

The Clapham Society Newsletter



Issue 423 December 2019/January 2020

The next newsletter will be the February edition, due out at the end of January 2020.

We wish all our readers seasonal greetings.

We meet 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 2020 is shown below.

Monday 20 January

Award-winning Clapham landscape architect **Diana Armstrong Bell** will introduce her book *Sculpting the Land: Landscape design influenced by abstract art* and discuss her designs which show the influence of her study of abstract art, particularly the work of Russian artist Kazimir Malevich. She is also inspired by earthworks, lines and patterns in the landscape and the book is beautifully illustrated with hand drawn sketches in pencil, ink and watercolour.

Monday 17 February

Sharing your personal data in the Health and Care System – what are they up to? **Dr Jack Barker**, a Consultant Physician at King's College Hospital, is also the Chief Clinical Information Officer for the six boroughs of south-east London. He is the driving force behind attempting to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of local health and care through the use of information technology and will tell us what has been achieved so far and in what direction this is heading.

Monday 16 March

After 25 years of being at the heart of Clapham's community, leading arts organisation **Studio Voltaire** will embark on a major £2.4 million capital refurbishment project. **Laura Harford**, Curator, will discuss this transformative project and offer insight into the process, including the plans designed by Matheson Whiteley Architects and the history of the site. The project will increase public space within the site by 233%, introduce a new community space, garden and café, and importantly provide more affordable artist studios to ensure that Clapham's thriving artistic community is maintained.

Monday 20 April

Bill Linskey, Chairman of the Brixton Society, will tell us about the famous markets area of Brixton, where there are so many 'firsts'; not least, the first shopping street to be lit by electricity. But the story of the markets is more important than that. Shops reflect the changing needs and tastes of their customers, and the history of shopping in Brixton mirrors the history of the area.



The bandstand on Clapham Common has recently been refurbished by Dannatt Johnson Architects, who were responsible for the major restoration of the bandstand in 2006.

This is the last newsletter I shall be editing. After nearly 20 years I am handing over the baton to Ruth Eastman, so that I shall have more time to dedicate to local history and the Society's publications. Thank you for your support and contributions, which are so important to keep the newsletter lively and informative. Please keep sending them to Ruth!

Alyson Wilson

Monday 18 May

St Paul's Opera – How Did That Happen?

In the short, dark days of January 2013 a plot was hatched to put on an opera at St Paul's Church. The mad minds involved were the then vicar, Deborah Matthews, parishioner Patricia Ninian, and Patricia's singing teacher, international soprano Jennifer McGregor. As a toe-in-the-water exercise, Puccini's one-act opera *Gianni Schicchi* was chosen. The show, just one night, was a sell-out and the die was cast. Founder, **Patricia Ninian** will explain how St Paul's Opera has grown. It now stages an ambitious opera over three nights every summer and has added regular gala concerts and an annual Masterclass given by international tenor, David Butt Philip.

Monday 15 June

Journalist and author of *The House on the Hill* **Christopher Impey** will tell the story of HMP Brixton, London's oldest prison, which was 200 years old in 2019. It began as the Surrey House of Correction, popularising the brutal treadmill. Later it became the first convict prison solely for women and during the twentieth century the remand prison for London. By the millennium it was rated the worst prison in the country by inspectors, but in recent years has been transformed and now boasts The Clink restaurant and National Prison Radio.

Monday 21 September

The late Peter Jefferson Smith's book about the three generations of local architects, *The I'Ansons – A Dynasty of London Architects & Surveyors*, was published by the Clapham Society in November 2019. Alyson Wilson, Andrew Saint and Timothy Walker, who completed the book left unfinished when Peter died, will tell the story.

Monday 19 October Annual General Meeting

Monday 16 November

The Fatal Illness of Kaiser Frederick of Germany – a disaster for the world.

