museum of Garden History, which is housed in the church of St-Mary-at-Lambeth, tucked away beside Lambeth Palace, will talk about the history and development of the museum which reopened in 2008 after a dramatic transformation. He will go on to trace the story of gardening in Britain through works of art from the Elizabethan period to the 20th century.

Wednesday 16 June

Animals and Battersea. In an illustrated talk **Dr Hilda Kean** FRHistS, author of *Animal Rights: Political and Social Change in Britain since 1800* and Dean of Ruskin College, Oxford, will explore why the Dogs Home, the Brown Animal Sanatory Institution, the Anti-Vivisection Hospital (which refused to employ any staff who experimented on animals) and a controversial statue commemorating a brown terrier dog killed at University College, London, were all in Battersea in the early 1900s. She will discuss what this aspect of the past adds to our understanding of this part of London. (NB. There will be no images of dead animals.)

There are no meetings during July and August. These are replaced by walks on Wednesday 14 July and Wednesday 18 August. Full details will be given in the next newsletter.

Wednesday 7 July

Summer Party at 82 Clapham Common West Side by kind permission of Mr and Mrs Richard Roxburgh. Put the date in your diary. A ticket application form will be included with the June newsletter.

Whitehall Choir Choral Workshop

On **Saturday 22 May** conductor, composer and musicologist Paul Spicer will lead a choral workshop at the Church of the Holy Spirit in Narbonne Avenue. This is an informal opportunity to learn choral techniques as found in two contrasting works from different periods – Handel's *Coronation Anthem*, including *Zadok the Priest* and Elgar's *The Music Makers*.

Registration is at 10.30 am, and the concert will be from 5 pm to 6.15 pm. Tickets are £15 for singers and £5 for the concert audience. Dress is casual throughout. There will be coffee at registration and breaks for lunch and tea. Music is available to hire.

For tickets and music hire email events@whitehallchoir.org.uk or telephone Richard Grafen on 020 7215 5323 (daytime only). For more information about the Whitehall Choir, which gives three major concerts a year, go to www.whitehallchoir.org.uk. [see picture overleaf]

Wandsworth Museum

Wandsworth Museum is due to open on its new site, in the former West Hill Library, on Bank Holiday **Monday 31 May** at 10.00 am. A donation of £2m by the Hintze Foundation has made it possible to launch the museum. The Friends of the museum are very active and would welcome new members. If you would like to lend your support email museumgroup@hotmail.co.uk.

Bus puzzle

The picture of the 155 bus in the March newsletter and my request to identify the location elicited responses from several readers.

Sylvia Foster suggested that it might be in South Lambeth Road, near St Anne's Church and Laurence Green thought it was in Queenstown Road. I rejected both these suggestions since these roads are not and, it would appear from a bus route website, never have been on the 155 route. A request to the expert who runs that website only told us that it could be anywhere between Wimbledon (where the route once started) and Blackfriars. The route then did a loop via Blackfriars Road, Embankment and Westminster Bridge, and on Sundays there was an extension to Hersham and West Molesey. Plenty of scope there then!

This gentleman and David Brown both dated the picture to between 1968, when the Ford Transit shown in the background came out, and 1975 which was the last date that type of bus ran on the route.

Margaret Barford thought the tall building, part of which could be seen behind the bus, was not a school, but the Belgrave Hospital for Children, which is in Clapham Road, almost opposite Oval Tube Station. This seemed a very plausible identification as it is on the route, though the fenestration did not conform with pictures I had of the hospital. However, it closed as a hospital in 1985 and was converted for residential

use in the early 1990s, so I thought there could have been changes. But when I went to look and took some photographs it was clear that this was not the location.

Gordon Rookledge took up the challenge with vigour. He wrote to me as follows:

'I spent a very happy hour trying to trace the location for the bus illustrated on the 155 route. I tried firstly visiting the Merton bus garage armed with a 1972 bus map and a copy of the photo which only attracted attention by bus drivers and engineers working or waiting in the garage, but no identification of the location.

When back home I listed the four identifying points as (1) Painted traffic markings on the road by the front offside wheel of the bus, indicating the location may be next to a staggered crossroads. (2) Close to what looked like an LCC school. (3) Shops close by with one having a Dutch gable. (4) The bus travelling north to Blackfriars, the school and shops were on the east side of the road with the bus on the west side of the street.

I then checked in the Collins Greater London Street Atlas along the roads the route covered and discovered two schools marked on the map that were close to a staggered crossroad, between Tooting Broadway and the Elephant & Castle. One appeared to be at the junction of Clapham Road and Dorset Road near Stockwell and the other at the junction of Blackfriars Road and Webber Street in Southwark.

Catching the 155 bus at Tooting Broadway bound for the Elephant & Castle with my friend and I sitting upstairs in the front offside seats (above the driver), my friend, aged 21 and me 76 and, 'eagle-eyed', observed every building along the now shortened route without any luck whatsoever. That bus could have been on diversion my wife suggested on our arrival home!

