

The Clapham Society Newsletter



Issue 390

September 2016

Clapham Village Fete



Don't miss the celebration of 150 years of the London Fire Brigade at Clapham Village Fete on **Saturday 3 September** from 12 noon to 6 pm in Clapham Old Town and The Polygon. There will be all the traditional village fete activities, alongside a fire engine display, arts and crafts stalls, Vauxhall City Farm, food and drink stands, and the Clapham Society will have a stand with historical display and our usual publications for sale, as well as our popular free leaflets about Clapham Common history and the tree guide.

New members

We are pleased to welcome the following new members: Virginia Alexander and Stephen Cook, Sarah Bridger, Gregory Coad, Caroline Elias, Camilla Ewart, Mark Hopkins, Marie and Daniel Jessel, Tim Kent-Phillips, Lindsay and Jeff Lynn, Kirk Nelson, and Jago and Susannah Wynne.

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 26 September

Do No Harm. Neurosurgeon **Henry Marsh**, who was brought up in Clapham and whose family have been associated with the Clapham Society since its founding in 1963 – his father, Norman Marsh played many roles in the Society and was finally President for several years – will talk about his best-selling book, *Do No Harm*. Subtitled *Stories of Life, Death and Brain surgery*, this is a moving insight into the highs and lows of a life dedicated to operating on the human brain, telling how it feels to hold someone's life in your hands.

Monday 24 October

Annual General Meeting. After the formal business of the meeting our guest speaker is local designer, **Tim Gosling**, who has an international reputation for exquisite, beautifully crafted furniture and a deep commitment to working with highly skilled British craftsmen. Tim's knowledge and interest in classic and contemporary design, his talent for sketching combined with his interest in the arts, create the perfect blend for producing the most innovative designs. Tim designed The Clapham Society's Green Plaque, and the first one was unveiled on his home, Sycamore House, in 2011.

This month's guided walks

Friday 9 September

Clapham Common Bat Walk. Dr Iain Boulton, of Lambeth Parks and Open Spaces, will lead another of his popular bat walks. Bat detectors and information will be provided, but please bring a torch if you have one. Warm outdoor clothing and sensible footwear are advised. Meet at Clapham Common Bandstand for a 7 pm start.

Wednesday 14 September

Clapham Common South Side. Peter Jefferson Smith will lead a walk along South Side and its hinterland, introducing some of the people who have lived here. Meet a sportsman, a scientist, a playwright and many others. About 1½ hours. Meet Clapham South Underground Station at 2.30 pm.

Saturday 24 September

The Rocks and Waters We Stand On – the geology, hydrology and soils of Clapham Common. Dr Iain Boulton will conduct a gentle excursion looking at how past and present geology – rocks and how they formed – and the way water moving and flowing both underground and on the surface, has shaped the evolution of Clapham Common and its surroundings, and continues to do for the future. No geological experience necessary! Meet Clapham Common Bandstand at 2 pm.

The 53rd Annual General Meeting of the Clapham Society will be held on **Monday 24 October** at Omnibus, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW starting at 7.30 pm.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Approval of the Minutes of the previous AGM (19 October 2015) published in the Newsletter No. 383, December 2015/January 2016, and available at the meeting
3. Adoption of the Annual Report for the year 2015-16
4. Adoption of the Financial Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2016
5. Election of the Officers and Committee Members for the year 2016-2017

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 eminent local designer, Tim Gosling.

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.

Maev Sullivan, Acting Secretary, 2 Fitzwilliam Road, SW4 0DN

Making connections

Although I left Clapham 17 years ago it still creeps back into my life in Knaresborough. This month we have been celebrating the release of the rioters of October 1865. Eleven men tore up the fences and broke the locked gates erected by Dr John Simpson which impeded their use of the Castle Yard, given to the town's people by Cromwell after the Civil War, and the paths down to the river from the town. They were convicted of riot in April 1866 and each man was sent to Armley Gaol for three months. The eldest died in prison and one was too ill to travel on release, but the others were carried in procession to the newly-built Town Hall accompanied by the town band and the ringing of the church bells, and after a feast, each man was presented with a silver tankard for standing up for the rights of the townsfolk.

150 years later we celebrated by ringing the bells again (I learnt to ring at Holy Trinity in Clapham) and descendants of one rioter brought one of the silver tankards for all to see. The youngest rioter, aged only 17 on release, was Joseph Harper Kearton, 'musician'. A chorister in the new Anglican second church in the town, he was also organist at the Congregational Church next door, which had been funded by 'Mrs John Thornton of Clapham'.

