



The Clapham Society

Newsletter

Issue 329 July/August 2010

As we go to press there are still some tickets available for our **Summer Party on Wednesday 7 July** in the beautiful garden of Richard and Susannah Roxburgh at 82 Clapham Common West Side. The party runs from 6.30 to 8.30 pm and tickets, at £12 each, include drinks and delicious canapés from the North Street Deli. Contact Maev Sullivan on 020 7498 9205 to check availability.

On the Common

Members will have seen a flurry of activity involving various parts of Clapham Common during the last few months. The most visible works have been those on Mount Pond where a major project is under way. Following serious problems with water quality in recent years, Lambeth Council were joined by the Environment Agency in producing a plan to landscape the area and improve conditions for wildlife as well as increasing facilities for fishing.

One project, already swiftly completed, has been the extensive improvement of the tennis courts. At a cost of £250,000, comprising £150,000 from Lambeth Council and £100,000 from the Lawn Tennis Association, the courts have been improved to a high standard. Although some people were sad to see the end of the old wooden shelters, the new transparent ones are probably less likely to be damaged.

The cricket nets were also renewed but are out of use at the time of going to press because of problems with the netting. Work has been done on the inadequate drainage of the circus site and it is currently being re-surfaced.



The most recent happening is the arrival of two drinking fountains, yet to be in use. They are a very welcome surprise and are funded by the Lambeth Capital Improvements Programme, as are most of the above improvements.

During July and August our monthly meetings are replaced by the following free guided walks. Both walks will leave from the Clock Tower outside Clapham Common Underground Station at 6.30 pm.

Wednesday 14 July. Clapham Common North Side walk led by Mary Coales. The North Side is full of wonderful sights – some of Clapham's oldest houses, two 'French chateaux' and a Pre-Raphaelite chapel, and of stories – Samuel Pepys lived here, so did Henry Hoare the Magnificent, members of the Clapham Sect, and many more historic figures. The walk will finish near St Barnabas Church at the west end of the Common, near Battersea Rise, at about 8 pm.

Wednesday 18 August. Historic Clapham walk led by David Perkin. An exploration of the heart of old Clapham from The Pavement and Old Town to Rectory Grove and St Paul's Church, returning via Grafton Square to finish at Holy Trinity Church at about 8 pm.

N.B. If you cannot join one of our guided walks remember that we also publish six leaflets for **self-guided walks** round different areas of Clapham. Full details of the area covered by each leaflet can be seen and the leaflets purchased on the Publications section of our website, or contact Alyson Wilson (details on back page of newsletter).

Our regular meetings at Clapham Manor Primary School will resume on

Wednesday 15 September
The Eric Smith Lecture. Professor Andrew Saint, the General Editor of the *Survey of London*, will talk about the Survey and about one of its current projects on the Parish of Battersea. *The Survey of London* is a monumentally comprehensive architectural and topographical description of London, being published parish by parish. The Battersea volumes will include the western part of the Common and the streets nearby.

The Garden Museum

Our May meeting was addressed by the Curator of the Garden Museum, Mary Guyatt, standing in for her Director, Christopher Woodward, who had to go overseas at short notice.

Mary started with a brief history of the Museum which is located in the church of St Mary-at-Lambeth, next to Lambeth Palace. Founded as the parish church of Lambeth in the 11th century, the church was rebuilt in the 19th century, but the congregation gradually dwindled and by 1970 the church was deconsecrated, derelict and due to be demolished. When Rosemary Nicholson, who was interested in the life of the 16th century gardener and botanist, John Tradescant, discovered his neglected tomb in the churchyard of St Mary-at-Lambeth, she campaigned to rescue the church and turn it into a Museum of Garden History. This she achieved with the help of donations from her many friends and the museum opened in 1977. In the churchyard a knot garden, containing only plants introduced to England before 1650, was laid out by Lady Salisbury of Hatfield House, where Tradescant had been head gardener.

