

The Clapham Society

Newsletter



Issue 372

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A Parting Shot

When I took over from the much-missed David Perkin as secretary in 2001, a big issue was Lambeth's 'Gateway' proposals for the redevelopment of the Old Town area. As I leave, a scheme has finally been implemented – after 13 years of hard work by the Society to help shape its development so as to maximise the benefits and mitigate the inevitable drawbacks. And other big local projects that have come to fruition in the last decade or so – the new library and leisure centre and the triumphant revitalisation of the Bandstand, for example – would not have happened, or would have been significantly different, without our continuing and committed involvement. We've won or lost the odd battle, but mostly we've helped achieve workable solutions to difficult problems.

That local change happens on a lengthy timescale is what makes the Society's work so important. When local authorities consult residents on new proposals, the response they get can only be a snapshot: a lot of people living in Clapham move in and out pretty quickly, and don't know very much about its buildings or its history. Societies like ours can take a longer view based on local knowledge, relevant expertise and serious study. Over our 51 years of existence, we have built up a significant body of data and experience which we can feed into the development of new ideas.

This has its downside. Too high a proportion of the Society's active members have been around as long as I have: we became active members in our twenties. Sadly, the average age of today's officers and committee and sub-committee members is probably more than twice that. Perhaps we give the impression of a closed shop; perhaps we appear to be more concerned with preservation than innovation. Those are misperceptions, but maybe they deter younger or newer members from getting more involved.

If this is so, it must change. We certainly need the expertise and experience we have built up, but we also need new ideas and fresh perspectives. So my parting call to our less active members is this: please get more involved in our work. I can assure you that it's interesting, it's rewarding, it's fun and – above all – it's one of the best ways that you can help make a real difference to Clapham life.

Jill Cramphorn

Emanuel School at War

To mark the centenary of WW1 Emanuel School is hosting a free exhibition remembering the part played by over 1600 former pupils in both World Wars. This is one of the largest free war exhibitions in the UK, and the school archive can also be seen. Open **Friday 7 November** (10 am to 8 pm) **Saturday 8 November** (10 am to 6 pm) **Sunday 9 November** (10 am to 5 pm) with Remembrance Service and **Monday 10 November** (10.30 am to 8 pm) at Emanuel School, Battersea Rose, SW11 1HS. For more information see <http://emanuelschoolatwar.wordpress.com>.

Bernard Middleton

Clapham resident, long-term member of the Society and former member of our Local History Sub-committee, Bernard Middleton, is a distinguished book restorer and designer bookbinder. To mark his 90th birthday, a retrospective exhibition will be held from **Monday 27 October to Friday 14 November** at St Bride Foundation, Bride Lane, EC4Y 8EQ. There will be some 20 of his design bindings on display, a selection of interesting tools from his bindery, and items documenting his 76 years in bookbinding. St Bride Foundation Open: Monday to Saturday 10 am to 6 pm.

Our meetings are held at Omnibus, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW on **MONDAY** evenings. 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.

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 committees will be able to explain the Society's work. The new and rather disturbing proposals recently put forward by Lambeth for the management of events on the Common are likely to be discussed.

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.

There is no meeting in December. The full programme for 2015 will be published in the next newsletter (December/January) which will be distributed during the last weekend of November.

Friday 31 October Celebration

Don't miss the unveiling of the Clapham Society plaque on Omnibus building, marking its change from Clapham Library to Omnibus Arts Centre. Arrive for a drink at 7.15 pm, plaque unveiling at 7.30 pm by a local celebrity, followed by an evening of entertainment with readings, music and memories performed by very special guests. The evening's entertainment is FREE but to secure a place book at omnibus-clapham.org.

Planning News

Since June the Planning Sub-committee has been notified of 200 planning applications, reviewed some 20 of them and has made, or is about to make, representations on those listed below.

Netball Courts, Rookery Road, Clapham Common

This application involves installing new three metre high fencing around the present netball and basketball courts and 12 metre high floodlights around the courts and adjacent skateboard park. Although the uses remain the same, the intensity will increase and with the floodlighting and fencing will change the character of this part of the Common.

The application is currently open for consultation. Members may make their own representations on Lambeth's Planning website at planning.lambeth.gov.uk/online-applications. The application reference number is 14/00394/RG3, and consultation closes on 7 November.

