

The Clapham Society

Newsletter



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Clapham Pottery

Who was Montague Weldon Champney? In 1922 Sir Francis and Lady Champney built a little chapel in Clapham, in memory of their son who had died 28 years earlier, as recorded on a plaque in the chapel. The delightful building was attached to a home for orphaned and vulnerable boys of the parish from the end of the First World War until the late 1970s. Then, for 30 years, it served as a training centre for an educational charity and is currently the home of Clapham Pottery, operating on a lease from Lambeth Council.

The charity runs classes for all ages and skills, providing free courses for the homeless, vulnerable children and the elderly from fees paid by those in work and other events such as team building programmes, children's parties, and fund raising activities.

This may all be jeopardised because Lambeth is in the process of selling off all their properties to raise funds to reduce the impact of the loss of central government funding. With the proposed sale of the chapel, an enterprise that offers a creative outlet for 200 students each week at no cost to local or central government would be forced to close.

What to do? The group has launched a campaign seeking voluntary contributions, together with community and celebrity donations to raise the yet-to-be-negotiated asking price. Money is being pledged in anticipation of a positive outcome. If the campaign is successful, the amount currently paid in rent will be used to maintain the building and to fund more courses. There is a waiting list for each of the current classes.

Everyone in the organisation would prefer the building to remain in local authority care but this is a forlorn hope. The hard-edged realities of the current political agenda that aspires to zero local government has galvanised the charity's governing body, staff and volunteers into trying to buy the property to keep it in public ownership in perpetuity.

The campaign is being spear-headed by the Clapham Pottery Charity trustees and led by Michel Roux Junior, who is giving his name, his presence at events and some cash to start things off.

With a positive outcome, the plaque that commemorates Montague Weldon Champney, who died aged 16 in 1894, will be kept in situ in the foyer of the building that will remain in community use as his parents intended. If you would like to make a pledge telephone me on 020 7622 0681 or email administrator@claphampottery.co.uk

Naine Woodrow, Coordinator



photo: Stephen Blanchard

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 April

An evening dedicated to local issues.

A chance to discuss matters of local interest and concern with the panel, which will comprise Jeremy Keates, recently appointed interim Town Centre Manager for Clapham and Brixton, and local Councillors Christine Barratt, Shirley Cosgrave, Nigel Haselden and Helen O'Malley. Before this meeting you may find it helpful to look at the Draft Lambeth Local Plan either on line at lambeth.gov.uk/localplan or at Clapham Library. This may highlight issues you would like to raise with the councillors.

Reminder

Following the article in the March newsletter about the Clapham Community Project remember that the Open Day when you can find out more about it is on **Saturday 20 April**, from 11am to 3 pm at St Anne's Hall in Venn Street.

Doing Bird

On **Thursday 4 April** at 7 pm Martin Gurdon, best selling author of *Hen and the Art of Chicken Maintenance* will be reading from his new book *Doing Bird* at Clapham Books, 120 Clapham High Street, SW4 7UH.

Bandstand Beds – growing on Clapham Common

After an informal start under the Incredible Edible Lambeth banner last year and with support from Parks Manager Victor Chin-Kit, we have now formed an association to bring like-minded people together and do more growing in public. The constituted aims of the Bandstand Beds Association are:

- to engage in community crop growing in public space on Clapham Common, sharing skills and knowledge with the public
- to network with other food projects and initiatives in Lambeth to build food resilience in the borough
- to promote the benefits of growing crops in order to further the social, economic and environmental well-being of Lambeth residents

In 2013 we will build on the successes of 2012. Volunteers aggregated around the watering rota. They in turn had wonderful engagement with visitors to the beds, chatting and sharing growing information. We often heard that weekly visits were made to see the progress of the crops. We want to develop the volunteering with a members' network and skills sharing. Signage also seemed to be a major draw, so we'll build on growing information posters.