By 2007 the museum needed additional space for special exhibitions, educational and group activities, and a shop and café. A small south London practice, Dow Jones, won an architectural competition with a design which inserted a free-standing wooden structure within the church to create a series of spaces, including an upper storey. The refurbished museum, now renamed the Garden Museum, opened in November 2008, with the permanent collection imaginatively displayed upstairs, and space below for special exhibitions and various activities, as well as a shop and café.

Mary then took us briefly through the exhibitions which have been held in the last two years: the first about the gardener, Beth Chatto; then the Highgrove Florelegium – an exhibition of contemporary botanical illustrations – an exhibition in memory of the gardener Christopher Lloyd and finally last year's *Good Life* exhibition, which was hugely successful due to the renewed interest in allotments and 'grow-your-own'. We saw interesting posters and photographs of allotments and heard of the rise and fall of their popularity since the Allotments Act in 1908, heydays during both World Wars and during the 1970s when home freezing was a novelty, and the recent boom in this eco-conscious age.

Mary showed us some of the material the museum owns which has a local connection, from pictures of Vauxhall Gardens to watercolours by James Sowerby of Curtis's Botanical Garden which was roughly on the site of the Old Vic Theatre and the documents of a Lavender Hill nurseryman. In conclusion we heard about funding and recent acquisitions. The museum has recently won a £100,000 lottery grant: half of which will be used to purchase new works – an all too infrequent pleasure for a curator – and half for educational, staff development and public activities. Recent acquisitions include interesting watercolours by minor artists. We learned that the museum generates useful income from renting out space for events, including weddings, and from its excellent café and well-stocked shop.

We are grateful to Mary for an enjoyable and well-illustrated talk which we hope will encourage members to visit this local museum. We would especially recommend the joint entry to the Garden Museum and the special exhibition at Lambeth Palace Library mentioned in the April newsletter.

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With the tennis season upon us this advertisement for a local sports shop which appeared in the programme for the Clapham Exhibition held in 1939 at Henry Thornton School is appropriate. Thanks to Ted Hayward for providing this.

Vote for The Papered Parlour

Our local independent craft studio, The Papered Parlour, is one of three South London businesses short-listed for a £50,000 prize in The Barclay's Business 'Take One Small Step' competition. The prize is awarded to an innovative business to help its development. The Papered Parlour was set up in 2009 to support contemporary craft and design locally. It provides studio space and weekly craft workshops. After a very successful first year, they want to upgrade their equipment, raise their profile and add a café.

The winner is decided by public vote, so local support is needed. To cast your vote for The Papered Parlour text PARLOUR to 87222 or go to www.takeonesmallstep.co.uk/Entry/View/6216. But hurry, hurry because voting ends on 5 July!

On **Sunday 4 July** from 2 pm to 5 pm The Papered Parlour is celebrating its own fun Declaration of Independence Day with American Style Quilting, Andy Warholesque Printmaking and Yankee Doodling for Kids. There will be live folk music and red, white and blueberry cakes, hot apple pie and cold lemonade and, they say, 'it won't cost you a dime!'

If you have not yet sampled one of The Papered Parlour workshops check out what is on this summer on www.thepaperedparlour.co.uk, call 020 7627 8703 or drop in to 7 Prescott Place to see the Parlour girls.

Parking in Abbeville Road

A recent letter in *The Guardian* told of the writer's mother who was a 'clippie' on London buses during the Second World War. To save fuel buses were parked on Westminster Bridge after the morning rush hour to await return journeys in the evening. On one occasion the lady persuaded her driver to take the 88 bus home to Abbeville Road for lunch and tea. On arrival she was surprised to find a fire engine parked next door – her neighbour was a driver in the Auxiliary Fire Service.



Clapham resident Councillor Christopher Wellbelove, who completed his year of office in May, has been a very popular Mayor of Lambeth. The re-elected councillor for Clapham Town Ward has been an enthusiastic supporter of many Lambeth charities including the Ace of Clubs, a day centre for homeless and vulnerable people in St Alphonsus Road. He is shown here at the official opening of the Club's charity shop next to St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church.

