

The Clapham Society

Newsletter



Issue 371 October 2014

Another Green Plaque and 125 Celebration

On **Friday 31 October** a Clapham Society Green Plaque will be unveiled on 1 Clapham Common North Side to mark the change of the former Clapham Library to Omnibus. This will be part of the celebration of the 125th anniversary of the opening of the building.

Arrive at 7.15 pm in time for a drink before the unveiling of the plaque by a special celebrity at 7.30 pm, with lights and musical accompaniment. Then enter the building for an evening's entertainment with readings, music and memories performed by some very special guests. The evening is FREE – but please book to secure a ticket (omnibus-clapham.org).

Clapham Chamber Concerts

Since its foundation by Amanda Lake and Jessica Maryon Davies in 2008, Clapham Chamber Concerts has brought an annual series of musical performances to Clapham, covering a wide range of periods and styles. The result has been rewarding musical experiences, helped by close communication between the audience and the performers, and the warm sonority of the acoustic in St Paul's Church.

The eight concerts in the 2014-15 series between October and the end of June reflect the established aims of variety, innovation and energy. They include works for strings, piano and clarinet from the chamber music repertoire, well-known and new works for voice, a concert of original jazz and jazz standards, the return of Troupe in an innovative mixed-genre concert of music, words and movement, and the first concert performance of an award-winning opera, *Lucy*.

Several of the performers are well known to the Clapham audience. The series will also introduce outstanding young musicians who are new to us. The artistic team of Amanda Lake (violin), David Wallace (violin and viola) and

Jonathan Parkin (clarinet), and Jessica Maryon Davies (piano), co-founder and a member of the team until earlier this year, are all performing.



Jonathan Parkin – new member of Clapham Chamber Concerts team

This year our meetings will be held at **Omnibus, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW**. The bar at Omnibus will be open from 7 pm, and meetings will commence at 8 pm. Our guest will normally speak for about 45 minutes, followed by around 15 minutes for questions and discussion, and the bar will remain open after meetings. Meetings are free and open to non-members, so please bring your friends along.

Monday 20 October

The Nigerian centenary: 100 degrees and rising? A voice from the diaspora. In 2014, Nigeria commemorates its centenary. With its name inspired by the principal West African waterway, the River Niger, today Nigeria stands at a volatile cusp of change. **Onyekachi Wambu** – a specialist in print as well as broadcast media and former Clapham resident – will provide a historical account of Nigeria's cultural, political and socio-economic development since 1914. He will also explore the importance of the Nigerian-British diaspora in shaping the country's future.

Monday 17 November

Local Issues. An open evening, at which members can raise topics of local concern and air their views. Representatives from Lambeth Council will be invited, and members of the Society's sub-committees will be able to explain the Society's work. If there is a particular issue you would like to raise at the meeting please contact Heather Binney (h.a.binney@soton.ac.uk) so that it can be put on the agenda.

continued overleaf

The concert on **Friday 10 October** promises to be a rewarding evening of music and drama. The first half of the concert presents two major works for soprano and clarinet: Schubert's 'Shepherd on the Rock' and Mozart's 'Parto, Parto' from *La clemenza di Tito*.

The concert continues with the first performance in Europe of the opera *Lucy* by Irish composer David Wallace, winner of the Director's Choice Award 2013 at the International Contempo Festival in Boston. Set in Ireland during the last century, the opera explores the complex relationships between a blind man, his wife and their housekeeper. It is a tragic tale of love lost and

found, and the struggles that can arise from being different in a close knit society.

The next concert, on **Friday 14 November**, is a cello and piano recital. Steffan Rees (cello) and Sophie Warwick (piano) will play Schubert's *Arpeggione Sonata* – the only extant major piece written for the arpeggione, performed here, as is usually the case, on the cello with piano accompaniment – and Beethoven's *Sonata No. 4 in C major*.

The final concert before Christmas, on **Friday 5 December**, is given by Baroque Strings, directed by Amanda Lake. Their programme includes, appropriately enough, Corelli's *Christmas Concerto*,

probably first performed by Corelli in 1690 and possibly his best-known piece of music. The concert also includes lively music from Vivaldi's *L'Estro Armonico* (described as 'perhaps the most influential collection of instrumental music to appear during the whole of the eighteenth century') and *Winter*, from one of the most popular pieces in the classical music repertoire, *The Four Seasons*.

Concerts are held at St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DX at 7.30 pm (doors open 7.00 pm). Tickets at the door: £12, £9 concessions and students, £5 children. For details see the website, claphamchamberconcerts.org.uk.

