

The Clapham Society

Newsletter



Issue 424 February 2020

We meet at Omnibus Theatre, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW. Our guests normally speak for about 45 minutes, followed by around 15 minutes for questions and discussion. The bar is open before and after. Meetings are free and open to non-members, who are strongly urged to make a donation. Please arrive in good time before the start to avoid disappointment.

Gems of the London Underground

On 18 November, we were treated to a talk about the London Underground network, the oldest in the world, by architectural historian Edmund Bird, Heritage Manager of Transport for London. He has just signed off on a project to record every heritage asset and item of architectural and historic interest at its 270 stations. With photographs and back stories, he took us on a Tube ride like no other.

One of his key tools is the London Underground Station Design Idiom, which groups the stations into 20 subsets, based on their era or architectural genre, and specifies the authentic historic colour schemes, tile/masonry repairs, etc, to be used for station refurbishments. Another important tool is the London Underground Station Heritage Register, which is an inventory of everything from signs, clocks, station benches, ticket offices and tiling to station histories. Balham, for example, which boasts a splendid cast-iron chandelier and stained-glass roundels, received a direct hit by a bomb in October 1940, killing 68 people. Blackfriars, opened in 1870, was another casualty of the Blitz, losing its beautiful Byzantine domes and top two storeys; the station was later redeveloped in 1977 and again in 2012.

The Tube network opened in 1863, when there were just seven stations between Farringdon and Paddington on the Metropolitan Railway. This line was built using the 'cut and cover' method – opening up the street and digging down to create the railway and stations then covering over the cutting. The gem on this line, in Bird's opinion, is the Grade II* listed Baker Street, designed by Sir John Fowler, who also designed the great trainshed at Notting Hill Gate and the Italianate Gloucester Road stations.

The Underground was an opportunity for architects to make their mark. One only has to recall the oxblood terracotta façades of Russell Square, Covent Garden, South Kensington and (the now defunct) Aldwych stations to realise (*continued overleaf*)



Dana Kubick

Monday 17 February

Sharing your personal data in the Health and Care System. Dr Jack Barker, consultant physician at King's College Hospital, is also the Chief Clinical Information Officer for the six boroughs of southeast 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 he will tell us what has been achieved so far and in what direction it's all 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 £2.4m 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 Clapham's thriving artistic community is maintained.

Buried river walk

If you came to our September talk you will remember the speaker, Jon Newman, kindly offered to lead a walk following the Heathwall. A date has been set for **14 May** and booking will open nearer the time. Jon's book *The Heathwall: Battersea's Buried River* will be available at future meetings, price £6.50.

Christine Armstrong

(continued) they represented the vision of one man: Leslie Green. He designed no fewer than 43 stations in just four years, leading, alas, to illness and premature death at 33. Twenty-five of his stations survive, 11 of which are listed. It was heartening to learn that Aldwych (closed in 1994 and originally known as Strand station) is used as a location for period film and television dramas – and also for London Transport Museum tours!

Other names of note were Stanley Heaps (Maida Vale and St John's Wood) and Charles Clark (ticket hall buildings at Great Portland Street and Aldgate).

Asked about his favourite station, Edmund Bird did not demur: Arnos Grove. Its designer, Charles Holden, the most famous name in Bird's view, also produced the rotunda design we all know and love at Clapham Common. Indeed Holden masterminded all the station designs on the 1926 Clapham to Morden extension on the Northern line, which received its name in 1937.

Lambeth's ninth tube station, Nine Elms, is due to open in 2021 as part of the Northern line extension to Battersea Power Station. Edmund was called in to ensure the brickwork on the ventilation headhouses in Kennington chimed with their conservation area settings.

Many thanks to Edmund for his epic undertaking for TfL and for sharing the fruits of his labours with The Clapham Society. It was standing room only that night at Omnibus. Next stop: the Elizabeth line but not quite yet!

Ruth Eastman, Edmund Bird

Clapham Common update

The end of 2019 was busy for the Society and Clapham Common. Through our standing membership of the Clapham Common Management Advisory Committee (CCMAC), we have been involved in discussions regarding the £350,000 investment in the Common's **playgrounds**. Low-maintenance inclusive play equipment in natural or recycled material will be used but, unfortunately, the sand pit is likely to go. Completion is scheduled for July 2020.

The two **RedGra pitches** between the circus cite and 'Battersea Woods', both in poor condition, are being considered for improvement. Suggestions include multi-purpose sports pitches or creating a hard surface events area by linking the RedGra pitches with the circus site. Using money derived from events, CCMAC has agreed to acquire and install **bird and bat boxes and bird feeders** across the Common.