The three compost giveaways of 2012 each had a spontaneous party atmosphere created through Lambeth growers coming together. For 2013 our major project will be the Squash and Bean Swap, which will see growers swapping seedlings at the time of the Chelsea Fringe (an offshoot of the Chelsea Flower Show).

Ten Lambeth community gardens, including Brockwell Park Community Glasshouses, Myatt's Fields and Ruskin Park are joining in, and other community growing groups (with those surrounding the Common being targeted) are invited too.

Bandstand Beds would like to encourage Clapham Society members to become involved. See our website for information on events, membership, contact, how to make a donation, the Squash and Bean Swap and growing information: bandstandbeds.org.uk

Fiona Law, Chair, Bandstand Beds

Hugo Dunn-Meynell (1926-2013)

We are sad to report the recent death of Hugo Dunn-Meynell, an enthusiastic Clapham Society member of long standing. Members may recall an article he wrote for the newsletter in October 2003, in which he recalled regular weekly visits in his childhood to his grandmother who lived on Clapham Common West Side. Hugo led a full and varied life, from naval service to advertising executive to leading authority and writer on food and wine. At the end of his long life Clapham was his home and still an enduring interest.

The Development of Building Estates in Battersea 1780-1914

In 1801 the population of Battersea was 3,365 – a century later it had reached 168,907 matched by an increase in the number of dwellings from 650 to about 25,000. This is the story of the largely uncoordinated development, mostly beginning around 1860, and virtually complete by 1914. Despite the depredations of war and postwar housing estates almost all of these buildings are still with us. The landowners, speculators, surveyors, architects, builders, lawyers, estate agents, auctioneers, even clergymen, who played a part are listed with fuller information on some of the major contributors. Some made fortunes others ended in bankruptcy. Today most of them are forgotten although the names of some of them such as Eccles, Poynders, Webb and Wix live on in the streets we walk down every day. This is a fascinating and very detailed account which will be of interest to those who live in the area and to students of the development of London. Copies are £6.00 plus £2 for post and packaging (cheque payable to Wandsworth Historical Society) from Neil Robson, 119 Heythorpe Street, SW18 5BT.

Derrick Johnson



photo: Dana Kubick

A young participant at the Save our Fire Station demonstration on 16 March

The man who was M

Clapham has had many notable residents, some in the limelight, others in the shadows. In the latter category we can place a resident in Lydon and Orlando Roads, William Melville, policeman and intelligence officer.

Melville was born in Ireland in 1850. In 1872 he joined the Metropolitan Police, and in 1883 was appointed to a special Irish branch, a covert operation set up to counter terrorist activity by the Fenians. His surveillance and intelligence work, some of it in France, helped uncover a plot to assassinate Queen Victoria in Westminster Abbey during the 1887 Jubilee. As the Fenian threat diminished, the unit became the Special Branch, and turned its attention to anarchists from the Continent who had found asylum here. He became head of the branch in 1893, becoming a public figure as he appeared in trials and as the branch achieved well-publicised successes against bomb plotters.

In 1903, he retired, amid many plaudits from a public which no doubt envisaged him enjoying peaceful years in his Clapham home. But he was not cultivating his Clapham garden: in reality he had joined a counter-espionage unit of the War Office, later to become the Secret Service Bureau, and now known as MI5. He monitored Russian agents but mainly followed up reports of German agents seeking naval intelligence. From 1909 he was chief detective within the Bureau, where he was referred to as M.

Melville retired from MI5 in 1917 and died a year later. His funeral was held at St Mary's Church, Clapham.

Peter Jefferson Smith

Local Listing

Clapham has a wealth of historic buildings and artefacts that make an important contribution to the character of the area, but which are not eligible for inclusion in the Statutory List. To recognize their importance, local councils are encouraged by government to identify them and include them in Local Lists. In the last few years over half the councils in the country have adopted Local Lists as part of local development plans

Local Listing does not confer the same protections as Statutory Listing. A building outside a Conservation Area can be demolished without consent. However it is an important tool in flagging up buildings of local interest that need protection during the planning process.