We changed buses, me with my Freedom Pass, and he with his Oyster card, at the Elephant, now the terminus, and made our way to the West End for a restful lunch.

What an interesting way to enjoy a pleasant day, playing spot the ball, the Pinkerton detective.'

I think Mrs Rookledge may have had hit the nail on the head, but I would welcome any further suggestions members may have.

Alyson Wilson

Nature notes

The small triangular section of the Common at the top of Battersea Rise by Worcester Gardens has become a mass of spring colour in recent years. Cut off from the rest of the Common by the South Circular road it has produced increasing numbers and varieties of small bulbs. Snowdrops in at least two forms are followed by yellow, pale mauve and deep purple crocuses. In mid March they are joined by yellow daffodils and later pale blue grape hyacinths come into flower. Autumn will see bright scarlet fruits of iris foetidissima appear as their seed pods split.

I do not know how they got there, though I suspect some degree of human intervention, but if you can stand the traffic fumes, they provide an attractive and cheerful sight and are a good advertisement for benign neglect as this part of the Common receives little attention.

Derrick Johnson

The Buildings of Clapham

We are now out of stock of this popular publication about local buildings. However, there are still some copies available to purchase at Lambeth Archives. You can buy it from the publications section of their website (www.lambeth.gov.uk/archives) or telephone 020 7926 6076.



Choral Workshop at the Church of the Holy Spirit

Safer Neighbourhoods

There was a disappointing turnout for our March meeting which set out to provide information on the Safer Neighbourhoods policing scheme. This is a nationwide initiative, brought into effect in London between 2004 and 2006, which involves local people working with local police to tackle matters of concern in their particular neighbourhoods. There are now 630 teams in London, approximately 20 in each borough, mostly covering a particular ward. Each team is supported by a ward panel made up of members of the public. Our meeting focused on the Clapham Town ward.

Sue Lilly, Vice-Chair of the Clapham Town Safer Neighbourhoods panel chaired the meeting, which was also addressed by Chief Inspector Jon Kirkpatrick who has responsibility for Safer Neighbourhoods teams in Lambeth. Unfortunately, two members of the team, PC Sean Cranfield and PC Peter Taylor, who were due to attend were called away at the last minute. The Clapham Town team comprises one Police Sergeant, two Police Constables and four Police Community Support Officers who liaise with panel members and the wider public to identify and address local issues. The Safer Neighbourhoods team meets with the panel every three months to decide priorities for the next three months. Panel members represent tenants of local housing estates, other community groups and individuals. The main issues tend to revolve around anti-social behaviour, drugs and alcohol misuse and licensing issues. The Safer Neighbourhoods team aims to work with the community and to promote confidence in the police by their visible presence. Despite the small numbers present, there was some lively discussion, particularly about whether giving to those begging in the street actually tended to achieve the opposite of the giver's intentions. In response to a question about minor offensive behaviour (for instance noisy youths outside one's house) which hardly merits a 999 call, we learnt that such calls are graded according to urgency, so that a call would be appropriate.

The Clapham Town team is based at 4-5 Clement Avenue, which is just off Clapham High Street, near Sainsbury's, and can be reached on 020 8721 2825 or 07881 516977. It was emphasised that the team is not a 24-hour service and in an emergency one should always call 999; but the team does aim to respond to issues raised with them within 24 hours. Regular surgeries are held at local venues and on

End of an Era

Along with generations of local people I learnt to swim in the pool in Clapham Manor Street. For me this was in the 1940s, and the pleasure I gained then from swimming and diving continues to this day. (Unfortunately diving is no longer an option in most pools now.)

The Foundation Stone for the building was laid in September 1930 by the Mayor of Wandsworth, Councillor Cox. He had been the driving force behind the provision of the Public Baths in Clapham. (Clapham Manor Street was in the borough of Wandsworth until 1965, when the borough boundary was changed and it came into Lambeth.)

Clapham Public Baths was opened by Prince George, later the Duke of Kent, in July 1932. The main feature was the swimming pool which had diving boards of various heights including a fixed board at 5 metres and two boards at 3 metres, one of which was a springboard. (see photograph)

In the 1930s many of the terraced houses in the area were in multiple occupancy and lacked bathrooms, so public baths often included washing facilities. Within the Clapham building there were 38 private 'slipper baths' for men and 38 for women divided between first and second class. Their use cost 6d for first class, 2d for second class and 1d for soap.

There were a number of other facilities, including a laundry, and the swimming pool could be covered in the winter to become a dance hall or assembly room with a capacity of 800 plus 200 in the gallery.

Now we look forward to a range of new facilities in a brand new leisure centre on the same site. Let us hope that the new centre inspires the same level of civic pride as did the one now being demolished.

Anna Jefferson Smith



the street to give the public a chance to have their say about local policing issues. Full details of these are available at the local office or on the Metropolitan Police website at www.met.police.uk/teams/lambeth/claphamtown/.

