

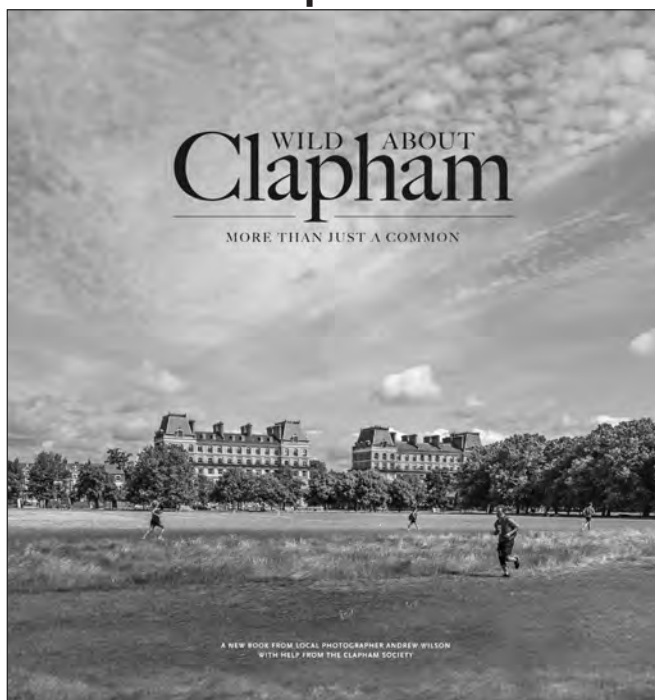


The Clapham Society Newsletter

Issue 410

September 2018

Wild about Clapham



At our Annual General Meeting on **Monday 15 October** Andrew Wilson's new book with stunning photographs of Clapham will be launched. Andrew has over 30 years publishing experience; having worked for a consumer magazine publisher for 20 years, in 2003 he moved on to start his own publishing consultancy, Unity Print and Publishing. With the recession of 2008 he went in a new direction and has over the past 10 years taken his hobby of photography to new heights and published over 18 coffee table books on the towns and villages of South West and West London. Taking his love of nature as a lead, his books all come under the Wild banner. He also publishes a series of local calendars, including Wild about the Common (Wandsworth & Clapham) in association with local estate agent Rampton Baseley.

The introduction to the book is written by Peter Jefferson Smith and members of the Local History sub-committee have given historical advice.

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 and open to non-members, who are invited to make a donation.

Monday 17 September

Vesta Tilley and Her World – an illustrated talk (with film clips). Vesta Tilley (1864-1952), was music hall's legendary male impersonator, recognised as one of the most successful performers of her generation, often billed as: 'The London Idol'. Vesta lived in Lambeth for a period, and she was also known for her work in recruiting soldiers during the First World War. She introduced many popular songs including *Burlington Bertie*, *Jolly Good Luck to the Girl who loves a Solder* and *Following in Father's Footsteps*.

Presented by **Keith Fawkes and Richard Norman** who are members of the British Music Hall Society for which this talk was created.

Monday 15 October

Annual General Meeting. After the formal part of the meeting there will be a brief presentation by Andrew Wilson of his new book *Wild About Clapham*, which will be available at the meeting.

The guest speaker will be **Councillor Sonia Winifred**, who recently presented to Cabinet the report on the future of Lambeth Archives, which resulted in the decision to relocate the Archives to a new building in Kennington.

Saturday 1 September in Old Town

On the day that Clapham Old Town Fair takes over The Polygon, Omnibus Theatre will host Lambeth Local History Fair. Stands including the Cinema Museum and Lambeth Palace Library as well as local history societies from Clapham (of course) Brixton, Streatham and many others will have historical displays and books for sale. During the day there will be talks in the theatre, including one about the history of Clapham Library and its conversion to Omnibus Theatre, and guided local walks.

The Fair is the start of Lambeth's month long Heritage Festival. Go to our website to download the full brochure or call in for a copy at Omnibus Theatre or any Lambeth library.



Walks

This month we have the following walks:

Sunday 9 September

Around Park Hill. A walk along Crescent Lane to Abbeville Road, and up Park Hill returning down Kings Avenue past some of the last remaining villas of Clapham Park. Led by Alyson Wilson. Leaving from Clapham Common Underground Station at 2.30 pm.