We are also aware of the number of **tents and rough sleepers by Eagle**

2019 Annual General Meeting

The 56th Annual General Meeting of The Clapham Society was held at 8 pm on Monday 14 October 2019 at Omnibus Theatre. The Society's President, Martin Drury, took the chair and welcomed members to the Annual General Meeting. Fifty-two members were present.

1. The Secretary had received apologies from members John and Marina Adams, and Kathleen Derrig.
2. The Minutes of the previous AGM, dated 15 October 2018, were approved.
3. The Chair of The Clapham Society, Annabel Allott, presented the Annual Report for the year 2018-2019, circulated with the September Newsletter (Issue 420).

Annabel reported enthusiastically on the events of the past year, with specific reference to anonymous donations received which had enabled the Society to make legal representation to Lambeth Council challenging their use of the Common. In this regard she referred to the letter from Lambeth (Kevin Crook, Assistant Director Neighbourhoods) published in the October Newsletter (Issue 421) setting out Lambeth's acceptance of the various issues raised. It was encouraging that Winterville would not be happening on the Common this year, and any possible future application from Winterville would be subject to a relocation to the surfaced Funfair area and RedGra pitches. Annabel reiterated her thanks, referenced in the Report, to all those who helped with the running of the Society. She was sad to include in her report the death of Peter Jefferson Smith at the end of last year and, more recently, that of Derrick Johnson, both of whom were long-serving members and irreplaceable.

Annabel also reported that Bill Emmett, a member of the Main Committee for a number of years, was unfortunately standing down because of health issues. She continued that Alyson Wilson was standing down from her long-serving involvement on the production of the Newsletter, and Ruth Eastman had kindly agreed to take this on.

4. Adoption of the Financial Report & Accounts for year ended 31 March 2019.

David Brown presented the Financial Report and Accounts, year ended 31 March 2019. He reported that additional funds had been received for the Peter Jefferson Smith Memorial Fund, which will be used to cover the costs of publication of Peter's book on the three generations of the I'Anson family of Clapham architects. A huge amount of work has gone into the project and Alyson Wilson, together with a team of Clapham members, are to be congratulated. David added that Alyson would be available after the business of the Annual Meeting with information for ordering a copy of the book.

5. Election of Officers and Committee Members for the year 2019-2020. The following were elected:

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

The following Committee Members were elected:

Christine Armstrong, Ruth Eastman, Mark Leffler, Martin Pratt, Andrew Summers and Alyson Wilson.

6. Anna Long, FCA, was thanked for her work during the past year and reappointed as Independent Examiner.
7. There was no other business.

Gillian White

Pond. We attended a meeting with the Lambeth cabinet member responsible for housing who explained again the practical difficulties with helping these vulnerable individuals. In early January we learned that the local police and Lambeth Council officers, within the appropriate legal frameworks, had moved on the people who were camped beside Eagle Pond, clearing the site of debris.

We are reassured that Lambeth shares the Society's view, and that of most of our members, that it is in everyone's interest that the relevant authorities should help these individuals into proper accommodation. We continue to urge members to report rough sleeping to Lambeth's Safer Streets team (email: lambethsst@cgl.org.uk, 020 7501 0601)

and can only hope that the more people who notify them, the greater the chance the individuals will be helped.

We also took sight of latest plans to redevelop the **bowling green and café** into a pitch and putt golf facility (further details next month).

CCMAC is a community-led group that works with Lambeth Council to manage Clapham Common. It aims to ensure the Council runs the Common as well as possible and balances the needs of all its users. If anyone has any suggestions or would like to be involved, please let me know. The Society is a permanent member but others are welcome to stand as a community representative. Find out more at claphamcommon.london.

Andrew Summers

MUSIC, ART AND THEATRE



Clapham Chamber Concerts Series regular Sophie Rivlin (cello) is excited to return on **Friday 7 February** with her good friends Flora Curzon (violin) and Ellen Blythe (viola) as the Oliveros Ensemble. They have chosen the Trio in D (Op 9, No 2) by Beethoven and Schubert's Trio in B flat (D 471), also movements from *Goldberg Variations* by J S Bach, superbly arranged, and a wonderful lesser-known piece by Jean Cras. 7.30 pm, St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DX. Tickets: £15, £12, £10, £5 on the door. Further details at oliverosenemble.com and claphamchamberconcerts.org.uk.

