

The Clapham Society *Newsletter*



Issue 384

February 2016

On the Common

Members will not have failed to notice the works at the Dump – the triangle of ground enclosed by iron railings which is the Parks Works area. Activities inside, previously hidden are now apparent because of breaches and reduction of vegetation to the internal earth bund.

Lambeth is reorganising the inside working area to allow for larger machinery (gate widening), removal of redundant storage and hazardous waste containers, and building more leaf storage.

The Clapham Society's Common and Open Spaces Sub-committee (C&OSS) made representations to the Clapham Common Management Advisory Committee (CCMAC) and the Council Environment Officer, Iain Boulton, over the piecemeal changes. We argued for an overall plan, keeping the bunds, reducing the slopes on the inside edges for extra internal surface area, protecting some existing trees



The view from Mount Pond

on the bund, while encouraging replanting of areas of excess privet, bramble and ivy, with the new planting that Iain Boulton was seeking to establish.

At the same time, Lambeth allocated part of the Dump to Bandstand Beds. You will have seen the white polytunnel, planters, bench and tables that have appeared. Concerns about visual intrusion increased with the proposal to locate a large metal container by the railings. Following discussions, it was accepted that any container would be sited further back from the railings and screened from view by new hedgerow planting.

During the autumn, I was offered an exciting research project that would have been foolish to reject. So with sadness, I resigned from C&OSS; this means I also no longer represent the Clapham Society on CCMAC. Involvement with C&OSS matters has bought me new friendships, a greater understanding of the complexity of protecting our Common, while at the same time letting it evolve, as it has in the past, to accommodate the needs of its constituent population.

I have learnt much, from the members of our committee and from the Lambeth Officers, in particular David Paul (Trees) and Iain Boulton (Environment). C&OSS needs new members, and from within it will need a new Chair. I do hope some of you step forward. Please contact Jennifer Everett (details on back page) if you are interested and can give time to attend a meeting once every few months.

But mostly, I have had fun. Listening to people with different ideas, hearing some bizarre stories – all has been both interesting and rewarding. It has been a pleasure to work with people to find a compromise, or indeed, if you will excuse the pun, some common ground for moving forward.

Deryn Watson

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 the talk. Meetings are free and open to non-members, so please bring your friends along.

Monday 22 February

Clapham South Deep Shelter Project.

In 2015, Transport for London announced a scheme to open up the Clapham South Deep Shelter for tours with a museum at ground level. **Chris Nix**, Assistant Director: Collections and Engagement at London Transport Museum will talk about the fascinating history of the deep shelters and update us on the progress of the scheme. Planning permission was granted in December 2015.

For some background information about the construction and former uses of the Deep Shelters look at the report of a talk given to the Society in 2008, which is on our website at claphamsociety.com/Articles/article5.html.

Monday 21 March

Conscription and Conscience in Clapham.

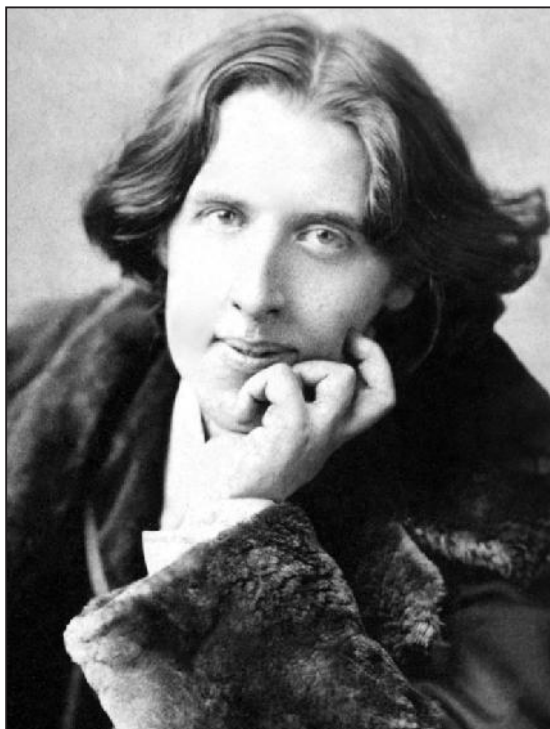
To mark its centenary **Ben Copsey** of Peace Pledge Union will talk about the introduction of conscription in 1916, when millions of men around Britain faced a future in uniform – willing or no. For those engaged in the anti-war movement this was unacceptable, and they registered their opposition to war by becoming Conscientious Objectors. Fifty men from Clapham made this difficult and often dangerous decision. From tribunals to work camps and prison and from Clapham Common to Alexandria, Egypt, the experiences of First World War Conscientious Objectors are fascinating stories of courage, conscience and morality.