Sunday 30 September

Clapham Ghostsigns. Sam Roberts (aka Mr Ghostsigns) whose talk to us last year, members will remember, leads two walks that read Clapham's history through its wonderful collection of fading painted advertisements. He uses these signs to discuss local craft and advertising history. Some research has been done by the Clapham Society and Roy Reed. Leaving from Clapham North Underground Station at 10 am and 2 pm. Very limited places, booking is essential by email alysonwilson.sw4@gmail.com. Charge £5.00. This walk is part of Lambeth Heritage Festival.

Calling all choral singers!

Come and Sing the Mozart *Requiem* at the Church of the Holy Spirit, Narbonne Avenue, SW4 9JU, with Joanna Tomlinson and the Whitehall Choir on **Saturday 8 September**. This is a great chance to enjoy a day refining your vocal technique on one of the most thrilling works in the choral repertoire.

Joanna Tomlinson, the new Music Director of the Whitehall Choir, one of London's top amateur choirs, is a leading vocal trainer and workshop leader. The choir's accompanist, Ian Tindale, holds the Pianist's Prize in the 2017 Wigmore Hall/Kohn Foundation International Song Competition and the Accompanist's Prize in the 2015 Kathleen Ferrier Awards, so expect glorious playing!

Joanna is always keen to add fresh voices (tenors especially), so do come along, whether you are keen to join the choir or just want an enjoyable day's singing, socialising and learning. Timetable, flyer and tickets (£20 for singers; £5 for audience at a 4 pm run-through) are available at whitehallchoir.org. You can hire the score (£10 refundable) or if you have a Novello edition, bring your own. Brilliant music-making in a relaxed atmosphere and fabulous acoustic – is there a better way to spend a September Saturday in town?

The Patron Saint of Computing

For our last meeting before the summer break, David Singmaster, retired professor of mathematics and computer science at London's South Bank University, gave an interesting talk about Ada Lovelace, Lord Byron's daughter, who was one of the world's first computer programmers and wrote the first description of a general computer.

Ada's mother, Annabella Milbanke was interested in mathematics and encouraged her daughter's study of the subject, hoping that she would not take after her father and become a poet. In fact, her father last saw her when she was five weeks old, and her mother did not allow her to see a portrait of him until she was 21 years old. Lady Byron was not a loving parent leaving Ada to be brought up mainly by her grandmother.

As a child Ada suffered various illnesses, one of which deprived her of the use of her legs for several years. And she was a semi-invalid for much of her life. She was tutored in mathematics and astronomy. As a young woman she formed a lasting friendship with Charles Babbage, who began work in 1832 on his first 'Difference Engine' the prototype for which won one of the first Gold Medals of the Astronomical Society. In 1834 he had the first idea for a much more powerful Analytical Engine, which he developed over the next few years into a general

purpose computer.

Ada first met Babbage in 1833 when she attended one of his soirees with her mother and she became very interested in the Difference Engine. In 1835, at the age of 19, Ada married William King, who the next year became the first Earl of Lovelace. Despite having three children in quick succession Ada continued her studies with leading mathematicians, and understood Babbage's ideas which she explained more clearly and elegantly than Babbage ever did. Her importance was as the interpreter of Babbage's work.

Ada Lovelace suffered serious, and painful, health problems for several years in the late 1840s, and died in 1852, near Newstead Abbey where she was buried beside her father with their coffins touching. Despite popular opinion Ada did not produce any great mathematics, and her notebook, which might have contained interesting material, is lost. However, she foresaw the possibilities of computing and was thus a forerunner of the computer age.

David Singmaster proposed an English Heritage blue plaque to Ada Lovelace, and in 1992 was present at the unveiling of it on No 12 St James's Square by John Barnes, Chairman of ADA UK.

After his talk David engaged in lengthy mathematical discussions with some of members of his audience who had a special interest in the development of computers.

The 55th Annual General Meeting of the Clapham Society will be held on **Monday 15 October** at Omnibus, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW starting at 8pm.

AGENDA

Apologies for absence

Approval of the Minutes of the previous AGM (23 October 2017) available at the meeting

Adoption of the Annual Report for the year 2017-18

Adoption of the Financial Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2018

Election of the Officers and Committee Members for the year 2018-2019

Chairman

Treasurer

Vice-Chairman

Solicitor

Secretary

Membership Secretary

A maximum of ten further Committee Members

Appointment of the Independent Examiner Any

other business and announcements

The formal business will be followed by a brief introduction by Andrew Wilson to his new book *Wild About Clapham*.

