

# The Clapham Society

## Newsletter



Issue 442 December 2021/January 2022

### Our programme of meetings for 2022

Meetings take place at Omnibus Theatre, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW. The talk starts at 8pm and our guest normally speaks for about 45 minutes, followed by 15 minutes for questions and discussion. The bar is open before and after, so do take advantage of that! Meetings are free and open to non-members, but donation are always welcome. Please arrive in good time. There is no meeting in December. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

#### Monday 17 January

**The regeneration of Studio Voltaire.** After 27 years of being at the heart of Clapham's community, leading arts organisation Studio Voltaire has just reopened following completion of a £2.8 million capital development. **Laura Harford** will offer insight into the history of the site and the build process, including the design plans by architects Matheson Whiteley, as well as discussing the exhibitions, studios and community events programme. The public space at Studio Voltaire has increased by 233 per cent with a new community space, garden and café; the project has also provided more affordable studios to ensure Clapham's thriving artistic community is maintained.

#### Monday 21 February

**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, Rectory Grove. The mad minds involved (for you'd need to be mad even to consider staging an opera from scratch) were the then vicar, Deborah Matthews; parishioner Patricia Ninian; and Patricia's singing teacher, international soprano Jennifer McGregor. Puccini's one-act opera *Gianni Schicchi* was chosen and the performance, just one night, was a sell-out; the die was cast. For this talk, **Patricia Ninian** will explain how St Paul's Opera has grown. It now stages an ambitious opera over three nights every summer (2020 being the obvious exception), gala concerts and an annual masterclass given by tenor David Butt Philip.

#### Monday 21 March

**The life course of health – we can't start soon enough.** This talk by **Professor Lucilla Poston**, CBE, Head of the Department of Women and Children's Health at King's College London (KCL), 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 is influencing public health advice about parenthood and the management of common complications of pregnancy. Professor Poston holds the Tommy's Charity Chair of Maternal and Fetal Health. 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 complications in pregnancy, particularly premature birth, gestational diabetes and pre-eclampsia.

#### Monday 18 April

**William Morris: Arts and Crafts and so much more.** The famous Merton Abbey works of the great Victorian designer were just four miles (down the A24) from Clapham. **John Hawks** traces Morris's life, character and the extraordinary range of his activities. After 25 years in advertising, John founded and managed Merton Abbey Mills in the abandoned Liberty silk printing works on the River Wandle – just upstream from the site of Morris's works. He is a trustee of the Wandle Industrial Museum, director of Wandle Heritage Limited, vice chair of Merton Priory Trust, and curator of the Chapter House Museum.

#### Monday 16 May

**Grime and glamour: London's wartime volunteer ambulance service.** Debutantes, taxi drivers, First World War veterans, car mechanics, knitwear models, secretaries – all kinds of people signed up to crew the auxiliary ambulance service during the Second World War. What were their lives like? What was the impact of working night after night during bombardment? **Naomi Clifford**, whose latest book *Under Fire* explores the diaries of a London Auxiliary Ambulance driver in Chelsea, brings some of that world to you and identifies ambulance crews operating in Clapham.

#### Monday 20 June

**Lambeth Palace Library: the new building and its collections.** The new building for Lambeth Palace Library was completed in July 2020 and opened to the public in November (*Continued on page 2*)



Kate Greening. Published with permission

**'It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas'**  
Head to Venn Street Market to get into the festive spirit,  
and maybe even pick up your tree! (*Story, page 2*)

(Continued) 2021, housing the historic books, manuscripts and archives of Lambeth Palace and the Church of England Record Centre in purpose-built conditions for the first time. In this illustrated talk **Giles Mandelbrote** will explain the reasons for the new building, how it was achieved and what it now contains. After working for nearly 15 years as a curator at the British Library, Giles became the Librarian and Archivist of Lambeth Palace Library in 2010, the year the Library celebrated its 400th anniversary.

