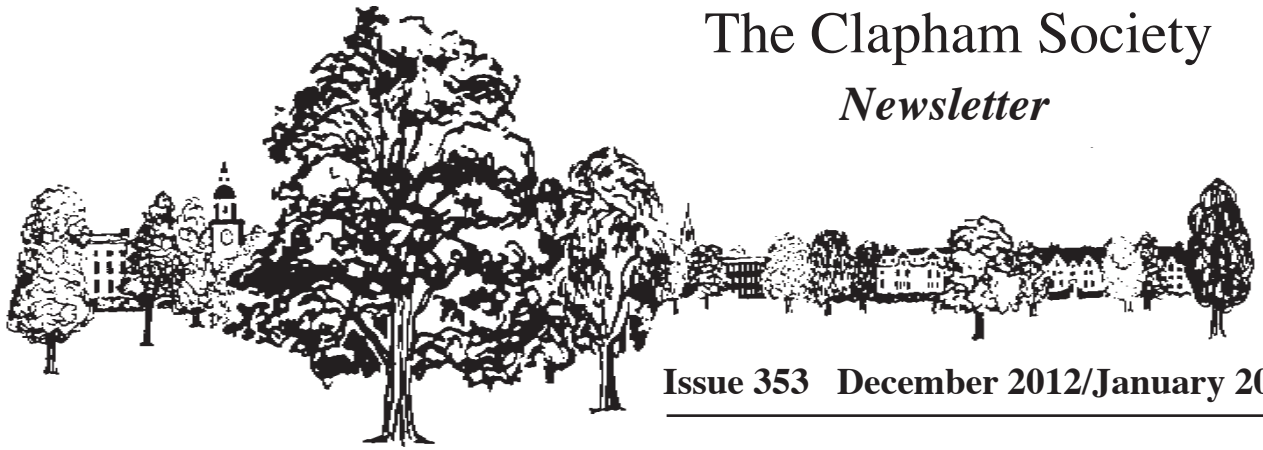


The Clapham Society

Newsletter



Issue 353 December 2012/January 2013

The next Clapham Society green plaque to mark an important building which has changed its use will be unveiled on the former Odeon Cinema at Clapham South (now Majestic Wine, with apartments above) on **Tuesday 4 December** at 12 noon, by Martin Humphries, Director of the Cinema Museum. Do come along and join in the celebration!



An urgent message from your local bookshop

As you may know, we have been running Clapham Books for six years now. We couldn't have embarked on this venture without the support of you and many other Clapham residents and for this, we are extremely grateful. We have successfully maintained a good and relevant bookshop here on our High Street.

We have now hit hard times with the drop in foot-fall badly affecting us, together with the general fall in takings which has hit all retail businesses in the UK. We have also been affected by the Kindle, which – unlike every other e-reader – is Amazon-specific. We are able to sell e-books for any other make of e-reader, but Amazon's virtual monopoly of this sector is an ongoing point for discussion in the bookselling industry.

All this, and then WHSmith opened virtually opposite us, which has also affected turnover. They can afford to wait it out until we close down, because even though they are a huge company they were given a nine-month rent-free period. We, however, have not had one second rent-free in our entire history! This has dramatically affected our viability.

So we would like our customers to consider the possibility of buying one extra book from us per visit, before 24 December. Why not buy a book as a gift for someone you had planned on buying something else for – soap, whiskey, gloves, socks? Buy a book instead, and keep us on this High Street where we feel we are still wanted and where we love to be.

Yours hopefully, Nikki, Ed, Roy & Marg at Clapham Books

Our programme for 2013 is published below, and will be on our website soon. As for the last few years meetings will be at Clapham Manor Primary School, Belmont Road, SW4 0BZ. The hall opens at 7.30 pm and talks commence promptly at 8 pm.

Wednesday 16 January

575 Wandsworth Road. The National Trust's latest acquisition in London is due to open to the public in March 2013. To prepare the building for opening, major building works were carried out as well as conservation work on the interiors. This talk will illustrate the work that was done and explain some of the techniques and thought processes behind the decisions that were made. You can check progress on the work now on the blog at 575wandsworthroadnt.wordpress.com.

Wednesday 13 February

Edmund Bird, Heritage Advisor to the Mayor of London's Greater London Authority and Transport for London, former Head of Conservation at Lambeth and Camden, will appraise the architecture of Lambeth, with a special focus on Clapham, of the period between the wars (1918-1939) – an era of enormous change with new building styles and new building types appearing throughout the borough as Art Deco, vernacular, Neo-Georgian and early examples of the Modern Movement all jostled for position, transforming much of Lambeth.

