

The Clapham Society

Newsletter



Issue 437 June 2021

Wild Clapham needs you

Modern ecology is all about joined-up thinking – quite literally. It attempts to link areas of nature conservation together and create corridors through which wildlife can travel. On a national level, we're being encouraged to plant trees through a new initiative called the Queen's Green Canopy, launched in May as a special gift to Elizabeth II for her Platinum Jubilee in 2022.

In the same spirit, Wild Clapham is a new venture on our own patch that seeks to replant diminishing tree species such as

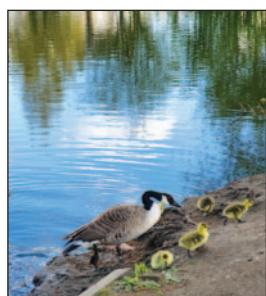
birch, field maple and hazel in Battersea Woods. Another key aim is to create corridors of scrubland connecting Battersea Woods, north of the Bandstand, through the wildflower meadows opposite Bandstand Beds and into Nursery Woods close to where The Avenue meets the



Ruth Eastman

A24. Sponsored by the Clapham Society and Friends of Clapham Common, and backed by Lambeth Council, the initiative will be managed by the Trees, Landscape and Environment (TLE) Group of the Clapham Common Management Advisory Committee.

We're facing a sharp decline in many bee and butterfly species, so the scrubland 'islands' we shall be planting will provide nectar, pollen and essential vegetation for these precious invertebrates. Fledglings need to find cover for their first weeks of flight after leaving the nest; low-growing scrub will offer that as well. The islands will sit unobtrusively within the landscape and cause no impediment to the dog-walkers who also value this space.



Mark Leffler

Hawthorn and blackthorn are the staples of the new scrubland islands along with guelder rose, dogwood, spindle, broom, bramble and gorse. We'll plant the edges with selected wildflowers to help endangered invertebrates. These indigenous plants are easy to (Continued on page 2)

Our meetings are held at Omnibus Theatre, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW. The bar opens at 7 pm and the talk starts at 8 pm. Our guest usually speaks for about 45 minutes, followed by 15 minutes for questions and discussion; the bar will stay open afterwards. Meetings are free and open to non-members, who are invited to make a donation. Although Covid restrictions are due to be lifted on 21 June, we propose to continue to offer our meetings on Zoom as well as in person. **To attend at Omnibus Theatre, email history@claphamsociety.com; to attend on Zoom, email events@claphamsociety.com.** Further details will be sent a few days before the meeting. All places must be booked in advance.

Monday 21 June, 8 pm

The Life Course of Health – We Can't Start Soon Enough. Professor Lucilla Poston, CBE, Head of the Department of Women and Children's Health at King's College London (KCL), holds the Tommy's Charity Chair of Maternal and Fetal Health. She will update us on pregnancy research at King's College London & Guy's and St Thomas' Trust. Illustrating the 'Developmental Origins of Health and Disease' hypothesis with examples from scientific literature, she will show how this influences public health advice about parenthood and the management of common complications of pregnancy. Her research team aims to improve the health of women and their children in the UK and, globally, by better understanding the processes which lead to these complications, particularly premature birth, gestational diabetes and pre-eclampsia.

There are no meetings in July or August.

Monday 20 September, 8 pm

The Man Who Made an Edwardian Suburb. In the 1880s and 1890s the large mansions around the Common were being demolished and new roads were laid out. In his talk for the Clapham Society, local resident Mike Tuffrey (see also *Real guided walks at last*, page 2) will recount how the neighbourhood around Abbeville Road, with a church, school, police station and shops, came to be built by 1910. He will reveal the decisive role played in the area's development by an elusive land agent and discuss what this tells us about how Clapham continues to change.