## There are no meetings in July and August

### Monday 19 September

**Flaming Dene: A Victorian stunner, actress and nude model.** Journalists **Eilat Negev** and **Yehuda Koren**, a couple in life and work, will introduce their book (reviewed in Newsletter 427) about Dorothy Dene, muse of Pre-Raphaelite painter Frederic Leighton and model for his famous painting *Flaming June*. The painting was found behind panelling during the restoration of a Clapham house in the 1960s, and sold for a mere £50 at a time when Victorian art was seriously out of vogue. There is a blue plaque on the house in The Chase where Dorothy Dene lived with her family in the 1880s.

### Monday 17 October

**Annual General Meeting.** Speaker to be announced.

### Monday 21 November

**Women of Lambeth.** Lambeth is the backdrop to the stories of some extraordinary women. **Jenny Rossiter** will provide an historical perspective on why we are more familiar with pioneering women of north rather than south London and provide a glimpse of mountaineers, artists, architects, actors, politicians, doctors, nurses, novelists, theatre directors, social reformers and campaigners, all women who have either lived, worked or set up organisations within Lambeth. Jenny is a founder member of Lambeth Tour Guides Association and has been involved in various voluntary organisations concerned with housing, homelessness and social welfare. In 2012 she wrote and published a book, *Nobler and Better Things*, about the work of social reformer Octavia Hill.

## Art transported: how did it get from where it was created?

We love gazing at a painting by Titian or Caravaggio, but where it was before it reached the gallery, how did it get there and who in earlier times stood in front of it? When Napoleon invaded Europe, he had the best of its works of art sent back to Paris for his new Musée Napoleon. But *how* did they get the four life-size bronze horses down from San Marco in Venice, over the Alps and all the way to Paris? What are the practicalities involved in shipping a 15-ft-high painting or a sculpture such as Michelangelo's *David*? On **Wednesday 15 December at 11am** the art historian **Dr Chantal Brotherton-Ratcliffe** will delve into this astonishing history at the Clapham Picturehouse. Email [claphamcommon@theartssociety.org](mailto:claphamcommon@theartssociety.org) for tickets, £10 visitors (members free), or details about joining. *Susan Holder*



## Genius, beauty and calm – music for violin and piano

Join violinist **Gabriela Zukowicz** and pianist **Kyle Hutchings** for their concert on **Thursday 2 December, 7pm**, at St Paul's, Rectory Grove. The journey begins with a sonata by a young Mozart composed when just 10 years old; a simple, beautiful work, which already gives a sense of his genius. We'll then be taken to Vienna, 1812, for Beethoven's last violin sonata; a work of ethereal beauty and calm. Ysaÿe's *Rêve d'enfant* and Franck's *Sonata for Violin and Piano in A Major* complete the programme. Tickets £12 and £10 on the door or at [gabrielaviolin.eventbrite.co.uk](http://gabrielaviolin.eventbrite.co.uk).



Alessandro Tear

## Clapham Chamber Concerts

On **10 December** at St Paul's, Rectory Grove the award-winning **Ferio Saxophone Quartet** presents an evening of light classics (Bizet, Bernstein and Piazzolla) and Christmas favourites (*Nutcracker*, *Christmas Concerto*) – the perfect antidote to a cold winter's night. There are two performances, **6pm and 8pm**. Tickets from Eventbrite nearer the time; visit [claphamchamberconcerts.org.uk](http://claphamchamberconcerts.org.uk). *Paul Askew*

## St Paul's Opera

There's still time to book for *Cinderella* (Newsletter 441), **Thursday 9 December, 7.30pm** and **Saturday 11 December, 3pm**. You'll see familiar SPO faces – Fiona Hymns (*Cinderella*), Louisa Tee (*Maguelonne*), Alexandra Dinwiddie (*Armeline*), Owain Evans (*Pictordu*) and Tricia Ninian (*Fairy Godmother*) – as well as newcomers, tenors Martins Smaukstelis (*Prince Charming*) and Tom Morss (*Barigoule*). We're particularly pleased to see the Vicar of St Paul's, Fr Jonathan Boardman, return as the narrator for our operatic panto. For tickets, visit [stpaulsopera.org/news/cinderella-tickets-now-available-you-shall-go-to-the-concert](http://stpaulsopera.org/news/cinderella-tickets-now-available-you-shall-go-to-the-concert). *Tricia Ninian*