29 Belmont Place. Objection to an application to construct a new two-storey dwelling in the rear garden. The design and size of the building damages the setting of its listed host building as well as the character of the immediate conservation area.

3-5 Turnchapel Mews. Following our objection to an application earlier in the year to demolish and rebuild these historic mews buildings, the application was withdrawn and a second one submitted. Although it retains some of the original building fabric now, it remains an over-large and poorly designed replica and we have continued to object.

Light up a Life

Trinity Hospice's annual Carol Service at Holy Trinity Church will take place on **Thursday 11 December** at 7.15 pm. As in previous years this will be preceded by turning on the lights on the tree in front of the hospice at 6.45 pm, and a candlelit procession to the church.

Christmas Fair

Wandsworth Friends of Trinity Hospice will be holding their Christmas Fair to raise funds for the hospice on **Wednesday 12 November** from 9 am to 3 pm at St Luke's Church, Ramsden Road, SW12 8RQ. Tickets are £10, or £18 for the preview on **Tuesday 11 November** from 6.30 pm to 9.30 pm.

Clapham Opera Festival



Sophie Yelland, Ricardo Panella, Georgina Murray and Alberto Sousa at the opening performance

The Clapham Society-sponsored opening concert of the Opera Festival was a great success and was enthusiastically received by the audience of over 100 people. The two subsequent concerts have been equally successful and the climax of the festival comes this month with an abridged version of Rossini's masterpiece, *La Cenerentola* (Cinderella) under the stage direction of Pedro Ribeiro from the Royal Opera House. The visual concept for the performance is by Clapham Opera Festival founder Marie Soulier, and is what she refers to as her 'Clapham Twist' to the opera.

Performances are on **Friday 14 November** at 7.30 pm and **Sunday 16 November** at 5 pm at the Church of the Holy Spirit, Narbonne Avenue, SW4 NLQ. Advance tickets are available at claphamoperafestival.com/booking-tickets/ or from Marie Soulier info@claphamoperafestival.com. £23, £18 concession, £70 family. Tickets on the door will be limited and slightly more expensive.

Below: Christina Petrou and Michael Taylor (Photo: Federico Carnevale)



Clapham Chamber Concerts

The Clapham Chamber Concerts season continues on **Friday 14 November** with a recital by prominent young professional artists Steffan Rees (cello) and Sophie Warwick (piano). The programme

includes Schubert's *Arpeggione Sonata* and Beethoven's *Sonata No. 4 in C major* for piano and cello. Venue: 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 more information see claphamchamberconcerts.org.uk.

November at Omnibus

This month's highlight is an unusual production of William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, which will commence at a location near to Omnibus before moving in to Omnibus Studio theatre. 'A country broken by conflict; a world that has forgotten what peace means. Loyalties and rivalries spill out across the streets. Macbeth's refuge becomes a bunker; the last hideaway of a man who has turned himself into a monster. London is at war.

This immersive production explores what it means to be a soldier and how conflict spreads across an area, leaving its mark on all in its path. Omnibus brings Shakespeare's darkest tragedy to Clapham in a site responsive performance inspired by this landmark location.' For 8+ years. Directed by Gemma Kerr. Designed by Lorna Ritchie. Produced by Michelle Owoo.

Daily, except Sunday and Monday, from **Tuesday 11 November to Saturday 29 November** at 7.30 pm (7 pm on Press Night **Thursday 13 November**) with Saturday matinees at 2.30 pm on 22 and 29 November. Tickets £12, concessions £10.

Other events include:

Sunday 2 November at 11 am and 3 pm. *Musical Tales from Adriamus*. A live interactive musical storytelling featuring the stories of *Willy the Wimp* and *My Wicked Stepmother* with the chance to meet author and illustrator Anthony Browne. For 4-11 years. Tickets £6, concessions £4.

Sunday 9 November at 11 am. *Shoe Kangaroo and the Big Bad Boot*. Garlic Theatre take you on a fantastical journey to the island of lost shoes with clowning, mime and beautifully crafted puppets. Puppet theatre for 4+ years.

Sunday 16 November at 7 pm. Dominic Aldiss Trio. Pianist and arranger Dominic Aldiss is joined by former Ronnie Scott's Quintet bassist, Andrew Cleynert, and ECM drummer Martin France, forming a collective sound that is lyrical and sensitive as well as spontaneous and rhythmic. Tickets £10.