Wednesday 20 March

The new US Embassy building in Nine Elms. Construction work on the new US Embassy will commence in 2013 for a planned 2017 completion. A representative from the Embassy will tell us why it is moving from Mayfair and

how the Embassy will fit into the new neighbourhood, which is itself a welcome regeneration project for the Nine Elms area.

Wednesday 17 April

An evening dedicated to Local Issues, with guest speakers from Lambeth Council. Members are invited to suggest issues they would like to be discussed. This is your opportunity to question local plans, seek explanations and air your views.

Wednesday 15 May

Trees for life and beyond. This year is the 20th anniversary of Trees for Cities, with whom the Society has had a close working relationship over the past five years. A representative of Trees for Cities will talk to us about what has been achieved on Clapham Common so far, their plans for further planting and the intriguing relationship between trees and people, particularly how working with trees can change lives.

Wednesday 19 June

Emily Wilding Davison and the Suffragette Campaign in 1913. In this centenary year of the death of Emily Davison, who made the ultimate sacrifice of her life in support of the suffragette campaign, **Beverley Cook**, Social and Working History Curator at the Museum of London will talk to us about this and other campaigning activities of the suffragettes, such as arson and attacks on art works and the response by the government of the day to these activities.

Wednesday 3 July

Summer Party celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Clapham Society, at 3 Victoria Rise by kind invitation of Mr and Mrs Martin Drury.

The July and August meetings are replaced by walks, of which details will be announced later.

Wednesday 18 September

Sew Over It. Lisa Comfort, a local entrepreneur with a passion for sewing and a concern that it is becoming a lost skill, will talk about setting up and running Sew Over It, her sewing café in Landor Road, SW9. It opened in 2011 offering classes in dressmaking, pattern cutting, soft furnishings, quilting, crochet and knitting as well as sewing parties and the opportunity to hire a sewing machine and a knowledgeable helper for an afternoon. Lisa studied at the London College of Fashion and later worked for British Designer Bruce Oldfield and bridal couture designer Philippa Lepley.

Wednesday 16 October

Annual General Meeting. Guest speaker to be announced.

Wednesday 20 November

The Survey of London. Colin Thom, Senior Historian on the *Survey of London* volume on Battersea, which is due to be published in autumn 2013, will talk about the research involved in this huge project.

There is no meeting in December

Michael Wilson 1939 – 2012

Michael Wilson, who sadly died in September after a long struggle with cancer, was well known to the active membership, both as a background presence and a staunch supporter of the Society. One would have thought, outwardly at least, that Alyson's huge contribution to the Society and its publications was enough for one family to make. However this generous, quiet and modest man was never far away and, as he is sadly not here to dismiss it, it is now possible to acknowledge all that he gave us.

As a background presence Michael, being a very sociable person, was not exactly invisible. He came to the monthly meetings, chatting and helping Alyson carry, display and sell publications. He was a persuasive wine-waiter and most hospitable host at several of the annual parties at which the Chairman thanks the members of the various committees and the deliverers of newsletters for all their work. Their house is also the venue for the meetings of the main committee and Planning Sub-committee, since it has one of the few tables large enough to accommodate such events. The disruption to family life was always accepted with good humour.

However when it came to the production of our newsletters and publications such as *The Buildings of Clapham*, he was absolutely invisible. In fact he was a meticulous proof-reader, fact and index-checker, grammarian and moral support. And apparently he NEVER lost his temper! Likewise, he would cast an avuncular (but professional) eye over our Annual Accounts, double-checking and, when necessary, influencing necessary amendments. That to him was apparently as good as reading a novel. Perhaps it was not so odd for a partner in PricewaterhouseCoopers.

He retired from PwC in 1995 and soon settled into a rewarding *pro bono* involvement with the Jerwood Foundation. He became Chairman of Jerwood Space (a former school in Southwark converted into rehearsal spaces) and a trustee of the Idlewild Trust (a south London grant making trust set up to provide funding for conservation projects in the field of the arts). Such involvements in the arts aptly reflect both his and Alyson's wide range of interests beyond family and Clapham Society. And I have not begun to tell about the escape in Sidlesham in Sussex; or the Bugatti.....

We miss him.