The guest speaker will be **Councillor Sonia Winifred**, who has recently seen through Cabinet the report on of the future of Lambeth Archives

Nominations for the election of Officers and Committee Members must be made to the 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

Gillian White, Secretary, 2a Sibella Road, SW4 6HX.

September at Omnibus Theatre

September has shaped up to be a bit of a Lorca extravaganza! Fans of the dramatist and all things Spanish will be delighted to find out that we are bringing a new adaptation of Federico Garcia Lorca's classic tragedy *Blood Wedding* to Omnibus Theatre for three weeks, adapted by Clapham local George Richmond-Scott, who is also the associate director of the West End hit



Everybody's Talking about Jamie. There will be many free bonus events for ticket holders including a pre-show flamenco by a renowned dancer Lourdes Fernandez as well as post-show Q&As to get up close to the cast and creative team and a pre-show Lorca discussion by Professor of Spanish literature Dr Stephen Roberts.

Celebrated Spanish dramatist Federico García Lorca's 1932 folk tragedy is deftly pulled into sharp focus in this dark and seductive re-imagining set in modern day London. This contemporary adaptation explosively blends grit, fate and claustrophobia. Told in a bold physical style with original live music.

Performances are from **Tuesday 4 September to Sunday 23 September**. Daily except Mondays at 7.30 pm, Sunday 4 pm.

On **Monday 10 September** Clapham local and *The Independent's* art critic Michael Glover will be launching his new book of poems inspired by Lorca as part of an evening he is curating, entitled *Bow Wow Shop presents Messages to Federico*. Check website for details. Art inspired by Lorca will also be on display during the month in the Omnibus Common Room. **Sunday Music** opens the new season on **Sunday 2 September** at 7.30 pm

with James Girling: Quarteto de Bossa Nova, This is an unmissable celebration of Brazil and Bossa Nova: the intimate fusion of samba and jazz, conceived on the beaches of Rio de Janeiro. Guitarist James Girling brings his quartet to Omnibus for a hip-swaying, foot-tapping night of rhythmical magic. For all tickets go to omnibus-clapham.org or call 0207 498 4699.

Some good news

We have had good news about the Victorian pillar box which was outside 3-5 Nightingale Lane but removed by the developer Audley Retirement Villages earlier this year. Many members complained about its removal as it stood for many years outside the former police section house which has now been demolished to be replaced by a retirement village. Since the box was within metres of Clapham South Underground station and adjacent to a busy bus stop it was always well used.

James Baker, a local resident, contacted the Clapham Society and asked for our help – which we were happy to give. Now Royal Mail has confirmed that they will restore and return the Victorian pillar box once the building work is complete.

Pleased with this success, we now hope that Audley Retirement Village developers will keep the footpath open so that Clapham South Underground users and families going to Oliver House school next to the site do not have to cross the busy road every time.



Annabel Allott

We were able to contact just under half of our members by email to tell them about the planning application for Winterville thanks to the return of the GDPR form. If you would like to receive occasional urgent information other than in the newsletter then please ensure that the Clapham Society has permission to use your current contact details for this purpose.

Save the date St Paul's Opera Autumn Gala Friday **12 October**. stpaulsopera.org

Clapham Relief Fund

Would you like to help run a local charity – only two hours four times a year? The Clapham Relief Fund, a local charity which gives grants to those in need in the Clapham area, has a vacancy for a Trustee and is now looking to fill this post. This is a voluntary position, with Trustees meeting just four times a year to consider applications for grants from individuals and organisations. More information is available on claphamrelieffund.org. If you would be interested, or know someone who may be able to help, please contact Shirley Cosgrave, the Clerk of the Fund, on enquiries@claphamrelieffund.org, by 15 September 2018.