Oscar Wilde month in Clapham?

Wednesday 3 February at 7.30 pm. *Wilde without the Boy*. Gerard Logan in a dramatisation of 'De Profundis', the letter Oscar Wilde wrote in 1897 to his lover, Lord Alfred Douglas, from his cell in Reading gaol. Two years previously, Wilde had been imprisoned for acts of gross indecency with other males. Tickets £12, concessions £10.

Wednesday 17 February at 7.30 pm. *A statue for Oscar Wilde*. Clapham resident, painter and sculptor Maggi Hambling will host an exclusive evening in which the audience will be given an up-close and personal insight into 'A Conversation With Oscar', her controversial memorial celebrating the life of Oscar Wilde, which now faces Charing Cross in central London.

The sculpture features Wilde's bronze head rising from a green granite sarcophagus which also serves as a bench, inviting passers-by to sit down and converse with him. The work is inscribed with a quotation from one of his plays: 'We are all in the gutter but some of us are looking at the stars'. Tickets £18, concessions £16. Both events are at Omnibus. See booking details below. See also *The Importance of Being Earnest* by **Southside Players** at the bottom of this page.



Oscar Wilde

More February highlights at Omnibus

Saturday 13 February from 7 pm to 11.30 pm. *Valentine Tango* hosted by tango DJ, Tony Walker best known for his Tango on the Thames event. There will be a tango class and workshop, social dancing and performances by professional teachers. Tickets £15 for class and dance, £12 for dancing only.

Sunday 21 February at 7.30 pm. Emilia Mårtensson is one of the most exciting young vocalists on the UK Jazz scene. The London-based Swedish/Slovenian musician introduces her highly personal compositions.

Her music is firmly rooted within the folklore and countryside of her native southern Sweden, adding to the mystique and allure of a distinctive and truly original artist. Tickets £10, under 25s £5.

Sunday 28 February at 4 pm. 15-year old local violinist Louisa Staples, who is competing in April in the prestigious Menuhin competition, will perform her competition repertoire in this exclusive recital. Tickets £12.

Book tickets for all events by telephone: 0207 498

4699, online at clapham-omnibus.org or call in at Omnibus, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW. Join the mailing list online for full details of all events as they are announced.



Louisa Staples

Fire at Dulwich!

After dusk on **Friday 5 February** and **Saturday 6 February** the grounds of Dulwich Picture Gallery will be transformed into a live fire garden by fire sculpture specialists *Walk the Plank*. This event celebrates the opening of the new exhibition of paintings by Norwegian artist Nikolai Astrup, in whose work bonfires are a recurring theme. Those lucky enough to have purchased tickets - the event is sold out already - will be able to explore flame-lined paths amongst copper flowers that breathe fire, scorching sculptural trees and especially commissioned fire boxes featuring designs responding to Astrup's bonfire paintings.

For more details about the exhibition and permanent collection, go to dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk.

Clapham NADFAS

As a result of the interest shown in the article about a possible Clapham branch of NADFAS (National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies) in our newsletter last summer, progress is being made and a free taster lecture has now been arranged. This will take place on **Wednesday 9 March** at 2 pm (doors open at 1.30 pm) at Omnibus, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW. The lecturer will be Linda Collins, and her talk: *From Wild Beasts to Pickled Sharks - 100 years of Modern Art 1900 - 2000*.

You are invited to come along to the lecture, meet the organising team - maybe volunteer to join them - and find out more about this exciting new development in Clapham. Although admission is FREE you need to book a place in advance. Contact James Wilkins on 020 3206 9324 or membership@nadfas.org.uk.

Gena Gilbert, Chair
Clapham NADFAS Steering Committee

Southside Players

Balham's award-winning theatre group, Southside Players presents Oscar Wilde's funniest play, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, from **Wednesday 17 February** to **Saturday 20 February** at 7.45 pm daily, except Saturday when the start time is 5 pm. The action is updated to 1910 - the Edwardian era of Art Nouveau, the plays of George Bernard Shaw, and the enormous popularity of the Music Hall.

Performances are at Chestnut Grove School Theatre, Hearnville Road, SW12 8RR. Tickets are £10, concessions (on Wednesday and Saturday only) £7.50 from the box office 07914 657524 or online at southsideplayers.org.uk.

Westbury Estate

Regeneration

During 2015 Lambeth Council took preliminary steps to consult residents of the Westbury Estate about the design and layout for the regeneration of the estate.