John Adams

Fire station closure

It has recently been disclosed that Clapham Fire Station is one of the 17 fire stations in London threatened with closure under the Mayor of London's plan to save £65m over two years. There is strong local opposition to this proposition and if you wish to add your name there is a petition you can sign at the Fire Station in Old Town or a Save Clapham Fire Station page on Facebook. Alternatively you could lobby your local councillors.

This is the last newsletter for this year – the next one will be the February 2013 issue due out at the end of January.

On the Common

In our November newsletter we expressed concern about the Claphamland Winter Fair event, scheduled for the grassed area between Clapham Common Underground Station, Holy Trinity Church and Long Road over the period of Christmas and New Year. At the time of going to press we have received unconfirmed information that Irvin Leisure have withdrawn their application for this site, but may want to negotiate on use of the funfair/circus site.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2012

The 49th Annual General Meeting of the Society was held on 17 October 2012 at 8 pm at Clapham Manor Primary School, Belmont Road, SW4. The Society's President, Martin Drury, took the chair and 50 members were present.

1. The Secretary had received no apologies for absence.
2. The Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting (19 October 2011), which had been previously circulated, were unanimously approved.
3. The Chairman of the Society, Annabel Allott, presented the Annual Report which had been circulated with the October newsletter (No. 351). She reiterated her warm thanks to the many members who had worked so hard for the Society during the year. In particular she mentioned Anna Jefferson Smith who had worked tirelessly on several projects affecting the Common, as a result of the constant pressure from Lambeth Council to generate income from events on the Common. She also especially thanked Maev Sullivan who was standing down from convening the Events Sub-committee. There were no questions and the Report was unanimously adopted.
4. The Treasurer, David Brown, presented the Financial Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2012. There were no questions, and the Accounts were unanimously adopted.
5. The following were then elected as officers for the year 2012-2013:

Chairman Annabel Allott	Vice Chairman Maev Sullivan
Secretary Jill Cramphorn	Treasurer David Brown
Membership Secretary Jennifer Everett	
- Also elected as **Committee Members** were: John Adams, Bill Emmett, Michael English, Anna Jefferson Smith, Mark Leffler, Ebuni Okolo, and Alyson Wilson.
6. Euan Kennedy FCA was reappointed as **Independent Examiner**.
7. There was no other business.

After the refreshment break Martin Drury gave an illustrated talk about the Landmark Trust, of which he was appointed a trustee in 1988. He retired this year after 13 years as Chairman.

The Landmark Trust is a charity, founded by a banker, the late Sir John Smith, in 1965, to rescue historic buildings at risk, restore them and give them a new future by renting them for self-catering holidays. Funds to pay for restoration and conversion are raised for each new building, but once restored, the holiday-letting income pays for future maintenance.

There are now 196 Landmarks, about one third of which are listed Grade I or Grade II* buildings. They are maintained on a day-to-day basis by a team of regional property managers, housekeepers and gardeners, while the building conservation, development and marketing teams are based at the head office in Maidenhead. About three or four new projects are completed each year.

We heard the criteria for a Landmark: it must be in some way a significant building but not necessarily grand, it must have no future without the intervention of the Trust and it must bring education and pleasure to visitors. Buildings are not normally purchased on the open market, and they are ideally freehold though some are long leases at nominal rents and a few are managed of behalf of the owners. The setting of the building is important. Once acquired a building is repaired, using the highest quality of materials and supporting traditional skills. Detailed research is undertaken to establish the original appearance and history of the building, and later additions often removed.

Martin showed pictures of many landmarks including the first one, Purton Green in Suffolk and some of the latest which are close to completion, as well as some 'before and after' pictures. Buildings include watertowers, follies, gatehouses, chapels and castles, all authentically restored and with furniture appropriate to the building and the period, but with modern bathrooms, heating and in some of the more recent ones, dishwashers and washing machines. In general Landmarks do not have telephones, but Martin admitted that there is some pressure now to introduce wifi. Each Landmark has a Log Book in which visitors record local information, as well as their impressions and memories, which always make for interesting reading.

An unusual member of the Landmark family is Lundy Island, which is owned by the National Trust, but leased and managed by the Landmark Trust, and provides accommodation at various levels including an inexpensive hostel and camping. The Trust has some properties overseas, including in Italy a Palladian villa near Vicenza, an apartment in Robert Browning's house in Florence and an apartment in Keats' former house in Rome. In France the Trust runs the Duke of Windsor's former home just outside Paris and has recently been asked by the French government to help with the management of several coastal properties in Brittany.

