

The Clapham Society

Newsletter



Public Meeting: Proposed redevelopment of Lambeth College

About 70 people turned out on 10 January for a Public Meeting at The Elms Academy to challenge representatives of London Realty, the developer who has applied to Lambeth Council for planning permission to redevelop Lambeth College at 45 Clapham Common South Side. Those present included residents from Notre Dame Estate, Elms Road, Abbeville Road and many of the side roads that run off it, Waldo Close, Shaftesbury Close and Timothy Close, as well as other Clapham addresses, near and far, that will be affected directly or indirectly if the planning application is approved.

Keynote speakers were Luke Baker, from London Realty; James Dowdall, Notre Dame Residents Association; Shane Young, Chair of Governors, The Elms Academy; and three local ward councillors: Andrew Collins (Clapham East), and Ben Curtis and Alison Inglis-Jones (both from Clapham Common & Abbeville). The **Revd Ruth Burge-Thomas**, vicar of the Church of the Holy Spirit in Narbonne Avenue, chaired the meeting.

It was apparent that many residents are worried about the issues that will result from this redevelopment, if approved, both during its construction and when completed. **James Dowdall** outlined the impact the Thornton Park scheme next door to the proposed site has already had on neighbouring residents' physical amenity, mental health and quality of life; he also cited a concrete spill on land belonging to Notre Dame Estate. He emphasised the lack of response by London Realty and Henry Construction (the main contractor) to the affected residents' concerns.

Shane Young pointed out the disruption caused by Thornton Park on the education of students at the Academy. Classrooms have had to be vacated due to noise and relentless drilling. This disturbance will be even worse if the new development goes ahead. Some of the proposed blocks to be constructed would directly overlook (west-facing) classrooms.

Luke Baker of London Realty responded for the developer in a meeting that remained calm and polite. Palpably residents are frustrated by the lack of clarity about the impact of so many new homes on the locality and their likely cost to future occupiers (including rents on 'affordable' homes), but also the premature demolition of excellent recently built Lambeth College facilities and the blight the new development would cause. **Mark Leffler**, Chairman of The Clapham Society, flagged numerous issues relating to conservation, pressure on amenities, housing, traffic and transport which neatly encapsulated much of the discussion and debate.

It is vital if you live in Lambeth to comment on this application, which goes to the Planning Committee on 7 February. **You have until 6 February** and remember to add your address. Visit: lambeth.gov.uk/planning-building-control/planning-applications/search-submit-comment-applications reference **22/03713/FUL**. Valid reasons for objection are: Adverse Impact on the Conservation Area; Excessive Height of Buildings; Excessive Density of Buildings; Disturbance; Loss of Privacy; Loss of Light; Overdevelopment; Pressure on Local Amenities; Negative Effect on the Environment; Impeding Road and Highway Access. Any questions, please email: AInglisJones@lambeth.gov.uk or BCurtis@lambeth.gov.uk. **Alison Inglis-Jones**

See also claphamsociety.com/AGM-2022minutes-Lambeth-College-development.pdf



Issue 453 February 2023

Our meetings take place at **Omnibus Theatre, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW**. The talk starts promptly at 8pm and our guest normally speaks for about 45 minutes, followed by 15 minutes for questions and discussion. Meetings are free and open to non-members, who are invited to make a donation to the Society. Please arrive in good time before the start. The Café Bar is open from 6pm for drinks and snacks – a great opportunity to socialise with other members before (and after) the meeting.

Monday 20 February

Behind the Shop Facade: The Life of Maurice Dorfman by **Jim Grover**.

On Christmas Eve 2019, Maurice Dorfman flipped over the sign hanging in his haberdashery shop door to 'Closed' just as he had done on so many Christmas Eves before. This time he would never flip it back. Five days later, he was admitted to hospital; two months later, at the age of 87, he died. Maurice's death represented the end of an era. For a little over 60 years he and his family had served the local community from Jeannette Fashions, the longest-surviving traditional independent retailer on Clapham High Street. Local documentary photographer Jim Grover spent a year piecing together Maurice's extraordinary life story, which is filled with surprises and a final extraordinary twist that can only now be revealed.

Monday 20 March

What makes a writer write or a painter paint? Local authors, novelist **Elizabeth Buchan** and crime writer **Julie Anderson**, discuss the sources of human creativity with particular emphasis on writing – the drama, the inspiration, the perspiration. It will all be covered.