For those who can't place where the estate is situated – it is on the north side of Wandsworth Road between Portslade Road (next to the railway line, across the road from Wandsworth Road Overground Station) and Saint Rule Street (formerly Saint Andrew Street). The area was built from the 1860s onwards, and by 1891 there were about 319 houses accommodating over 1,000 people, four pubs, a Mission Hall, a Post Office and shops fronting Wandsworth Road.

In the 1950/60s, the area was cleared possibly through a Compulsory Purchase Order and replaced by the existing estate in the 1960s by the London County Council and Greater London Council. Very few buildings were retained; one being a public house on Wandsworth Road now converted into flats.

The existing estate contains 242 homes (64 are privately owned) and some community facilities. The current proposed estate layout retains the 21-storey tower blocks but does not suggest investing any money in their improvement – a mistake to miss the opportunity to modernise the flats and improve sound and heat insulation.

The Council and residents have selected consultants to produce a plan for the redeveloped estate and to organise consultation with residents. The programme is to develop the master plan during 2015/16, produce detailed design in 2016/17, submit the planning application and if needed to serve the Compulsory Purchase Order during 2017/18, and carry out construction in 2018/19. The Society is not now directly involved in formulating proposals but we will be commenting on them during consulting stage and on submission of the planning application. *Peter Cobley*

Bandstand Beds

Bandstand Beds' Annual General Meeting is on **Tuesday 2 February** at The Bread and Roses, 68 Clapham Manor Street, SW4 6DZ at 6.30 pm for 7 pm. If you are interested in joining the committee contact David Dandridge: ccbstandbeds@gmail.com.

There will be gardening sessions on **Saturday 6 February** and **Saturday 20 February** from 10 am, planting seedlings ready for the Easter plant and seed swap on **Saturday 26 March**.

Dogs and Cats

At our final meeting of 2015 Shaun Opperman, Veterinary Director of Battersea Dogs and Cats Home, gave an interesting talk about the history and work of the world-famous Home, which was founded in 1860 by Mrs Mary Tealby in a disused stable yard in Islington, as the Temporary Home for Lost and Starving Dogs. There was local opposition to the Home initially but attitudes changed following support by Charles Dickens amongst others.

In 1870 the Home moved to its present premises in Battersea. In 1882 Queen Victoria visited the Home, thereafter made an annual donation and soon became the royal patron. Royal patronage has continued to this day, with the Queen as the current patron. We learned that since 1882 stray cats have also been taken in and today more cats than dogs are rehomed.

In the 1890s due to a rabies outbreak in London a country home was started at Hackbridge in Surrey. This provided a temporary home for 99 Canadian Huskies ordered by Shackleton for his ill-fated Trans-Antarctic expedition. Dogs from Battersea were used during WWI as ambulance and messenger dogs, and again in WWII for home defence. During WWII the Home took in 150,000 dogs made homeless by the London Blitz. The Home itself suffered bomb damage because of its proximity to Battersea Power Station.

Shaun had many enchanting pictures, especially of children with dogs, of the early 'fundraiser' dogs with collecting boxes on their backs, Edward VII with his Battersea dog and a Chelsea Pensioner at the Animals at War memorial dedication. And we saw footage of Red the Lurcher who became famous when he was caught on camera escaping from his kennel and freeing other dogs to enjoy midnight feasting! We also met Larry the cat who moved into 10 Downing Street in 2011.

Early pictures showed a remarkable range of breeds and of small dogs, which Shaun said they would love to have today, now that many dogs which come in are the more difficult to place large, less family friendly dogs.

We saw how the buildings have changed over the years: a cattery designed by Clough Williams Ellis in 1900, now a listed building, is still in use today as offices, in 1991 Queen Elizabeth II opened the new Tealby kennels (named after the founder), in 2009 the Duchess of Cornwall opened a new cattery wing, and in 2015 the Queen opened new kennels.

Four years ago Shaun was approached by ITV with a view to filming Paul O'Grady's *For the Love of Dogs* at the Home. This show has become a huge success, now in its fourth series with five million viewers and Shaun as co-presenter. It is not, however, without its problems, as making the show is disruptive to the daily routine, time-consuming and repetitive with a lot of waiting around. Inevitably the show, calls for excitement and emotion which does not necessarily reflect every day life at the Home.

It was an entertaining evening, delightfully illustrated and a valuable introduction to something on our doorstep about which many of us have known little in the past.

Clapham Chamber Concerts

The Clapham Chamber Concerts Season continues on **Friday 5 February** with the clarinettist, Jonathan Parkin and his duo partner award winning pianist, Sebastian Stanley. The pair will be joined by cellist Daniel Bull, to present a varied concert.

