

The Clapham Society

Newsletter



Issue 459 September 2023

Lambeth College redevelopment

We first broke news of this proposed redevelopment at 45 Clapham Common South Side a year ago (Newsletter 449), flagging up the planning history of the college and the extreme height and density of the new development it would be part of. Committee member **Alison Inglis-Jones** provides an update.

Lambeth Planning Application Committee (PAC) is now not due to hear the application for the redevelopment of Lambeth College until September. The college is still open and fingers crossed it remains so for decades to come. There have been many delays on the part of the developers, London Realty,



who have had numerous issues to address on Thornton Park, their still unfinished development alongside the college site. Residents there are struggling to make their voices heard with regard to service charges and heating bills, as well as thefts and anti-social behaviour on the property. There are no signs of work by any

contractor, following the collapse of Henry Construction (Newsletter 458).

Councillors are working with Southern Housing to resolve some of the issues facing residents, but the absence of a contractor has hampered this.

There are two possible dates for PAC in September. As soon as the Society has a firm date, all residents affected will be leafleted with a final push for comment submission to Lambeth Planning Department. Comments are still being accepted at bit.ly/42u2LNA and will be until three working days prior to PAC.

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, email ajinglisjones@lambeth.gov.uk or bcurtis@lambeth.gov.uk, councillors for Clapham Common and Abbeville, who will be glad to help.

Public Inquiry into major events on the Common

Members may recall that Lambeth Council contracted with Festival Republic (FR) to hold a series of major music events in August 2024. As in previous years they are proposed to occupy the large meadow on Clapham Common to the west of the skateboard park and south of Long Road. Referred to by the Council as the Events Site, the area was most recently occupied – by FR – in August 2021.

Last December the Council applied to Defra (the Central Government department responsible) for consent to the approximately 20-acre site being enclosed again by a 3-metre-high fence, and for the erection of the various stages, refreshment tents and associated equipment that (Continued on page 2)

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. 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 18 September

Jane Morris – the Pre-Raphaelite muse. Jane Morris's highly individual beauty, a symbol of the Pre-Raphaelite movement, was immortalised through the many portraits of her by her long-time lover, Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Ever in the shadow of her famous husband, William Morris, she has been unfairly neglected by posterity. **John Hawks**, founder of Merton Abbey Mills, director of Wandle Heritage Limited and curator of the Merton Priory Chapter House Museum, looks at the life and contribution of a woman who most certainly was 'not just a pretty face'.

Monday 16 October

Annual General Meeting. The AGM is your opportunity to join our Committee and become more involved in the Society's activities. We are especially keen to recruit people with knowledge of planning and architecture, and admin, communication and IT skills. If you would like to talk – informally and with no obligation – to one of our committee members about what would be involved, please email secretary@claphamsociety.com, and we will arrange this.

The formal part of the meeting is brief. Members are then invited to enjoy nibbles and a glass of wine before our guest speakers, **Marie McCarthy**, Artistic Director of Omnibus Theatre, and **George Owen**, MBE, Founder, tell us about the theatre's 10th anniversary celebrations.

Nominations for the election of Officers and Committee Members are open until 2 October (see last page for details).

New members

This month we welcome Peter Afford; Clare, Vivian and Joseph Gallaher; and Ana Vrkljan and Fabio Caradonna. If you, or someone you know, would like to join The Clapham Society, email membership@claphamsociety.com, visit claphamsociety.com/join-the-society or come to any of our events mentioned in this Newsletter when we can tell you, or them, more about us. **Jennifer Everett**

(Continued from page 1) FR requires. Such events attract up to around 40,000 ticket holders a day over the August bank holiday weekend. The Council claims the events are an important source of income.

Some 570 people and organisations (including the Society) submitted objections to this proposal last January, and Defra decided to conduct a Public Inquiry to determine whether the event would be allowed to proceed. The Inquiry was conducted virtually using Microsoft Teams, and was also viewable online by those not participating. It took place over the best part of three weeks, commencing on Tuesday 13 June.

Lambeth Council and the Friends of Clapham Common (FCC) each engaged King's Counsel in preparation for the Inquiry, and the main arguments for and against the proposed FR event were set out by witnesses on behalf of those organisations, FCC's witnesses in an entirely voluntary capacity. Submissions were also made on behalf of the Society, the Open Spaces Society, and the Clapham Common Management Advisory Committee (CCMAC), as well as powerful testimony about the problems caused by similar past events from private individuals and four local councillors.

