



On the Common

At the time of going to press the last large event on Clapham Common for the summer is being dismantled. We have not yet been able to assess the condition of the event site at the end of a season when Lambeth's restrictions on the size and frequency of events were lifted. We are not hopeful as the last two large events left no days between the taking down of one and the setting up of the next. The wet weather in particular meant that a badly damaged surface was inherited and some reurfing was carried out.

It is to be hoped that some lessons have been learned, the first being that large events should not be booked back to back. The previous Lambeth Council events policy, developed over years along with local groups and 'refreshed' in 2008, proposed that there should be 21 clear days between large events.

An unexpected lesson has been the fading popularity of music festivals nationwide. Reasons offered are too many festivals, lack of new talents and the attraction of lower cost, more varied music and the likelihood of more sunshine in Spain and Croatia. The result of this is a falling demand for tickets. The cost of tickets for Jamie Oliver's Feastival fell from £75 for an adult ticket to £17.50.

Using public green space to increase income for a cash strapped council has a negative effect for the local community. Two of the large events occupied the event site for two weeks surrounding the events. Sainsbury's Super Saturday took over a very large site which included one of the main shared use foot/cycle paths. Most events bring with them extra noise and pollution from vehicles and generators. While the majority of us are prepared to tolerate a reasonable amount of disruption, it is the view of many that the level of use of Clapham Common this year has been unsustainable.

Volunteers

Young people from Deloitte, part of a much larger group, are seen here carrying out a tidy up of Clapham Common as part of an offering of time to the community.

Also in the picture are three Lambeth Parks Rangers, an endangered species for some time but about to become extinct. We would like to thank the Rangers for all the help they have given in all kinds of ways. We believe that losing them is a retrograde step, particularly in relation to security. We wish them all well.



Our regular monthly meetings are held at Clapham Manor Primary School, Belmont Road, SW4 0BZ. The entrance 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 19 October

Annual General Meeting. After the formal business 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.

Wednesday 16 November

Planning the new US Embassy building.

In 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. If 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 site was chosen, how the architect was selected and the design developed and how it is envisaged that the building and its occupants will contribute to the Nine Elms regeneration project.

There is no meeting in December.

Venn Street Market The market in the newly pedestrianised Venn Street is due to run every Saturday from 10 am to 4 pm commencing on **Saturday 1 October.**

Myriad Marvellous

On September 3, something special happened in Clapham. For one night, the public library was transformed into a proper performance space, with proper stage and lighting. And on to that stage came Miriam Margolyes, one of our great actresses, who proceeded to transfix and transport a packed house, performing a selection of favourite poetry and scenes from Dickens, interlaced with personal reminiscences.

It's tough to pick highlights from an evening of highlights, but of the poems, *Aubade*, Philip Larkin's brooding small hours contemplation of death stood out. And her treatment of John Donne's *The Good Morrow* – a brilliant affirmation of love – got beyond Donne's difficult metaphysical gymnastics to find the intrinsic humanity in the poem.

A reading from *Great Expectations* exhumed the bitter jilted bride Miss Havisham, who manoeuvres Pip to fall in love with her ward Estella, so she will break his heart. This was a dark moment, as Havisham's tight-drawn lips repeatedly hiss 'Love her, love her, love her'.

Miriam found her inner Irene Handl to give us Mrs Smith – a priggish neighbour in the 1970s, who complained about two bohemian tenants, who sat in their kitchen, in full view (if you peered through the window) – naked, if you please! Eating marmalade! Think Mrs. Crevatte, Tony Hancock's permanently appalled landlady in *The Rebel*.

The finale was Mr Bumble's marriage proposal from *Oliver Twist*. This was a tour-de-force, with Miriam effortlessly gliding from narrator, to excitable widow Corney to Bumble himself, played as only a woman can play a man – all cock and swagger. He edges round the table to descend upon his helpless prey, lascivious toad's mouth spreading across his face and eyes sparkling in anticipation of lustful and financial dreams come true, to deliver his proposal. The hapless Mrs Corney can only throw herself back, arms outstretched, legs akimbo and bellow 'YES!!!'