Lambeth formally established a Local List three years ago. Listing 280 structures throughout the borough – five in the Clapham area – was a start. The first to be listed locally were the Postmen's Sorting Office at 66 Venn Street and Nos 18, 102-104, 108, and 188 Clapham High Street. One historical artefact – the water hydrant at the junction of Abbeville Road and Elms Road – was also included.

This first List was never intended to be a definitive one and not long after it was set up work on reviewing and updating the List was commenced. The Clapham Society was formally approached by Lambeth's Conservation Officer at the end of 2010 and invited to submit recommendations. The Council expressed their wish to prioritise structures located outside Clapham's existing Conservation Areas and suggested that the Society adopt Lambeth's own selection criteria which were based on guidance from English Heritage. These specify that a building or structure can be Locally Listed if it meets one or more key considerations set out under five main headings: (a) architecture (b) history (c) close historical connection (d) townscape (e) age and rarity.

At the time of Lambeth's approach, our Planning Sub-committee was already in the process of drawing up its own list of recommendations. Over the next six months this work was completed, to include a full description of every structure chosen, together with an explanation of which criteria were met and a photograph. A list of over 70 properties was submitted to Lambeth, some of which were in Conservation Areas as we felt CA status of itself conferred insufficient protection.

Lambeth's Local List was formally updated on 2 April 2012. From the Clapham Society selections, the following buildings and artefacts were added:

- 2 Abbeville Road (formerly Banachie Lodge) 1876. An imposing Victorian house in a Venetian Gothic style, boasting fine towers, gables and chimneys while retaining many original details including sash windows and boot scrapers
- Granite drinking trough on Clapham Common South Side incised with 'Metropolitan Cattle Trough and Drinking Fountain Association. Erected in memory of Robert Trotter Esq. 1877'
- Two milestones on Clapham Common South Side with pyramidal tops, one incised 'Royal Exchange 4 ½ miles, Whitehall 4 miles'
- St Mary's RC Primary School in Crescent Lane, c1870 (Architect WW Wardell). A fine picturesque two-storey stock brick building possessing gothic arched windows, dormers and buttresses
- 142-144 St Alphonsus Road, c1840. A pair of very modest but charming cottages
- 5 The Pavement. Plaque to Zachary Macaulay (1768-1838) and his son Thomas Babington (1800-1859)
- 13 Rodenhurst Road. Home of Arthur Henderson (1863-1935) Nobel prize winner in 1934 for international disarmament.
- 17 Englewood Road. Blue Plaque to Sir Jack Hobbs cricketer (1882-1963)
- 100 Clapham Park Road 'The Grey Goose' public house A well known early 19th century public house
- Heathbrook Primary School, St Rule Street, 1886. A large prominent Queen Anne style London Board school.



2 Abbeville Road, 1876

Apparently inundated with proposals from not only ourselves but other amenity groups and individuals, Lambeth responded by considering only buildings outside Conservation Areas. We were therefore left disappointed that so few of our proposals made it on to the List, especially those not within Conservation Areas. Nonetheless the sub-committee is generally pleased that Lambeth appear to be taking local listing seriously and are keen to consult, engage and use the offices of the Clapham Society and other local amenity groups. Hopefully, it will not be too long before the List is reviewed again.

*Martin Pratt,
Clapham Society Planning
Sub-committee*

photo: Martin Pratt

February meeting

At our February meeting Edmund Bird, former Lambeth Conservation Officer and now Heritage Adviser to the Mayor of London, spoke about architecture in Lambeth in the 1920s and 1930s, the subject of his most recent book written with co-author Fiona Price.

The book treats different types of buildings in successive chapters, and Edmund roughly followed this pattern, starting with public buildings. Both Lambeth Town Hall and County Hall were built before the First World War, but were extended, sympathetically to the host buildings, in the 1930s. Other public buildings included the moderne style London Fire Brigade Headquarters on Albert Embankment (1937) and Lambeth County Court in Cleaver Street (1928).