Party to raise funds for Wild Clapham, 8 July, 6.30 pm

Hurrah! The much-hoped-for easing of Covid restrictions points to our Summer Party still taking place. We are holding it this year with Friends of Clapham Common and in one of Clapham's most beautiful gardens. All members are invited but, as numbers are limited, don't delay to save your place. Tickets, which must be bought in advance, £15, to include canapés, a welcome drink, live jazz piano and the chance to win exciting prizes. It will be a fantastic opportunity to socialise outside and catch up with friends; warm clothing advised. Tickets are available to buy online at <http://bit.ly/SummerParty21>. Or post a cheque made out to The Clapham Society, stating names of attendees, to: The Clapham Society, c/o 20 Malwood Road, SW12 8EN. In the event of oversubscription, refunds will be given. If you can help on the night, email events@claphamsociety.com.

(Continued from page 1) maintain and can be kept below head height to prevent views across the Common being obscured.

The Wild Clapham project will also be re-lining the small pond next to Eagle Pond with a tight seal of puddle clay to create a sheltered wetland pond for frogs and newts. We will build a stilted viewing platform on the southeastern edge so that children and adults can watch tadpoles and aquatic life close up. The pond will be planted with native marginals – irises, hard rush, marsh marigolds and water forget-me-nots. Watch this space for dragon flies!

Finally, we will be helping Lambeth to restore Battersea Woods. Invasive false acacia suckers have crowded out our native species. We'll be redefining the pathways with felled trunks and boughs to create protected planting beds for wild garlic, ferns, bluebells and primrose, and replanting diminishing tree species as mentioned at the start of this article. The Masterplan for Clapham Common, published in 2007, showed biodiversity levels to be very low on the Common, so the Wild Clapham project will be focussed on reversing that trend. **Gareth James**, TLE Group, Clapham Common Management Advisory Committee (CCMAC)

*If you are interested in volunteering for the Wild Clapham project, we'd love to hear from you. Email chairman@claphamsociety.com. You can donate online to Account 2221 7045, Sort Code 60 05 34, reference Wild Clapham, or by cheque, made out to: The Clapham Society; post it to Chairman, The Clapham Society, 32 Bellamy Street, London SW12 8BU. Thank you for your donations so far. Already you have helped us raise £600. **Annabel Allott***

All the fun of the fair

St Paul's, Rectory Grove, is excited to bring back its Summer Fete on **Saturday 10 July, 12 noon to 4 pm**. As the church has become part of the Eco Church scheme, the fair will have a green theme this year. If you or someone you know has a business (or hobby) trading in eco-friendly/sustainable products and would like to have a stall, please email stpaulsfair@hotmail.com or call the church office on 020 7622 2128. *We are very pleased to say that the Clapham Society has been asked to be among the stallholders. Our wonderful publications will be on the stand, so come and browse.*

Real guided walks at last

We have three walks planned this month, circumstances permitting:

- **Wednesday 2 June.** Timothy Walker (tehwalker@uwclub.net) will introduce the area around Clapham South in **The Growth of a Victorian Suburb**.
- **Tuesday 8 June.** Gillian Robinson (thenightingales95@gmail.com) leads a walk entitled **Mostly Medical**, which tells the story of the many health-related institutions that once stretched the length of Nightingale Lane – could that be why the road is so named?
- **Sunday 13 June.** Mike Tuffrey (mtuffrey@talk21.com) will lead a walk that focuses on local 'movers and shakers' in **South Side People over 200 Years**.

All of the walks must be pre-booked by email with the leaders (above), who will also confirm start time and place. Details about all our walks this season can be found at claphamsociety.com/walks.

To find out about walks sponsored by other Lambeth local societies, visit lambethlocalhistoryforum.org.uk/walks.

A mountain of evidence

Never let it be said that the Clapham Society does not follow the fortunes of Cassie Fortune. Cassie was the heroine of *Plague* (NL 429), the first in Clapham author Julie Anderson's trilogy about an intrepid female civil servant whose lifeblood is tough assignments set by men in high places. At the end of *Plague*, which took us on a pacy ride through London's corridors of power – and underground rivers – Cassie was informed that her next mission would be in Delphi on the slopes of Mt Parnassus. On this occasion she would be working not for the Deputy Prime Minister but for the PM himself. Quite a *coup* for someone who had blotted her copybook not so very long ago.