Dr Ian Calder, whose talk about Shackleton drew a record audience in 2018, returns to tell the story of Kaiser Frederick, who possessed almost everything required to become one of the world's truly great rulers – except good health and a reasonably sane heir. The medical management of Frederick's illness by an English expert aggravated his son Wilhelm's paranoia about Britain. Frederick died of a smoking-related disease shortly after his coronation and 'Kaiser Bill' messed things up completely, allowing German military hawks to start WWI. The English doctor's treatment was probably correct, but his medical career was wrecked.

Venn Street Market

The market is open from 10 am to 4 pm on **Saturdays 7, 14 and 21 December**. Closed on **28 December** and reopening **4 January 2020**.

This year Venn Street Market is holding a Christmas Raffle in support of three local charities: Ace of Clubs, Omnibus Theatre and Royal Trinity Hospice. To increase the support of the raffle, many local shops and organisations are selling tickets to create more awareness and funding, and help build a strong community.

Royal Trinity Hospice Light up a Life Service

Trinity Hospice annual Light up a Life service is on **Thursday 12 December** at Holy Trinity Church, SW4 0QZ. The evening begins with the lighting of the Christmas tree outside the hospice on Clapham Common North Side at 6.45 pm, followed by a short candle-lit procession to the church where the service of readings and carols begins at 7.15 pm, followed by mulled wine and mince pies. All are welcome and the service is not ticketed. More information at royaltrinityhospice.london/lual or call 020 7787 1012.

The Christmas Feast

On **Friday 6 December** regular soloists from St Paul's Opera productions and concerts, with members of the chorus, will offer arias and ensembles to enjoy at the best time of the year to sing. The audience will not be forgotten, with some community singing to crown the evening's entertainment. Starting at 7.30 pm at St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DX. Tickets: £15 in advance at stpaulsopera.org or £17 on the door. For further information email info@stpaulsopera.org.

Planning News

18-19 The Pavement

As far back as 2002 the Society joined with Lambeth Council in opposing plans by a previous owner of this long-derelict site to redevelop. But more recently, the new owner's local architects, Marks Barfield, devised a design for a contemporary new building, both positive in design and respectful of its key position next to a listed building fronting on to Clapham Common. Planning permission was awarded in 2018 after a blander frontage, favoured by Council planners, was substituted for the original design. Marks Barfield have now applied for a variation to the permission which would restore a more positive scheme for the frontage. The Society has been strong in support, recognising the quality and character of the design.

Grafton Square

An application by Lambeth Council Landscapes to attach pairs of advertising boards to railings on either side of two entrances into the gardens in Grafton Square generated stiff and widespread local opposition. The Society concurred with the objections raised, in particular to the fact that the square was already adequately signed – the new boards were not only unnecessary but would have a significant and negative impact on the square, which lies in the heart of a conservation area. Further to these objections, the planning application was withdrawn.

Clapham South Tesco Car Park

We are awaiting determination by Lambeth.

Martin Pratt

Clapham Singing!

Clapham Community Choir's Christmas celebration this year is on **Tuesday 17 December**. It's an occasion to showcase the enthusiastic and friendly choir and for the audience to share in the celebration. Music is for everyone – a song, a carol...! All are welcome. St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DX. Doors open at 7 pm for a 7.30 pm

start. Admission is free and drinks and refreshments will be available.

As a warm-up for the concert celebration, the choir is also singing on **Saturday 7 December** at the Holy Trinity Christmas Fayre at 12 noon, and at Venn Street Market at 1 pm.

New members are always welcome. For information see singclapham.org or email info@claphamcommunitychoir.org.

Hanna and the Corkscrew Wine Bar

There have been several responses to the piece in the last newsletter about Hanna Barrington. The most comprehensive was from Pamela Price, whose delicatessen on The Pavement (where Clapham Books now is) many members will remember. She wrote:

‘Hanna lived in Dorothy Road (off Lavender Hill) half way up on the right with a large barn door with a little notice on it. It was there last week when I went past and wondered if Hanna was still there.

