

# The Clapham Society

## Newsletter



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## A Tale of two structures

In mid September temporary planning permission was sought for two structures on Clapham Common. One was in Lambeth and one in Wandsworth. (Confusion sometimes arises about the ownership of Clapham Common. It is owned and managed by Lambeth Council but Wandsworth Council is the planning and licensing authority for that part within Wandsworth.)

The Lambeth structure was a large dome which, with a number of smaller domes and temporary installations, was to become a television studio in which Sky One's programme 'Got to Dance' would be auditioned and filmed. The dome would be blacked out from within and carpeted and surrounded by a high steel fence. The ground would be occupied for 36 days. The Clapham Society, the Open Spaces Society (OSS) – England's oldest conservation society, the Clapham Common Management Advisory Committee (CCMAC) and the Friends of Clapham Common (FoCC) as well as individuals objected on various grounds. The event was due to begin two days after the meeting of the Lambeth Planning Committee and the dome was already in place (see photo). Lambeth Council officers recommended approval but the Planning Committee accepted the proposal from the Chair that the application be refused, with one abstention and one against. Grounds included design, size and loss of accessibility to common land. The maximum time allowed without planning permission is 28 days so the event would be restricted to that period.



photo: Anna Jefferson Smith

The structure in Wandsworth was the Nike Fuel Station on South Field. They had applied for an extension to the initial three months temporary planning permission to last until May 2013. Once again the Clapham Society, OSS, CCMAC, FoCC and others had lodged objections. The Wandsworth Council officers had recommended refusal and Wandsworth Councillors agreed with the further proposal that the structure should be removed by 30 September along with restoration of the site. Failure to do so might lead to enforcement procedures. The principal grounds were unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the Common.

The Common is now under constant pressure to provide a source of income for Lambeth. The outcomes above suggest that greater care must be given in balancing loss of amenity and inappropriate usage against the need to raise revenue.

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. Meetings are free and non-members are very welcome.

**Wednesday 17 October Annual General Meeting.** The agenda for this meeting was published in the September newsletter. After the business part of the meeting Clapham Society President, **Martin Drury**, will talk about the origins, evolution and role of the Landmark Trust which gives new life to worthwhile old buildings. Appointed as a trustee in 1988, Martin retired this year after 13 years as Chairman.

**Wednesday 21 November The Cinema Museum.** **Martin Humphries**, co-founder and Director of the Cinema Museum will talk about the history and development of the museum which is located in the Master's House of the former Lambeth Workhouse in Kennington.

**There is no meeting in December. The full programme for 2013 will be published in the December/January newsletter.**

## Cotman in Normandy

On **Wednesday 10 October** the new autumn exhibition opens at Dulwich Picture Gallery. *Cotman in Normandy* takes a fresh look at the central chapter of the career of John Sell Cotman (1782–1842), revered as the quintessential English watercolourist. Drawings, watercolours and prints by Cotman, will be displayed along with studies by other artists, including JMW Turner. The exhibition will place Cotman's visits to Normandy within the broader context of his lifelong engagement with buildings, particularly the architecture of the Middle Ages. His exploration of the undeniable French influence on some of Britain's finest architecture provided a controversial commentary on Anglo-French cultural exchange in the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars.

The curator's lecture, a detailed introduction to the exhibition, will be given by curator, Timothy Wilcox on **Thursday 11 October** at 12.30 pm. Tickets are £10. Dulwich Picture Gallery also has plenty of other interesting events: a series of 'In Town' evening lectures about exhibitions in other London galleries – including this autumn *Bronze* at the Royal Academy, *Shakespeare: Staging the World* at the British Museum and *Pre-Raphaelites: Victorian Avant-Garde* at Tate Britain, as well as free weekly lunchtime concerts given by talented young musicians every Wednesday at 1.30 pm. For more details and to book tickets go to [www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk](http://www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk) or call 020 8693 5254

## Fire Hydrants

A member recently alerted us to the fact that the Grade II listed fire hydrant outside the Northcote Public House in Northcote Road had been removed during works to the road and pavement. When he followed up the matter with Wandsworth Council he was informed that this has been done in error, that the original fire hydrant had been destroyed, but it would be replaced with a replica!

Meanwhile, the fire hydrant in Abbeville Road has been more fortunate. Clapham Society member, Peter Skuse, persuaded Lambeth Council to repaint it, and the owner of the nearby house to put up a plaque marking the hydrant.