Oracle opens with our heroine arriving at the European Cultural Centre of Delphi where she will be delivering a speech on tax reform. That at least is her cover. Alighting from a limousine, which whisked her from Athens Airport after a harrowing delay, she finds herself buffeted by angry environmental protestors outside the conference centre. Not exactly the start she had been picturing. Desperate for a good night's sleep, which eludes her because of a row in the next-door bedroom, she asks the night manager to silence the noisy guests but no one, he tells her, is booked in...

Cassie's actual mission at Delphi is to lure the headline speaker, Finance Minister Theo Sidaris and presumptive next Prime Minister of Greece and Chair of the European Council, to London for an 'unofficial' chat with her boss. The UK having left the EC, the British PM will need the new Chair's support. Will Cassie succeed, or will the macabre events that unfold at Delphi – and send Sidaris packing back to Athens for his own safety – dash those hopes and, with them, her final big chance to salvage her career?

The plot twists and turns like the switchbacks on the mountain trails of Parnassus where much of the action is set. Anderson peppers her tale with clues, some more obvious than others. Which to follow and which to ignore is the game she sets the reader. This reader enjoyed the puzzle, along with Anderson's ingenious weaving of the mysteries of the Delphic oracle into the story.

A memorable cast of characters struts the stage: an androgynous ex-Olympic athlete who mysteriously invites Cassie on a pre-breakfast run up a mountain trail – do her hands fit the finger marks found on the throat of the first victim, a museum curator? The local policeman, and uncle of the deceased curator, so strangely slow to react to his niece's disappearance. The handsome security officer detailed to keep the guests safe yet so reluctant to interview all those he should. Then there's the silver-haired Austrian delegate with a roving eye.

Cassie leads the investigation, at the behest of the PM, and no one can leave until questions are answered. When someone else goes missing she must act quickly in case a serial killer is on the loose. Maybe, even, the villain who escaped justice in *Plague*; signs of the shadowy figure abound in the most unexpected places.

Whodunnit, who didn't? Grab a copy and find out. But be sure to read it in the sunshine or with a fire blazing because snowstorms are closing in on the mountain. *Ruth Eastman*

Oracle was published in May by Claret Press. It costs £9.99 from Clapham Books and all good book stores, and is available for £3.99 on iBooks. Julie Anderson is Chair of Clapham Writers, the organisation responsible for the Clapham Book Festival.





Battersea Society events

Readings from *London Undercurrents* is a virtual reading on **Thursday 3 June, 7 pm**, from co-authors Joolz Sparkes and Hilaire of extracts from their beautiful *London Undercurrents: The Hidden Histories of London's Unsung Heroines, North and South of the River*. The poems form a rich tapestry full of local colour throughout the ages viewed from both sides of the Thames. Thirty minutes of pure poetry – literally! This event is part of the Wandsworth Heritage Festival.

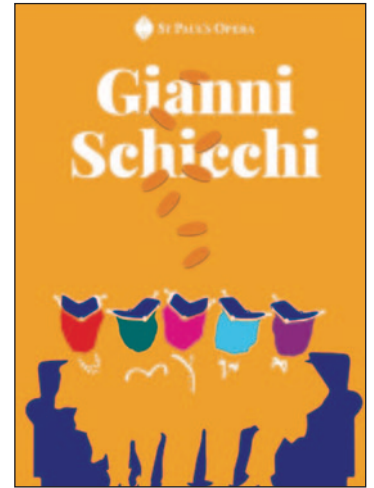
Four 18th-Century Houses and their Occupants is a Zoom talk on **Friday 4 June, 6 pm**, by local historian Jeanne Rathbone. She will take you back in time to Elm House, Lavender Sweep House, The Shrubbery and Gilmore House to meet Jeanie Nassau Senior, Britain's first female civil servant; Tom Taylor, playwright; Laura Barker, composer; Marie Spartali, Pre-Raphaelite artist; and Deaconess Isabella Gilmore. This event is part of the Wandsworth Heritage Festival.

