

The Clapham Society Newsletter



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Not So Remote

Do you know who looks after our website, claphamsociety.com? Since the very beginning of our presence online Christina Bonnett has made our pages, added features and looked after the upkeep of our website. But why? And who is Christina? You may remember Outlines, the picture framers that started out in Venn Street in 1978 and moved to The Pavement in 1987. Christina was the owner of that business and came to know many of the residents of Clapham through her work. Outlines closed in 2005 when Christina moved to Devon to pursue her career as an artist.

However, Christina didn't forget her Clapham friends and continues in her role as webmaster of our website to this day. Speaking about living in Devon Christina says: 'Life in the Devon countryside is very different from living in a busy and lively part of London. There is very much less contact with people, and



Christina - and lamb!

Continued on page 3

Book events

On **Wednesday 2 November** at 7 pm there will be an evening of readings and Q & A with the authors of two new London books – *Up in Smoke: The Failed Dreams of Battersea Power Station* by Peter Watts and *Beautiful Idiots and Brilliant Lunatics: A Sideways Look at Twentieth-Century London* by Rob Baker.

Battersea Power Station is one of London's favourite buildings – this is the first book to explore the life of the building, from conception and construction, through use and obsolescence, and then into the long years of post-closure redevelopment.

Beautiful Idiots and Brilliant Lunatics

explores fascinating stories from our capital in the twentieth century. From the return of local hero Charlie Chaplin to the protests that blighted the Miss World competition in 1970, the book covers the events and personalities that reflect the glamorous, scandalous, political and subversive place London was and is today.

And on **Saturday 26 November** at 11 am author/illustrator Tammy Johnston will read from her new picture book *Elmo's Christmas Tail* – an enchanting children's story about the magic of Christmas, with beautiful, hand-drawn illustrations by award-winning author-illustrator Tammy Johnston. Both events are free at Clapham Books, 26 The Pavement, SW4 0JA.

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 28 November

Slavery, Commerce and the Hibbert Family. Dr Katie Donington, Research Associate on the Antislavery Usable Past project at the University of Nottingham, will explore the Hibbert family and their links to slavery and Clapham. George Hibbert MP was a leading parliamentary proslavery advocate, a Chairman of the Society of West India Merchants, Agent for Jamaica and an extensive plantation and slave-owner. He lived in a large house with a renowned garden on Clapham Common North Side.

Following the meeting a framed photograph of a watercolour of the Hibbert Almshouses in Wandsworth Road, will be donated to Omnibus by the Trustees of the Almshouses. Hibbert Almshouses were erected by Sarah and Mary Anne Hibbert, in memory of their father, William Hibbert, also a Clapham resident and brother of George Hibbert. The watercolour is probably by the architect of the Almshouses Edward I'Anson, whose grandson, also Edward I'Anson, was the architect of the former Clapham Library, now Omnibus.

There is no meeting in December. The full programme for 2017 will be published in the December newsletter.

Transport for All

It has been brought to our attention that Transport for London (TfL) is giving serious thought to the future shape of the bus network once Crossrail comes into operation. This provides an important opportunity to press for improvements to the local network.

Local councillors and members of Clapham Transport Users Group held two meetings over the summer with senior personnel from TfL to discuss a range of local transport issues, and to look at potential solutions. Among the issues raised were congestion resulting from pinch points created by the Old Town Regeneration Scheme; fears that redevelopment of Vauxhall Bus Station will result in a loss of amenity, and make transfers between buses and other transport modes considerably less convenient; and the scope for amending existing routes or introducing new ones.

Specific priorities include: a direct route serving the City to Moorgate via Southwark; a direct link to St Thomas' Hospital by extending the 155; and an orbital link via Tulse Hill along the South Circular, which would particularly assist the school run for many Clapham children.

The Society's Roads and Transport Sub-committee supports these proposals, and would encourage members to let us know their thoughts over the next couple of months, and to assist us in making representations to TfL. Particular attention is drawn to the online petition organised by local resident, Anna Watson, for the South Circular route. This can be accessed via this link: <https://www.change.org/p/transport-for-london>.