Having a criminal record doesn't seem to have impeded his career. In 1861 he

was living with his widowed mother and three siblings, and receiving the Christmas Eve poor relief of sixpence to each child. In 1867, only a year after his release, he was appointed Vicar Choral at Wells Cathedral and by 1871 he was married, living with his wife and child, and a servant, in Vicar's Close at Wells. 1881 sees him as Lay Vicar at Westminster Abbey where he sings for almost the rest of his life.

He lived in Northcote Road, just a short walk from where I lived when I first went to London, and then moved around the corner into 38 Salcott Road, now with five children at home and another in boarding school in Hanover Square. 'The celebrated tenor' Harper Kearton also sang in a well-known quartet, The Westminster Glee Singers, having a 'light natural tenor voice' and was an established composer of music for the pianoforte and the organ. His setting of Byron's *Farewell* featured recently in a film version of *Jane Eyre*.

He spent his last years (1911-14) in the Holloway Sanatorium, a 'lunatic' but not abandoned. His son Wilfred, a Lay Clerk at the Chapel Royal, was living nearby in Slough with his son, also called Harper Kearton. *Derrick McRobert*

Black Cultural History

A course on Black Seafarers and Revolutionary Politics, led by historian and curator S. I. Martin, commences on **Tuesday 6 September**

Bandstand Concerts

The concerts on the Bandstand so far this summer have been an outstanding success, very popular with audiences and blessed with sunny weather. The two final concerts of the season are on:

Sunday 4 September. The Clapham Society's own concert with Junction Jazz – a popular local group playing Traditional jazz and Dixie.

Sunday 18 September. London Allstars. Steel drum band with an authentic Caribbean flavour.

Concerts are from 3 pm to 5 pm, and FREE to the public.

Bursting into Song

In seven years of enjoyable and exciting music-making Clapham Community Choir (CCC) has come to be a recognised part of Clapham's musical and social life.

CCC is a non-audition choir, singing a wide range of music. It welcomes people from all walks of life, with or without past musical experience. It's a happy choir to be a member of!

The choir meets on Tuesdays from 7.30 pm to 9.00 pm at St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DX. The autumn term starts on **Tuesday 13 September**. For more information contact claphamcommunitychoir@gmail.com – or just come along!

Tonight at the Museum, Charlie Chaplin

This new play, set in 1959 when Chaplin is 70 years old, gives a voice to the star of silent movies, charting his progress from Lambeth Workhouse to Hollywood in words, song and dance. Performances at The Cinema Museum, 2 Dugard Way, SE11 4TH on dates between **Friday 9 September** and **Sunday 25 September**. For more information and to book tickets go to thelittletramp.org.uk.

The Cinema Museum, located in the Master's House of the former Lambeth Workhouse in Kennington, is well worth a visit at any time and has a full programme of events and visits. Full details and programme at cinemamuseum.org.uk or call 020 7840 2200.

at Brixton's Black Cultural Archives, Windrush Square, SW2 1EF. The course is on five consecutive Tuesday evenings from 7.00 pm to 9.00 pm. For details visit bcaheritage.org.uk or call 020 3757 8500.

Battersea Park

The Friends of Battersea Park have just published a new history of Battersea Park, tracing the fascinating story of the Park from its early development to its recent place in design history.

The author is Jennifer Ullman, Manager of the Park from 1998 to 2008, and a Trustee of the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew and the RSPB. *Battersea Park* is available, price £10 + £2.50 P&P from batterseapark.org/book.

44 Clapham Common South Side

This four-acre site is sandwiched between the Notre Dame Estate and Lambeth College and backs on to Abbeville Road. Originally part of the large gardens of the Georgian houses fronting South Side, the land was subsequently developed during the inter-war period by Cleaves, a confectionery manufacturer. After the war Batgers manufactured confectionery there and since the 1990s it has provided commercial, warehousing and waste transfer facilities for the facilities management company, OCS Group.

The site is now to be redeveloped by London Realty with some 360 flats and 50,000 square feet of commercial space. The proposals can be viewed on the developer's website southsideregeneration.co.uk via the 'Download exhibition boards' link.

The Planning Sub-committee took part in the initial consultation event in July and members have been round the site. The loss of the existing buildings is not a matter of concern, and we feel the proposed uses are appropriate. But we have expressed reservations about the height of the proposed buildings (15 storeys near the Common, dropping down to three/four storeys backing onto the Abbeville Road houses), the importance of unlocking the isolated nature of the site by making links with neighbours such as the Notre Dame Estate, and the impact of the development on the amenity of residential neighbours, particularly those in Abbeville Road.