Dame Vivienne Westwood (1941-2022)

I've known Vivienne and her wonderful husband, Andreas (Kronthaler), for many decades now and in a word she was remarkable. Not just for her incredible fashion design but for the



Vivienne Westwood with Tim Gosling after she unveiled the Green Plaque outside Sycamore House. Below: Floral tributes outside her home.

way she cared deeply about the community she lived in. Living opposite in Clapham Old Town, she was overjoyed to be involved in the unveiling at my home in August 2011 of the first Green Plaque sponsored by The Clapham

Society, which formed part of the storytelling of Clapham's historic buildings and their changes into a different use.

Vivienne wrote the foreword for my book *London Secrets* in 2012 and when they were planning on moving the main bus stops from outside her house and the Sun pub said to me, 'No, no, no,' she felt the same. One of her greatest joys was opening her curtains in the mornings and looking out at the bright red buses; she knew then that she was truly in London. So they didn't move them!

Vivienne was also instrumental, in her early days of living here, in creating the Clapham theatre and arts centre, Omnibus, which could have so easily been developed instead into luxury flats.

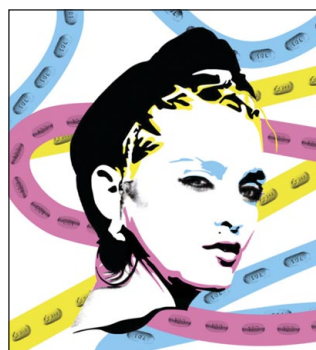
Her fame aside, Vivienne was very much part of all of our lives here and will be so sadly missed, especially as she rode her bike up that hill with her husband each day from Battersea, wearing a fantastic assortment of clothes and her brightly coloured hair. It always made your pulse race a little faster. I know we shall all miss that – and her – a lot. **Tim Gosling**
Learn more at claphamsociety.com/green-plaques/sycamore-house/



Jon McHer

Omnibus Theatre

Omnibus celebrates LGBT+ History Month with shows, panels, exhibitions and more. *Live To Tell: (A Proposal For) The*



Madonna Jukebox Musical (7-18 February) mashes up queer history and pop artifice into some highly personal Confessions on a Dancefloor. Following on from that, *Merboy* (21 February to 4 March), a poetic and queer retelling of *The Little Mermaid*, takes us to where the fantasy world of fairytale meets the dramatic yearnings of 1960s girl band music, exploring the intense

depths of gay shame. Omnibus Theatre, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW. For times, and to book and see what else is on this month head to omnibus-clapham.org. **Ellie Grice**

Join Clapham Community Choir

The Clapham Community Choir rehearses every **Tuesday evening, 7.30-9pm**, at our new home, Omnibus Theatre. We are a friendly and inclusive bunch of all ages and levels of ability; no experience needed. A non-religious choir, we sing everything from pop, rock and soul to sea shanties and folk songs, sometimes in other languages.

This year we are celebrating 10 years of singing together, including during lockdown when we met and sang online every week. If you would like to try out a session, it's a pay-as-you-feel donation; then weekly rehearsals are £10 casually or £9 per session if you pay the half or full term up front. For more information email: claphamcommunitychoir@gmail.com or check us out on Instagram: [@claphamcommunitychoir](https://www.instagram.com/claphamcommunitychoir).

If you are a local business and would like to work with us as a sponsor we would love to hear from you, too. **Aleisha Leonard**



Women of Lambeth

On a wet and windy Monday evening in late November, refreshingly so after the unseasonably warm weather that had come before, we were treated to a talk by **Jenny Rossiter** about the famous and, in a few cases, infamous women of Lambeth. Jenny is a founder member of the Lambeth Tour Guides Association and has learned so much about the history of our large and interesting borough, as she revealed, simply by looking up.

Jenny's talk traced the 10 chapters of the book she co-wrote with three other Lambeth Tour Guides about these notable females: writers (Mrs Beeton, E Nesbit, Angela Carter), women in health and science (Ann Dally, Chief Abeni Pratt, Annie McCall, Wendy Sheila Atkin), women on the screen (Ida Lupino, June Whitfield), politicians (Rose Lamartine Yates, Linda Bellos), artists and designers (the late Dame Vivienne Westwood, the 'accidental Brutalist' Magda Borowiecka), pioneers, and a special a mention of 'women upholding and breaking the law'. There was a strong presence, too, of women who strutted the boards, possibly thanks to good tram links in days gone by to the West End. We learned, if we didn't know before, that Maggi Hambling is a Clapham resident whose wonderful sculpture *Brixton Heron* tops the Prince of Wales in Brixton.

