



The Clapham Society

Newsletter

Issue 333 December 2010/January 2011

PROGRAMME FOR 2011

The full programme for 2011 organised by our Events Sub-committee is published below and will soon also be on our website. We hope that we have arranged an interesting and varied programme with something to suit everyone. If you have any suggestions for future meetings do please pass them on to Maev Sullivan.

Our meetings in 2011 will be held, as for the last few years, 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. There is no meeting in December.

Please note that the April meeting will be at Wandsworth Museum. The timing remains the same.

Wednesday 19 January

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 and consider their financial implications and grants available.

Wednesday 16 February

The Clapham Sect. Stephen Tomkins, historian and journalist, will talk about this remarkable group, centred on William Wilberforce, who fought for the abolition of the slave trade and slavery, and for many other religious and moral causes. They had a lasting impact on the morality and politics of Victorian Britain. Publicity for Stephen Tomkins' recent book has generated controversy about their acquiescence in aspects of slavery ('Do-gooder sect far from saintly' as a local paper put it). How should we assess them, whether against the standards of their own times, or our own?

Wednesday 16 March.

These were our Sons. Local historian, Naomi Klein, will describe her research on the 574 names on the Stockwell War Memorial of men who died in the First World War. Starting with just their names, she has traced most of them and unearthed many of their personal stories. She will tell us how she used a variety of public records and information

Light up a life

This year's Light up a Life celebration is on **Thursday 16 December**. The illumination of the tree at Trinity Hospice at 6.30 pm will be followed by a procession to Holy Trinity Church for the Carol Service commencing at 7.15 pm. Wine and mince pies will be served afterwards. This annual event is an occasion to make a donation in memory of friends and family who have been cared for at Trinity Hospice. For more information contact Leah Bull on 020 7787 1085 or email lbull@trinityhospice.org.uk.

from families, and share with us some of the lives she has recaptured. She will also tell us about the three Burleigh brothers commemorated on the memorial at Holy Trinity Church Clapham.

Wednesday 20 April

This meeting will take place at Wandsworth Museum, 38 West Hill, SW18 1RZ starting at 7.30 pm with the talk at 8 pm. The Director of the museum, Ken Barbour, will talk about this new museum which opened in September 2010. He will tell us about the collection, future plans including forthcoming exhibitions and special events. Members may then look round the museum in their own time, or join the Director on a tour of the collection.

Wednesday 18 May

The Thames Tunnel. Malcolm Orford, Thames Tunnel Senior Project Manager, will talk about Thames Water's plan to build the Thames Tunnel. At present 39 million tonnes of sewage flushes into the River Thames in a typical year and the problem is getting progressively worse. It is proposed that the tunnel will run up to 20 miles, broadly following the path of the River Thames and will involve digging the deepest tunnel ever constructed in the capital. Along with the Lee Tunnel (under construction), the Thames Tunnel will ensure the city has a sewerage system fit for the 21st century and beyond.

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. More details will be announced later in the year.

Wednesday 6 July

Summer Party. Venue to be finalised.

continued overleaf

In July and August meetings will be replaced by the following walks:

Wednesday 20 July
Historic Clapham.

Wednesday 17 August
Clapham Common South Side

Wednesday 21 September
Eco-restoration of a Victorian cottage.
Peter Cobby, architect and member of the Society will follow up on Iain McCaig's January talk about ways to reduce heat loss in traditional buildings. Jenny and Peter Cobby have carried out a major modernisation of an unimproved two-storey Victorian terraced house in Clapham Old Town using a sustainable approach and investing more than strictly necessary in order to cut future running costs. Peter will describe the project from conception to completion, including practical decisions on choice of materials and lessons learnt during the work. Susan Venner, the project architect, will be present to explain the problems involved in constructing a sustainable building within the context of a Victorian terrace.

Wednesday 19 October
Annual General Meeting. Guest speaker to be confirmed.

Wednesday 16 November
Planning the new US Embassy building in London. In February 2010 The US Embassy announced that the architectural firm Kieran Timberlake of Philadelphia had won the competition to design the new US Embassy to be built at Nine Elms. Provided that all necessary consents are obtained, construction work should start in 2013 and be completed in 2017. A representative from the Embassy will outline how the Nine Elms site was chosen, how the architect was selected and the design developed and how it is envisaged that the new building and its occupants will contribute to the Nine Elms regeneration project.

