



# The Clapham Society Newsletter

Issue 413 December 2018/January 2019

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The next newsletter will be the February edition, due out at the end of January 2019.

We wish all our readers seasonal greetings.

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.

There is no meeting in December. The programme for 2019 is shown below.

#### Monday 21 January

**Bob Flanagan**, Chairman of the Friends of West Norwood Cemetery, will discuss the history of the cemetery and give details of some of the many remarkable Clapham residents who chose to be buried there. These include the clown Tom Barry, who sailed down the Thames in a tub pulled by geese in 1844, Thomas Cubitt, the developer of Clapham Park, the engineer Sir William Cubitt FRS, the potter John Doulton, the naturalist Robert Hudson FRS, and the Baptist preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon.

#### Monday 18 February

An evening with **John O'Farrell**, local resident, Clapham Society member, renowned author and comedy scriptwriter. He will talk about his experiences as a writer from *Spitting Image* to Broadway musicals via numerous books including the recent *Things Can Only Get Worse*. In between, he found time to stand for Parliament against Theresa May and campaign for a new local school where he was Chair of Governors for eight years.

#### Monday 18 March

**Bill Linskey** Chair of the Brixton Society will tell the story of the local sugar magnate and philanthropist, **Henry Tate**. Perhaps best known for his donation of paintings, which formed the basis of the Gallery of British Art, later known as Tate Gallery and now Tate Britain, Henry Tate also donated three libraries in Lambeth including the striking Brixton Library in Windrush Square. Bill's recent book about Henry Tate and the Brixton Library will be available at the meeting.

#### Monday 15 April

Three years after it was destroyed by a devastating fire, **Battersea Arts Centre's** Grand Hall has reopened following a multi-million pound refurbishment and restoration by architects Haworth Tompkins. The first production was *Missing* the show that was running at the time of the fire. **Maddie Wilson**, formerly assistant to the Director of Battersea Arts Centre, now a producer and coordinator of their new co-working space, the Scratch Hub, will talk about the development of this atmospheric and iconic building.

#### Monday 20 May

**John Inglis** and **Jill Sanders** will talk about their **Panorama of the Thames Project**. When filming the River Thames from Tower Bridge to Hampton, to produce a contemporary panoramic record of the river, they uncovered an 1829 60ft panorama from Richmond to Westminster. Both show continuous views of both banks of the river, enabling comparisons across almost 200 years of social and architectural change. This presentation is an introduction to a fascinating project, with additional short films illustrating special features. Their book *A Riverside View of Georgian London* (price £25) will be on sale after the presentation.

#### Monday 17 June

**Brewing along the Wandle Valley**. **Alison Cousins**, a volunteer at the Wandle Industrial Museum based in Mitcham, has a keen interest in our local heritage and will talk about brewing along the Wandle Valley. While Young's is the best-known name associated with brewing in south London, there were many other brewers along the Wandle and now a local revival is taking place.

**There are no meetings in July and August**

#### Monday 16 September

**Growing Up in Wartime Battersea**. What was it like to be a child in London during World War II? This talk by **Carol Rahn** shares highlights of filmed interviews with men and women recounting their childhood experiences during the war. It is a fascinating story of the terror – and temptations – of bombing, disrupted schooling and youthful independence that would be unthinkable today. Even for those familiar with the history of the war years, these first-hand accounts are magnetic.

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### Monday 14 October

**Annual General Meeting.** Guest Speaker to be advised.

### Monday 18 November

One of our most popular speakers in the past, **Edmund Bird**, returns to tell us about the **Architectural History of the London Underground**. Edmund has been the Senior Heritage Advisor to Transport for London since 2006 working on projects to refurbish and adapt London Underground and Overground historic stations and Thames bridges together with highway schemes in conservation areas. He has also written five books on the architectural history of Lambeth between 1837 and 2000 on which he has given talks to the Clapham Society in previous years.

**There is no meeting in December**

## St Paul's Opera's Christmas Cracker

Join St Paul's Opera on **Friday 7 December** for Christmas music, where the rulebook has been well and truly thumbed through and the boundaries have been pushed to compile a programme to suit every fan of the festive season. With medieval carols, the glory of oratorical offerings, festive morsels from opera, some unusual twists of favourite carols and popular songs from the movies, no stone will be left unturned.