## Omnibus Theatre

The seasonal fun continues. Choose from *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* (**14-19 December**), a toe-tapping Christmas concert from **Seven Steps Big Band** (**19 December**) or a cheeky festive tippie in the cosy Café Bar. 'Tis the season! Details at [omnibus-clapham.org](http://omnibus-clapham.org).



## Christmas is in the air at Venn Street Market

Exciting new traders have recently set out their stalls at Venn Street. Every first and third Saturday of the month, **Fish of Life** will serve up fresh Cod/Hake Kiev in panko breadcrumbs, deep-fried and oozing with garlic butter in a brioche bun; they hope to include gluten-free buns for GF customers. We also have a gluten-free baker, **Noodo** ([noodo.uk](http://noodo.uk)), Clapham's first! Mushroom aficionados will appreciate **Nonsuch Shrooms**, on the fourth and fifth Saturdays of every month. Their Oyster, Shitake, Morels, St George, Shamenjii, Golden Enoki, and Chicken of the Woods are not just a great addition to the market but to any recipe. **Beau's Gelato** contain no artificial additives and they've just introduced tubs of gelato to take away ([beaugelato.com](http://beaugelato.com)).

Finally, **Christmas trees!** You can choose them at **Venn Street Flowers** on three consecutive Saturdays, from **27 November to 11 December**. On **4 December, 11am to 1pm**, the **Crystal Palace Brass Band** will play all your favourite Christmas tunes and carols. On **11 December, 11am to 11.30am**, **Clapham Community Choir** sing carols for their community. O come! *Kate Greening*



## John How (8 October 1934 - 13 October 2021)

Susan and I moved to Clapham in 1967, into a new block of flats in Victoria Rise. We chose a flat on the first floor, overlooking the garden. Shortly after we moved in, John moved in also, directly below us. He was an architect, working for Lambeth Council. Later he studied Building Conservation and worked for English Heritage for many years. We got to know him and several of his friends. He was involved with the Clapham Society, but although concerned with planning issues he chaired other sub-committees such as Events, and became Vice-Chairman. John had a clear vision of what should be done but always expressed in a polite and unforced manner, never seeking the limelight.

John did much to help and strengthen the Clapham Society until he left Clapham in 2009 to retire to a charming converted stable in Gloucestershire (still getting the Newsletter). In recognition of his long service to the Society, in 2010 a tree was planted in his memory near Eagle Pond. He married his long-term friend and partner, Wim, on 10 October 2014, announcing the event at his 80th birthday celebration a few days later. John died suddenly on 13 October 2021 while visiting friends near the South Coast. *Bill Emmett, with help from Sinclair Johnston*

**Left: John at his 70th birthday party, at home in Lynette Avenue. John was a party animal and this was one of three parties to celebrate the occasion!**

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## Clapham Common news and views

Our recent Annual General Meeting was an opportunity to share with our members all the principal issues relating to Clapham Common, details of which are in the meeting report included with this issue.

The Clapham Society continues to work with Friends of Clapham Common and others to insist that all future events similar to last summer's Festival Republic event are approved by the Secretary of State, as we believe the law dictates that they must. We are pleased that CCMAC has endorsed this position and it remains the position of Lambeth Council that they will do so. Interested parties met recently to map out how we can best achieve this objective. The urgency is underlined by Lambeth's intention to seek a multi-year planning approval to coincide with the length of the contract they have signed with events organiser Festival Republic. However, the Planning Inspectorate has indicated that the matter may go to a Public Inquiry, which could have substantial implications on the future of events on Clapham Common and indeed all common land.

