



The Clapham Society Newsletter

Issue 380

September 2015

Lord Clapham!



Photo: Karey Kirkpatrick

As far as I know there has never been a 'Lord Clapham' - but since I like to smuggle Clapham into my writing I invented a 'Lord Clapham' for a character in a Broadway musical I have just co-written, now playing at the St James' Theatre in New York (and recently nominated for 10 Tony Awards). *Something Rotten* is set in Tudor London and follows the fortune of two playwrights struggling in Shakespeare's shadow. Lord Clapham is their patron who is horrified by their idea of writing the first ever musical. The part is played by the American actor Peter Bartlett who by pure coincidence lived in Clapham in the 1960s when he was a student at LAMDA.

John O'Farrell

New members We are pleased to welcome the following new members: Mathilde and Sarvapreet Bedi, Tim and Sally Begg, Michael Christie, Emma Mahmood, Joanna Rolfe, Karin and Julie Saddi, Margaret Wall, Anthony and Sophie Ward, and Sara and Peter Williams.

Our meetings are held at Omnibus, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW. The bar at Omnibus is 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 21 September

Nobby Clark Talks Photographs. Nobby Clark has worked as a photographer with all the major English theatre, opera and ballet companies and has been production photographer for many theatre directors, including Peter Hall, Trevor Nunn and Richard Eyre on their plays. He has also worked for several UK broadsheets, including *The Observer*, *The Guardian* and *The Times*. He will be showing some of his powerful photographs of actors during rehearsals and production and will have some entertaining stories to tell about captured moments.

Monday 19 October

Annual General Meeting. The guest speaker will be **Edward Stourton**, one of Radio 4's leading presenters of news and documentaries, who will reminisce on his successful career to date. He was a founder member of Channel 4 news, scripting, producing and presenting.

Lambeth Heritage Festival runs for the whole month of September. Clapham Society contributions to the festival are shown below, and also include the St Paul's events. During the month there are walks, talks, events, tours, exhibitions and workshops throughout the borough. The full programme is available at Lambeth libraries or to download at lambeth.gov.uk/heritagefestival. The final day **Saturday 26 September** is Lambeth Archives Open Day at 52 Knatchbull Road, SE5 9QY, an opportunity to meet local history and amenity societies, to listen to talks and see displays of local history.

Saturday 5 September

Clapham Common North Side Walk. Peter Jefferson Smith will lead a walk along the most historic part of North Side and its hinterland, introducing some of the famous people who have lived there, from Samuel Pepys to Graham Greene. About 1½ hours, finishing at Omnibus. Meet at Omnibus, 1 Clapham Common North Side, for a 3 pm start.

Sunday 6 September at 3 pm. The Clapham Society Annual Bandstand Concert. Baker Street Brass, a quintet of talented young musicians will play a selection of classic favourites and jazz in a programme to include music from *West Side Story*.

THE 2015 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 52nd Annual General Meeting of the Clapham Society will be held on **Monday 19 October** at Omnibus, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW at 7.30 pm.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Approval of the Minutes of the previous AGM (15 September 2014) published in the Newsletter No 371, October 2014, and available at the meeting
3. Adoption of the Annual Report for the year 2014-15
4. Adoption of the Financial Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2015
5. Election of the Officers and Committee Members for the year 2015-2016

Chairman	Treasurer
Vice-Chairman	Solicitor
Secretary	Membership Secretary
A maximum of ten further Committee Members	
6. Appointment of the Independent Examiner
7. Any other business and announcements

The formal business will be followed by a talk by Guest Speaker, Edward Stourton, one of Radio 4's leading presenters of news and documentaries.

Nominations for the election of Officers and Committee Members must be made to the Acting Secretary at least 14 days before the Annual General Meeting. Every nomination must be in writing, supported by a seconder. The consent of the person nominated must be obtained.

Jenny Copley, Acting Secretary, 11 Broadhinton Road, SW4 0LU

No Exit for Large Vehicles

It is many years since the Larkhall Rise road bridge was made one-way northwards and closed to heavy traffic. Closed initially as a temporary emergency measure due to structural problems, and pending repairs, there was strong local support for the bridge to remain closed to heavy traffic seeking an alternative route between the Common and the Wandsworth and Clapham Roads.