Forgotten Spaces

An exhibition, entitled *Forgotten Spaces*, in the Lyttelton Exhibition Space at the National Theatre until 4 July displays the winners and short-listed entries from a design competition launched by RIBA London, Design for London and investor and developer Qatari Diar. Designers were invited to seek out disused and forgotten areas of London and propose ideas for developing the space to serve the local area. The proposal could be simple or complex, commercial or public, a piece of public art or a new building. The only requirement was to respond to a need in the community.

Among the designs exhibited is one for the Orangery and surrounding area in the Notre Dame Estate in Clapham. The proposal, submitted by Cabinet of Curiosities, and called *Visions of Utopia*, replaces the neglected stone, concrete and scrublands around the Orangery with a vibrant café, a piazza and gardens. Plots radiating across a paved and turfed garden allow for the cultivation of food for the café and the local community. The classical structure itself includes a glass and wood louvred cube that acts as an events space. If you miss the exhibition at the theatre details of the 150 entries can be seen online at architectsjournal.co.uk/forgottenspaces.

SPECIAL VISIT

Wednesday 22 September

A visit to Sambrook's Brewery. Duncan Sambrook, a city accountant at Deloitte, and a few friends took the bold step of making a complete career change by starting up a brewery in Battersea. Production commenced in 2008. Sambrook's can be reached by 345 bus from Clapham Common (stop K) to the junction of Falcon Road and York Road, taking about 25 minutes, and then it is a 4-minute walk to the brewery at Units 1 and 2 Yelverton Road. The tour (for a minimum of 10 and maximum of 30 people), starts at 6.45 pm, will cost £7 per person and includes tasting! See www.sambrooksbrewery.co.uk for more details. Please complete the booking form on the back page of this newsletter to apply for your tickets.

Summer walking

In addition to our own walks this summer many of our neighbouring societies have guided walks throughout the summer months. Here is a brief selection:

Sunday 4 July. Footpaths and Woods with Brian Bloice, John Brown and Graham Gower of the Streatham Society. Meet at Streatham Station at 2.30 pm.
Sunday 11 July. A day-long walk, for enthusiastic ramblers, along the **River Wandle** with Bruce St Julian-Bown, Chairman of the Wandsworth Society's Open Spaces Sub-Committee. Meet at Earlsfield Station at 11 am for prompt departure to Trewint Street river access. Lunch at Merton Abbey Mill or Morden Hall Park Garden Centre Restaurant (or bring a packed lunch). Finish at Hackbridge Station at about 4 pm. For those willing to go the extra mile, a look round the famous green Bedzed Estate and/or extension to Carshalton Ponds to finish at approximately 5 pm. Distance is about 7 miles to Hackbridge. For the return journey from Hackbridge Station take a train to Mitcham Junction, change to Tramlink to Wimbledon for trains to Earlsfield or Clapham Junction. If you will be joining the walk please confirm with Bruce on 020 8871 3872 or bsjb@onetel.com.

Sunday 18 July. Balham Park Road led by John Rattray of the Balham Society. Meet outside St Mary's Church, Balham High Road (just south of Balham Station) at 2.30 pm.

Sunday 1 August. Historic Highlights of Herne Hill led by Robert Holden of the Herne Hill Society. Meet at Herne Hill Station at 2.30 pm.

Sunday 8 August. North Brixton led by Alan Piper of the Brixton Society. Meet at St Mark's opposite Oval Underground Station at 2.30 pm.

Sunday 22 August. Balham Hill led by John Rattray of the Balham Society. Meet Clapham South Station at 2.30 pm.

New Members

We have welcomed the following new members recently: Evelyne Brown, Christopher Calman, Stephen Coleman, Rupert Fane, Sarah Guise, Susan Hynard and Nial Stewart.

10k Race and Fun Runs

On **Sunday 4 July** Clapham Common will be busy with runners raising funds for Trinity Hospice. Races start at 9.30 am (registration from 8.30 am) and there are races to suit all abilities in a great family day out.