Tony Bell

Minutes of The Annual General Meeting 2014

The 51st Annual General Meeting of the Society was held on 15 September 2014 at 7.30 pm at Omnibus, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4. The Society's President, Martin Drury, took the chair and 44 members were present.

1. The Secretary had received apologies for absence from Jenny and Peter Cobley, Michael English, Derrick Johnson, Anna Long and Helen O'Malley.
2. The Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting (16 October 2013), 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 September newsletter (No. 370). She reiterated her thanks, made in the report, to all those who help with the running of the Society, mentioning in particular Jill Cramphorn, Michael English, Anna Jefferson Smith and Peter Jefferson Smith who were all standing down after many years of sterling service to the Society. She pointed out that the Society relied heavily on the efforts of a small number of people, and urged the wider membership to become more involved in its activities. She drew attention to the current 'big issue' – the over-use of the Common, often for inappropriate events, and Lambeth's reluctance to acknowledge that the problems this created for local residents called for a more balanced approach. A small group had been established to look into the legal aspects of

this and to devise a strategy for tackling it. After questions on these topics, the Report was unanimously adopted.

4. The Treasurer, David Brown, presented the Financial Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2014. He thanked the new Independent Examiner, Anna Long, for taking on the role. He noted that the income for 2013-14 was broadly in line with that for the previous year; there had been increased expenditure, largely in respect of the production of booklets and leaflets and the gift of stacking chairs to Omnibus. A new Legal Action Fund had been established to support the work of the group dealing with the over-use of the Common, to which further donations would be welcome. He drew attention to an error in the 2014 Balance brought forward line of the Accounts and circulated a note giving the correct figures, which are £33,031, £503, £33,516. The Accounts were then unanimously adopted.
5. The following were then elected as officers for the year 2013-2014:

Chairman Annabel Allott **Solicitor** Daniel Dovar
Vice Chairman Maev Sullivan **Treasurer** David Brown
Membership Secretary Jennifer Everett
Also elected as **Committee Members** were: John Adams, Christine Armstrong, Heather Binney, Jenny Cobley, Bill Emmett, Mark Leffler, Ebuni Okolo and Alyson Wilson.

6. Anna Long FCA was reappointed as **Independent Examiner**.

7. There was no other business.

A summary of the second part of the meeting on 15 September, entitled **Commemorating the First World War**, when members spoke about family memories of the War, and read from letters and diaries, will appear in the next newsletter.

October at Omnibus

October is another busy month at Omnibus. Some highlights include:

Sunday 5 October at 7 pm. Nick Costley-White Quartet '... one of the most in demand young guitarists in the UK jazz scene.' Tickets £10.

Thursday 9 October at 7.30 pm. *Dylan Thomas: Return Journey*, starring Bob Kingdom as Dylan Thomas. 'Playing a man who wrestled with the psychological conflict between creative talent and self-destructive impulse, Bob Kingdom's remarkable portrait of Dylan Thomas

offers a chance to experience the electrifying presence of Dylan Thomas' last great lecture tour.' Tickets £15, £12 concessions.

Sunday 19 October at 7 pm. Cabaret: *I'm A Stranger Here Myself* evokes the extravagant and exotic Germany of Dietrich, Brecht and Weill, taking the audience on a poignant journey through two of the most extraordinary decades in history.

Friday 24 October and **Saturday 25 October** at 7.30 pm. *Passion*. Marking

the start of The Great War and the present withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2014, Dorset's multi-award winning AsOne Theatre Company presents a gripping new play with live music; five stories of soldiers and families 100 years apart. Tickets £15, £12 concessions.

For full details and bookings go to omnibus-clapham.org, call 020 7498 4699 or drop in to Omnibus at 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW. And be sure to put your name on the emailing list to receive regular updates.

A Moving Issue

Although located outside our area, many will be aware that Transport for London (TfL) and Lambeth Council have been devising plans for Vauxhall Cross – the area defined by the large gyratory road system that includes Vauxhall overland, underground and bus stations. These plans were referred to during Helen Fisher's talk on Nine Elms at the Society's meeting on 16 June, and in Annabel Allott's Annual Report, and have important implications for residents of Clapham. A key objective of TfL is to remove the gyratory road system and to revert to two-way traffic on each of the main roads passing through the area, and in so doing to make it easier and safer for pedestrians and cyclists. Lambeth claims it wants to create 'a vibrant district centre'.