Following the various roadworks around Clapham Old Town of the past three years a severe, though intermittent, problem has arisen in the area. This is caused by the amended street layout and lack of clarity for drivers of large vehicles due to poor signage and/or inadequate Sat Nav systems.

Residents of Larkhall Rise and adjoining streets are frequently alarmed to find large lorries and coaches trying to negotiate their way back out of what they discover to be effectively a cul-de-sac, having missed the right turn opposite Omnibus which takes them towards Clapham High Street, and following the route into Rectory Grove, which now has priority

over North Street since the removal of the Old Town mini-roundabout. Signs on Rookery Road and Clapham Common North Side alert drivers to the 7.5 ton limit on vehicles in North Street, but it is not until they have passed the entrance to Clapham Manor Street on Larkhall Rise that drivers are informed of the three-ton limit and 6'6" width restriction over Larkhall Bridge. Hazardous and complicated reversing manoeuvres result, and large vehicles seek to exit the area via residential streets such as Ivey Road and Clapham Manor Street.

Residents and the Society have been raising this problem with Council representatives for the last two years, but a solution has yet to be found.



Photo: Christine Galbraith

St Paul's Church

The Bicentenary of St Paul's Church is celebrated in September with two talks on **Wednesday 16 September**, in the church starting at 7 pm. Peter Jefferson Smith will talk about the history of the church, and Michael Green about the origins of Clapham. Tickets are £6 to include a glass of wine, available from the church office 020 7622 2128, by email admin@stpaulssw4.org or on the door.

Thursday 24 September at 7.30 pm.

Celebration Eucharist – 200 years to the day since the first service held in the church. President: Rt Rev'd Christopher Chessun, Bishop of Southwark. St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DX.

September at Omnibus

The varied programme this month includes the following events. For the full programme and to book tickets go to omnibus-clapham.org or call in at Omnibus, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW.

Sunday 6 September at 7.30 pm. Simply Soweto Encha, a five-piece a *cappella* group that celebrate South African oral and dance traditions in various styles. Tickets £12, £10 concessions, £5 under 25s.

Sunday 13 September at 7.30 pm Tom Ellis and Laura Snowden, the first guitarists to study at the Yehudi Menuhin School, where guitar tuition was made possible through a donation from the Rolling Stones. Tickets £12, £10 concessions, £5 under 25s.

Saturday 19 September at 11 am and 2.30 pm. *Old Mother Hubbard*. For 3-6 year olds. Tickets £9, £7 concessions.

Sunday 27 September at 7.30 pm. A Moveable Feast, is a group led by pianist Mark Pringle. Inspired by time spent studying in Paris in 2013, the music draws on multiple cultural influences. All tickets £10.

Work at Trinity Hospice

You may have been wondering what is happening in one of the hospice buildings, 29 North Side. This house, once the home of the English architect Sir Charles Barry, was bought by the hospice in 1899 and housed wards until 2005. A leaflet from the Hospice explains that the scaffolding at the front of the building is part of a project to convert the first and second floors into six rental properties, which will generate long-term income for the hospice. These floors are not suitable for modern healthcare delivery, but the ground floor and basement will continue to be used by the Hospice.

Mark Leffler

Jenny Copley

St Mary's Church Visit

On the 18 June 2015, 13 intrepid Clapham Society members climbed the scaffolding on St Mary's Church tower and steeple. The original 'fan' scaffolding was erected when stone started flaking off and falling on the footpath in Clapham Park Road. As the danger of a future major fall increased, the Church decided to apply for a Heritage Lottery Fund Grant, which was eventually agreed at £428,100. The total cost of the work will be £691,278. St Mary's Church, considered the best Victorian church in South London, was built in 1849-51 by architect WW Wardell, who was influenced by the designs of AWN Pugin. In 1882-95 it was enlarged by JF Bentley. The church is listed II* and is on the English Heritage 'Buildings at Risk Register' because the broached C14 style steeple now requires major repairs.