Keep the date

Trinity Hospice's popular Annual Ball will be on **Saturday 20 November** this year at Embankment Gardens. For details and to book 'early-bird tickets' call Fran on 020 7787 1086 or email snowball@trinityhospice.co.uk

New Members

We have welcomed the following new members recently: Tim Brown, Diana, Philip and Stephanie Crewes, Michael and Patricia Lillywhite, and Anne Rogers.

Books Galore

Lambeth's Annual Readers and Writers Festival takes place again this May. There is a wide selection of talks at Lambeth libraries throughout the month. At Clapham Library on North Side author of 'best-selling literary bizarre', Toby Litt, will discuss his work and launch his latest novel, *King Death*, on **Tuesday 25 May** at 7 pm.

A highlight of the festival will be Stella Duffy talking about her new book, *Theodora: Actress, Empress, Whore* which relates how Theodora rose from nothing to become one of the most powerful women in the history of Byzantium. This event is at Brixton Library on **Wednesday 26 May** at 7.30pm. On **Wednesday 19 May** at 7 pm Edmund Bird, Heritage Advisor to the Mayor of London, who lived and worked in Lambeth for some years will talk about the improvements to transport, education and health in Edwardian Lambeth at Carnegie Library.

There will be a 'meet the authors' session for children at Streatham Library at 4.30 pm on **Monday 10 May** and another for teenagers on **Thursday 20 May** at 7 pm. Jon Newman of Lambeth Archives will be leading a walk round William Blake's Lambeth on **Tuesday 4 May** at 6.30pm.

This is just a brief selection from the rich and varied programme. All events are free and bookable on 020 7926 1075 or email readersandwriters@lambeth.gov.uk. The full programme may be found at any Lambeth library.

The Big Chris Barber Band

On **Saturday 15 May** jazz legend Chris Barber brings his Big Band to St Luke's Church in Battersea for an evening of jazz, swing and blues – a rousing finale to St Luke's Music Society 2009-10 series.

Chris formed his first Barber New Orleans Band in 1949 at the age of 19. In 1953, along with Monty Sunshine and Lonnie Donegan, he joined forces with Ken Colyer. In 1954 it became Chris Barber's Jazz Band and over the years evolved into the Chris Barber Jazz and Blues Band, a rich eight-piece group, blending brass, reeds, and electric guitar into a unique and unmistakable mix of blues and jazz. Recently Chris extended his band with three more musicians into The Big Chris Barber Band.

The concert starts at 7.30 pm at St Luke's Church, Thurlleigh Road, SW12 8RQ. Tickets are £16 (£12 concessions) from the box office 07951 791619 or online at www.slms.org.uk.

Make a Skirt

On **Sunday 23 May** you can learn how to make a skirt at an intensive one-day sewing workshop at The Papered Parlour, 7 Prescott Place, SW4 6BS (just off Clapham High Street). Check the details on their website: www.thepaperedparlour.co.uk or call 020 7627 8703. Or the following weekend, **Saturday 29 May** and **Sunday 30 May** you can do a two-day intensive Photography Master Class at the same venue.

Gene Meme

From **Wednesday 9 June** to **Sunday 20 June** an art installation, organised by two Clapham Society members, at The Crypt Gallery, Duke's Road, St Pancras, NW1 addresses the issue of rising population. For every painting sold a contribution will be made to secure the future of a child in Africa, through Street Child Africa. A debate on the topic, following by a drinks reception, will be held on 10 June at 6.30 pm. For tickets and full details go to www.genememart.blogspot.com.

Wandsworth Heritage Festival

The festival this year runs from **Sunday 30 May to Sunday 13 June**. The events include talks about early Wandsworth, Wandsworth Common and Edwardian Tooting; a walk round the heart of old Battersea and an exhibition about Wandsworth Prison Museum. An illustrated brochure will be available soon from Wandsworth libraries, and more details will be given in the next newsletter.

Garden open

On **Sunday 6 June** the recently restored and replanted garden of Trinity Hospice will be open from 2 pm to 5 pm. The garden which has been a haven of peace, and a place of joy, for many thousands of patients and their families has a large carp lake, ancient mulberry trees and a weeping cherry tree, planted by HRH The Duchess of Cornwall. Each of the 24 rooms in the new inpatient centre also has a private terrace or balcony overlooking the beautiful gardens.

On the Bandstand

Summer events on the bandstand on Clapham Common start on **Sunday 6 June** at 2 pm with Tango Heat, a free Argentine Tango taster dance class for beginners, followed by a Tango demonstration. The following weekend Becontree Brass Band will perform on **Sunday 13 June** at 3 pm.

More events in June and July will be shown in next month's newsletter.

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

Dulwich Festival

The traditional inaugural peal of bells starts the annual Dulwich Festival on **Friday 7 May**. During the following week there are walks, talks, poetry readings, dancing, concerts for both adults and children and a host of other attractions around the village. One of the most popular events each year is the Artists' Open Houses which takes place on both weekends of the festival.

Details of all events are available on the [website www.dulwichfestival.co.uk/2010](http://www.dulwichfestival.co.uk/2010), where bookings may also be made.