

The Clapham Society

Newsletter



Issue 406

April 2018

Winterville is back!

The organisers of Winterville have made clear their intention to seek planning permission for the event on Clapham Common for 2018. The Society does not object to the event per se, which seemed popular with many residents. Our objection is to the location on the grassed area of the Common rather than the purpose built hard surface of the circus site. An area approximately the size of 10% of the Common was fenced off and unavailable to local residents in November. We are now in March and, as anyone who has walked past can see, it remains unusable. Worse, it is an eyesore for those using the rest of the Common. We can expect this part of the Common to be in a substantially sub-optimal state until at least April, almost five months in total. Shortly thereafter a whole series of further events will be held on the site. We are very concerned that the sheer number and scale of events on the Common is causing lasting damage to the ground, which already suffers from very poor drainage.



We all know Lambeth's rationale for approving this event. The organisers see the current location as more commercially valuable than the circus site and Lambeth has an explicit policy of commercialising the Common.

Whilst the Society is not blind to the financial constraints facing Lambeth, we also believe there are appropriate and inappropriate ways to raise revenue. We consider holding events such as Winterville on Clapham Common to be a wholly inappropriate way to fund council budgets. The situation is not helped by Lambeth refusing to say how much money they make out of the event, citing commercial confidentiality. We can therefore only assume it is meagre.

The Clapham Society will continue to argue against Winterville and other inappropriate events on the Common. However, the only way Lambeth will really listen is if they experience first hand the weight of discontent from residents on their stewardship of the Common. This can be done via the planning application consultation process and we will alert you to when this is open. It can also be done by contacting your local councillors who will be aware of Winterville's proposals for this year.

Andrew Summers

Our meetings are held at Omnibus Theatre, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW. The talk will commence promptly at 8 pm and the bar will open prior to the talk at 7 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, open to non-members, who are invited to make a donation. **PLEASE ARRIVE IN GOOD TIME TO ENSURE ENTRY. THERE IS A LIMIT ON THE NUMBER THE THEATRE CAN ACCOMMODATE AND YOU WILL NOT BE ADMITTED WHEN THAT NUMBER IS REACHED.**

Monday 23 April

Let's Talk: About Old Age And Dementia. Local journalist and author **Pippa Kelly** began charting her elderly parents' declining years in the national press over a decade ago, describing her battles to secure state funding for them both and her mother's descent into dementia. Since their deaths she has become one of the UK's foremost writers on older people's care and dementia. Her talk will explore society's attitudes towards its elderly, particularly those with dementia, and highlight the uplifting yet unsung initiatives that are changing lives. She will also be signing copies of her novel, *Invisible Ink*.

Monday 21 May

The South London Botanical Institute (SLBI), in Tulse Hill, was founded by Allan Octavian Hume, who was also a founder of the Indian National Congress, in 1910. The SLBI maintains a small botanical garden, a herbarium and library, and promotes a wide range of plant-related activities.

Roy Vickery worked for over 40 years in the Botany Department of the Natural History Museum, and remains a Scientific Associate at the Museum. He is currently president of the South London Botanical Institute, having served as a trustee for many years, including ten as chairman. His present work focuses on the folklore and uses of plants in Britain and Ireland.

Secretary: Vacant

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Westbury Estate – Lambeth’s Proposals.

In the February 2016 newsletter, we informed members that Lambeth Council was intending to initiate the comprehensive redevelopment of the Westbury Estate on the north side of Wandsworth Road opposite the overground station, bounded by the railway line, Portslade Road and St Rule Street. The Council has carried out extensive consultation with tenants and owners. Our Society attended some of the meetings since the large scheme was likely to be seen from the St Paul’s Clapham area.

Lambeth Planning Committee has now approved the proposals. These can be checked on Lambeth website lambeth.gov.uk/planning (ref 17/0599/OUT and ref 17/06112/FUL). The existing Amesbury and Durrington tower blocks containing 160 homes will not be affected, but the 82 low-rise houses will be replaced. The proposal is for four to ten-storey housing with high buildings fronting Wandsworth Road. We commented on the application supporting the principle of providing housing intended to assist in solving the Council’s housing problem, but asking that the Wandsworth Road tower block be reduced in height, as at ten storeys it will be visible from around St Paul’s Church. We considered reducing the height could be achieved by increasing the heights of other blocks elsewhere on the site. Our views were considered by the Planning Committee but not accepted.