I met her years ago towards the end of the Corkscrew days through my sometime catering assistant and latterly financial advisor, the late Franz Buchaus, who came from Graz. He was Austrian as was Hanna and because I had worked in Austrian refugee camps as a student she did not make me unwelcome. She was not over-friendly either because I was obviously not a fellow traveller. She was, however, very keen to be a supplier of varied Austrian sausages to my shop on The Pavement and we did sell them for a while. I saw her fleetingly over the next years and the last time, maybe ten years or more ago, was when I found her in Asda and gave her a lift back.

She was a splendid spiky lady and I wish I had taken time to know her better and be more helpful as she aged.’

Jeanne Rathbone added that in the 1970s and 1980s Franz Buchaus ran Geiger’s Wine Bar, now Donna Margherita Pizza on Lavender Hill.

Have a Green Christmas

The Green & Ethical Christmas Fayre takes place on **Saturday 7 December** from 11 am to 4 pm at Holy Trinity Church, Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QZ. Stall holders from previous years as well as many exciting new businesses will offer quality gifts, including beautiful clothing which helps communities in South America and India, skin products that are good for the planet and for you, accessories, homewares, books, Fairtrade coffee, home-baked cakes and locally made upcycled gifts.

There will be activities for children, including crafts and face painting, and Father Christmas will be welcoming the children with environmentally friendly toys in his Green Grotto. Macaulay School will be selling Christmas trees, wreaths and barbecued food outside the church.

A percentage of the profit from the Fayre will go to Emmaus, who upcycle furniture and help homeless people get back into a confident, happy life. Funds will also go to help the environmental mission of the Church based on the Anglican Church’s fifth mark of mission: ‘To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth’, and to investments including a move to LED floodlights and toilet twinning! (See toilettwining.org/what-we-do/). Admission: Adults £1 donation, children FREE! To find out more, contact environment@holyltrinityclapham.org.

Clapham North Update

Further to ‘Time to revitalise Clapham North’ which appeared in our October newsletter, I am now able to confirm that Lambeth Council and Transport for London (TfL) intend to engage in public consultation early in the new year to consider proposals that will affect road traffic and pedestrians in the vicinity of Clapham North, as well as considering partial traffic restrictions in Voltaire Road.

As stated in the earlier article this area is a blackspot for traffic accidents, and TfL is considering a range of ways to address this issue. Of particular concern are traffic movements out of Lendal Terrace heading north into Gauden Road, and onto the A3 towards Stockwell, as well as pedestrians foregoing the use of the light controlled crossings at the Bedford Road junction and to the south of Voltaire Road – sometimes dodging between moving traffic. The heavy bunching of cyclists at traffic lights at peak times also gives rise to conflicts with other road users.

It appears the preferred solution may involve: requiring all traffic emerging from Lendal Terrace – which is a key section of the Clapham North gyratory system – to turn left towards Clapham Common; moving the existing pedestrian crossing serving Voltaire Road closer to the railway bridge; and introducing more modern crossings with pedestrian countdown and better synchronisation between them. There will undoubtedly be concerns about the impact these proposals may have for traffic using Landor Road, and traffic accessing Gauden Road – including large vehicles with deliveries in Timbermill Way. However, the pedestrian crossing proposals are likely to be welcomed.

Women vs Capitalism

In her new book leading economist and Clapham resident Vicky Pryce argues that despite the advances being made by women in business, economic inequality persists and must be addressed by government if women are to reach their full potential. Capitalism in its present form perpetuates gender inequality. *Women vs Capitalism: Why We Can’t Have It All in a Free Market Economy* by Vicky Pryce is available at Clapham Books, 26 The Pavement, SW4 0JA.