Gene Meme and the population debate

The art installation and public debate devised and mounted by members Alex and Gregor Harvie in June succeeded admirably in focusing attention on an important and challenging topic in an innovative way. The well-attended debate in St Pancras Church was chaired by Geoff Watts, who observed that the history of life on the planet shows a sequence of population growth followed by collapse. Are we at the point where our own species has made itself unsustainable and faces a crash? If so, what can or should we do about it? Six eminent speakers offered a range of views. Some thought that the marked decline in the global fertility rate over the past 40 years – from 5.4 to 2.6 – was defusing the issue; others pointed out that even such a steep decline would slow overall growth only gradually, and suggested that action would be needed to bring about the stabilisation that most agreed was necessary, given the rate at which the human race was currently depleting the earth's resources. In the course of a lively debate, all agreed that we could not continue to live as we are doing, and that failure to address the issues could only mean that future generations would find themselves in an increasingly hostile environment of our own making.

The display in the crypt of Gregor Harvie's paintings and of Alex Harvie's brief, poignant elegies for lost societies provided a stimulating counterpoint to the debate, and ensured that the issues would stay in the minds of all who attended. In addition, the fact that some of the world's poorest children will benefit directly through donations to the Street Child Africa charity should ensure that this event will 'make a difference' to a much greater extent than most exhibitions can lay claim to.

Jill Cramphorn

CS7

The first of London's Cycle Superhighways is due to be launched on 19 July. It is too early to assess what effect the Superhighway, which passes through Clapham on its way from Morden to the City, is going to have on road users. But one immediate effect on our environment is already all too obvious. While the lurid bright blue achieves its objective of making the lane very obvious, it is, in the opinion of many, a real, glaring eyesore.

Our street environment is becoming increasingly disfigured: sprayed coloured lines and signs indicating the location of underground services, while meant to be temporary, have become a permanent feature of many roads and footpaths. How can we condemn those whose graffiti multiplies on walls and buildings while we apparently condone official vandalism that is equally offensive?

On the Bandstand

The following concerts are planned over the summer on Clapham Common Bandstand. **All concerts begin at 3 pm.** More events may be added as details are finalised, so check the Lambeth Council website, call 020 7926 1017 or email bandstand@lambeth.gov.uk.

Sunday 4 July	Merton Concert Band
Sunday 11 July	South London Concert Band
Sunday 1 August	Crystal Palace Brass Band
Sunday 8 August	South London Saxophone Quartet
Sunday 15 August	Southwark Concert Band
Sunday 22 August	Lambeth Wind Orchestra
Sunday 5 September	South London Jazz Orchestra

Book launch

The Ball That Got Stuck in the Tree is the title of a children's book by local authors, Rebecca Hollweg and Jeb Loy Nichols, to be launched on **Saturday 10 July** at St Paul's Church Hall, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DX. Celebrations start at 11 am with free tea and fairy cakes, followed by children's leaf colouring and at 12 noon a mini-gig by Rebecca and Jeb who are also singer-songwriters. Bring a picnic lunch to have afterwards in the Eden Garden.

Ticket application form

Visit to Sambrook's Brewery on Wednesday 22 September, to include tasting.

Please send me tickets @ £7 each. Cheque, payable to The Clapham Society, for £..... with stamped addressed envelope to Bill Emmett, 13 Crescent Lane, London SW4 9PT

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 web site at
www.claphamsociety.com

Ben & Jerry's Sundae

Ben & Jerry's annual family fun weekend returns to Clapham Common this year on **Saturday 24 July** and **Sunday 25 July**. Bands include Doves, Billy Bragg, Frightened Rabbit and Exit Calm. There are lots of stalls and entertainment for all the family, including the popular Helter Skelter and Vauxhall City Farm, and of course, the ice-cream. The Clapham Society will have a stand too, at which we shall have publicity about the Society as well as our new free hand-out map of Clapham. So come along and see us there! Tickets can be bought now on line at www.benjerry.co.uk/sundae/tickets.php.

Name..... Telephone No.....