Regular soloists from St Paul's Opera productions and members of the chorus, will offer arias, duets and ensembles, and there will be some community singing. The event is produced by Patricia Ninian, and pianist for the evening will be Maya Soltan. St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove SW4 0DX. Doors open 7.00 pm, concert at 7.30 pm. Tickets: £15 on the door or at [stpaulsoperachristmascracker.eventbrite.co.uk](http://stpaulsoperachristmascracker.eventbrite.co.uk).

## And more Christmas Music

On **Tuesday 18 December** Clapham Community Choir celebrates with a programme of music for all seasons at St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DX at 7.30 pm, doors open 7.00. Admission is free (donations are invited). The choir welcomes everyone. For information about the Choir go to [singclapham.org/](http://singclapham.org/).

## Music at St Luke's

St Luke's Music Society has a stellar line up in the run up to Christmas and into the New Year. On **Saturday 8 December** distinguished opera star, Sir Willard White, returns following his last triumphant appearance at St Luke's with a programme ranging from Schubert's *Death and the Maiden* to *Some Enchanted Evening* from *South Pacific* – truly something to enjoy during the dark days of winter!



Then on **Saturday 12 January** the Doric String Quartet make their St Luke's debut with a programme of Mozart, Bartok and Schubert quartets, and on **Saturday 2 February** organist Thomas Trotter, gives a virtuoso demonstration of St Luke's newly restored organ in a solo recital.

These concerts are selling very well, so book your tickets soon at [slms.org.uk](http://slms.org.uk) where you can also find further details. St Luke's Church, 194 Ramsden Road, SW12 8RQ.

## Christmas Music

On **Friday 14 December** Clapham Chamber Concerts presents a seasonal concert featuring harpist, Jean Kelly, with singers Daire Halpin, Patricia Hammond, Lisa Coates and Louisa Barry. This concert promises to be a reflective look at both Christmas and its earlier pagan predecessor, Yule. Britten's *Ceremony of Carols* is a firm favourite for this time of year and Holst's *Choral Hymns from the Rig-Veda* harks back to ancient gods and goddesses from another age. David Wallace's new work: *A Symbol At Yule* is a celebration of the pre-Christian influences for this time of year. The concert concludes with a few Christmas favourites and festive solos. St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DX at 7.30 pm. Tickets available on the door at £12, £10 concessions and Friends of CCC, £5 children. Further information email [claphamchamberconcerts@gmail.com](mailto:claphamchamberconcerts@gmail.com).

## Hospice Honey

For an unusual local Christmas present you can buy Hospice Honey from 1 December either at the café at Royal Trinity Hospice, 30 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0RN or from Nick Pursey, telephone 020 8675 0587. It comes in 4 oz and 8 oz sizes, priced £5.50 and £10.00.



*The Selfish Giant*

## Minutes of The Annual General Meeting 2018

The 55th Annual General Meeting of the Society was held at 8pm on 15 October 2018 at Omnibus, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4. The Society's President, Martin Drury, took the chair and 35 members were present.

1. The Secretary had received apologies for absence from Gillian White, Sarah Bridger and Jill Cramphorn. The Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting (24 October 2017), had not been prepared owing to the sad passing of Maev Sullivan, the late Secretary of the Society.

2. The Chair of the Society, Annabel Allott, presented the Annual Report, which had been circulated with the October newsletter (Issue 411).

She reiterated her thanks, made in the report, to all those who helped with the running of the Society. She announced that Peter Jefferson Smith would retire as Vice President of the Society, and would be succeeded by Julia Barfield. Appreciation was shown by all present for the services of Peter Jefferson Smith to the Society over many years. The Chair also acknowledged the passing of Maev Sullivan and her work for the Society

She encouraged members of the Society to offer their services by joining the main Committee and the various sub-committees, particularly the Common and Open Spaces Sub-

committee. She was pleased that the role of Secretary had been filled by Gillian White. The Report was unanimously adopted.

3. The Treasurer, David Brown, presented the Financial Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2018. He explained that unrestricted income had almost matched our expenditure and that the work of claiming for recent years under the Gift Aid Scheme continues.

He pointed out the forthcoming increase in subscriptions with effect from 1 April 2019, as detailed in the Report, and highlighted details of the generous donations to the Legal Actions and Special Purposes Fund. The Accounts were then unanimously adopted.

4. The following were elected as officers for the year 2018 - 2019:

**Chair** Annabel Allott     **Solicitor** Daniel Dovar  
**Treasurer** David Brown     **Secretary** Gillian White  
**Membership Secretary** Jennifer Everett

Also elected as Committee Members were: Christine Armstrong, Sarah Bridger, Bill Emmett, Mark Leffler, Andrew Summers and Alyson Wilson.