Sunday 23 November at 7 pm Jesse Sebastian's Flamenco Trio. Tickets £10.

Sunday 30 November at 11 am and 3 pm. Tangram Theatre's *Albert Einstein Relativitively Speaking*, Winner of Best Children's Event Award on Brighton Fringe 2014. Tickets £9 adults, £7 children and concessions.

For full programme and to book tickets go to omnibus-clapham.org telephone 020 7498 4699 or drop in to Omnibus,

Commemorating the First World War

The Clapham Society marked the centenary of the outbreak of WW1 with an evening of members' contributions of letters, diaries and memories of the war from their own families. Peter Jefferson Smith put together a varied programme of readings and pictures, in chronological order and covering different war zones and experiences, with musical interludes provided by harpist, Harriet Adie.

Nat Tapley, on behalf of Bernard Battley, showed and read a brief letter from George Spencer Battley who reluctantly joined the Royal Field Artillery in 1915, under peer pressure. His memorial card recorded that he was killed in action within six months. His uncle, Clapham printer John Battley, for whom he had worked wrote a moving tribute to him.

Sinclair Johnston spoke of Arthur Vale, a Clapham boy, about whom his family have only scraps of information, which include some photographs and his medals. He joined the Royal Horse Artillery in 1914, and was killed in action in 1917. His body was never recovered.

Peter Jefferson Smith showed photographs, medals and an elaborate certificate belonging to George Foster, father of member Sylvia Foster. He was in the Royal Marines and a mine-layer in the Far East. He survived but his family know little about his service beyond the few mementoes we were shown.

Anna Jefferson Smith's father, Henry Willett, served in the Royal Horse Artillery from 1914 to 1918. He never spoke to his family about the war. What little they know was gleaned from the so-called 'burnt records', the charred and water-damaged records which were rescued when a fire caused by an incendiary bomb at the War Office Record Store in 1940 destroyed about two-thirds of the WW1 soldiers' documents.

Rosemary Kennedy told how her family took in a 10-year old Belgian girl who came to England when Belgium fell. She became a life long family friend. Rosemary also spoke about her great-uncle who was a military chaplain for three years and won the Military Cross in 1916.

Alyson Wilson's uncle joined the Ox and Bucks Light Infantry in 1914 and the next year his battalion was sent to Salonika, where they were making roads and bridges to facilitate transport in the aftermath of the Balkan War. His regular letters home, from which she read, described the very unfamiliar surroundings, and the battles which were mainly with the climate and health issues.

John Taylor's grandfather, Albert Cousins, served in the Rifle Brigade from 1916 to 1918. From the camp on Wimbledon Common he went to Ypres, in July 1917 he was at Passchendaele, a few months later at the Menin road attack and in 1918 witnessed the final German attack. John followed Albert Cousin's war with readings from his records and diaries.

Charles Edward Wauchope who served in the Royal Field Artillery from 1914 to 1918 kept a detailed and meticulous diary throughout that period. His daughter, Mary Rose Beaumont, read several entries for the last months of the war, concluding with the entry for November 11, Armistice Day.

The final reading, again by John Taylor, was a letter written by Albert Cousins to his wife after the Armistice, and his sketches from France were shown on the screen while Harriet Adie played *We'll gather lilacs in the spring again*.

Members of the audience spent some time talking to the speakers and discussing family war memories, after a most enjoyable, informative and moving presentation which reinforced the fact that many of those who served in WW1 were reluctant to speak of their experiences.

1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW. Join the Omnibus mailing list to receive regular information.

New members We are pleased to welcome the following new members to the Society: Philippe, Pascale and Antoine Belot, Alexandra and Duncan Byatt, David Dandridge, Suzanne, Ian and Tori Gordon-Brown, Sarah Kampe, Walter and Pamela King, Davina and Colin Shields.

Wandsworth Historian

The autumn edition of *Wandsworth Historian* has the usual selection of interesting local history articles. A particularly fascinating one tells the story of the Royal Victoria Patriotic Building on Wandsworth Common which became a war hospital within a few days of the outbreak of war, with orderlies recruited from the unlikely venue of the Chelsea Arts Club! Email nrobson@tiscali.co.uk to purchase a copy.