## Wandsworth U3A

This group meets at Earlsfield Library, 276 Magdalen Road, SW18 3NY on the third Monday of the month from 2 pm to 4 pm. The speakers this autumn are Dr Enid Stockwell on The Darwin Family at Down and Cambridge on **Monday 15 October** and on **Monday 19 November** Peter Titcher will speak about 18th Century Silver. There is no meeting in December. For further details email Brenda Callaghan at [brendacallaghan@btinternet.com](mailto:brendacallaghan@btinternet.com).

## Lambeth Architecture 1914-1939

This recently published book by Lambeth's former Head of Conservation and Urban Design, Edmund Bird, and Lambeth Archives Local Studies Librarian, Fiona Price is a concise and well-illustrated guide to buildings in the area, which follows on from their earlier book about Lambeth's Edwardian architecture. It is divided into sections covering public buildings, education, leisure, housing, commercial and so on with a final section on lost buildings of the area. Several Clapham buildings feature in the book, including Maritime House, but the trade union buildings in Crescent Lane are omitted.

*Lambeth Architecture 1914-1939*, price £9, is available from Lambeth libraries. Edmund Bird will speak about the book at our meeting on **Wednesday 13th February 2013**.

## Contributions needed

Founded by Clapham Society member Dr Gregor Harvie RIBA, Designing Buildings Wiki is an expert wiki site which aims to improve the UK's building industry by encouraging professionals to pool their expertise on every stage of building design and development.

The site launched in the summer and already has over 400 articles – ranging from planning applications and conservation areas through to sustainability and drainage. Contributions from Clapham Society members are welcome: [www.designingbuildings.co.uk](http://www.designingbuildings.co.uk)

## 575 Wandsworth Road

In March 2013, 575 Wandsworth Road, the former home of Khadambi Asalache, will open to the public. Behind the early 19th century façade lies a remarkable home transformed by fretwork decoration. During the last 18 months major conservation work has been carried out on the structure and the fretwork to ensure the building is ready to receive visitors. The visit will be by guided tour and the National Trust is currently recruiting volunteers who will be able to help visitors enjoy this enthralling house. There are also a few limited spaces to visit the house on a tour before it officially opens. If you are interested in visiting, volunteering or simply finding out more please contact: [575wandsworthroad@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:575wandsworthroad@nationaltrust.org.uk) Tel: 020 7720 9459. A member of the National Trust staff from 575 Wandsworth Road will be talking about the house and its imminent opening at our first meeting in 2013, on **Wednesday 16 January**.

## Black History Month

October is Black History month which is celebrated by many events in local libraries.

At Clapham Library on **Monday 22 October** at 8 pm in 'Fresh Voices', Alex Wheatle introduces three new black authors – Yvette Edwards whose debut novel, *A Cupboard Full of Coats* was on the Man Booker Prize long list, Nigerian-born Irenosen Okojie whose short stories have been published in the UK, USA and Africa, and Ernest Alanki, author of *The Chocolate Shop Perverts* and many short stories.

On **Tuesday 23 October**, also at Clapham Library, at 7 pm Dr Everard Phillips will give an interactive talk 'Speaking truth to Power' about the lyrics of political calypsos.

There are events throughout the month at other Lambeth libraries.

Go to [www.lambeth.gov.uk/Services/LeisureCulture/Libraries/Black+History+Month+brochure.htm](http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/Services/LeisureCulture/Libraries/Black+History+Month+brochure.htm) to download a copy of the brochure or pick one up at any Lambeth library.

At Balham Library there is an Asian music workshop on **Saturday 13 October** from 2.30 pm to 3.15 pm led by classical singer and teacher, Krishna Ray (free, but book on 020 8871 7095) and on **Friday 19 October** at 6.30 pm Dorothy Koomsom talks about her recently published novel, *The Rose Petal Beach*. (free, but book on 020 8871 7195).

At Battersea Library on **Friday 26 October** at 6.30 pm Brenda Lee will talk about Vitamin D deficiency – the new disease among those of African, Caribbean and Asian heritage. And there are many more events at Wandsworth libraries. Details in Wandsworth libraries or at [www.wandsworth.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/libraries).