To book for each of the events above please email events@batterseasociety.org.uk. Zoom login details will be sent out 24 hours beforehand. *Sue Demont*

Stop press from St Paul's Opera

Rehearsals are now well under way for *Gianni Schicchi* and members of the SPO team are loving being back together and making music again. If you haven't already, please consider subscribing to our website, stpaulsopera.org, to ensure you receive the latest news about our performances on **Thursday 1 to Saturday 3 July**. These will include details of the creative team, a full list of the cast, announcements of ticket sales and timings, the opportunity to reserve picnic tables and, importantly, information about additional musical entertainment we have planned for the performance evenings.

What Do Words Matter? An Insight Evening of Discussion about Opera Libretto. It is truly a rare privilege to announce an event bringing the cream of the world's librettists together to discuss their role in crafting some of the most revered contemporary operatic 'scripts'. We are delighted to welcome Meredith Oakes and Philip Hensher to a round-table talk at the home of St Paul's Opera – St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DZ, on **Tuesday 8 June at 8pm**. The conversation will be hosted by the Revd Canon Jonathan Boardman, Vicar of St Paul's and a mine of information on all aspects of the operatic repertoire. The evening will also include musical interludes to illustrate the topic of discussion. Tickets are on sale through stpaulsopera.org at £5 each, but numbers are limited (due to social distancing), so please book early to avoid disappointment. *Patricia Ninian*



Live on stage at last

Omnibus Theatre's summer season kicks off on **21 June** with *The Human Connection*, a premiere from Irish playwright Eugene O'Hare which runs for two weeks. This will be followed by a week-long **96 Festival**, which includes a variety of artists and shows. Visit omnibus-clapham.org to check out the exciting line-up. From Thursday to Sunday, pop into the café and enjoy a meal or a coffee – opening times on the website (above).

They (were) writing songs of love

On **Wednesday 16 June, 11 am**, composer and keyboard musician Pip Burley will give our last Zoom talk this season, **The Golden Age of Song: the Genius of Jerome Kern, Irving Berlin, Cole Porter and George Gershwin**. Pip wrote the prize-winning theme tune of *The Darling Buds of May*, a series he also produced. With slides, video clips and demonstrations on the piano he will pay tribute to these four titanic men who defined popular music in the first half of the 20th century. To book, email claphamcommon@theartsociety.org (log on at 10.50 am). Non-member tickets £10, or email us to join the Arts Society for free entry to future events. *Susan Holder, The Arts Society Clapham Common*

We are the champions!

At the end of our March meeting, Annabel Allott asked the speaker, **David Gwyther**, if he would let us know how the census went locally. True to his word, he did. Then, just before we went to press, he sent through the good news that our help in allowing him to reach the wider community in Clapham had been invaluable. The certificate (below) was our reward and we are proud to share it with you.

The census this year was always going to be different. To start with, it would be a 'digital-first' census, meaning that people would be encouraged to fill it in online. Secondly, it would have to take place during a pandemic. This once-a-decade survey of all the households in England and Wales provides essential information that helps to inform policy making and the allocation of local funding and services.

Lambeth, for the first time, had a dedicated census engagement team. Made up of two Census Engagement Managers (covering the north and south of the borough), along with two Community Advisors (for the Black African and the Black Caribbean communities), this team worked with local community groups to raise awareness about the census and direct people to the support available to help them take part.