Around Christmas 2013 it was announced that two options for removal of the gyratory had been devised – one using the existing roads as they are, and one involving the widening of the viaduct over Kennington Lane next to the overland station to cater better for two-way traffic. Both options involved redevelopment of the bus station, built in 2005, to provide new shops and offices along Bondway, and redistributing bus stops back onto the surrounding road system, much as they had been before the bus station was created.

These proposals met considerable opposition during January from local

organisations, including the Kennington and Vauxhall Societies, who objected strongly to the loss of what has proved to be a well-used and popular interchange serving bus and rail users, and they questioned the claimed benefits for the new scheme. It was understood the Council would think again ahead of formal consultation which is due to take place during the autumn.

In June, the results of this rethink went on display at a series of Open Days held at Bolney Meadow Estate in Vauxhall, where it was revealed that two further options have been devised. The new options still involve redevelopment of the bus station, but allow for some buses, though not all, to pass/stop along Bondway. TfL has indicated that the cost of widening Kennington Lane viaduct and reverting to two-way traffic is in the region of £75m, and propose a large tower above the tube station to pay for this. Plans displaying the options were sketchy, poorly captioned, and no data was available to enable costs and benefits of the various proposals to be quantified.

At this stage the benefits of the new proposals are far from clear in transport terms, and bus users seem likely to be most disadvantaged. The local societies have questioned the need for a district shopping precinct. Questions should be asked as to whether this the best way to invest £75m and whether acceptable benefits could be achieved for less? Certainly the gyratory

is not a comfortable place for cyclists or pedestrians in its present form, and improvements are desirable. Vauxhall Cross is one of the most heavily trafficked intersections in the country, and provides a strategic route for traffic crossing the river and bypassing the congestion zone. It is not clear what impact these changes would have on traffic flow through the area. The process of widening of the viaduct is likely to severely disrupt train services between Waterloo and Clapham Junction. And while the bus station may not be aesthetically pleasing to everyone, it fulfils a hugely beneficial service for those using public transport, and to quote from The Vauxhall Society's recent application to English Heritage for listing: '... in its present configuration the interchange is the most convenient, safe and efficient interchange in London. The bus station, the second busiest in London after Victoria's, is also an iconic building, revolutionary when designed by Arup Associates just over ten years ago.'

Members are encouraged to read what the Vauxhall Society has to say on their website (vauxhallcivicsociety.org.uk) where there is a link to a petition to save the bus station. Further information on the options under consideration are on the Kennington Oval Vauxhall Forum site (forumkov.wix.com/kov-forum). This is not a purely local issue for the people of Vauxhall.

Mark Leffler

A new play for Black History Month

Muscovado, recently commissioned from Matilda Ibini by Burnt Out Theatre, tells the interlinked stories of slaves and slave owners on a sugar plantation in Barbados in 1808, just after the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act. Some members saw a rehearsed reading earlier this year at Omnibus, now the play is to be staged in full at Holy Trinity Church, Clapham Common, SW4 0QZ – a particularly appropriate venue because of its links with William Wilberforce and other abolitionists.

Performances will be daily from **Wednesday 1 October to Friday 3 October**, and from **Monday 6 October to Friday 10 October** at 7.30 pm. Tickets at £10, £8 concessions, are available in person from the Parish Office from 9.30 am to 1 pm daily, or on burntouttheatre.co.uk, where you can also find more information about the play, and the company.



Portrait of Tim Gosling as Queen Cassandra by Louis Pragnell which was exhibited at the BP Portrait awards at the National Portrait Gallery.

Peter Pan with a difference

Furniture designer, Clapham Society member and designer of our Green Plaques, Tim Gosling is no stranger to the stage, and this year is no exception. He plays a starring role in the swashbuckling production of *Peter Pan and the Designers of the Caribbean* featuring leading figures in the world of fashion and design. With costumes designed by celebrity designers such as Dame Vivienne Westwood, Jasper Conran and Zandra Rhodes, it promises to be a magical evening of fun and fantasy and all in aid of NSPCC. The Bloomsbury Theatre (15 Gordon Street, WC1H 0AH) will be transformed from **Tuesday 28 October to Saturday 1 November**. For more details about tickets and sponsorship visit: interiordesignerspantomime.com or telephone 020 3108 1000.

Stop Press: It has just been announced that Gosling is the winner in the Bespoke Cabinet Making category of the 2014 International Design and Architecture Awards. Congratulations!