Whilst many challenges remain, it is clear that our members value the expanse, nature and quietness (in places!) of the Common as well as its vibrancy, activity and opportune location for social mixing. Despite the furore around events, and the often frustratingly slow pace of visible improvements on Clapham Common, progress has been and is being made in a number of important areas. The Society and our membership remain important tools in encouraging Lambeth to be the best possible stewards of this precious piece of land. *Andrew Summers*

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## The future of Wandsworth Museum

Some members may know the chequered history of Wandsworth Museum, which for many years was in the Old Court House in Garratt Lane. In 2007 Wandsworth Council decided to close the museum on this site and transfer the Wandsworth Public Library from its custom-built 1920s building on West Hill (*shown*) to the mid-19th-century Old Court House, in order to provide a library in the town centre. So the museum was closed.

After the withdrawal of council funding and a three-year closure, the former West Hill Library was converted into Wandsworth Museum with the aid of a £2 million cash injection from a local philanthropist to refurbish and modernise the premises. The new Wandsworth Museum, complete with learning centre, café and dedicated research area, opened in September 2010. The then Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, attended the official reopening, saying, 'Not only is the new Wandsworth Museum a fabulous resource for the local community, it is a wonderful addition to London's cultural landscape.'

By 2016, however, the museum was in trouble again, lacking appropriate funding, so it closed and the museum collections were transferred to Battersea Arts Centre (BAC). Although the collections were not on view, BAC ran a successful Schools Outreach programme that drew on them for some years, but earlier this year decided to end their agreement with Wandsworth Council. The collections were then moved to the basement of the former West Hill Museum which is, fortunately, climate controlled. But it is inaccessible, and it is not certain that the contents are completely digitally catalogued. This inaccessibility impacts on organisations such as the Clapham Society who have in the past used the collections for research and been able to see and use material relevant to Clapham.

The Clapham Society has joined with other local organisations in a campaign to lobby Wandsworth Council to take action to ensure the safety of the collections and restore accessibility. We hope that, in due course, new premises and funding will be found and the museum reopened. These are not world-class museum items but an important local historical resource which should be available to residents, especially children, and to researchers. Many Clapham Society members live in the Borough of Wandsworth; if you are among them we urge you to contact your councillors to ask them to support the campaign to reopen the museum. If you do not know who your local councillors are, the names and contact details can easily be found by inserting your postcode at [wandsworth.gov.uk/the-council/councillors/find-your-councillors](http://wandsworth.gov.uk/the-council/councillors/find-your-councillors). If you have any suggestions for the future of Wandsworth Museum do contact me, as I represent the Clapham Society on the action group. *Alyson Wilson*



John Brennan

## Social media – we’d love you to engage with us

*It’s never too late to follow our social media and interact with the Society’s posts. At the AGM several of you expressed an interest in learning more about the basic techniques and interactions.*

*Member and social media expert **Dave Cross** offers this handy primer for new users – and those who want to know more!*

Like pretty much everyone in our internet-connected world, the Clapham Society has a number of social media accounts. These serve two purposes for us. They are a great way to communicate with the membership in between the monthly newsletters and allow us to promote our activities, and those of other groups, to non-members too.

We currently have accounts on three platforms. **Facebook:** [facebook.com/claphamsociety](https://www.facebook.com/claphamsociety); **Twitter:** [twitter.com/ClaphamSociety](https://twitter.com/ClaphamSociety); and **Instagram:** [instagram.com/claphamsociety](https://www.instagram.com/claphamsociety).

If you are on any of these services, it would be great if you could follow us. The more followers we have, the more likely the services are to show our posts to people who don’t follow us. It would also be helpful if you could like or share any of our posts that you find entertaining or useful. (If you are not on social media but would like to start, it is easy to create an account by signing up.)

The suggestions below will only apply to platforms for which you have your own account, although if you wanted to sign up to all three and help boost our posts that would be great!