The tower is 69 feet (21 metres) high with an additional 85 feet (26 metres) for the steeple. The latter is divided into eight stages; the highest includes 13 courses of Portland stone and the weathervane, rebuilt after wartime damage by a barrage balloon cable. There are five bands of York stone tied together with iron cramps at the junctions. The steeple is strengthened with wrought iron straps

and a 'spider' supporting the iron shaft of the weather vane above. Each face has two Bath stone crocketed openings, the lower serving the belfry allowing the bells to be heard and the upper lighting the steeple internally.

After a 30-minute talk by Paul Sharrock and Fergus McCormick architects with Thomas Ford & Partners, Andrew Kennedy from contractor PAYE provided us with hard hats, high visibility vests, gave us a Health and Safety Induction, and we then went up the scaffold.

The first ladder seemed long and steep but it got easier after that. As we progressed the architects illustrated the structural problems, showing the extensive deterioration in the ragstone and how the surface of the stone which had perished was removed (called 'defrassing') and the failed stones numbered to be replaced with new. Kentish Ragstone was difficult to obtain until a new section of the Gallagher's Hermitage Quarry near Maidstone was reopened recently. This is a very hard high quality stone and when laid to its original bed as laid down in the quarry is guaranteed. We saw a sample and were told that the masons would replace stone with a finished face on the line of the original face, not the existing weathered one.

The approach to dealing with the problems identified was explained fully by Paul and Fergus. The lower tower is not part of the contract although failing stone was also noticed. The substantial lower tower scaffolding only supports the steeple scaffold. Problems are mainly failing stone, rusting iron cramps (tying stones horizontally across their joints) and iron strips (placed in horizontal joints as reinforcement) – these will all be replaced with stainless steel. The thickness of the stone decreases higher up the steeple until at the pinnacle it is 9 inches (250 mm) thick and failing stone means that the inside of the steeple is visible.

The views from the steeple were impressive although limited by the protective netting except from the top four levels, where we had a wonderful clear view of the Common, the High Street and beyond. Bellringers will be pleased to know that making the steeple safe could be the first step to allowing the eight bells to be rung again.

Following on from the visit the architect will speak at a Society meeting next year describing and illustrating the problems, solutions and the results. We have agreed to make a donation to the restoration of the war memorial in the churchyard, which will be the next project for the church. If you would also like to make a personal donation please contact me (petercoble23@aol.com).

Peter Coble

Garden Museum

At our June meeting the Director of the Garden Museum, Christopher Woodward, gave a fascinating talk on the history and development of the museum, which is adjacent to Lambeth Palace. The museum was started in the disused church of St Mary-at-Lambeth, rescued from demolition in 1977 by John and Rosemary Nicholson, who had identified the tombs of the 17th century royal gardeners John Tradescant, father and son, in the churchyard and judged this the ideal place for the world's first Museum of Garden History (as it was originally called). Christopher pointed out that, unlike most museums, this one started with no collection to house, and over the years has built up an enviable collection.

He first showed pictures of the Tradescant tombs and the famous knot garden designed by Lady Salisbury, the church buildings, with the interior which was transformed in 2008 to make more exhibition space, and he then moved on to a comprehensive survey of the collection. There are tools, artefacts, paintings, watercolours, photographs and ephemera. The range is extraordinary covering everything from the overshoes worn by horses when pulling a lawn mower, gardener's clothes and boots, to photographs of prize winning marrows at a village show in the 1950s. We also heard about future additions to the museum, in particular archive material for which storage will be built in a forthcoming upgrade of the museum.

In November this year the museum is to close for one year for the building of an education centre and café in the garden and improvement and augmentation of the exhibition space so that more of the 6000 objects in the collection can be displayed. We are grateful to Christopher for his detailed account of the museum, and hope that it will encourage members to make the short journey to visit it.

London Open House

Don't forget that **Saturday 19 September** and **Sunday 20 September** are the days of this year's London Open House, when buildings all over London – private houses, offices, schools, churches, museums and galleries, public buildings and many more – are open to the public free of charge, and often with a guided tour. Openings in our area include Cressingham Gardens Estate, Clapham Manor School, the National Theatre and Burntwood School. The full programme is available at public libraries, or on line at openhouselondon.org.uk.