The proposals will be built in three phases. They will provide 334 one, two, three and four-bedroom homes, of which 153 will be affordable. Phase 1, adjoining Wandsworth Road will include 64 rented homes to include a rehousing obligation related to 22-29 Albert Embankment and for rehousing existing estate tenants/owner occupiers whilst the rest of the estate is rebuilt. Accommodation for disabled residents including parking will be included. Phases 2 and 3 are outline approvals only so there is not much detail available as yet.

Peter Cobley

Planning

The Clapham Society Planning Sub-committee is looking for new members with experience in architecture, urban planning, conservation or landscape design.

The Sub-committee is consulted on planning applications affecting Clapham and meets regularly to discuss proposed schemes and provide public support or objections on behalf of the Society. The Sub-committee is a great way to get involved with the local community and help shape the future development of Clapham.

If you or someone you know may be interested please email Sarah Bridger, Convenor of the Sub-committee, for further details: sarahbridger1066@gmail.com.

Angela’s Footsteps

Angela Cobbin-Owen, MBE, whose entertaining talk to the Society in 2015 many will remember, in addition to a successful career as an international wig maker across film and television, has always harboured a passion and talent for writing poetry. She wrote her first poem at the tender age of 16 and has continued to write throughout her life. This collection of insightful, sometimes funny and sometimes poignant poems, entitled *Angela’s Footsteps*, will be launched on **Monday 16 April** at 6.30 pm at Omnibus Theatre. The book will be on sale at the launch and then at Clapham Books, 26 The Pavement, SW4 0JA.

The Mozart Question

On **Saturday 28 April** at 7.30 pm, at St Luke’s Church, Thurleigh Road, SW12 8RQ children’s author and storyteller Sir Michael Morpurgo of *War Horse* fame with Alison Reid and The Storyteller’s Ensemble, will explore the power of Mozart and classical music generally in the orchestras of the concentration camps of WWII Germany. The story is told from the perspective of a musician and we, the audience, bear witness to the powerful story of a Europe devastated by war, the ties that bind parents and children and the sublime redemption offered by exquisite classical music.

The performance will last 75 minutes without an interval and is suitable for children from 8 upwards – and of course adults! There are more details at slms.org.uk



National Trust Volunteer opportunity

Have you ever wanted to help conserve historic properties? Do you want to share how important 575 Wandsworth Road is with others?

Our House Guides are part of a small team dedicated to interpreting this extraordinary and intriguing house, giving tours that inspire and enthral visitors. We are also looking for a Fundraising Volunteer and Supporter Group Co-ordinator to support fundraising administration and ensure local supporter groups are kept up to date with the progress of conservation projects. If you are interested in either of the roles, please contact me: laura.hussey@nationaltrust.org.uk.

Laura Hussey, House and Gardens Manager

Guided Walks

The full schedule of our walks for this year is now on the Events page of our website. We have four local history walks, including one about Clapham during WWII, which is part of Historic England’s London History Day on 31 May, two on Clapham Common led by the popular Dr Iain Boulton, and an exciting new walk of Clapham Ghostsigns devised and led by Sam Roberts, who spoke to us last year about these. The first walk is on:

Sunday 6 May

The Trees of Clapham Common – their origins, uses and the future. A walk looking at the geographical origins of the trees on Clapham Common, how they came to be there and their past and present uses. What is the future for many of our commoner trees in the light of climate change or changes in water availability or pollution? Led by Dr Iain Boulton, leaving from Clapham common Bandstand at 2 pm.

Clapham Book Festival

Put **Saturday 12 May** in your diary for Clapham’s very own book festival. It has something for everyone, from internationally renowned authors Dame Margaret Drabble and Deborah Moggach to crime, non-fiction, poetry and even advice on how to get your own work published. You can also meet local authors and view the exhibition *Memories of Fiction*.

The Festival comes together thanks to Clapham Writers, This is Clapham, Clapham Books and Omnibus Theatre, and forms part of the *Whispers from the Walls* season, a programme of work celebrating storytelling, theatre and the power of words from 9 May-24 June. Tickets go on sale at omnibus-clapham.org on 1 April. For more information go to claphambookfestival.com.