We wait to see how these issues are resolved in the next consultation round in September. The developer has not yet submitted a planning application, so this is a good opportunity for members to see the proposals and make their own views known as the design emerges. If you copy your comments to the Planning Sub-committee (pjashford@yahoo.co.uk), we can take them up in the next consultation round.

Philip Ashford

Lambeth Architecture 1965-99

In June, one of our most popular speakers, Edmund Bird, returned to talk about the final book in his series on 20th century architecture in Lambeth. This book is considerably larger than previous volumes, since it covers a particularly intense period of building activity as public housing and the welfare state reached its apogee in the 1960s and 1970s.

We first saw pictures of the wide range of public buildings completed when Ted Hollamby was Lambeth's Director of Architecture and Planning – from the MI6 building at Vauxhall to St Thomas' and Kings College Hospitals, the Hayward Gallery and the National Theatre. There were also many schools built at this time, including the now-closed Clapham Park School for partially-sighted children in Park Hill and Henry Thornton School, now Lambeth College on Clapham Common South Side, and in the higher education sector Southbank Polytechnic in Wandsworth Road, now converted to residential use.

There was an astonishing burst of residential building in the 1960s and 1970s as the GLC continued the housing programme of its predecessor LCC, with high and medium rise blocks, which included the Westbury Estate in Wandsworth Road and the Spurgeon Estate in Stockwell. Lambeth Council's public housing, under the supervision of Ted Hollamby took many forms, designs and scales. We saw illustrations of these throughout the borough, from the tower blocks in Clarence Avenue, Clapham Park to the nearby high density low-rise models like the four houses back to back (known as quad housing) and patio housing. Victorian terraced houses were replaced by two-storey terraces in brick and white weatherboard, with garden squares, pedestrianised areas and cars banished to the edges of the estate. Edmund identified Clapham Manor as one of the most successful of the Hollamby team's estates, which integrated with the established townscape and incorporated refurbished historic terraces. Other less successful estates have already been demolished. He also cited Clapham's Bowland Road Estate by Darbourne & Darke and the Carfax Estate as attractively designed and enduring groups.

We heard about and saw examples of housing association and private houses, amongst them the Macaulay Road house of our former chairman, John Adams, and his wife Marina. Edmund moved on to show some of the local commercial buildings, including the three Sainsbury stores and the IBM headquarters on the South Bank. He concluded with several already demolished buildings – among them Mary Seacole House office building on Clapham High Street, now replaced by Clapham Library.

Edmund's quick tour through his book could do little more than give a taste of the wealth of fascinating information it contains. As one member of the audience remarked 'It makes you look around and realise what you have never seen.' A bargain at £10, *Lambeth Architecture 1965-1999* by Edmund Bird and Fiona Price with photographs by John East, should be on the book shelves of every member. Available at Clapham Books, Clapham Library and Lambeth Archives.

Bandstand Beds

Despite the cold, damp and dreary start, it's been a sizzling summer in the Bandstand Beds community garden.

There have been planting days and picnics and so much interest and enthusiasm for food growing that the group now meets twice weekly, on Saturday mornings and Wednesday evenings, to garden and share their harvest. And of course some is always preserved or reserved for the autumn feast.

This year, Bandstand Beds are working in partnership with The Spinney nursery and Incredible Edible Lambeth for their community feast on **Saturday 8 October**. The Brixton People's Kitchen bike is being hired to cook up delicious food, there will be natural thinkers activities for children at The Spinney, and the launch of the Edible Clapham route map. This will be a free event from midday until 4 pm, and everyone is welcome!

For more information about food growing in the heart of Clapham visit the Bandstand Beds website or email cbandstandbeds@gmail.com.

David Dandridge

The Plough Brewery

The former Plough Brewery, now offices, in Wandsworth Road is one of the buildings on which we are planning to erect a Green Plaque, marking a notable local building which has changed use. We already know much of the early history or the listed building, but so far we have not been able to find out when brewing ceased there. We are hoping that a long-term Clapham resident might remember when this was an active brewery. Can you help? If so please contact Derrick Johnson (derrick45johnson@hotmail.co.uk) or 020 7223 1172. For full details of our Green Plaque scheme visit claphamsociety.com/Articles/greenplaques.html.

Your Society Needs You!