Reflections on the Common

Having stood down from the role of Convenor of the Common and Open Spaces Subcommittee and member of the Main Committee of the Clapham Society after fifteen years, I am very aware that there are ongoing problems requiring the involvement and support of our members. What has been achieved so far on and around the Common?

Looking back, on the positive side has been the restoration of the bandstand in 2006 in which the Society was closely involved. At the time we did not realise that the new disabled access slope would become the most popular scooter run in Clapham for youngsters. The replacement of the damaged grass surround by granite setts in 2011 even increased its popularity. This year has seen a number of free events on the bandstand, often watched by an audience reclining in the donated 'Ben and Jerry' deckchairs.

My own greatest personal pleasure was the major restoration of the paddling pool in 2003. Our own children loved it and it has proved a great source of enjoyment for local families, particularly those without any outdoor space.

On the negative side has to be the lifting of restrictions for events on the Common in 2011 to maximise income for Lambeth Borough Council (LBC). Following an event in 1997 which attracted a quarter of a million people and left the Common a glittering sea of glass, unusable for three weeks, an Event Strategy had been developed between the Clapham Society, the Friends of Clapham Common, and the Clapham Common Management Advisory Committee along with LBC. (A new Event Strategy was promised months ago by the Council Chief Executive, Derrick Anderson, but it has yet to appear for consultation.)

The introduction of Park Rangers was a very welcome development, but sadly that service was lost as a result of budget cuts.

For the first time, a recent event on the Common led to the discarding of hundreds of nitrous oxide canisters mostly on the Common but also on surrounding streets. This problem was highlighted by the BBC when they did some undercover filming for a local news programme. Another issue raised on this occasion was the high cost of alcohol and cash machine charges at some events which led the attendees to drink at supermarket prices before entering the event.

The Committee is currently wrestling with a planning application which would bring a three metre fence and floodlights 12 metres high to the Sport Zone in Rookery Road.

As Clapham Common comes under ever more pressure because of its popularity and location, we all need to take some responsibility for the care of this much valued green space.

Anna Jefferson Smith



The reopening of the Paddling Pool in 2003 with (l-r) Anna Jefferson Smith, Cllr Clare Whelan, Diane Clark, and clowns

Venn Street Market

Members will be very familiar by now with the fine food market, which takes over Venn Street every Saturday from 10 am to 4 pm. But have you noticed some recent new arrivals? Fishmonger, Portland Scallop Co. has fresh wet and shell fish caught off Chesil Beach in Dorset, and Hansen & Lydersen is a family business producing smoked salmon in the traditional Norwegian way. Be sure to check them out on your next visit.

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

Chairman **Annabel Allott**
21 Clapham Common West Side,
SW4 9AN

Tel: 020 7228 5551

Email: annabel@allott.plus.com

Acting Secretary **Jenny Cobley**

11 Broadhinton Road, SW4 0LU

Email: jennycobley@aol.com

Treasurer **David Brown**

15 Turret Grove, SW4 0ES

Tel: 020 7720 7536

Meetings and Events **Heather Binney**

63 Clapham Common North Side,

SW4 9SB

Tel: 020 7223 4480

Email: h.a.binney@soton.ac.uk

Membership Secretary

Jennifer Everett

30 Trinity Close, SW4 0JD

Tel: 020 7627 4770

Email: jeverett@waitrose.com

Planning Matters **Philip Ashford**

45 Rodenhurst Road, SW4 8AE

Tel: 020 8674 1727

Email: pjashford@yahoo.co.uk

Roads and Transport **Mark Leffler**

65 Crescent Lane, SW4 9PT

email: mark.leffler88@gmail.com

Newsletter and Publications

Alyson Wilson

22 Crescent Grove, SW4 7AH

Tel: 020 7622 6360

Email: alysonwilson.sw4@virgin.net

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

Clapham Opera Festival

The festival continues this month at the Church of the Holy Spirit in Narbonne Avenue, SW4 9LQ with Simply Baroque on **Friday 3 October** at 7.30 pm and Mozart and his contemporaries on **Sunday 12 October** at 4 pm. For details and tickets at £17, £12.50 concessions and £55 family, go to claphamoperafestival.com, or email Marie Soulier at info@claphamoperafestival.com.

Wandsworth Artists' Open House

On **Saturday 4 October** and **Sunday 5 October** and **Saturday 11 October** and **Sunday 12 October** artists all round Wandsworth will be opening their homes and studios to the public. There will be trails to follow, demonstrations to watch and the opportunity to see and buy unique pieces of sculpture, painting, prints and jewellery. For full details go to wandsworthart.com.