## London Song Festival

This year's London Song Festival celebrates the anniversaries of four composers, Claude Debussy and Frederick Delius (b 1862), the Anglo-African Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (d 1912) and John Ireland (d 1962). The first concert on **Wednesday 31 October** is of English and American Comedy Songs, which include songs by Flanders and Swann and Tom Lehrer.

On **Wednesday 7 November** John Ireland's *Land of Lost Content* is included in a concert of songs about ghosts and exotic places. The festival continues throughout November with weekly concerts, which take place at St Paul's Church, Covent Garden, WC2E 8NA. For the full programme go to [www.londonsongfestival.org](http://www.londonsongfestival.org).

## Surrey Heritage Celebration

On **Saturday 6 October** there is a free Open Day from 10 am to 3.30 pm at the Surrey History Centre in Woking. This celebrates the award of Archive of the Year to the centre, by *Your Family History* magazine.

There will be free behind the scene tours at 10.30 am and 12.30 pm. The tours last 1½ hours. Places are limited, but book in advance (contact details below).

Surrey Heritage Annual Lecture, 'Valuing the Past: Why Heritage Matters in the Modern World' is at 2 pm. Drawing on his experiences working as a heritage professional around the globe, Dr Joe Flatman will explore the different values that societies place on heritage in the modern world. He will use examples drawn from across Surrey, the UK and further afield. Book in advance at Surrey History Centre, 130 Goldsworth Road, Woking, Surrey, GU21 6ND. Tel: 01483 518737 Email: [shs@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:shs@surreycc.gov.uk) [www.surreycc.gov.uk/surreyhistorycentre](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/surreyhistorycentre)

Members may remember that at our March 2009 meeting the Eric Smith Memorial Lecture was given by Dr Julian Pooley of the Surrey History Centre. He told us about the modern purpose-built archive centre in Woking and some of the important holdings – in particular those relating to Clapham which was once in the county of Surrey.

## Growing up in wartime Clapham

*We recently received the following reminiscences from a reader in New Zealand:*

'I was born at No 71 Clapham Manor Street, in 1933. My family must have enjoyed living in that street, as we later moved across the street to No 58 and finally in the Second World War to No 89 Clapham Manor Street. I attended Sir Walter St John's Grammar School in Battersea High Street. Eventually, I emigrated to New Zealand in 1970.

The Second World War was an exciting and dangerous period, for a schoolboy (aged from 6 to 12). Opposite No 89 was a bomb-site. An incendiary bomb dropped on our own vegetable patch. I remember American troops building four prefabs in Cresset Street, which had been destroyed by bombing. A bombed-out corner house, had its basement waterproofed and filled as a firefighting water tank. We had an Anderson shelter and also slept on the platform of Clapham North tube station in the worst air attacks. Clapham Common had a large battery of anti-aircraft guns. I remember watching trains, packed with Dunkirk survivors, passing over Wandsworth Road and there were lots of cheering soldiers and waving Londoners.

My neighbours (at No 87) were the Denny family. They owned a small milk-filling and delivery company, based in Stonhouse Street. Their bulk milk arrived in churns. The three members of the family hand-filled glass milk bottles, put on the cardboard tops, loaded their three handcarts and each delivered to their designated sector of neighbouring homes. At the end of their day they hand-washed the returned empty bottles and scrubbed down their work area. They also housed a (retired) horse and cart. At night, my neighbour was an ARP (Air Raid Precautions) Warden, despite his need to get up at 4 am to start his milk shift. If ever you view the film *This Happy Breed*, you might notice an early shot with Denny's milk bottles delivered to the front step of the family's front door.

The local pub 'The Bread & Roses' was (then) named 'The Bowyer Arms', with beer supplied by Meux's Brewery in huge wooden casks. The patrons nick-named me 'Ronnie Meux', as I often waited outside, hoping that my grandparents would buy me some lemonade and crisps.

*Ron Durham*





## 'The Final Whistle: the Great War in Fifteen Players' by Stephen Cooper

This is the story of fifteen men killed in the Great War. All played rugby for one South London club; none lived to hear the final whistle.

Rugby brought them together; rugby led the rush to war. They came from Britain and Empire to fight in every theatre and service, among them a poet, playwright and perfumer. Some were decorated and died heroically; others fought and fell quietly. Together their stories paint a portrait in miniature of the entire war.