Clapham Common Film Club

The December screening, on **Monday 16 December** at Omnibus Theatre, SW4 0QW, will be Asghar Farhadi’s *The Salesman*, perhaps the best recent example of Iranian film making. It won the Oscar for Best Foreign Film in 2016 after prizes at Cannes for Best Screenplay and Best Actor for Shahab Hosseini. This is a story within a story based upon a married couple putting on Arthur Miller’s *Death of a Salesman* in Tehran.

The January screening (date to be confirmed) will be Louis Malle’s *Le Souffle au Coeur* his 1971 film which is a coming-of-age story about a 14-year old boy growing up in bourgeois surroundings in post-World War II Dijon, France, who has a complex relationship with his Italian mother.

Screenings are at 7.30 pm and the Omnibus bar is open from 7.00 pm onwards. Full membership of the club is now £70, since we are part way through the season, and can be acquired at the screening or in advance by bank transfer; the £20 membership option with a £10 entry charge will remain. Full programme and more details from Roger Booker at ccfilmrb@gmail.com.

For Voltaire Road itself, the highways planners are looking to make the junction with the High Street one-way, and to pedestrianise the other carriageway, combining this with other environmental improvements. Their preferred option is to close the carriageway nearest to the railway arches. If this is accepted we have asked the planners to think carefully about how the premises on the other side of the road can also benefit. I would welcome feedback from residents on these proposals (mark.leffler88@gmail.com) but would also urge people to look out for details of the proposed consultation exercise.

Mark Leffler

The I'Ansons

The book left unfinished by Peter Jefferson Smith when he died at the end of 2018 has now been completed and published by the Clapham Society, with the help of generous donations from members, as a tribute to the author.

These three architects, whose lives spanned the whole of the 19th century, all lived and worked at some time in Clapham and several of their major local buildings survive: The Alexandra on Clapham Common South Side, the former Clapham Library (now Omnibus Theatre) on North Side and the Hibbert Almshouses in Wandsworth Road. But they were also early developers of office blocks in the City, managed estates for Magdalen College Oxford (including a large area near Wandsworth Common) and for the Merchant Taylors' Company. Later work is in Surrey, where family members went to live near Haslemere, and there are I'Anson-designed cottage hospitals and almshouses around the south of England.

This book records the development of surveying and architecture over that century, and of construction generally. Hand-drawn maps of Clapham and the City show the location of buildings, and the book is richly illustrated with both archive pictures and photographs taken this year of surviving buildings, or parts and details thereof. *The I'Ansons – A Dynasty of London Architects & Surveyors* by Peter Jefferson Smith, is available now, price £20, at Clapham Books, 26 The Pavement, SW4 0JA, or on the Clapham Society website at claphamsociety.com/clapsocpublications.html.

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 14 October 2019 will be published in a newsletter in 2020.

Following the meeting Carol Rahm from the Battersea Society gave a presentation entitled **Growing Up in Wartime Battersea**. The basis of this was eyewitness stories captured on film of the area which was part of the 'War Comes Home' project launched in 2017 to explore the lives of Battersea's citizens during World War Two.

Residents who experienced the war as children or young adults were interviewed and their words incorporated with illustrations from residents of the area at the period, including many of bombed-out houses and streets. This made for a fascinating presentation. An illustrated booklet with many of the interviews and photographs, entitled *The Bombing of Battersea* by Sue Demont, is available at Wandsworth Libraries.

Edward I'Anson Sr
1775-1853



Edward I'Anson Jr
1811-1888

Edward Blakeway I'Anson
1843-1912



Painting Winter: Snow Scenes in art

The next Clapham Common Arts Society talk is on **Wednesday 11 December** when Stella Lyons will explore the variety of interpretations of winter through various artists from Pieter Bruegel to Andrew Wyeth.

Talks take place at Clapham Picturehouse, 76 Venn Street, SW4 0AT, starting at 11 am. Membership currently costs £50 or £90 joint membership (plus joining fee) and gives free entry for ten lectures. Visitors pay £10 per lecture. Information about membership can be obtained from claphamcommon@theartsociety.org, or at the Picturehouse before the talk.

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