Southside Players *Richard III* comes to Balham with a hint of cabaret. From **19-22 February** Balham's award-winning theatre group, Southside, will perform *Richard III* by William Shakespeare. Staged during the decadent inter-war years, it will show how political instability mixed with apathy can allow narcissistic and charismatic dictators to flourish. Wednesday 19 to Friday 21 February, 7.45 pm; Saturday 22 February, 3 pm. Chestnut Grove Academy Theatre at Chestnut Grove Academy, Boundaries Road, SW12 8JZ. Tickets: £12, £9 (concessions: Wednesday and Saturday only) from 07914 657524, southsideplayers.co.uk or ticketsource.co.uk/southsideplayers/e-bmmoxe.



Andrew Staples

St Luke's Music Society The wonderful, anarchic Budapest Café Orchestra (above), travelling all the way from Haringaria, are back at St Luke's on **Saturday 22 February**. Gypsy, klezmer and folk music from Hungary, the Balkans and eastern Europe of the very highest quality is on the menu. The concert by these consummate entertainers is also likely to include their take on a goulash recipe! Sponsored by Gregsons Solicitors. 7.30 pm, St Luke's Church, 194 Ramsden Road, SW12 8RQ. Tickets: £18, £14 (concessions) at slms.org.uk.

St Paul's Opera – sneak preview

Have you ever wondered how singers produce such a beautiful sound? Then come to the masterclass on **Thursday 5 March** by international tenor David Butt Philip, returning for his third such venture. You might recognise the candidates from last year's concerts and *Le Nozze di Figaro*: sopranos Stephanie Hershaw and Eleanor Strutt, mezzo-soprano Heidi Jost, and baritones Jack Lawrence-Jones and George Reynolds. 7.30 pm, St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DX. Tickets: £10, £8 (students) from stpaulsopera.org, or on the door.

Dulwich Picture Gallery – British Surrealism

This major exhibition, **26 February to 17 May**, marks 100 years since the birth of surrealism, championing the British artists who contributed. See works from Leonora Carrington, Francis Bacon, Henry Moore and Paul Nash as well as lesser-known figures such as Marion Adnams and Conroy Maddox. Dulwich Picture Gallery, Gallery Road, SE21 7AD. Ticket information and details at dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk

Omnibus Theatre

Two meaty dramas are coming your way this month. *The Glass Will Shatter* **until Saturday 8 February** is a thrilling and powerful world premiere which interrogates faith, belonging and the consequences of the Prevent Policy on the quality of education in the UK today.

From **11-29 February**, award-winning playwright John O'Donovan (Old Vic 12, Royal Court Writer's Programme, BBC Drama Writer's Room) stages *Flights*, a piece about bereavement, brotherhood and breaking free from one's past.

'Sunday Music' highlights include Duo Furioso on **9 February** featuring Concerto for Two Cellos by Vivaldi and a contemporary tango by Borsarello. On **Tuesday 25 February** world-class cellist Sheku Kanneh-Mason and friends return (tickets limited).

Details and tickets for all these events at omnibus-clapham.org, the box office on 020 7498 4699 or drop in at Omnibus Theatre.



FILMS

The Deadly Affair

The Battersea Society's Film Night at the Royal College of Art on **Thursday 20 February** showcases the classic 1967 British espionage thriller based on John le Carré's first novel. Directed by Sidney Lumet, it features numerous Battersea and Wandsworth locations. 7 pm (refreshments from 6.30 pm), Royal College of Art (Battersea Campus), Dyson Building, Hester Road, SW11 4AN (near Battersea Bridge bus stops). Tickets: £5 on the door.

Timbuktu

Clapham Common Film Club presents *Timbuktu* on **Sunday 23 February**. By Mauritanian director Abderrahmane Sissako, it won two prizes at Cannes (2014) plus Oscar and BAFTA nominations for Best Foreign Film. Set in Mali, it looks at the brief occupations of Timbuktu by the Islamic group Ansar Dine. A cattle herder and his family who reside in the dunes outside find their quiet lives abruptly disturbed. 7.30 pm, Omnibus (bar open before and drinks can be taken in to the auditorium. There will be time before with time for post-screening discussion afterwards). Membership, £50 for next six films. For more details, email ccfilmrb@gmail.com.