Shirley Cosgrave

On the Common

The Winterville 2018 planning application deadline came and went in July with a sizeable number of Clapham Society members commenting either online or in writing. At the time of writing the online comments only were running more than 4-to-1 objecting to the application. Our members will be very familiar with our position on this matter: events of this scale

should be held on the hard surface 'circus' site rather than on the grass with all the associated damage and unsightliness it causes for many months. Having been told repeatedly by Winterville and its supporters that last year's damage to the Common was the result of incompetence (Lambeth Events) and misfortune (unseasonably cold weather), I met with the agronomist retained by Winterville to advise them on preparations and remediation work on the Common. Whilst there seems solid evidence of both incompetence and misfortune, I heard nothing to suggest that less ham-fisted remediation work or better weather this year would materially improve the recovery time of the Common. Despite the obvious drawbacks of this event, we have little faith in Lambeth as stewards of the Common and will need to keep up the pressure. Other opponents of Winterville, including Friends of Clapham Common, are planning further action to try to block this application between now and the likely decision date some time in September and we will be as involved as we can be.

Andrew Summers

Return to the (Old Town) Barricades!

Readers may recall my article in October 2017. A year has now passed since the Edwardian toilet block on The Polygon was controversially demolished following a botched attempt by the Council to convert it into a café. The unsightly panel enclosure around where the building once stood continues to blight the piazza created at great public expense and razzmatazz in 2012 in the heart of Old Town. At least the area enclosed by the original structure was eventually marginally reduced in area sometime last October, and this has made it a little less oppressive and overbearing for residents of The Polygon and customers of Trinity restaurant. It also released from captivity some of the trees and other plants and paving that formed part of the original landscaping scheme.

Since then a series of requests for clarification on the Council's plans for the site, which is legally part of the Common, have been made. The widely shared view



was that the site should revert to open space, and that a landscaping scheme should be drawn up and implemented as quickly as possible. For months it remained unclear whether some within the Council still harboured plans to construct an entirely new building for commercial use on the site, irrespective of its likely viability. Perhaps the more likely explanation is that no one was empowered to make an appropriate decision. Finally, on 9 March we learned that a decision had been taken to landscape the site, and a process had been set in train to devise and agree plans and to select a contractor to undertake the works. As far as I can ascertain very limited consultation has been undertaken – Clapham Town Councillors and a small number of interested parties. Nonetheless we have been informed that a planning application was due to be submitted at the beginning of August, with a view to the contractor starting on site at the beginning of October, and a completion date sometime in November.

I have not yet found a record of this application on Lambeth's planning database. We live in hope.

Mark Leffler

Immortalised

Opening on **Thursday 30 August** this exhibition explores the ways in which we commemorate people and events in England and looks into how we may memorialise in the future. *Immortalised* brings new meaning and context to those who have been remembered and highlights those who have been left out, from women to the working class and people of colour.

You are invited to enter four giant monuments that hold the key to our me-

morial past and future. From a Trafalgar Square lion to the Brighton Peace Angel, to the boots on the contested statue of Edward Colson in Bristol, these will each explore how, why and who we remember, from the well-loved and famous, to the lost local hero.

The exhibition is at The Workshop, 26 Lambeth High Street, SE1 7AG. Open Wednesday to Sunday 10 am to 5 pm until 16 September. Free admission.

Bandstand concerts

Sunday 2 September – Junction Jazz – 2 pm to 4 pm

Sunday 9 September – Crystal Palace Band – 3 pm to 5 pm

Sunday 23 September – Clapham Community Choir. 2 pm to 4 pm. This is the Clapham Society's Annual Bandstand concert, which is part of Lambeth's Heritage Festival

Clapham Chamber Concerts

The tenth anniversary season begins on **Friday 28 September** with a gala concert introducing Ensemble SW4, the new ensemble-in-residence led by artistic directors Amanda Lake (violin) and Jonathan Parkin (clarinet). The group will be performing *A Soldier's Tale* by Stravinsky and a premiere by composer-in-residence David Wallace. Full details at clapham-chamberconcerts.org.uk.

New Members

We have welcomed the following new members over the summer:

Lucy Daniels, Robin Downes, Safenaz Farouk-O'Keil, Jorge Ferreira and Bella Caridade-Ferreira, Susan Hayday and Peter Glasgow, Michael and Meg Rallings, Paul Stephenson and Pam Williams.

GDPR

Many thanks to members who have returned the form confirming their willingness to receive occasional information (in addition to the newsletter and annual report) from the Society by post, email or phone. The details provided will be kept secure and not be sold or passed on to a third party. The full Privacy Policy can be found on our website or can be provided, on request, by the Membership Secretary. It is not too late to return the form and any future changes to your name, address, email or telephone number should be sent to me to keep our records up-to-date.

Jennifer Everett,

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