This was a truly fascinating talk, and Martin's enthusiastic presentation gripped the audience for a full hour. He concluded with the remark that 'a stay in a Landmark is intended to be an experience of a mildly elevating kind'.

Once tried, it is difficult not to become addicted to Landmarks. To get started look at the very beautiful, and enticing Handbook showing details, historical information and plans for of all the properties. This can be purchased on their website: www.landmarktrust.org.uk, which also has plenty of pictures and rental availability.

A Family in Wartime

A free exhibition now on at the Imperial War Museum tells the story of a family living in Stockwell during the Second World War. It shows how the Allpress family coped with rationing, evacuation, war work and events such as the London Blitz and VE Day. Although their own house in Priory Grove was not badly damaged, the cottages directly opposite them were destroyed by a direct hit in April 1941.

The exhibition includes a model of their house, photos and interviews, and a recreated Anderson shelter, as well as radio

shows from the archives and information about life in wartime Britain shown in film, posters and paintings. A film clip from *This Happy Breed* shows Eagle Pond and Clapham Common South Side.

There will be free family events during the school holidays. For details and opening times go to www.iwm.org.uk or telephone 020 7416 5000. There is also a tie-in book with over 200 photographs, posters and documents which capture the spirit of the times.

Planning News

Since August the Planning Sub-committee has been notified of some 95 applications, reviewed 15 of them and made representations on the seven listed below, as well as on the temporary structure for Got to Dance which was reported fully in the October newsletter.

34-36 Bedford Road. Objection to an application to demolish the present nondescript office and over-develop the site with new office space and 40 flats. The scale of the new building over-exploits the site, fails to reflect any local character and damages the amenity of residential neighbours.

The Windmill, Clapham Common. Objection to an application to extend the hotel at first and second floor level. The new building work fills the present gap between the historic pub and modern hotel, blurring the distinction between the two.

2 Rectory Grove. Detailed comments on the refurbishment and extension of this listed building, being converted back to a family house from its previous community use.

13 Clapham Common North Side. Further comments on a second application to demolish and rebuild the present quirky modernist mews extension at the rear with a larger and more 'traditional' style building.

115 St Alphonsus Road. Comments on an application to demolish and redevelop the existing pub with a ground floor bar and flats above. The proposals are reasonable in principle but the design is dull and could be improved.

118 Gauden Road. Objection to an application to construct a new house on a small piece of vacant land. The proposals try to shoehorn too much new floor space onto a prominent and awkward site at the edge of the Sibella Road conservation area.

120 Abbeville Road. Objection to an application to construct a new house at the end of the rear garden fronting onto Leppoc Road. The small space available is totally unsuitable; the proposed house looks ridiculous alongside the scale and character of the Leppoc Road terraces, it blocks views across the presently open rear gardens and damages neighbours' amenity.

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 our website at www.claphamsociety.com

Maurice Stewart

On Saturday 10 November an oak tree, donated by the Clapham Society, was planted near the Bandstand on Clapham Common to commemorate Maurice Stewart, who died earlier this year. Members may remember the many wonderful entertainments which Maurice arranged for the Society, drawing on his lifetime of experience in the theatre, and the evening when he recounted the story of his life. Maurice loved Clapham, where he lived for over 60 years, so it is appropriate that his memory will live on here for many years.



Christmas Fayre

On **Saturday 8 December** Local MP, Kate Hoey will open the Green and Ethical Christmas Fayre which is being held for the second year and will take place between 10 am and 4 pm at Holy Trinity Church on Clapham Common. A wide array of stalls will sell Christmas gifts, clothes, accessories, books, jewellery, wrapping paper and toys. Father Christmas will also attend the Fayre and will provide gifts for visiting children. Visitors both young and old can be pulled on sleds by real husky dogs, as well as being entertained by live music, delicious wholesome hot food and warming winter drinks. Marion's Christmas Kitchen will sell special treats needed for any household to create a traditional English Christmas at home, including jams, preserves, stuffing mixes, Christmas puddings, fudge and other foody gifts. The cake stall will sell a delectable spread of sweet cakes, puddings and other treats. For more details go to www.greenethicalchristmas.com.

On the same day the children's shop in the Polygon, Under the Greenwood Tree, will be holding a Fun Day. More details at www.underthegreenwoodtree.co.uk.