In all cases, we’re battling the algorithm. People who follow our accounts are likely to see our posts, but we want people who don’t follow us to see them too. All the platforms have an algorithm for showing random posts to people and we want to use that to our advantage. We do that by interacting with posts. Any interaction is good, as it makes the algorithm think the post is more popular and, therefore, more likely to appeal to more people!

The ways to interact with a post on the platforms are as follows:

**Facebook** gives us three options:

1) We can ‘like’ a post. The simplest way is to click the ‘thumbs-up’ underneath it, but if you do a long press on that thumb, you’ll get a pop-up from which you can access more options – all emojis. Hover

over them if their meanings aren’t clear, but most are pretty obvious.

2) We can comment. Click on the text box that says ‘Write a comment’ below the post and write whatever you like.

3) Finally, we can ‘share’. There’s a ‘share’ icon under the post and pressing that will give you several options: you can share to your feed, to a page or group that you’re a member of, or to a friend. In all cases, you’ll be given the option to add some commentary that will be displayed above the shared post.

**Twitter** gives us three options, but effectively four (see item 3):

1) We can like a post by pressing the heart below the post.

2) We can reply to a post. This is like starting a conversation with the person who made the original post. Do this by pressing the speech balloon under the post.

3) We can retweet by pressing the circle of arrows under the post. This will give us two options – a normal retweet and a quote tweet. In the first option, the original tweet will appear in your timeline with ‘retweeted by <your name>’ above it. In the second option (quote tweet), you can add a comment that will appear above the tweet in your timeline (this is like the ‘share’ option on Facebook).

**Instagram** As with Facebook, there are three options:

1) We can ‘like’ a post by tapping the heart at the bottom of the photo.

2) We can comment by tapping the speech bubble under the photo and typing something interesting.

3) Or we can share it with a friend by clicking the icon resembling a paper plane, choosing a friend from the list, then adding some text.

**Cross-platform sharing** You can also share a post from one platform to another. Any time you see an icon that has three small circles connected by two lines, this is a ‘share’ button. Pressing that will give you all sorts of sharing options, including email.

If you’re new to social media the quickest route to seeing our platforms is on the Clapham Society website, where the icons appear in the ‘Follow The Clapham Society’ box on each page. You can access them through the main Facebook, Twitter and Instagram links too, all of which have user guides for further help.

To set up your own account, visit [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com), [instagram.com](https://www.instagram.com) or [twitter.com](https://twitter.com), as appropriate, and sign up with a username and password.



## Christmas shopping? The Clapham Society has lots to offer

Why not give friends and family who live in Clapham, or used to and are missing it madly, a Gift Membership to the Clapham Society so they can keep up with events in our vibrant community? Starting on 25 December, it will run until March 2023. Further details are available from Jennifer Everett at [membership@claphamsociety.com](mailto:membership@claphamsociety.com). The Society also has a wealth of authoritative and beautiful publications on local history, including the Clapham Sect, Clapham in the last century and famous residents, plus self-guided walks. Visit [claphamsociety.com/publications/](https://www.claphamsociety.com/publications/).



## Advanced Care Planning

Has the pandemic made you or the people you care for think about what care and treatment you would or wouldn’t want if you became very unwell, or what you would want people to know about you if you couldn’t tell them yourself?

If you live in Lambeth you can get free help to record your future wishes now, in an advanced care plan, so that your loved ones and care professionals will know what’s important to you if you’re unable to tell them yourself later. We have been offered a free information

session on Zoom on **13 January 2022 at 4pm**. For more details about this event, please email: [verena.hewat@compassionindying.org.uk](mailto:verena.hewat@compassionindying.org.uk). You will receive a login link about joining the meeting from the Lambeth Advance Care Planning Consortium. The session will last no longer than an hour and a half and will provide you with information about the planning documents you can use, and how you – or the people you care for – can access support to create your own plan using free documents from The Lambeth Advance Care Planning Consortium. *Jenny Cobley*

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

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Details of meetings, activities and a full list of our publications can be found on our website at [claphamsociety.com](https://www.claphamsociety.com)