Mark Leffler, Convenor, Roads and Transport Sub-committee



November at Omnibus

Tuesday 1 November and Wednesday 2 November at 7.30 pm. *The Man Who Would Be King*. A reworking of Rudyard Kipling's classic mercenary yarn, adapted and directed by Dan Coleman. This five star production explores a tale of greed, adventure and ruin. Peachy Carnehan and Daniel Dravot are soldiers-for-hire amid the shifting borders of the Middle East. Tired of the mercenary life, the duo have come up with a plan; head to Northern Afghanistan, enslave the natives, and install themselves as kings. Tickets £12, £10 concessions.

Thursday 3 November at 7.30 pm. *The Trials of Galileo*. Starring RSC actor Tim Hardy, who takes on a witty, chilling and passionate one-man retelling of Galileo's trial for heresy in 1633. 'The Universe is a divine miracle, Galileo, not a clockwork toy! Proof denies faith and without faith we are nothing.' In this reprimand of Pope Urban is contained Galileo's tragedy – a mistaken belief that all he had to do was show the church his reasoning and his evidence and the church would fall in behind him. He understood the science better than any man alive, but never grasped the politics until it was too late. Tickets £12, £10 concessions.

Sunday 6 November at 7.30pm. *The Covent Garden Consort*. Four singers from the Royal Opera House (including Omnibus Chairman George Owen) and a pianist, provide a selection of vocal gems from across the musical spectrum from Grand Opera to the West End and Broadway, including Verdi, Puccini, Mozart, Strauss, Hammerstein, Sullivan and Romberg. Tickets £12, £10 concessions, £5 students.

Tuesday 8 November to Saturday 19 November at 7.30 pm. *Mule*. Inspired by the topical and real events of 'the Peru Two', this gripping two-hander explores the murky, hedonistic world of drug smuggling.

Mule is Omnibus' first production at the Edinburgh Fringe. Through its Artist Development Programme, Omnibus worked with the playwright Kat Woods (an Omnibus Associate writer) to bring her play to fruition. Refined over a period of months, word spread at the Fringe about the crisp production in which actors Edith Poor and Aoife Lennon played the two hapless girls, as well as an impressive array of associated characters, 28 in total between them. Tickets £12, concessions £10. For ages 14+. Bookings for all events 0207 498 4699 or email boxoffice@omnibus-clapham.org.

Drive for Royal Trinity

Royal Trinity Hospice is looking for volunteer drivers to help patients get to their appointments at the hospice, 30 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0RN. Trinity's patients all have a terminal illness and visit for support groups and events as well as physio, complementary therapy or nursing appointments. However, patients often have difficulty getting to the hospice under their own steam and volunteers can help.

Trinity are looking for volunteers who live locally, have their own car and could be available on one weekday per week. As well as getting patients from A to B, volunteers provide companionship and support throughout the journey. Between trips, most volunteer drivers stop off for coffee in the hospice's bright café. To find out more please contact Mat Croft on 0207 787 1064 or email volunteering@royaltrinityhospice.london.

A Christmas Fair

The Wandsworth Friends of Royal Trinity Hospice Fair is on **Tuesday 15 November**, Preview Evening 6.30 pm to 9.30 pm and **Wednesday 16 November**, 8.30 am to 3.30 pm at St Luke's Church, 194 Ramsden Road, SW12 8RQ (on the corner of Thurleigh Road and Ramsden Road). Don't miss this popular annual event which is a major fundraiser for the hospice.

And a Christmas Fayre

Holy Trinity Church's Green and Ethical Christmas Fayre is on **Saturday 3 December** from 11 am to 4 pm at the church on Clapham Common. Stallholders will be offering ethically sourced and environmentally friendly gifts and food. Animals from Vauxhall City Farm will come for the fancy dress Nativity and Father Christmas will welcome the children at his Green Grotto. There will be music, storytelling and activities for children throughout the day, plus delicious food and drinks at the Green Café. Entry £2 Adults, Children free.

Soseki Museum The museum at 80b The Chase, SW4 0RN, dedicated to the Japanese novelist, Soseki Natsume (1867-1916) who spent two years in London, is to close next September due to financial difficulties and declining visitor numbers. The museum was opened in 1984 by Ikuo Tsunematsu, an authority on Soseki and a professor at Sojo University in the city of Kumamoto. Since 2004 it has been run by Tsunematsu's wife, Yoshiko. The Museum is open three days a week between February and September.