Among the women pioneers were Rabbi Julia Neuberger, formerly of Orlando Road; and the mountaineering Pigeon sisters, Anna (1832-1917) and Ellen Abbot (1836-1902). When, in 1869, they finished their descent down the Sesejoch pass – in skirts ('no lycra trousers then') – their achievement was initially dismissed on the grounds that no woman could do that.

If anyone can update Jenny on other notable women in Clapham and Lambeth beyond the 125 luminaries who populate her pages, she would love to hear about them. Two obvious omissions she might consider are Miriam Margolyes and the textile designer Susan Collier (1938-2011).

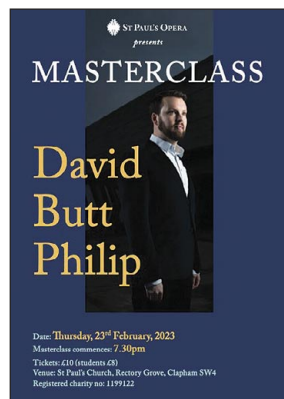
Jenny spoke without notes, a skill that possibly comes from being a tour guide – on which subject she would also like to hear from any members who might wish to become a Lambeth Tour Guide. If you would, please visit lambethtourguides.org and follow the link to LTGA Course. Watch this space for publication details of her book, *Extraordinary Women of Lambeth*. When the next 125 women of Lambeth make it into print, we look forward to hearing about them in a return visit. **Report and photograph Ruth Eastman**



St Paul's Opera

The **David Butt Philip Masterclass** is back. This will be his fifth masterclass for St Paul's Opera, but the first in his official capacity as our Patron. We are extremely grateful for his continued support, especially given his increasingly hectic international schedule.

David's tenor star is in the ascendant. In the last year alone he made debuts at the New York Metropolitan Opera as Laertes in Brett



Dean's *Hamlet*, the Salzburg Festival (*Katya Kabanova*) and the Vienna Staatsoper (Laca in *Jenůfa*, followed by Stolzing in Keith Warner's new production of *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*). This February he returns to the Royal Opera House, then he will be back at the Vienna Staatsoper in April as Don Jose in *Carmen*. In June David makes his debut at San Francisco Opera in Richard Strauss's *Die Frau ohne Schatten*.

If you have never been to a David Butt Philip Masterclass before (even if you have), you are in for a treat. His

skill at conveying the nuances of good singing, and the speed with which his pupils absorb and reflect his vocal tuition, is compelling to watch. Masterclass candidates are selected by ballot from the many singers in recent and future SPO productions. **Thursday 23 February, 7.30pm, St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DZ.** Tickets, £10 (£8 for students), are available at stpaulsopera.org. **Tricia Ninian**

Volunteer opportunities with the Hospice

Royal Trinity Hospice is excited to launch Compassionate Neighbours. This is a social movement which helps to tackle the loneliness and isolation that many people who are nearing the end of life, owing to age or illness, face. We are looking for local people to train as Compassionate Neighbours and offer their time, friendship and interests to create a more compassionate community. This may be through being matched with someone one-to-one, or using your people skills to forge connections with people across the community.

If you are interested and would like to learn more, please email: Emma at elnaef@royaltrinityhospice.london. The first training sessions are **Monday 6 February and Wednesday 8 February, 7-9pm** (both on Teams). Training will cover a variety of areas to prepare volunteers for home visits and will be led by Emma in interactive and informal group exercises.

To find out more about the work of the hospice, also feel free to attend the Talk and Tour with Trinity open-house morning on **Thursday 16 February, 11am to 1pm.** To book, visit www.royaltrinityhospice.london/events. **Anna Reid**

Devas Youth Club – supporting the local community

For over 150 years, the Devas Club, which moved to its current home on Stormont Road in 1970, has been providing a safe space, guidance, creative skills and learning opportunities for local youth. Devas believes that every child has the right to fulfil their creative potential and supports more than 250 members, aged eight to 18, and their families, many of whom are among the most disadvantaged and vulnerable in our community. Activities on offer include cricket, football, girls' boxing, dance sessions (warm-up, *right*), table tennis, DJ skills, gym sessions, crafts, sewing, cooking and homework tuition.