Edmund mentioned war memorials – locally Stockwell and in Clapham those at St Mary's Church, Clapham Park Road and Holy Trinity Church – before moving on to schools, notably the Brixton School of Building in Ferndale Road, the former Aspen Open Air School (now Orchard Primary School) and Battersea Grammar School (now Streatham Hill and Clapham High School) built in 1936 on an 8-acre site provided by the LCC. Outstanding in the health sector was the South London Hospital for Women, first opened in 1916 but extended in 1935. Edmund spoke with great feeling on this topic since the lengthy battle to save it from demolition, which resulted in the limited success of preserving the frontage only, was his baptism by fire when he first came to work in Lambeth.

He then turned to housing of the period, when the popular slogan was: 'Up with the houses, down with the slums.' The housing built included cottage estates in Norwood, Tudorbethan in Atkins Road, Clapham Park, and many blocks of flats: in Clapham, the Larkhall Estate, Oaklands Estate and Trinity Close among them. Edmund showed excellent pictures to illustrate the very varied styles of these buildings.

Other building types covered in the talk were churches, cinemas, pubs, stations as well as Brockwell Lido and the Brixton Market Halls. Finally, Edmund mentioned some of the notable buildings of the inter-war years which have been lost, including WH Smith and Doultons on Albert Embankment, the Streatham Ice Rink and Camberwell Odeon. It was a fascinating taster of some notable local buildings, which served to whet the appetite for Edmund Bird's book, *Lambeth Architecture 1914-1939*, published by Lambeth Archives and available at Lambeth libraries.

Edmund mentioned that he is now working on the third book in his series on Lambeth architecture which will cover the post-war period. If any member would like to suggest a building of this period for inclusion email Edmund: edmund.bird@london.gov.uk.

2013 Governor elections at Guy's and St Thomas'

Guy's and St Thomas' Foundation Trust (GSTFT) has a Council of Governors composed of governors elected from amongst the local population, patients, staff and local stakeholders. This is a voluntary role. Governors have an advisory role to the Board of Directors and are responsible for appointing the Chair and the non-executive directors. The 2012 Health Bill and the Francis Report on Mid Staffs have suggested that governors should play an enhanced role. My term is coming to the end, as I have been a governor for six years. I have found it very interesting to hear about the challenges faced by one of the largest foundation trusts in the country and to discuss the developments planned. Being a governor gives you a good opportunity to help GSTFT to continue to provide a good service for the local population.

I would like to encourage Society members to consider standing for election. Three public governors and three patient governors are due to be elected in May 2012. You need to be a member of GSTFT in order to stand for election. You can become a public member if you live in Lambeth, Southwark, Wandsworth, Westminster or Lewisham, or a patient member if you have attended Guy's or St Thomas' hospitals as a patient during the last 5 years. Formal notice of the elections will be published on 26 March and the deadline for nominations will be 23 April.

Go to guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/home.aspx and click 'Membership' at top right, for more information on becoming a member, the Council of Governors and the elections. You can contact me if you would like to know more about being a governor jennycobley@aol.com.

Jenny Cobley

If you have any queries about **The Clapham Society** or have news of local events, please contact the appropriate person below:

Chairman **Annabel Allott**
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SW4 9AN

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Membership Secretary

Jennifer Everett
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Details of meetings, activities and a full list of our publications are on our website at claphamsociety.com

New members

We are pleased to welcome the following new members this month: Dr Libby Assassi, Hilary and Simon Carrington, Chris Evans, Louise Nathanson, Jennie Rookledge, Dr Richard Smith, and Cathy Watkins and Daniel Phelan.

Wandsworth Museum

The present exhibition at Wandsworth Museum (until 21 April) explores the printed work of four great 20th century artists: Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, Salvador Dalí and Andy Warhol. There are over fifty artworks from the V&A Museum's collections, including Picasso's *Le Repas Frugal* and three versions of Warhol's *Marilyn*, in this touring exhibition's only London stop. For details and opening times email contact@wandsworthmuseum.co.uk or telephone 020 8870 6060