Masterclass with Nelly

Miricioiu On Saturday 19

September at 2 pm the internationally renowned artist, Nelly Miricioiu, has kindly offered to hold a Masterclass, in front of a small audience (70 people) as a lead up to the Clapham Opera Festival. The event is at the Church of the Holy Spirit, Narbonne Avenue, SW4 9LQ.

A few lucky singers will be coached by the great diva. It will be a rare chance to see one of the greats in action. The three singers will be appearing at the Festival, so Festivalgoers will also be able to witness at first hand their development as artists.

We advise early booking, as this event will sell out. Tickets £30 at claphamoperafestival.com/booking-tickets-for-2015/ or contact Marie Soulier, founder of the Festival on info@claphamoperafestival.com.

Clapham Community

Choir The choir re-starts on **Tuesday 8 September**, after the summer break, with a new leader. Nearly six years after founding the choir, Jessie Maryon Davies is handing on the baton. The July concert, followed by a lively musical party, was a chance for the choir to thank Jessie for the experiences and achievements of being in the choir. The choir has performed in the Royal Festival Hall and at the Young Vic, and members have sung in several mass-choir performances at the Royal Albert Hall. In 2014 the choir 'adopted' composer Mak Murtic, under a national scheme, producing an exciting modern work that was recorded by BBC Radio 3.

The new leader Adam Saunders is a pianist, composer and arranger who has worked on several large-scale choral projects; he has already worked with the choir on a couple of occasions.

Clapham Community Choir has

Bandstand concerts

In addition to the Clapham Society concert on **Sunday 6 September** shown above the following concerts are also planned:

Saturday 12 September at 2 pm.

Junction Jazz

Sunday 13 September at 2 pm. The Trouser Band

Sunday 20 September at 2 pm. Merton Concert Band



Photo: Mike Walker

An unusual clay pipe We were recently sent the attached picture of a rare clay pipe found by a mudlarker on the bank of the Thames. The decoration on it is a slave in chains, which was the motif used in the campaign to abolish slavery. As the sender points out this is ironic considering much of the tobacco was produced by slaves in America.

become a regular part of the Clapham music scene. As its name indicates, it is a non-audition community choir. It warmly welcomes new members. It meets on Tuesday evenings at St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DX. Detailed information can be obtained by e-mailing claphamcommunitychoir@gmail.com.

Tony Bell

Clapham Chamber

Concerts

Clapham Chamber Concerts return to St Paul's Church for the opening of their eighth season on **Friday 2 October** with a performance by the Ferio Saxophone Quartet. Recently appointed Park Lane Group Young Artists 2015-16, this talented young ensemble will perform a programme to include Barber's haunting *Adagio*, Arvo Pärt's minimalist masterpiece *Fratres* and compositions by Bach and Michael Nyman amongst others. The season continues with an evening of renaissance music for voice and lute on **Thursday 12 November** and a recital featuring CCC directors Amanda Lake (violin) and Jonathan Parkin (clarinet) in works by Mozart and Prokofiev on **Friday 4 December**. All performances start at 7.30 pm at St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DX. Tickets on the door £12, £10 Friends and concessions, £5 children under 12 years. Full details at claphamchamberconcerts.org.uk.

A NADFAS Society in

Clapham? There was an encouraging response to the notice about the National Association of Decorative & Fine Arts in the July/August newsletter, so further discussions will be held soon. If you are interested in joining or helping to set it up please call 020 3206 9331 or email membership@nadfasc.org.uk. You can find out more at nadfasc.org.uk.

Margaret Barrie

Clapham Common Bat Walk

On **Friday 11 September** Dr Iain Boulton will lead one of his popular Bat Walks on Clapham Common. Meet at Clapham Common Bandstand for a 7.30 pm start. Bat detectors and information provided, but please bring a torch if you have one. Warm outdoor clothing and sensible footwear advised. The walk will last about one hour.

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 **The Clapham Society** website at claphamsociety.com.