There is no meeting in December.

Carols by Candlelight

A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols will be held by candlelight at St Peter's Church, Prescott Place (opposite Sainsbury's) on **Sunday 19 December** at 6 pm. All the usual favourites will feature. Come and have a good sing in a beautiful place.

On the Common

Speeding cyclists

Both the Safer Neighbourhoods Police and the Rangers have been receiving complaints about dangerous and inconsiderate cycling on Clapham Common. The chief concern has been excessive speed. There is a recommended speed limit on the Common of 8 mph. When the police carried out a survey in October using a speed gun they found that the average speed of the 232 cyclists measured in the morning rush hour was 14.7 mph, with 16 of these reaching between 20 and 27 mph. A further,

larger survey is to be carried out which will include the evening as well as the morning rush hour.

Mount Pond

Phase Two of the extensive work on the Mount Pond is now under way. By summer 2011 there should be a great improvement in the water quality, landscaping and biodiversity. Members are encouraged to see for themselves how this project is developing, in what is one of the most attractive and historic features of our Common.

Supermarkets

The Society's Planning Sub-committee has objected to the Sainsbury's Local planning application in Abbeville Road because of the visual and economic damage it will cause to the character of the Abbeville Road Conservation Area, and because of its impact on residents' amenity.

More generally, we are becoming concerned that the proliferation of small versions of major supermarket chains throughout Clapham may threaten the viability of a good number of more specialised local shops, very often of long standing. While supermarkets are clearly a necessary element of any local retail centre, many studies have shown that the increasing dominance of major chains is leading to a homogenisation of high streets throughout the country, reducing the choice and diversity offered to customers.

We have written to our local councillors outlining these concerns, and urging them to ensure that when the Council considers such applications, it gives due weight to the possible impact on other retailers in the area. If you feel strongly about this matter, you may also wish to make your views known to them.

200 Years Old

Dulwich Picture Gallery celebrates its 200th anniversary in 2011 with a full and starry programme. The first ever exhibition in Britain of the work of the American 20th century illustrator, Norman Rockwell, opens on **Wednesday 15 December**. All 323 covers Rockwell created for the *Saturday Evening Post* between 1916 and 1963 will be included in the exhibition. The Director's lecture on the exhibition is on **Thursday 16 December** at 12.30 pm

On **Sunday 9 January** the celebrations proper are launched at noon with the **Big Bang** – a free afternoon of fun with gallery tours, drop-in workshops, live music, food stalls and falconry displays, concluding with fireworks at 5.15 pm.

Masterpiece a Month: Presiding Genius will feature a different high profile international loan painting for each month of the year. Check out more details throughout the year on the gallery website www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk or call 020 8693 5254. Don't forget to look at the Education section of the website to find out about lectures, courses, workshops and community outreach programmes.

Hungry Delivery

A new home delivery shopping service has been launched recently in Clapham. You can order on line from local independent shops and the goods will be delivered to you at the time of your choice, by eco-friendly electric van.

At present, Moens the butcher, Moxons the fishmonger, Macfarlanes (cheese and deli), Philgas and Swiggett wine merchants, the Old Post Office Bakery and First Choice fruit and vegetables are in the scheme. Check out

the website hungrydelivery.co.uk or call 020 7622 4225 for more details. Clapham Society members are offered free delivery on all orders until the end of December. Simply add the code **1FVU3K4** in 'redeem voucher' box when checking out.

The Verdict: Did Labour Change Britain?

Polly Toynbee and David Walker will discuss their new book at Clapham Books, 120 Clapham High Street, SW4 7UH at 7 pm on **Wednesday 1 December**.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2010

The 46th Annual General Meeting of the Society was held on 20 October 2010 at 8 pm at Clapham Manor Primary School, Belmont Road, SW4. The Society's President, Martin Drury, took the chair and 42 members were present.