5. Anna Long FCA was thanked for her work during the last year and reappointed as Independent Examiner.

6. There was no other business.

Following the formal meeting we were pleased to welcome Kevin Crook, the recently appointed Assistant Director with responsibility for Lambeth's Parks, Leisure and Cemeteries. Kevin's name may be familiar, as he has been involved with Lambeth's parks for several years.

Kevin outlined some of the financial issues facing the Council, notably the 50% cut (c.£2m) in the parks budget in 2015. Against that the Council has been growing the income it gets from events, but also to fund agreed priorities from a share of the levy on new developments in the form of Community Investment Levy (CIL). Regarding priorities for Clapham Common, the Council has been developing investment proposals to improve seven areas which will be the subject of local consultation. These include the two playgrounds and the paddling pool. In addition, he said the Council has applied for loan funding to rejuvenate the 'green' Events Site off Long Road, and the Redgra games area off The Avenue. The Bowling Green, which is very little used, is being looked at with a view to considering alternatives. Partly in response to recent court rulings, Lambeth is apparently undertaking a full review of its Events Strategy, and it is intended this will be consulted on over the winter months.

As a result of the Quietways 5 cycle route project (Croydon to Central London) Kevin confirmed that the Council has now agreed to close Windmill Drive to through traffic, and create a new shared cycle route from Windmill Drive, past the playground and Long Pond to the drinking fountain, and across The Pavement to Bromell's Road, which will have a contra-flow cycle lane. This is a scheme over which the Society has expressed a number of major reservations in recent years. It will result in minor additions to the green area of the Common at Windmill Drive and Rookery Road.

On a more positive note, Kevin said he was planning to raise the horticultural standards on the Common; completely clear the Greenways (depot) site on Windmill Drive; create a series of smaller mulching areas around the Common which could be available to the public; and to bring tree maintenance back in house, and initiate a new planting programme.

In response to questions, Kevin confirmed that Wandsworth has no funding responsibilities for the Common; he hoped that street trees that have been lost in Old Town would be replaced; that the Council is looking to create new changing rooms to replace the defunct facilities on West Side; and that Clapham Common is a priority, together with Kennington Park if the Council can secure additional lottery funds.

*Mark Leffler*

## Winter at Omnibus Theatre

Fresh off the back of last year's OFFIE winning Family Christmas show, this festive season Omnibus Theatre presents Oscar Wilde's celebrated short-story *The Selfish Giant*. Already listed as one of *Time Out's* Best Family Christmas Shows to see in London, this production runs from **Wednesday 14 November** until **Monday 24 December**. For ages 3 to 103. Magical puppetry and a heart-warming reimagining for all the family awaits.

On **Sunday 16 December** *The Seven Steps Big Band* brings a touch of festive swing to Clapham. The 20-piece ensemble (yes, they can just fit in!) was formed in 2012 from ex-members of the Durham, Oxford and Cambridge University big bands, together with graduates from music colleges to form

one of the really exciting young bands playing in London. You don't want to miss this Christmas special. Book early!

The New Year opens with *Well/Being*, a panoramic mini-season exploring mental health unburdened from stigma. Playing On, Body Politic and Sarah Corbett unflinchingly confront lived experiences of mental health through new writing, dance and physical theatre. Award-winning playwright Philip Osment brings *Hearing Things* back to Omnibus Theatre. This production is based on lived experiences arising from Playing On's work with service users and NHS professionals. Here Osment asks fundamental questions about the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness. From **Tuesday 8 January** to **Sunday 27 January**.

Further information and all tickets at [omnibus-clapham.org](http://omnibus-clapham.org), 020 7498 4699 or call in at Omnibus Theatre, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW.