The key arguments before the Inspector, Mr Rory Cridland, concerned whether the area required by the events would involve no more than 10% of the Common, and whether the holding of the events would be compatible with Defra's Common Land consents policy (2015): in broad terms, whether the erection of these temporary structures and the holding of the events can be considered to be in the interest of the neighbourhood and in the public interest; and whether it would be compatible with conservation (including nature conservation) and local heritage.

This Inquiry will be a landmark case, as such events on common land have not previously been subjected to this level of scrutiny. In view of the weight of the evidence presented at the Inquiry, and the issues involved, we are unlikely to know the outcome much before Christmas.

To find out more, visit eventlambeth.co.uk/clapham-common-common-land-consent-application-2, or if you are interested in reading the Society's case against the FR events going ahead, email me (mark.leffler88@gmail.com). **Mark Leffler**



The site is fenced off not just during large events but sometimes for months afterwards, when the ground recovers or needs reseeded. In 2020 at the height of Covid it was inaccessible for nine months.

Ruth Eastman

Are you sitting comfortably? In conversation with Iain Mackintosh

As an actress, I am slightly irked by the rather self-conscious term theatre makers for all those who create a piece of theatre. Iain Mackintosh (*below*), in his fascinating talk at Omnibus on 16 June, ably interviewed by The Clapham Society chairman, Mark Leffler, reminded us that it is actors and audience who together light the spark that makes theatre, but that it is also those who create the best space, the auditorium, who help that spark to flame.

Iain, resident in Clapham with his wife actress Jan Carey for 52 years, has made theatre spaces his life's work: first by discovering



and studying how different auditoria affect the same show when touring with Prospect Theatre Company in the '60s, then, from the '70s, as part of Theatre Projects Consultants, by helping to design, create, and adapt theatre spaces all over the UK and the world. He swears he has no specific qualifications in the field, but what he does not know about the insides of theatres, the magical space where live theatre happens, is not worth

knowing. His talk was a taster. I would urge anyone to buy his book, with its detailed histories, beautiful photographs and diagrams, and wealth of anecdote.

Quoting theatre director Declan Donnellan, Iain says, 'A piece of theatre changes completely according to the space it is in.' He started by treating us to a long investigation into just why the vast stage and space of the London Coliseum is not suitable as a home or touring base for English National Opera, as ENO's repertoire will not fit smaller stages on tour, and anyway few performers can fill the Coliseum's stage.

Most telling, however, were his loves, and hates. He is a good hater: first the National Theatre, Denys Lasdun and his inhuman concrete, in particular the vast Olivier space (Albert Finney said acting there was like trying to play a concrete violin); then the widespread use of mics, necessitated by that vast space, where all can see but few can hear, and the creeping substitution of

'streaming' for live touring. 'Streaming is not live theatre,' Iain maintains. 'Theatre on screen is film or television!' Indeed Ralph Fiennes said he gave his worst performance when he realised the cameras were there; he 'froze'. A study in 2017 had shown that in a *live* theatre experience patrons' hearts beat at the same time.

Iain shared his loves, those spaces that frame and enhance theatre performance: the renovated Festival Theatre in Edinburgh with its old auditorium preserved; the new Tricycle (now Kiln) Theatre in Kilburn, using scaffolding and canvas, its shape inspired by that gem, the Georgian Theatre Royal in Richmond, Yorkshire; and Peter Brook's Bouffes du Nord in Paris, epic yet intimate. Then there are thrust stages such as the Crucible in Sheffield, and theatres like Manchester's Royal Exchange and the tiny Orange Tree Theatre, Richmond upon Thames, where audiences sit all round, and see each other take part, as it were, in the shared experience.

Iain puts people – actors and audience – at the heart, and has devoted his life to finding the best spaces for them. He ended with the image of the Old Vic again, superimposed over the Olivier stage: the close, warm, human space over the vast, impersonal hangar.

Theatre Spaces 1920-2020: Finding the Fun in Functionalism by Iain Mackintosh (Methuen), £29.99, is available at Clapham Books. Read it if you can. **Alison Skilbeck**

Alison and her husband, Tim Hardy, were speakers at Omnibus in January (report, Newsletter 454). If this issue reaches you early, you might be able to catch them at the Edinburgh Fringe in August: Alison in 'Alison Skilbeck's Uncommon Ground' at the Assembly Rooms and Tim in 'The Trials of Galileo' at Greenside.