Founded in 1879, Rosslyn Park mysteriously has no Great War memorial. An old press cutting gave numbers –350 served, 72 died – but no names. So began a quest to rediscover these men and capture their lives, from their vanished Edwardian youth and vigour, to the war they fought and how they died. This is their story.

Fergal Keane has described it as a 'haunting and beautiful book ... it tells the story of men from one rugby club but it is a universal narrative of heroism and loss'. Ian Hislop called it 'a fresh and fascinating take on the impact of the Great War, with a novel and moving focus'. One Amazon review voted it 'a superb read for anyone interested in history, rugby, or even anyone interested in men... an excellent present for men who are difficult to buy for, and interesting for book groups too.'

The book is published in paperback and as an e-book by The History Press; it is available in bookshops, online, and as a download on iTunes and Amazon. Author's royalties go to Sports and Cancer charities.

## The Thornton Players

Ted Hayward, editor of the newsletter of The Old Thorntonians Association (pupils of the former Henry Thornton School on Clapham Common South Side) has recently received an interesting collection of photographs and other memorabilia relating to four plays performed by members of the Dramatic Society of the now-defunct Clapham Literary Institute during the 1940s. They were known as 'The Thornton Players' since the productions were all based at Henry Thornton School, and the Institute's address was given as 45 South Side.

The material seems to have belonged to a Maurice Smith, possibly a local resident at the time, who assisted with stage management as well as being a member of the cast. The productions themselves, with dates were: *Poison Pen*, by Richard Llewellyn (10 July 1943); *Johnson Over Jordan* by J B Priestley (15 January 1944); Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (10 November 1945); and *Wild Decembers*, by Clemence Dane (6 April 1946).

Does any member happen to know more about The Thornton Players, or have any material related to them? How long did they survive and what happened to them. Does anyone know who Maurice Smith was? If you have any useful information contact Ted Hayward: [ted.hayward@btinternet.com](mailto:ted.hayward@btinternet.com) or 01494 762838.

## Clapham's Eton Link

The summer edition of *Eton*, the Eton College magazine, carried an article about a lady, who as a pupil at Clapham County Secondary School for Girls (the school in Broomwood Road is now Thomas's), was evacuated to Eton a few days before the outbreak of war in 1939. About 300 girls were sent to Eton and billeted in houses around Windsor. Natalie Sutton, as she then was, eventually lived for nearly four years with a group of 20 girls in a property belonging to Eton College.

Although the girls lived in a College property they were educated at Windsor Grammar School for Boys during their time as evacuees. The boys received their schooling in the morning, and the girls in the afternoon. Natalie was ten years old at the time, and she recalled that some of the older girls caused quite a stir in Windsor. She remembered her time at Eton as something of a fairytale. 'I didn't learn anything then: I just imbibed atmospheres, and that's what I imbibed from Eton: a wonderful, wonderful atmosphere.' she said in a recent interview with an old Etonian.

## Christmas Cards

The Trinity Hospice Christmas Card brochure is now out, and we would recommend these cards to you as support for a local cause.

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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Email: [annabel@allott.plus.com](mailto:annabel@allott.plus.com)

**Secretary** **Jill Cramphorn**  
552 Wandsworth Road, SW8 3JX

Tel: 020 7720 3343

**Treasurer** **David Brown**  
15 Turret Grove, SW4 0ES

Tel: 020 7720 7536

**Meetings and Events** **Maev Sullivan**  
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**Membership Secretary**

**Jennifer Everett**

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**Planning Matters** **Philip Ashford**  
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**Newsletter and Publications**

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Details of meetings, activities and a full list of our publications are on our website at [www.claphamsociety.com](http://www.claphamsociety.com)

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## Clapham Chamber Concerts

This group's fifth year of bringing live music to Clapham continues on **Friday 5 October** at 7.30 pm when the Hampden Quartet will play works by Britten, Shostakovich and Beethoven, at St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DX. Tickets are available on the door at £10, £8 concessions, £3 children.

## The Papered Parlour

On **Saturday 20 October** and **Sunday 21 October** The Papered Parlour is offering a Photography Masterclass – a chance to join two professional photographers taking photographs out and about on Clapham Common and returning to base to learn how to edit and present digital printing. For details and to book your place go to [www.thepaperedparlour.co.uk](http://www.thepaperedparlour.co.uk) or 020 7627 8703.