The Clapham Society is not short of members – our membership is the envy of many other societies, but we are short of **active** members, who sit on our main committee and the sub-committees which keep the Society going. You must have noticed that over the last year and more we have appealed several times for a Secretary, but without any success so that other members of the main committee have had to take on the role in turn.

The main committee meets every other month, and comprises the usual officers and a representative of each of the sub-committees – Planning, Common and Open Spaces, Local History, Events, Roads and Transport, and Publications. We need new members on all these sub-committees. The same people have been doing the Society's work for too long – several want to retire, and we need new blood and new ideas. If you want the Society to survive and flourish please consider taking an active role. Contact either the Chairman or the appropriate person shown in the Contacts on this page, to discuss how you can become more involved.

September highlights at Omnibus

After a lull during August Omnibus will be back in full swing in September. Highlights include:

Thursday 15

September at 7.30 pm. *Engine Room* featuring artists working across art forms and between genres.

Friday 16 September

at 7.30 pm. *Omniswrite*, when three established writers give 20 minute previews of their new work.

Sunday 18 September at 7.30 pm. Award winning jazz vocalist Lauren Kinsella with her ensemble.

Wednesday 21 September to Friday 23 September at 7.30 pm. Rum & Clay Theatre company in *64 Squares*, an adaptation of Stephan Zweig's famous novel about chess. Three actors and a live percussive score.

Sunday 25 September at 11 am and 2.30 pm. *The Owl and the Pussycat's Treasury of Nonsense*. Edward Lear brought to life in music and puppetry by Soap Soup Theatre.

For the complete programme for the autumn season, and to purchase tickets go



Photo: Dana Kubick

The Society's stand at the Northcote Road fête in July

to the website omnibus-clapham.org, call 020 7498 4699 or drop in at Omnibus, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW to pick up a programme.

An Online Designer Charity Boutique

Royal Trinity Hospice is launching the first online designer charity boutique. Packed full of fashion one-offs from top British and international names, high-end designer bags, scarves and shoes as well as vintage curiosities for the home, the Trinity online shop is a cut above the average. It features over 500 items of clothing both for men and women, as well as sections for the home; we can boast designer handbags (Chloe, Gucci, and so on), some fine

Lambeth Heritage

Festival This annual local festival organised by Lambeth Archives and Lambeth Local History Forum runs for the whole month of September. The programme is packed with walks, talks, events, tours, workshops and exhibitions throughout the borough. Highlights include an exhibition of documents and archives of Lambeth Palace, open throughout the month in the Great Hall of Lambeth Palace; a talk by Clapham architect of the London Eye, Julia Barfield; Southbank Mosaics featuring artists making portraits of Lambeth soldiers who fought in the battle of the Somme; tours of West Norwood cemetery... and lots, lots more.

Pick up a brochure, showing a day by day programme and full details, at a Lambeth library, Omnibus, the Clapham Village Fete, or at our Bandstand concert, or lambeth.gov.uk/heritagefestival.

Aircraft noise Those of us living under the Heathrow flight path have suffered aircraft noise for 18.5 hours per day during the good weather in August. Therefore we have been glad to hear that Lambeth has joined ten other London councils in writing to the Prime Minister to say that Gatwick Airport expansion would be preferable to a third runway at Heathrow. They warned that 'environmental impacts, legal barriers, taxpayer costs and political opposition are just too great to overcome'. *Jenny Copley*

accessories (Boss, McQueen, Dolce & Gabbana among others) and a carefully edited range of collectables, curiosities and objets d'art for the home.

The shop will also offer the best of Trinity's ethos and values online, with features on relaxation, aromatherapy and exercise from the in-house therapists and experts on alternative health, as well as fun hints and tips on how to get the best out of your vintage bargains and a Shop VIP section that features donations from household names in entertainment.

Georgina Harris

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

Chairman

Tel: 020 7228 5551

Acting Secretary

Tel: 020 7498 9205

Treasurer

Tel: 020 7720 7536

Membership Secretary

Tel: 020 7627 4770

Annabel Allott

Email: annabel@allott.plus.com

Maev Sullivan

Email: maevsullivan@gmail.com

David Brown

Email david.brown@centrum-uk.com

Jennifer Everett

Email jeverett@waitrose.com

Planning Matters

Tel: 020 8674 1727

Newsletter and Publications

Tel: 020 7622 6360

Meetings and Events

Tel: 020 7223 4480.

Roads and Transport

Tel: 020 7720 9370

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