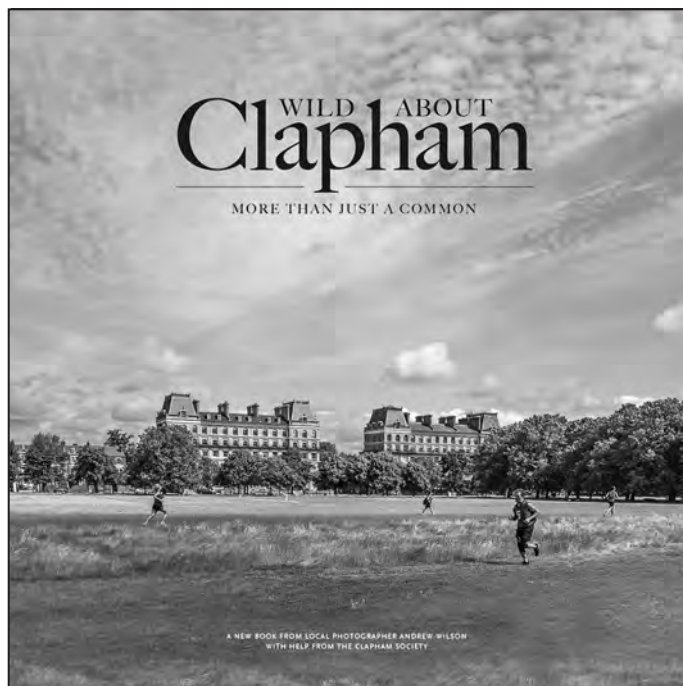
## A Photographer looks at Andrew Wilson's Wild About Clapham

The great 20th century French photographer, Henri Cartier-Bresson specialised in taking the perfect photograph by capturing his subject at just the right time – ‘the decisive moment’.

Andrew Wilson seems to follow the same premise. *Wild About Clapham* is rich with photographs caught at just the right moment. If you'd like an example, compare the cover photograph with its 'twin' on the double page spread, pages 78-79. They are both photographs of the same subject, North Side, shot deeply within the Common, and taken at the same time – almost. Joggers appear in both shots, but have reached different positions in their run. The cover shot shows the closer jogger on the right hand side of centre, a great place to balance the focus of the Cedars terraces and provide overall balance for the cover image. The double page spread has a different function than the cover and of course is a much more horizontal image. The closer runners, now two of them, are to the left and by shifting the 'weight' to the left, Wilson upsets the overall balance and enhances the sense of movement as the joggers run along the Common. Satisfying two different purposes, both photographs were taken at 'the decisive moment'.

Henri Cartier-Bresson is quoted as saying 'Of course it's all luck'. In this, Andrew Wilson departed from Cartier-Bresson and instead put in time and work. Focussing on Clapham, Wilson took over 20,000 photographs from 2016 to 2018 and edited them down to around 400 in order to get a book full of excellent images. He was to photograph Clapham through the seasons and to capture events and celebrations. People, pets and wildlife are all beautifully here. He also researched historical and social details about Clapham which add an additional strand of interest.

But what I like most in Andrew Wilson's photographs is his appreciation of shadow and clouds – he glories in long, oblique, very British shadows and captures wonderful clouds – clouds that complement the subject on the ground and clouds that absolutely make the photograph. There is much to enjoy in the book. *Wild About Clapham: More Than Just a Common* by Andrew Wilson price £21.99 is available from Clapham Books, 26 The Pavement, SW4 0JA.



## Christmas Fayre

Holy Trinity Clapham's Green and Ethical Christmas Fayre is back on **Saturday 8 December**. There will be hundreds of gifts including clothing which helps communities in South America, goods from Africa to empower women, skin products that are good for the planet and great for you, as well as Fairtrade coffee, home-baked cakes and ethical foods. There will be activities for children and Santa will be there with a grotto full of environmentally friendly toys!

Macaulay Primary School will be selling Christmas trees, mulled wine and BBQ food. From 11 am to 4 pm at Holy Trinity Church, Clapham Common. Admission £1.00, children free.

## Underground Farm Tours

If you were intrigued by Derrick Johnson's description in the November newsletter of his visit to Growing Underground, the farm underneath Clapham High Street, you now have the opportunity see it for yourself. For the next few months there are tours each Tuesday and Thursday at 6 pm. For details and to book ticket go to [eventbrite.co.uk/e/growing-underground-urban-farm-tour-with-the-founders-tickets-51023923930](http://eventbrite.co.uk/e/growing-underground-urban-farm-tour-with-the-founders-tickets-51023923930).

## Light up a Life

Royal Trinity Hospice's annual Christmas service is on **Thursday 13 December**. At 6.45 pm the lights on the tree at the hospice will be switched on followed by a candlelit procession to Holy Trinity Church for the service at 7.15 pm. The event will include guest readers, wine, mince pies and plenty of carol singing. It is a fitting way to remember loved ones with family and friends at this time of year.

**Short of ideas for Christmas presents? Why not give a friend or relation gift membership of the Clapham Society. For further details contact the Membership Secretary.**

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

### Chairman

**Annabel Allott**

Email: [annabel@allott.plus.com](mailto:annabel@allott.plus.com)

### Secretary

**Gillian White**

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### Membership Secretary

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