Clapham and Brain Surgery

We had a very full house for our September meeting when neurosurgeon, Henry Marsh, talked about his life, brain surgery and his best selling book, *Do No Harm: Stories of Life, Death and Brain Surgery*. Henry's early life was spent in Oxford where his father lectured in law, but in 1960 the family moved to a beautiful Queen Anne house on Clapham Common North Side, where they lived for the next 45 years. Henry's father, Norman Marsh, was a distinguished Law Commissioner, served on several Royal and International Commissions and was one of the founders of Amnesty International. He was also a founder member of the Clapham Society, in which he held various offices up to his death in 2008. Henry showed pictures of his early life, before moving on to tell us about his career as a brain surgeon from his early days at the now-closed Atkinson Morley Hospital in Wimbledon, through his long association with St George's Hospital, Tooting to his recent activities in the Ukraine.

He asserted 'Brain surgery is easy – it's the decision-making which is so difficult and where mistakes are made'. We saw slides of diseased brains and learnt that decisions are about probability and uncertainty, about the risks or benefits of surgery against those of not operating. These are questions of judgement and not of factual knowledge. He showed us examples of how framing the effect of a problem in different ways can influence the decision. The same information can be shown in another way to favour an alternative decision. When the outcome of surgery is not as planned it is usually due to a wrong decision and not a mistake.

We saw some case histories and learnt many facts about the brain, damage to it, and in particular how childhood neglect, as in Romanian orphanages in the Ceauşescu years, erodes the brain. We saw pictures of new techniques including 'awake craniotomy' and learnt about help to recovery from surgery and the success of the outdoor terrace for patients which Henry Marsh saw installed at St George's Hospital.

He was only able to give us a taste of his book that has been translated into many languages and is a best seller all over the world. Some of the audience came because they had already read the book, and many more bought it after the meeting. It is a moving and informative book, which cannot be recommended too highly. We are extremely grateful to Henry Marsh for making time in his busy life – he was flying off to Nepal the next morning – to speak to us.

Saving the Cinema Museum

Members may know the Cinema Museum, which is located in the Master's House of the former Lambeth Workhouse in Kennington, and some may have been to the play about Charlie Chaplin performed there in September and mentioned in our newsletter.

The director and founder of the Cinema Museum, Martin Humphries has announced that the philanthropist, Laurie Marsh, recently revealed plans to save the Museum from closure. Laurie Marsh, who was born within walking distance of the Museum and has long been a supporter, held a launch party for his biography (*The Philanthropist's Tale*) at the Cinema Museum and used the occasion to disclose his plan to save the Museum. He proposes to acquire the freehold of the entire site (which currently belongs to the NHS), restore the building to its former glory, and develop the area behind the museum as residential property with a high proportion of affordable housing.

Laurie Marsh who left his hugely successful corporate career in 1979, aged 49, has dedicated the decades ever since to philanthropy: from saving theatres from bankruptcy to fundraising for local communities including the Cinema Museum.

If you don't already know the museum, be sure to visit it. Find all the details at cinemamuseum.org.uk/ or telephone 020 7840 2200.



Photo: Philip Moran

Not So Remote - Cont from first page

getting things done around the house can be challenging. All shops are a drive away and having an aptitude for DIY is a must, but the joys and advantages are many. They include easy access to the extra-ordinary variety in the landscape of Devon, physical exercise looking after our garden and vegetable plot, and a lovely big studio for painting and making plates for original prints. Both my husband, John, and I have learned so much about rural life and gained new skills too. We have learned about larger tools, such as the little Ferguson tractor to keep the field in order and have new names in the local dialect for some of the smaller tools we use. We even know a little about sheep farming from our farming neighbours – we have helped in a small way with lambing from time to time. John has joined in the harvest of straw for thatching and other seasonal jobs which gives me opportunities for sketching and painting. Even the weather changes are more evident here and can have dramatic effects on life. We have sometimes been cut off by floods in the valley or by deep snow. There is always something to do and no time to get bored.'

The internet helps Christina to stay in touch, buy things she needs when they are not available nearby, and to show her artwork in online galleries. Being online also enables her to work on websites and promote them on social media, including the Clapham Society website.

When asked what she misses most about her life in Clapham she said: 'I met so many interesting people as a shop-owner. A service like picture framing makes for long discussions and friendships are often formed. I do miss that aspect of my former life. I also had a large audience for my artwork and a place to exhibit it whenever I pleased.'

If you would like to see Christina Bonnett's artwork and projects you can keep up at christinabonnett.com.