This was everything intimate theatre can be. Comedy, tragedy, pathos, power, boom and whisper. One person holding in thrall a packed audience as if we were a roomful of children at story time. Magic.

Jason Fox

Clapham Chamber Concerts

The next concert in the 2011 autumn/winter series is on **Thursday 13 October**. The minimalist folk ensemble 'Firefly' – John Barber (piano/ gamelan), Jack Ross (guitar), Bea Hankey (voice), James Redwood (violin) and Sam Glazer (cello) will perform songs rich with close vocal harmonies, infectious rhythms and delicate atmospheric textures. Supported by experimental duo, 'Tuppence' – Jessie Maryon-Davies (prepared piano) and Pete Truin (saxophones) who draw the listener into an unusual sound world where stillness and movement co-exist and improvisation and composition find a delicate balance.

On **Friday 11 November** there will be a Remembrance Concert with Jessie Maryon-Davies (piano), Amanda Lake (violin), Romola Smith (clarinet) and Sophie Rivlin (cello) featuring music inspired by war and peace including Vaughan Williams' much-loved *Lark Ascending* and Messaien's masterpiece, *Quartet for the End of Time*, written in a prisoner-of-war camp during WW2.

Both concerts are at St. Paul's Church, Rectory Grove SW4 0DX starting at 7.30 pm. Tickets (£10, Concessions £8, children £3) are available on the door. Visit www.claphamchamberconcerts.co.uk to join the mailing list and find out more about the weekly Clapham Community Choir (open to everyone!).

Clapham Chamber Concerts are delighted to team up with Omnibus to present a special concert by Moonfleet Trio at Clapham Old Town library on **Friday 2 December**. Tickets must be purchased in advance – email claphamchamberconcerts@gmail.com for further details.

Aircraft noise

Are you bothered by the 40 planes an hour that fly over Clapham Common every day? The Government's consultation period on aviation policy finishes in mid-October 2011. A separate consultation on night flights begins in spring 2012 when the 16 night flights permitted between 11.30 pm and 6 am will be reviewed.

If you are in favour of a total ban on night flights, as well as the implementation of 'flight alternation', whereby flights into Heathrow would come over Clapham Common for only half a day (a regime currently enjoyed by residents of West London), please consider lobbying your local councillors, MP and local press.

Take a look at the website www.hacan.org.uk for more information.

Sainsbury's Abbeville Road

Lambeth's Planning Committee finally considered Sainsbury's applications at its meeting on 16 August. The Society and ward councillors all spoke against the applications but the Committee approved them nevertheless. The effect of competition on the other independent traders, the principal concern to local residents, is not really a proper planning matter, so it was always going to be difficult to argue that a shop in a location such as the Abbeville Road parade was inappropriate because it is part of a national supermarket chain.

Planning Committee members at least managed to wrest some concessions from Sainsbury's at the meeting, notably minor improvements to the shop front design (including the addition of a traditional awning), and a commitment to regular checks of the plant machinery at the rear to ensure that it does not create more noise than it is designed to.

Lambeth Archives Open Day

The theme of this year's open day on **Saturday 1 October** is *Festival Lambeth*. Talks and films will range from the public executions on Kennington Common to entertainments at Vauxhall Gardens, the Crystal Palace and the Festival of Britain. There will be workshops entitled *Introduction to House History* and *Photographs and Memories*, and an art exhibition.

In addition many local societies will have stands displaying their information. As usual, the Clapham Society's stand will sell our publications (note that we have published several new self-guided walks leaflets this summer) and members of the Society will be on hand to answer your historical queries.

This is a great day out for any local historian. It runs from 10 am to 5 pm at Lambeth Archives, 52 Knatchbull Road, SE5 9QY. More details on www.lambeth.gov.uk/archivesopenday or telephone 020 7926 6076.

Lambeth Palace The Archbishop of Canterbury, Patron of Together for Sudan, is hosting a reception in aid of the charity at Lambeth Palace on **Tuesday 11 October** from 6.30 pm to 8.30 pm. Tickets at £25 are available by telephone 020 8348 4897 or email: adrian@togetherforsudan.org, before 1 October.