This included working with community centres, charities, religious groups, food banks, social groups and branches of national charities. We worked with these groups to help identify any barriers in participating in the census and how we could overcome them. Through community meetings (which of necessity were virtual), newsletters, emails, phone calls, leaflets, posters and social media we were able to reach people far and wide across the diverse borough and support them to take part. The result? The most successful census ever! Whilst official statistics for Lambeth won't be available until 2022, on a national scale 97 per cent of households took part. This is the highest percentage of participation in the census's 200-year history.

We would like to thank all the community groups who helped to make this possible. We couldn't have done it without you. Results will be published next year and we hope to see you again in 2031.



Gala evening for the Hospice – booked your table yet?

Royal Trinity Hospice are thrilled to announce that our 130th anniversary celebrations will culminate in the **130 Gala Dinner on Saturday 20 November**. Taking place in the Grand Hall of Old Billingsgate (*right*) in the City of London, the evening will include a champagne reception, three-course meal, live auction, music and exciting entertainment. All funds raised will help ensure that Trinity's specialist nurses can continue to provide outstanding palliative and end-of-life care, completely free of charge, to all those who need it across central and southwest London. Events such as these are so important to Trinity as we can only meet the demand for our vital services, and be here for the next 130 years, with your support. To purchase your table, or find out more, visit royaltrinityhospice.london/gala or email Grattan Thompson at events@royaltrinityhospice.london.



Ruth Eastman

Common viewpoints

Many thanks to all of you who took the time to respond to our survey about Clapham Common in last month's Newsletter. Watch this space for the findings. *Andrew Summers, Common and Open Spaces Sub-committee*

New members

A very warm welcome to new members Tina and Miles Colclough, Chris Everett and Kevin Minns. Final reminders have been sent to members whose subscription renewal for 2021/22 has not yet been received. Please make payment before the end of June to avoid membership lapsing. If you have any queries contact the Membership Secretary (email address below). *Jennifer Everett*

Ann Kay

We were sad to learn of the recent death of very long-standing member Ann Kay at the age of 93 years. Ann and her late husband, John, moved to Clapham in the mid-1960s and soon joined the recently formed Clapham Society. In 1973 John became a member of the main committee, of which he was Secretary from 1975-79. He also served on sub-committees and was involved with local campaigns. Both John and Ann were enthusiastic and active members of the Society.

Ann (photographed here only a year ago), who had trained as an architect, changed careers to become a teacher, initially as a classroom teacher, then providing specialist support in teaching English as a second language. She was very active in organisations campaigning for state education. Her wide-ranging interests included membership of the William Morris Society, a book group and a patchwork group. When she retired she was an active member of the Friends of Minnie Kidd, the Clapham nursing home that her neighbour and long-time friend Pat Tindale was in. Until the time of her death, Ann continued to live in the iconic, now listed, 1960s house in Crescent Grove which she and her husband had designed and built. *Alyson Wilson*



Could you be a borough guide?

Morley College is offering a one-year course, starting in September, for anyone who would like to become a Lambeth tour guide. If you're interested in the borough's history, architecture and tourist attractions, it could be a perfect course for you. Successful students will gain a professional tour guiding qualification at the end. To find out more, please email humanities.enquiries@morley.ac.uk.



Our social media going forward

Recent member Dave Cross revealed an interest in social media when he joined the Society. He has since been co-opted onto the Committee to look after matters digital. Dave has been a freelance computer programmer since 1995. His clients range from investment banks to media giants as well as lots of dot-coms. He specialises in databases and websites, often mixing the two; indeed, he has written a few books and given talks about his areas of expertise. Email Dave (address below) if you have local items you'd like him to post about – ideally not politics or religion – and feel free to like, share, retweet or comment.

If you wish to contact **The Clapham Society** or have news of local events, please email the relevant Committee member below:

Secretary	Chairman – Annabel Allott	Email: chairman@claphamsociety.com	
	Gillian White		Planning Matters
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Details of meetings, activities and a full list of our publications can be found on our website at claphamsociety.com