St Paul's Opera

On Friday 18 November St Paul's Opera presents *The Path to Power* – favourite arias, duets, ensembles & choruses from Mozart, Bellini, Beethoven, Verdi, Saint-Saens, Gilbert & Sullivan and Puccini. Doors open at 7 pm for 7.30 pm performance

Tickets £15, on the door or online at wegottickets.com/StPaulsOpera include a glass of wine and interval nibbles. St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DX.

Bandstand Beds update

This autumn Bandstand Beds teamed up with The Spinney to organise the Common People Feast – a fantastic day with lots of fun-filled activities and delicious food made from produce grown on Clapham Common.

Lambeth Council helped get a small section of Windmill Drive closed for the day so that people could move freely and safely between The Spinney garden, where Natural Thinkers' activities took place, and the Bandstand Beds growing space. In the suspended parking area there were stalls, one displaying fresh veg, pickles and jams made from produce from the community gardens on the Common throughout the summer. Other stalls promoted local community groups and organisations including Lambeth's Edible Living and St Mungo's, with which Bandstand Beds would like to build partnerships in the future.

Dr Bike's cycle safe maintenance team were also present, working through the afternoon carrying out maintenance checks on bikes. They were joined by officers from Lambeth's Safer Transport Team who were security tagging bikes, and moving among the crowd to talk to people about National Hate Crime Awareness Week.



Photo: Dana Kubick

Lots of people came along to join in the feast and there was a warm and friendly atmosphere, with the added peace and tranquillity the closure of Windmill Drive brought to the afternoon. The question many of them asked was: 'Why can't it be closed all the time – or at least at weekends?'

The day was rounded off with a raffle, with some fantastic prizes donated by local businesses. Through this, and other donations made on the day, Bandstand Beds were able to cover their costs for the event, making this a free event for everyone!

The feast was a celebration of the magnificent harvest there has been from the Bandstand Beds growing spaces this year, including lots of preserved pickles and jam. The group is going from strength to strength and from around 10 members at this time last year, we now have almost 80. The new garden on Windmill Drive has proved so popular and successful that Lambeth Council is allowing the group to reclaim more space on the green waste site – formerly known as 'the dump'. Over the coming months volunteers will be clearing the area ready for a new shipping container to be delivered. This will replace the rusty, leaky one already on the green waste depot, and it will be used as a facility to make refreshments and for storage.

Also coming up, Bandstand Beds has two 'pay what you can' gardening workshops on **Saturday 5 November** and **Saturday 19 November**, from 10.30 am to 12.30 pm. The first explores growing winter vegetables, and the second examines the practicalities of the most important aspects of gardening, soil and composting.

If you would like to take part in the gardening workshop, or volunteer to help with clearing the extended growing space, email cbandstandbeds@gmail.com

David Dandridge. Chair, Bandstand Beds



'Goose', a skateboarder in last month's dog show on the Common - Photo: Dana Kubick

CCDFAS

Clapham Common Decorative and Fine Arts Society (CCDFAS) is nearly up and running. Our inaugural meeting is on **Wednesday 15 March 2017** when Antony Penrose will present his lecture, *The Boy who Bit Picasso*. Antony's parents were Roland Penrose, the curator and biographer of Picasso, and Lee Miller, the photographer. Picasso painted her portrait six times, she photographed him more than 1,000 times, and her images illustrate Antony's entertaining and amusing account of life around Picasso.

Our lectures will be held at Clapham Picturehouse, 76 Venn Street, SW4 0AT, on Wednesday mornings, starting at 11 am. Our forthcoming lecture programme should be confirmed before Christmas. If you are interested in attending a lecture or joining CCDFAS, telephone 020 7430 0730 or email membership@nadfasc.org.uk for further information.

Gena Gilbert, Chairman, CCDFAS

Clapham Chamber Concerts

On **Friday 11 November** Clapham Chamber Concerts (CCC) presents Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time*, performed by CCC founders Amanda Lake (violin) and Jessie Maryon Davies (piano), with

core CCC co-professionals, Jonathan Parkin (clarinet) and Sophie Rivlin (cello). This iconic work will be prefaced by a diverse first half to include works by Couperin, Beethoven, Stravinsky and Debussy.

The concert starts at 7.30 pm at St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DX. Tickets are available on the door at £12, £10 concessions and Friends of CCC, £5 children. For further information email claphamchamberconcerts@gmail.com.

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.