1. Apologies for absence had been received from Ann Dunkley, Anne and David Isherwood, Peter Skuse and Alyson and Michael Wilson.
2. The Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting (21 October 2009), which had been previously circulated, were unanimously approved.
3. The Chair of the Society, Alison Macnair, briefly presented the Annual Report, which had been circulated with the October newsletter (No. 331). The Society continued to offer an informed voice on local developments, particularly

through the work of its Planning Subcommittee, a significant current example being the Gateway project in which the Society was heavily involved. She noted also the many ways in which the Society helped to connect people with Clapham's local history, including maps and plaques and the newsletter and website; and acknowledged the substantial number of individuals who contributed time and effort to its ongoing work. There were no questions on the Report, which was unanimously adopted.

4. The Treasurer, David Brown, presented the Financial Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2010. Once again, the Society was in good financial health. He drew attention to two particular items of expenditure which illustrated the Society's contribution to the local community: the planting of trees on the Common, and the inception

of a programme of plaques marking local buildings of interest. There were no questions, and the Accounts were unanimously adopted.

5. The following were then elected as officers for the year 2010-2011:

Chair Alison Macnair
Vice Chair Michael English
Secretary Jill Cramphorn
Treasurer David Brown
Membership Secretary Jennifer Everett
Solicitor Maev Sullivan

Also elected as **Committee Members** were: John Adams, Annabel Allott, Bill Emmett, Anna Jefferson Smith and Alyson Wilson.

6. Euan Kennedy FCA was reappointed as **Independent Examiner**.
7. At the conclusion of the business there was a break for refreshments before the guest speaker, **Councillor Steve Reed**, addressed the meeting.

Steve Reed, Leader of Lambeth Council, remarked that the day on which the government had outlined some rather dramatic expenditure proposals was perhaps not the happiest occasion on which to have to talk about the Council's future plans. He emphasised, though, that Lambeth's ambition to become a 'Co-operative Council' was definitely not a cost-cutting exercise, but a way of forging stronger partnerships between the council and the users of the services it provided. Although the press had characterised it as a 'John Lewis' approach, this was wrong (or perhaps 'never knowingly understood' !): John Lewis was a department store seeking to make a profit, Lambeth a council whose function was to serve its residents; and they could have little in common beyond aspiring to achieve the highest possible levels of quality and efficiency.

He then outlined several examples of effective co-operative working. The **X-it** programme had tackled serious social problems on the Moorlands Estate, including high levels of unemployment and gang membership, by training young people to act as mentors to younger ones who were at risk of getting involved in crime and gang activities, and offering positive activities to keep them productively occupied. Its success was based on involving 'insiders', who had a clear idea of what would and would not work, and were capable of gaining the trust of those they were working with. The **Weir Link** had involved handing a derelict laundry in a badly run-down area to the local community. They had rebuilt it, establishing a community and children's centre, and thereby gained the confidence they needed to confront some of the area's social problems, including prostitution and drug dealing. **Elm Green School** in West Norwood – currently the only parent-promoted local authority secondary school in the country – had been set up by a partnership between the council and parents, whose heavy involvement was contributing to its educational success. **The Coin Street Community**, a shared-equity housing development, had shown how this type of occupancy could reduce the antagonism that often arises between tenants, leaseholders and householders. And **Community Freshview** offered residents a chance to undertake projects like brightening up a green space or giving a facelift to a disused area of land by providing expertise, equipment and a helping hand.

Looking to the future, Councillor Reed foresaw a major challenge in the provision of care services for older people. While funding for this was likely to be reduced, the need was growing. The council was looking at ways of offering greater choice and reducing costs by identifying, and bringing together, people in similar circumstances. This exemplified what he saw as the council's fundamental objective: to change from one that told its residents what they were going to get to one that helped people get what they wanted.

A wide-ranging question-and-answer session followed, in which Councillor Reed responded frankly and thoughtfully to a range of issues including the council's relationships with local groups, the need to retain proper accountability when sharing or transferring responsibility, and means of communication. We are most grateful to him for giving us a really interesting, illuminating and worthwhile evening.