Clapham Memories

We continue to receive memories from those who lived in Clapham many years ago. This letter from John Sheeley, describing Clapham in his youth between the wars, is a reminder of how much has changed:

‘Venn Street consisted of a row of shops on the right hand side starting with a bank, a gentleman’s barbers, greengrocers (Mr & Mrs Bates), general grocers, café, and a sweet shop (Mr & Mrs Stone) who made their own ice cream in the summer. On the left was James Walker jewellers and the billiard hall. During the war it was a factory making components for the war.

The High Street started with the bank then J Lyons (bread, cakes and tea room) then an off licence, United Dairies shop, a large tobacconist with a library at the rear and Woolworths and another bank on the corner of Stonhouse Street. Stonhouse Street left side was a few shops and a garage for car repairs. The right side was mainly taken up by the Majestic Cinema side wall a small engineering works and a builders’ yard.

Along from The Plough Inn (The Pavement) was a large cake and bread shop (Carpenters) and in front of them were all the bus stops (35 37 45 88).

On the island of course was the entrance to the underground station and public toilets also a taxi rank and not to forget the clock tower. Newsvendors occupied the area around the entrance. The road junction of Venn St, High Street, Clapham Park Road was a mass of tram lines as trams entered and left the depot in Clapham Park Road and a nightmare for any cyclists.

Up until 1939 we had weekly visits from coalman, muffin man, shellfish man and of course the refuse collection All either walking or with horse drawn carts. There was also a daily visit of the milkman who measured the milk into your own container (no frigs or freezers)’.

Fireworks There is no Lambeth Council fireworks display on Clapham Common this year. On **Wednesday 5 November** there is a ticketed event – bonfire, funfair, food stalls, entertainment and fireworks display – in Brockwell Park. Advance tickets at £6 for Lambeth residents, and children under 16 free from Lambeth libraries or on line eventlambeth.co.uk/events/fireworks. There is a free event, with bonfire and lanterns, but no fireworks, on Streatham Common on the same day.

A Clergyman’s Daughter Southside Players will be performing George Orwell’s *A Clergyman’s Daughter* from **Wednesday 29 October to Saturday 1 November** at Chestnut Grove School Theatre, Boundaries Road SW12 8JZ. Tickets £10, concessions £7.50, Performances at 7.45 pm Wednesday to Friday, Saturday at 5.00 pm. More information and tickets at southsideplayers.org.uk.

My Husband and I



John How, no longer a Clapham resident but past Secretary, Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Society, surprised and delighted the many friends who gathered to celebrate his recent 80th birthday by announcing his marriage, the previous day, to Wim Spee. Our warmest congratulations and good wishes go to them both.

John’s sister had made an extraordinary birthday cake shown in this photograph. On a map of the world iced on the top of the cake were symbols representing the places to which they had travelled together.

From the Forest to the Sea

On **Saturday 1 November** an exhibition of the work of Canadian artist, Emily Carr (1871-1945) opens at Dulwich Picture Gallery. Carr was based on the west coast of Canada and her work is rooted in the forest and landscapes of British Columbia, although she went to art school in London and was well versed in the work of her European contemporaries. More details of opening times, talks and tickets at dulwichpicturegallery.org or 020 8299 8732.

Wandsworth Museum

Although the museum at 38 West Hill, SW18 1RZ is now closed to the public awaiting the move to a new site (still to be finalised), there will be a special opening on **Friday 21 November** and **Saturday 22 November** from 10 am to 3 pm for the sale of stock and various Christmas delights.

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
Tel. 020 7720 2370. Email: jennycobley@aol.com

Treasurer **David Brown**
15 Turret Grove, London SW4 0ES
Tel: 020 7720 7536

Membership Secretary **Jennifer Everett**
30 Trinity Close, London SW4 0JD
Tel: 020 7627 477

Planning Matters **Philip Ashford**
45 Rodenhurst Road SW4 8AE
Tel: 020 8674 1727
Email: pjashford@yahoo.co.uk

Newsletter and Publications **Alyson Wilson**
22 Crescent Grove SW4 7AH
Tel: 020 7622 6360
Email: alysonwilson.sw4@virgin.net

Meetings and Events **Heather Binney**
63 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 9SB
Tel. 020 7223 4480. Email: h.a.binney@soton.ac.uk.

Roads and Transport **Mark Leffler**
65 Crescent Lane SW4 9PT Email: mark.leffler88@gmail.com

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