Organ recitals return to St Paul's Clapham

'Organ Phantasticus' is a second series of recitals on the restored Forster & Andrews organ (1881) at St Paul's, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DZ. It will be held on three consecutive **Sunday afternoons at 3pm on 17 and 24 September and 1 October**. This powerful, exuberant and versatile instrument, rebuilt in 2019 to reflect its condition 150 years ago, will blow you away when eclectic programmes of music from across the centuries are performed on it by local recitalists **Charlie Warren, Alan Saggerson and Richard Pilliner**. Described by experts as an instrument of 'immense historic importance', the organ has now resumed its place amongst London's many magnificent concert instruments. Find more details about St Paul's organ and concerts at stpaulsclapham.org/About Us/Music. Entry is free with a retiring collection. **Alan Saggerson**

Dana Kubick

A great success

The Clapham Society Summer Party was a lively affair, attended by 50 happy guests. Many thanks to our generous hosts, Alison Inglis-Jones and Adrian Williams, who welcomed us to their beautiful garden to celebrate over wine and canapés. English summer weather being what it is, rain was the uninvited



guest, gate-crashing the festivities about half an hour in, when the multitude tripped inside and partied on, duly heedful of a newly laid oak floor, until an all-dry was sounded. Returning to the lawn with its comfortable seating and still ample supplies of nibbles and drink, the assembled company chatted away, enjoying company new and familiar, and it was well past the bewitching hour before the last guests made their way home. Thank you once again, Alison and Adrian. **Ruth Eastman**

London Borough of Culture bid

Wandsworth is applying to become the London Borough of Culture for 2025. If you live in the Borough of Wandsworth and like the idea, you can lend your support by filling in the 'Tell us what you love' questionnaire box at wandsworth.gov.uk/culture. **Neil Robson**

Unsung hero: Maud Chadburn, surgeon (1868-1957)

You may have never even noticed its name, but the forked road in and out of Tesco's across from Clapham South station is Maud Chadburn Place. Who was Maud Chadburn and why do we remember her?

Born in Middlesbrough to a Congregational minister, she was one of four children. Little is known about her childhood but one of her adoptive children describes it as less than happy. Maud fought to be allowed to train as a doctor. She studied in London, qualifying at the Royal Free Hospital in 1893. One of the first women to qualify as a surgeon, there being no separate qualifications for Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the time, she worked at the Clapham Maternity Hospital and then at the New Hospital for Women (now Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital); she was also a surgeon at The Canning Town Women's Settlement Hospital.



Together with Eleanor Davies-Colley, a fellow surgeon at the New Hospital for Women, she founded the South London Hospital for Women at Clapham South in 1912. Known as 'an Adamless Eden', the hospital was unique in that, save for an engineer and gardener, all the staff were

women. Indeed, such were the laws around the hospital that an Act of Parliament was required to let the hospital admit male patients in the Second World War.

The hospital closed amid great controversy in 1984. Maud Chadburn's name, however, lives on. When the South London Hospital for Women was founded, a trust was established to purchase the site for the hospital. This provided that if the site was not used for the hospital for a year the property should revert to the University of London to support women professors in medical subjects and to teach female medical students. When the South London closed, the proceeds from its sale enabled the University of London to establish the Chadburn Academic Clinical Lectureship at its Medical School at St George's Hospital, just a few stops along from Clapham South.

Gillian Robinson

Next issue: To mark Black History Month we celebrate Phillis Wheatley whose book of poetry was the first book ever to have been published by an African-American. To have it published she travelled to London, where she was a guest of Mr and Mrs John Thornton in Clapham.

Lambeth Heritage Festival

A month of celebration of Lambeth's history starts on **Saturday 2 September, 10am to 4.30pm**, with the **Local History Fair** at West Norwood Library, 1-5 Norwood High Street, SE27 9JX. Local history societies will have stalls at the event with displays and publications for sale, free film shows, walks and talks. The walks include tours of West Norwood cemetery and the course of the now disappeared River Effra. Of special interest will be a stall dedicated to the **University of Oxford's Second World War project, 'Their Finest Hour'**.