Clapham Chamber Concerts

The season continues on **Friday 20 April**, with a programme for flute, harp and string trio. The ensemble, led by CCC musical director Amanda Lake and harpist Jean Kelly, will be performing Debussy's *Trio for Flute, Harp and Viola* and Mozart's *Flute Quartet* alongside works by Handel, Saint-Saens and Ibert. The evening will also include a performance of CCC composer-in-residence David Wallace's piece *From my window I can see the sea*. The concert will start at 7.30 pm at St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DX. Tickets at the door £12 for adults, £10 for CCC friends and concessions, £5 for children. For further information, see claphamchamberconcerts.org.uk.

Shackleton's Heart

On a freezing February evening a packed house was gripped by Dr Ian Calder's talk about Sir Ernest Shackleton, the one Arctic and four Antarctic expeditions he embarked upon, and in particular about his health. At times Shackleton displayed extraordinary physical prowess, but he also suffered periods of unexplained ill health on all his expeditions. He had to abandon his Arctic venture and on the *Discovery* and *Nimrod* journeys towards the South Pole he had breakdowns that alarmed his companions. Ian Calder's research, along with cardiologist Jan Till, leads him to believe that intermittent abnormal heart rhythms may be a possible explanation. Many will be familiar with what we refer to as atrial fibrillation. Or it could have been due to atrial septal defect (ASD) often called 'a hole in the heart'.

Shackleton clearly knew that he had a heart abnormality which could have been detected by a doctor with a stethoscope, because he repeatedly refused any examination of his heart. His father was a doctor, moreover a doctor with a particular interest in listening to hearts, so it is tempting to believe that Shackleton's father alerted him to the presence of a murmur. Sir Ernest's chances of fame and fortune rested upon his ability to raise finance for his expeditions, from rich men and a question mark over his heart could have been catastrophic. Dr Calder emphasised that little was known about the condition of ASD at the time and there was no treatment available.

Dr Calder said that Shackleton was undoubtedly an outstanding leader, but his possible congenital heart lesion meant that he was often walking on thin ice, both

The Arts Society Clapham Common

The next event on **Wednesday 18 April** is a talk by Sandy Burnett entitled *The Age of Jazz*. This lecture ties in with The Age of Jazz exhibition at Two Temple Place, WC2R 3BD (which closes on 22 April). Lectures are held at Clapham Picturehouse, 76 Venn Street, SW4 0AT, starting at 11 am. Tickets are free for members and £8 for non members.

Membership of The Arts Society Clapham Common costs £50 annually or £90 joint membership (plus joining fee) and gives free entry for 10 lectures. There are also special visits, events and study days which are charged for individually. Information about membership can be obtained from claphamcommon@theartsociety.org, or at Clapham Picturehouse before the lectures.

Omnibus in April

Guahar Jaan – The Data Incident, Tarun Jasani's new multilingual play is a historical reimagining interwoven with scandal, intrigue and invention. It is India in October 1902. Engineer Fred Gaisberg is travelling across the country capturing the exotic sounds of the East to be played on his miraculous new machine, the gramophone. He is hoping to record the beautiful voice of Gauhar Jaan, a young courtesan famed not only for her musical prowess but her arrogance. Fusing live music and dance and celebrating the early 20th century musical revolution, this is the remarkable story of a talented female singer who only ever craved control over her own fate.

There is an exhibition accompanying the play, which will be in the cafe area for the month of April and is supported by The British Library and EMI Archive Trust.

Guahar Jaan – The Data Incident runs at Omnibus Theatre from **Tuesday 10 April to Sunday 29 April**. Booking is open now. For more about the play and accompanying exhibition supported by EMI Archive Trust and The British Library visit the website <http://bit.ly/2EJoef0>.