Forty Years On

The current issue of the *Wandsworth Historian* celebrates forty years of the publication of the journal with the usual selection of wide-ranging articles. A long-forgotten Edwardian Wandsworth-born novelist is introduced, the connection of Battersea MP, John Burns, with town planning is investigated and there is an interesting article about the River Thames in the 1930s and 1940s.

Copies of the *Wandsworth Historian*, price £3 plus £1 post and packing, are available from Neil Robson, 119 Heythorpe Street, SW18 5BT.

To mark the fortieth anniversary all 91 issues of the *Wandsworth Historian* from 1971 to 2011 have been digitally scanned, and are now available on a searchable DVD. As we have found since we scanned both the Clapham Antiquarian Society Occasional Sheets and our own newsletters, this is an invaluable resource for local historians researching the area. Many of our members live in the area covered by Wandsworth and Battersea and will find this DVD of interest. It is available for a mere £5, plus £1.50 post and packing from Neil Robson (contact details above). You can find out more about the Wandsworth Historical Society at www.wandsworthhistory.org.uk.

Old Park, Nightingale Lane

Suzanne de Launton, who is descended from James Coles, one time resident of Old Park in Nightingale Lane, the Georgian mansion which once stood in extensive grounds on the site of the present Old Park Avenue, has written a series of novels which follow the lives of the members of this family over a period of about one hundred years.

The first book in the series, *The Shop At Poppins Court*, is now available as an eBook on Amazon for the low price of £1.14 p. The rest of the series will be published shortly.

Clapham Common constituency

The Boundary Commission for England has published its proposed new constituency boundaries, aimed at more equal numbers of constituents in each. A new Clapham Common constituency, and a Battersea and Vauxhall constituency, are planned. For full details go to consultation.boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk/ - follow links to London and then Lambeth. You have until until 5 December 2011 to 'Have Your Say'.

De Morgan Centre Reopens

The De Morgan Centre, at 38 West Hill, SW18 1TX, has been refurbished, re-configured, restored and rehung, and was reopened in September alongside the new Wandsworth Museum. Apart from the beautifully displayed ceramics of William de Morgan and the paintings of his wife, Evelyn de Morgan there is an exhibition space, which will have a wide-ranging programme of temporary exhibitions. The first of these is of work by Fine Cell, a charity that trains prisoners in highly skilled needlework, using William de Morgan's tile designs for many of their cushions.

The Museum is open from Tuesday to Friday from 1 pm to 5 pm and on Saturdays from 10 am to 5 pm. For more details see www.demorgan.org.uk.

Wandsworth Museum

In August Ken Barbour, the Director of Wandsworth Museum who hosted the Clapham Society evening at the Museum in April, was succeeded by Neil Couzens. Mr Couzens was formerly Commercial Development Manager at the National Army Museum in Chelsea.

The new temporary exhibition at the Museum, entitled *Separation & Silence*, a history of Wandsworth Prison, opened in September. For opening times and more details see www.wandsworthmuseum.co.uk.

New members We are pleased to welcome the following new members this month: Caroline Chandy and David Middleton, Francine Corbin, Virginia Douglas, Fiona Leach, and Anton Truter

London Song Festival

This festival, organised by local resident Nigel Foster, is dedicated to promoting the song repertoire, which, in Nigel's view, continues to be under-appreciated in a world so strongly dominated by opera. The festival acts as a major showcase for young singers and helps them set down roots in a way that only public performance can give.

There are five concerts during November, with the first on **Thursday 3 November**. All concerts take place at St. George's Church, Hanover Square, W1S 1FX at 7.30 pm. Tickets are £15 (£10 concessions). For full details of the various concerts and to buy tickets go to www.londonfestival.org/concerts.php.

Platinum Boys Choir

A new venture recently launched locally is a choir for boys between 7 and 13 years old. The choir rehearses on Saturday afternoons in term time at the National Opera Studio in Wandsworth. See www.platinumconsort.com/boys-choir.html.

Good work

Our member, Kath Derrig, was recently the subject of an article and photograph in the *South London Press*. For some time she has been regularly taking magazines into Brixton Prison for the prisoners. Keep up the good work, Kath!

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.