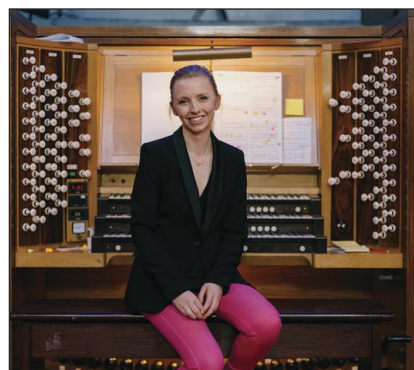
In addition, Devas provides wider support to all local residents in the form of a weekly food bank, a regular over-50s disco and a new monthly community café. Large and small rooms and event spaces are also available at the club for one-off or weekly hire.

Music fans will want to SAVE THE DATE for a 70s/80s piano/vocal gig presented by renowned local talent **David Whitlam** on **13 May**. To keep informed about tickets for this and all Devas community events, you can sign up to the newsletter at devasclub.org. **Kath Ludlow, Trustee**

St Luke's Music Society

Thanks to generous sponsorship by Savills, there will be a very rare opportunity to hear a recital on the magnificent organ at St Luke's, Ramsden Road, when superstar young organist **Anna Lapwood** gives a

programme ranging from J S Bach through César Franck and Maurice Ravel to more recent organ music by Florence Price. A large video screen will be installed so that the audience can enjoy every detail of Anna Lapwood's virtuosic performance. **Saturday 18 February, 7.30pm, St Luke's, Ramsden Road, SW12 8HQ.** Full details and tickets are available at slms.org.uk.



The Arts Society Clapham Common

At **11am on Wednesday 15 February** the art historian **Barry Venning** looks at the contributions to British art made by artists



Nelson's Ship in a Bottle, Trafalgar Square, by Yinka Shonibare.

of African, Caribbean or Asian origin since SS *Empire Windrush* arrived in Tilbury from Jamaica in 1948. He considers the work of Sir Frank Bowling, Francis Newton Souza, Eddie Chambers, Yinka Shonibare, Sonia Boyce, Rasheed Araeen, Lubaina Himid and The Singh Twins, all of whom have achieved international

recognition and set much of the agenda for British art of the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

Barry Venning's interests and teaching range from the art of late medieval Europe to global contemporary art. He has published books, articles and exhibition catalogue essays on Turner, Constable and European landscape painting, but he also has an ongoing research interest in post-colonial art and British visual satire. Come and hear him at **Clapham Picturehouse, 76 Venn Street, SW4 0AT.** Doors open at 10.30am. Tickets cost £10 (visitors and non-members); members free. To join The Arts Society for free entry to this and future events, email: claphamcommon@theartsociety.org. **Susan Holder**



Joyce Luck (1927-2022)

Many older members of the Society will remember Joyce Luck's cheerful smile as she stood behind the heavily laden buffet table at Clapham Society parties. From 1993 for 12 years, with a small band of helpers, she organised and cooked for a Summer Party and a Winter Party each year. In those days almost everything was home-made, either by Joyce or another member. It was not until 2005, when she decided to hang up her apron, that professional caterers were first used. For an even longer period, 1984 to 2005, Joyce was Membership Secretary of the Society, not only keeping the records on index cards but also initiating the system of volunteer newsletter deliverers which still survives and thrives today.

But her role in The Clapham Society was a small part of Joyce's colourful life, which was spent entirely in Clapham (Klea Avenue as a child and Cavendish Road, a short walk away, when she married). At the start of World War II, aged 12, she was evacuated to Windsor along with her fellow pupils at Clapham County Secondary School, and after a brief rather unhappy time, she returned to Clapham to