This will open with Beethoven's *Opus 11*, a light-hearted work and one of the earliest composed for this combination. It will be followed by Daniel Bull's rendition of *Toccata* by Italian Baroque composer, Girolamo Frescobaldi, and then John Ireland's *Fantasy Sonata*, a work featured on the Parkin-Stanley duo's debut CD. The second half will open with a short Debussy piano work, arranged by Parkin. The highlight of the evening is Brahms's *Trio in A Minor*, which has to be the most significant work for clarinet trio.

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

Anyone for French?

Our French Conversation Group would welcome new members. We are a sociable, mixed-ability group helping each other to improve our language skills. We meet on alternate Wednesday mornings in the Abbeville Road area. No fees! No tutor!

If you are interested, please telephone

Celia Bibby on 020 8673 0561

Do you Tweet?

If you are a user of social media please help promote the Clapham Society by following us on Facebook and Twitter, as well as liking, sharing, commenting and re-tweeting our tweets.

The Clapham Dispensary and the London Russian Ballet School

In November, against their officer's recommendations and to our relief, Lambeth Council's Planning Committee refused consent for the planning application by the London Russian Ballet School to alter and enlarge the former Clapham General Dispensary at 42 Clapham Manor Street.

This is a Grade II listed building of much greater local significance in the story of Clapham than was conveyed in either the application or the officer's report. The application was strenuously opposed by this Society as well as by all three ward councillors. The school is expected to appeal the Council's refusal decision.

The Clapham General Dispensary was a charitable institution founded during the 1848 cholera outbreak. It moved into the new building in 1854. Designed free of charge by the eminent local architect JT Knowles Sr., it is one of the most individual, distinctive and important buildings of Victorian Clapham, the last surviving building in Clapham by Knowles, and one of the earliest examples of purpose-built community care. This can be seen in the copy of his presentation drawing now in the Lambeth Archive. Though not quite as was finally built, this plan largely confirms that ideal and purpose. The sequence of spaces between the street and the back of the waiting hall remained essentially unaltered until around 1990. There were two doctor's consulting rooms at the front with the resident dispenser's rooms and a committee room above; a large patient waiting hall in the middle; and the dispensing room, drug store and resident housekeeper's flat which opened on to a garden at the rear. Records show annual attendance at the dispensary: 1853 was typical with 1274 patients attending the dispensary, 251 home visits and 1983 receiving medicines.

The school proposes improved facilities including a new rear extension with a much larger dance studio beneath the rear pile. In order to increase studio ceiling height this will involve the demolition of virtually half of the original built form, the formation of a substantial deep basement and raising the level of the ceiling and upper floor level. We disagree that the harm done to the listed building will be 'less than substantial'.

Nor do we agree that the design of the new extension and its formal relationship to the host building is 'harmonious and sympathetic to context' or 'subservient' (as required by Lambeth's own guidelines for new extensions). We think it too large, out of scale and at odds with the predominant character of the Conservation Area. When viewed at street level from Cubitt Terrace it will almost completely obscure the old building.

The Committee did not agree that the public benefits of the ballet school outweigh the harm that will be caused to the listed building. They also found unacceptable the plan to remove enormous quantities of excavated material and delivery of plant and materials to and from Cubitt Terrace via narrow and constricted residential streets in the Conservation Area to the rear of the building.

Details of the proposals can be seen on the Lambeth Planning database (planning.lambeth.gov.uk/online-applications/) by inserting the reference number 15/02266/FUL. You should then click on Documents, and Design Statement (four parts) for illustrations.

John Adams

Clapham Common Management Advisory Committee (CCMAC)

CCMAC is holding its Annual Open Meeting on **Thursday 4 February** at 7 pm at Omnibus, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW. The speaker will be Adrian Wikeley from Land Use Consultants, who produced the 2007 Masterplan 'Clapham Common: the Next 50 Years' for Lambeth and CCMAC.

New Members We are very pleased to welcome the following new members: Lydie Gonzalez and Philipa Hatch, Jan Messenger, Trace Newton-Ingham, Carolyn Pidgeon, Suzie Robertson, Patrick Schweitzer and Paul Hope, and Celia and Archie Walls.

Clapham through Time

Have you bought your copy of this new book which shows in photographs how Clapham has changed over the years? The 'now' pictures look even better in colour! Available from Clapham Books.



Abbeville Road as it was, with a dairy shop ready to make milk deliveries...

And as it is now, as an Estate Agency.



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.