Volunteer Opportunity

The Baytree Centre is a social inclusion project based in the heart of Brixton. We support women and children so they can achieve their potential. We do this through workshops, after school activities, lessons and mentoring. Volunteers run about 80% of the project and it is due to their energy and dedication that the centre stays open. We are currently looking for female volunteer mentors to support our girls. The purpose of this role is to provide support and assistance to girls who are enrolled within the Parents, Education, Achievement and Character (PEACH) programme and to motivate the girls to pursue excellence in areas of academic and personal development. The main tasks will be: mentoring,

assessing progress, building a positive connection with parents of the girls, attending monthly training sessions, identifying and communicating support and training needs to the PEACH Project Co-ordinator and making effective use of the support mechanisms provided. Mentors become part of our worthwhile and interesting organisation while contributing positively to the community and developing new skills. If you are interested in this very rewarding, exciting opportunity or for more information please contact me at una@baytreecentre.co.uk or 020 7733 5283. For more about The Baytree Centre go to www.baytreecentre.org/archives/2009/03/peach.html

*Una Fahey, Volunteer Services Coordinator
The Baytree Centre*

Clapham Methodist Church

There has been a Methodist Church on Clapham High Street since 1874 – when the Wesleyan Methodists, who had previously bought Dunoon House on the same site and had been holding their services there, opened their magnificent Victorian church, which seated 1,000 people and had a steeple to match the one at St. Mary's. The Revd Charles Haddon Spurgeon, who lived in Nightingale Lane and travelled regularly through the High Street on his way to the Tabernacle at the Elephant and Castle, preached at the opening service.

Like many other buildings in the area, the Methodist Church suffered bomb damage during the Second World War and although it was not razed to the ground it had to be demolished, making way for the present church which was built in 1961. The Revd Dr Donald (later Lord) Soper was the preacher when the new building was dedicated.

The church has survived well and has played its part in the local community throughout its history. Today, with a predominantly black church membership of 250 and a regular congregation of 150 a week, it is the centre for Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorers of the 19th Clapham Scout Group and for the Rainbows and Brownies of the 6th Clapham Brownie Pack. Several cultural groups, with Ghanaian and Nigerian connections, meet on the premises as do pre-school mother and toddler groups. The local councillors hold their weekly surgeries at the church and many local groups use the hall for their meetings. Mount Zion Pentecostal Church meets on a Sunday and a Wednesday and the Methodist church has its youth group and musical group and mid-week fellowship meetings throughout the year. The church is the permanent base for the Queen Mother Moore School, started by Rev Hewie Andrew in the 1980s and providing very successful supplementary education for black students – a response to the need which saw some black pupils under-achieving at school.

After about ten years of talking about it, the contractors started work in September 2010 on a new phase of church building. A new narthex is being built on the front of the church – bringing the building right to the pavement and providing what will be a 'shop-front' in line with all the other shops and restaurants in the High Street. This will provide a welcoming entrance lounge and meeting place and serve as an extension to the church sanctuary, which is also being completely refurbished. It was thought that as the church stood back from the road, although it provided three or four useful parking spaces, too many people walked by without even realizing it was there. Now it is hoped that this new addition to the building, which will cost nearly £1 million, as well as giving good access to all the users and providing a 21st century appearance, will also ensure that the church's presence will be noticed by all those who formerly may have just passed by.

Currently, the Clapham Methodist worshippers are meeting at St. Mary's Parish Hall in St Alphonsus Road for their Sunday morning service, but everything else is continuing in the Church Hall (entrance in Nelson's Row) – if all goes according to plan, the work will be completed by Easter 2011.

Revd Norman Grigg – Superintendent Minister of Clapham Methodist Circuit



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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Membership Secretary

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Newsletter and Publications

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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

Twixt the Commons

Timothy Walker, a long-standing resident of Old Park Avenue, has recently published a 400-page illustrated study of the development of the area known to estate agents as 'Twixt the Commons'. The book may be obtained directly from Mr Walker at 24 Old Park Avenue, SW12 8RH, tehwalker@uwclub.net, price £20.00. A review will appear in our February newsletter.

Christmas Presents

A gift membership of the Clapham Society or our book, *Discovering Clapham*, would be an ideal present for local friends, especially newcomers to the area. Full details and contacts are shown above and on our website. We also have available some Christmas cards from past years, which are **FREE** when collected from Alyson Wilson.