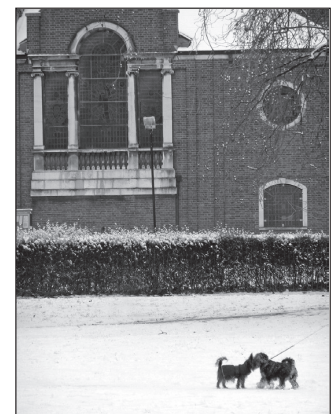
Omnibus has teamed up with local restaurant Zumbura, 36A Old Town SW4 0LB who are giving a whopping 20 per cent discount on their menu for Omnibus ticket holders coming to see this play. Zumbura specialises in home-style healthy Indian dishes and the head chef is from the same area that Gauhar Jaan was born, so the flavours are authentic.

literally and metaphorically. We also heard a little about Sir Ernest's rather complicated and turbulent love life.

It was an interesting new view of someone about whose expeditions and life we know so much, but whose health problems have never before been investigated.



Picture: EMI Archive Trust



Some people enjoyed the recent snow! Here, outside Holy Trinity Church. Photo, Dana Kubick.

Keep the date

To mark their 40 years of making pots in Clapham, North Street Potters are holding a celebratory event on **Saturday 5 May** where the work of the current collective will be showcased but also colleagues who have been part of the story over the years will be exhibiting 'then and now' examples of their craft

There will be a Lucky Dip held throughout the day whereby customers will be rewarded with one of 40 anniversary pieces made especially by the eight potters working there today. For more details go to northstreetpotters.com.

Short Story Competition

Sarah Gray, who has motor neurone disease has published a short story collection *Half Life*, dealing with aspects of physical and mental illness in innovative and original ways. This is the inspiration for a short story competition organised by Claret Press, in support of the Motor Neurone Disease Association (MDNA). The judges will be looking for similarly engaging short stories of no more than 5,000 words inspired by these issues.

For full details and entry form go to claretpress.com. Entries must be submitted by 31 May 2018. There are prizes of £250, £150 and £50. All shortlisted finalists will be published by Claret Press in a new collection.

New members

This month we have welcomed the following new members: Joyce Hoey, Elaine Snell, and Josh Williams and Niamh Murphy.

Maev Sullivan (1948 - 2018)

With the sad loss of Maev in February we have lost a good friend who was a vital and active member of this Society. She came to Clapham in the early 1980s to live nearer to her sister, Brigid, and family. After joining the Clapham Society in 2007 she convened our Events Sub-committee and has been a member of the Main Committee and Vice-Chairman of the Society since 2014. She has also been standing in as Acting Secretary since 2015. With her concern for Clapham Common she has engaged on issues such as the threatened enclosure of common land at The Spinney and the awful state of the Events Site, which is due largely to inadequate repair and recovery time between events. And she delivered newsletters in her area.

After studying law at the University of Durham Maev trained as a barrister and went into the business of communications rather than practice in the courts. In the 1980s and 1990s she was an in-house lawyer at Mercury Communications, a subsidiary of Cable and Wireless which was battling to open up the market against BT. It was the first real competitor against BT. Maev became well known in the industry for successfully resisting BT's attempts to stifle the growth of Mercury.

In the 1990s the telecoms market was opened up to all players leading to the wide range of competing providers today. Maev played a big part in making that change happen. In 1994 she was responsible for a legal challenge to OFCOM over the terms on which BT had to allow competitors to operate on its telephone lines. Thanks to her (and some others) we now have relatively affordable and reliable phone and internet connections from providers who have to compete on cost and quality.

In the 1990s Maev became Regulatory Director and Strategic Director at Mercury and was frequently in the Far East. She is remembered for working horrendous hours, returning home from the City in the small hours for a quick shower and a change of clothes before going straight back to the office in her taxi still waiting outside!

In 2003 Maev survived a brain haemorrhage whilst in Hong Kong. She 'retired' to Clapham and continued to live life to the full, travelling and exploring remote places such as the Galapagos Islands. Bhutan was particularly special to her, and she went to the Antarctic. She was elegant, dressed beautifully, and was great company. Above all she enjoyed and cared about people, as witnessed by her support for two charities: Zaccheus 2000 Trust, which gives free legal advice and help to people caught up in the benefit system in London and campaigns on their behalf, and Beyond Autism which supports people with autism to live fuller lives.

Unique and irreplaceable, Maev will be sorely missed. Our thoughts and deepest sympathy go to Brigid and John Salt and the family that was the true centre of her love and care.

John Adams



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 our website at claphamsociety.com