Remembering Daphne Ayles



We were saddened to hear of the death of **Miss Daphne Ayles**. An author and member of the Society, Daphne lived in the same house in Chelsham Road for all her 87 years and was so devoted to the cinema she once sat through 24 hours of films to raise funds for the Alzheimer's Society. Her relative, Julian Goldsmith, has kindly shared the eulogy he gave at her funeral in early December and here follows edited selections:

'I've known Daphne pretty much all my life. In the last four years I got to know her a lot better. As shopper, cook, cleaner, gardener and purveyor of builders, plumbers and handymen, I did my best to keep Daphne in her beloved home, which has been in the family for over 100 years; indeed Daphne was born there and during World War II took refuge with her family in an air-raid shelter in the back garden.

'Daphne loved Clapham, in particular her road and the people who make up its vibrant community. Someone once described her as the "Grandmother of Clapham" – a title she loved. Raised in the Methodist Church, Daphne had an interest in, and tolerance of, all religions. She was a freelance journalist, writer and editor for much of her career.

'Her great-uncle, Walter Ayles, was a Labour politician and this started an interest in and support of the Labour Party, which Daphne maintained unflinchingly. She also worked for

a printers' trade union. A couple of years ago there was a junior doctors' strike and when her medical care team arrived at her home, she insisted they should not see her if coming in meant them crossing a picket line!

'Daphne has always been a touch eccentric. Generous too. At her peak she gave to 70 different charities. It helped their finances but largely drained her own. Even in her mid-80s she was still giving to Help the Aged at a time when I felt they should have been giving to her!

'As a thoughtful landlady Daphne was generous almost to a fault, modernising the top floor where her lodgers stayed with central heating, absent elsewhere in the house.

'Daphne's greatest love was films: horror films, sci-fi (she was also an avid fan of *Star Trek*), *Star Wars* – she had the T-shirt, ditto *Star Trek*; she loved Harry Potter – again she had the T-shirt and would queue through the night with people a fraction her age when a new book came out. She must have had 2,000 books at home.

'Throughout her life she went to the cinema – and not just any old cinema. She loved the Clapham Picturehouse and only there would do. She watched a huge number and range of films, and she was very well looked after there, for which I am most grateful. In fact, when it came to thinking about where to have refreshments and continue the celebration of Daphne's life, there really was only one place it could be!

'Her lifelong friend, Jill, from across the road always kept an eye on her. Towards the end, when Daphne went off for a wander, Jill's son Martin was despatched to find her. I marvel how upon hearing the same anecdote from Daphne for the 20th – or was it the 200th time? – Jill responded as if she had only just heard it.

'Daphne never married – she was proud to be a Miss. To an incongruous British Gas customer services person who addressed her as Mrs, she explained that she was a Miss: "...an unclaimed treasure!" Daphne, you will be missed.'

New members

We have welcomed the following new members recently: Kerry Akerman; Diana, James and Robert Ferguson; Helen Mann; Helene, Isabella and Alexandra Oratore; Lucilla Poston and Peter Nathanielsz; Neil and Frances Sanders.

Florence Nightingale needs you!

The year 2020 is the bicentenary of Florence Nightingale's birth (and also the Year of the Nurse). The Florence Nightingale Museum at St Thomas' is marking the milestone with events and celebrations, and volunteers are needed to help. For details, visit florence-nightingale.co.uk/volunteering-opportunities or telephone 020 7188 4400.



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: annabelallott@outlook.com

Secretary

Gillian White

Tel: 020 7720 7496

Email: gillian.white@icloud.com

Treasurer

David Brown

Tel: 020 7720 7536

Email: david.sbrown@bopenworld.com

Membership Secretary

Jennifer Everett

Tel: 020 7627 4770

Email: jeverett@waitrose.com

Common and Open Spaces

Andrew Summers

Tel: 07977 454229 Email: andrew_summers_london@yahoo.co.uk

Meetings and Events

Tel: 020 7720 7449

Christine Armstrong

Email: christinearms52@hotmail.com

Planning Matters

Tel: 020 8675 5679

Martin Pratt

Email: prattpartnership@hotmail.com

Roads and Transport

Tel: 020 7720 9370

Mark Leffler

Email: mark.leffler88@gmail.com

Local History and Publications

Tel: 020 7622 6360

Alyson Wilson

Email: alysonwilson.sw4@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor and Social Media

Tel: 07768 095767

Ruth Eastman

Email: eastman.ruth@gmail.com



TJL's Edmund Bird (back row, left) treated members to a tour of Charles Holden's 55 Broadway last month. The Grade I Listed building, soon to be a hotel, offers a view that is truly transporting.

Peter Emrys-Roberts

Details of meetings, activities and a full list of our publications are on our website at claphamsociety.com