Other events in the Local History Festival include a talk about South London orchid growers, a guided walk about Windrush Pioneers, tours of The Clockworks museum, a Pavement Prowl searching for pavement weeds around Tulse Hill by a plant expert – trust us, he's fascinating – and a walk looking at Lambeth through the eyes of William Blake. Our own contributions are a History of Clapham Common and a Clapham Old Town walk. Full details and booking arrangements are in the programme for the Fair and the Festival, now available at local libraries, Omnibus Theatre and other local venues, and on the Society website at claphamsociety.com/news. **Alison Wilson**

Big Green Day

Come along to our third annual Big Green Day and learn how together we can make a difference in the fight against climate change. The fun-packed day will have guest speakers on everything from swifts to solar panels; workshops on art, composting and sustainable building; and a bring-and-share lunch. The event is free and there will also be activities for the children, a lucky dip and a seed swap. For more details or to get involved, please email bgdclapham@gmail.com. **Sunday 24 September, 11am to 3pm, St Paul's Churchyard and Eden Nature Garden, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DZ.** **Allison Clark**

Autumn season at Omnibus

Another season has just begun at Clapham's award-winning independent theatre. Expect a packed line-up of new writing, world premières, classics reimaged and thrilling fringe theatre. Find details and showtimes at omnibus-clapham.org/whats-on.

Clapham Community Choir

Clapham Community Choir welcomes new members. No audition is needed and we sing everything from classic soul tunes to folk music and pop hits. For details email info@claphamcommunitychoir.org or visit singclapham.org. Rehearsals are on **Tuesday evenings, 7.30-9pm**, at Omnibus Theatre. **Felicity Brienza**



Royal Trinity Hospice talk and tour

The success of the open-house-style informal guided tours around Trinity continue and the next tour is on **Tuesday 12 September, 11am to 1pm**. People new to the work of a hospice who are interested in finding out more can attend. It's a chance to meet clinicians and hear them talk about their work, and see the site and award-winning gardens, before finishing off with home-made refreshments. Entry is free, but tickets must be booked in advance. Visit www.royaltrinityhospice.london/Event/talk-and-tour-with-trinity-sept. **Anna Reid**

Hospice light opera event

Wandsworth Friends of Royal Trinity Hospice are holding a fundraising light opera night with a champagne reception, dinner and an auction run by Nick Bonham at Holy Trinity Clapham on **Thursday 21 September**, with tables of eight going for £600



(£75 per person). You will be treated to arias from *La Traviata*, *Don Giovanni*, *Carmen*, *Rigoletto* and *Lakmé*.

The Hospice serves seven London boroughs from Westminster to Richmond, providing specialist care for over 2,600 patients and their families every year.

As a charity it must raise £11 million every year to fund its free service,

and with an ageing population demand is increasing.

Please join us for this evening in aid of an extremely worthy local cause. Email amanda@ajshine.com if you would like to take a table. **Amanda Shine**

Lambeth Mutual Aid

Hidden in every crevice of Clapham are people who are struggling: single parents, disabled people, and those seeking asylum from war zones and repressive regimes. Lambeth Mutual Aid (LMA) came together in response to the Covid crisis, but everyone who is still involved in the group understands that the poverty and disparity exposed by the pandemic have deep roots and that care for one's community should be deeply rooted too. LMA exercises this care by redistributing cash, referring people to food banks and offering kindness to people treated by official bodies with cold bureaucracy. To lend your help in any way, large or small, visit lambethmutualaid.com. **Maddy Costa**



Save the dates

Guests at this year's **Clapham Book Festival** have been announced. They include **Melvyn Bragg** and **Kate Mosse** who amongst other literati will appear live at Omnibus Theatre on **Saturday 14 October**. The festival culminates in a literary walk on **Sunday 22 October** with online events in between. You can find more details in the October Newsletter and at claphambookfestival.com.

On **19 October** the **St Luke's Annual Discussion** at St Luke's, Ramsden Road, will explore how each of us can contribute to help fight climate change. More information in the next issue.

The 59th Annual General Meeting of the Clapham Society will be held on **Monday 16 October 2023** at Omnibus Theatre, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW, at **8 pm**.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Approval of the Minutes of the previous AGM (17 October 2022), published in Newsletter 452 (December 2022/January 2023) and available to share at the meeting.
3. Adoption of the Annual Report for the year 2022/23.
4. Adoption of the Financial Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023.
5. Election of the Officers and Committee Members for the year 2023/2024

Chairman	Treasurer
Vice Chair	Legal Counsel
Secretary	Membership Secretary

A maximum of 10 further Committee Members.

6. Appointment of the Independent Examiner.
7. Any other business and announcements.

The formal business will be followed by a talk (see page 1) and other matters arising.

Nominations for the election of Officers and Committee Members

must be sent to the Secretary at least 14 days before the Annual General Meeting. If you wish to stand, please email secretary@claphamsociety.com, with the names of your proposer and seconder by 2 October.

Gillian White, Secretary

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

Chairman	Mark Leffler mark.leffler88@gmail.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