Colin Baldock

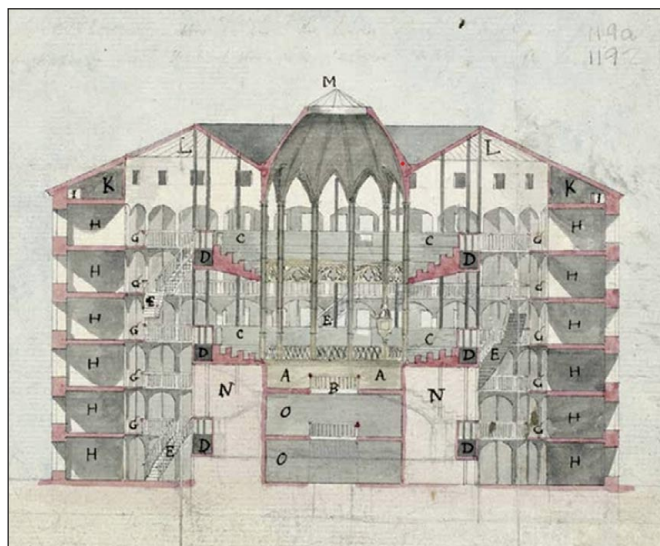
complete her education, specialising in Commercial French. Completing the course with flying colours, she was recommended by her tutor for a position with the French government in exile under General de Gaulle. Although only 17, she was the only English person in the team and greatly enjoyed the interesting job. When France

was liberated the office moved back to Paris, but British subjects were not allowed to go because it was not considered safe. Joyce later spoke in some detail about her wartime experiences in an interview for Lambeth Archives, some of which can be found on our website at claphamsociety.com/docs/joyce-luck-recollections.pdf.

Joyce told amusing stories of the value of her fluent French locally when soldiers from the Free French army were based at the former Notre Dame School on Clapham Common South Side. She clearly had a gift for languages and went on to learn Italian and German, becoming a multilingual secretary at the International Chemical Company.

Among her many varied activities, Joyce spent time at her house in the Loire, travelled widely, and lodged and tutored overseas language students at her Clapham home. She was truly phenomenal.

Alyson Wilson



A sketch of Jeremy Bentham's proposed panopticon by the architect Willey Reveley (1760-1799). Prison cells are marked H.

Unbuilt Clapham: The panopticon

For some long time at the end of the 18th century, there was a proposal to build a major national prison, enabled by an Act of Parliament in 1779. An area was chosen in 1782 on what was then called Battersea Rise, roughly where Clapham Junction is now, but it proved too expensive to build and transportation to Australia, commencing in 1788, made it less necessary.

A few years later, Jeremy Bentham tried to use the Act to build his own proposal for what was called a panopticon. This is a circular prison with cells on the outside with the opening to the centre barred but otherwise clear for observation by the guards in a central tower. Its advantage was supposed to be that supervision required a smaller number of guards than in other prisons and the arrangements meant that prisoners could not know whether or not they were being observed.

Bentham continued to promote his prison on Battersea Rise but managed to offend Lord Spencer, the site's owner, who was very aware of the increasing value of the land for housing. Another Act was passed in 1794, but local dignitaries Henry Thornton, Robert and John Dent, and Christopher Baldwin secured an amendment that ruled out compulsory purchase. Spencer remained determined not to sell the land for a prison and the panopticon was never built. *Timothy Walker*

Next issue: A Clapham seminary

Social media at The Clapham Society – it's not just about us, but you and us!

The Society is committed to reaching members through social media as an urgent way to communicate. We cover as much as we can in the Newsletter but issues may crop up between publication that we feel our members will want, and need, to know about. You can do three things to help: ensure the Membership Secretary has your current email address for rare but important mailings (email her at her address below), become a Friend with us on Facebook and 'Follow' us on Twitter and Instagram. We want you to know what's going on!

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

Chairman	Mark Leffler chairman@claphamsociety.com	Common and Open Spaces	Andrew Summers openspaces@claphamsociety.com
Vice Chair	Alison Macnair vicechair@claphamsociety.com	Meetings and Events	Christine Armstrong events@claphamsociety.com
Secretary	Gillian White secretary@claphamsociety.com	Local History and Publications	Alyson Wilson history@claphamsociety.com
Treasurer	David Brown treasurer@claphamsociety.com	Social Media	Alison Inglis-Jones socialmedia@claphamsociety.com
Membership Secretary	Jennifer Everett membership@claphamsociety.com	Newsletter Editor and Instagram	Ruth Eastman news@claphamsociety.com

Previous Newsletters and details of our meetings, activities and publications can be all found at claphamsociety.com

