



ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS 2023-24

As I reflect on the events of the past year for this, my third Annual Report, and the Society's 61st year since its founding in 1963, I am struck by how much Clapham has changed since the Society's formation, and the huge contribution so many of its members have played in helping to shape this remarkable area of London over the years. From its inception the Society was instrumental in raising public awareness of notable local buildings – many of which had suffered from the predations of World War II and poor maintenance since the 1920s – and of the Common, our amazing public space enjoyed by all. Together with other local societies, the Society fought against Ringway One, the proposal that would have cut a massive swathe through Camberwell, Brixton, Clapham and Battersea to create an elevated urban motorway, and in the 1970s the Society strongly backed opposition to Lambeth's compulsory purchase orders that would have swept away many old houses and destroyed communities in three areas in Clapham. The Society has produced a range of publications over the years that provide guides to Clapham's many notable and historic buildings, as well as an invaluable street-by-street guide.

The Society has also arranged an informative and fascinating programme of talks, walks and tours, and regularly produces and distributes an informative and very readable Newsletter. All of these activities are the work of an amazing band of volunteers.

However, as was noted 10 years ago, "Clapham High Street has stubbornly resisted the Society's efforts, from our earliest days, to improve its appearance and commercial diversity." Government changes to the Town Planning Use Classes Order in recent years has meant that many of the controls on how buildings are used have now been removed, and nowhere is this more evident than in the High Street (*right*). In recent years we have seen the closure of the majority of our financial premises: Lloyds, HSBC, Santander, Barclays, Nationwide and NatWest. In December we learnt that our Crown Post Office was also scheduled for closure, and the Society actively campaigned alongside local councillors and officers of the



Mark Leffler

Communication Workers Union for its retention. We discovered that the decision to close had become almost inevitable several years ago, when much of the GPO estate was transferred to Royal Mail when the postal service was privatised. By the time this report is published, Clapham will have also lost its branch of TSB on Clapham Common South Side. In nearly every case of a bank closure the premises have become a fast-food outlet displaying flamboyant signage. We have yet to see what becomes of the remainder.

An important achievement locally by members of the Society and other local residents was to secure the retention of the old Clapham Library building which was transformed into a vibrant community theatre, Omnibus Theatre. The subject of our talk last October, following the AGM, Omnibus' President George Owen and Artistic Director Marie McCarthy recounted the story of how Omnibus Theatre came into being and the story of its first 10 years.

In last year's report I dwelt at some length on the precarious state of the Society's finances going into the next financial year resulting from rising costs of our principal activities, and the fact that members' subscriptions, our principal source of income, had remained unchanged for some years. I advised members that Committee had concluded that subscriptions would have to increase at the beginning of the new Financial Year in April 2024. Details of the increases were included in the December/January edition of the Newsletter, and members were requested to increase their standing orders accordingly, and to submit an updated Gift Aid declaration to the Honorary Treasurer to enable the Society to maximise the claims we submit to HMRC.

However, whilst increasing the cost of membership has had an important impact on our finances during the current year, many members have been slow in amending their subscriptions and in returning the Gift Aid declarations, creating a lot of chasing by our Membership Secretary. A positive development has been the agreement by Audley Villages to provide sponsorship to cover a significant part of the cost of producing the Newsletter, for which we are very grateful. This contribution will be apparent in the 2024/25 accounts.

I am ever grateful for all the work undertaken by our volunteers – all those who arrange the distribution of the Newsletter and deliver it through members' letterboxes, rain or shine, 10 times a year, and thank all those who dedicate their time and ideas in support of our Main Committee, and organising various events and activities. Particular thanks go to Alison Macnair for her impeccable advice and her initiative in taking on a range special tasks; and to David Brown and Jennifer Everett who have valiantly continued to shoulder the vital responsibilities of Treasurer and Membership Secretary despite having indicated that they wished to call it a day after 20-plus years' service. Thanks are also due to our Secretary Gill White, who ensures our meetings are properly organised and recorded, and correspondence is followed up. Ruthie Eastman deserves considerable praise for the energy and professionalism she puts into producing our brilliant Newsletter and its timely production throughout the year. I am also very grateful to Christine



Armstrong who assembles such an excellent array of speakers to deliver talks on diverse topics at Omnibus, as well as more occasional tours to places of interest. Thanks also to Alison Inglis-Jones who manages our social media while juggling so many other important roles in the local community.

Deserving a very special mention this year is Michael Barry, who was newly elected to the Committee at last year's AGM, and who immediately threw himself with huge enthusiasm into representing the Society on the Clapham Common Management Advisory Committee (CCMAC), the role vacated by Andrew Summers. Michael has also played a pivotal part in helping the Society work out how it might make better use of IT and its online presence.

Rounding off this list of thanks I must pay tribute to the splendid summer party we held in July. This took place as a result of the



Photograph by Ruth Eastman

generosity of our gracious and perfect host, Pamela Price (*left*), who shared with us her special secret garden (and her well-equipped kitchen!) for the event. Pamela was responsible for ensuring we were able to enjoy together what turned out to be one of the nicest summer evenings of 2024. Thanks also to

Ruthie for arranging for violinist David Wallace and pianist Shelagh Sutherland to play, and to both of them for serenading us so beautifully.

Turning to specific areas of Society activity during 2023/24...

Meetings and Events – Christine Armstrong is responsible for having arranged seven very well-attended and stimulating talks at Omnibus during the year, which all received a write-up in the Newsletter. Speakers have included Edmund Bird, TfL's Heritage Manager, describing how the transport system shaped the capital; Patricia Ninian demonstrating the benefits of the outreach programme of St Paul's Opera to several local schools; Robin Cooke-Hurle on the impact of human activity is on climate change and its consequences; and Penelope Corfield of the Battersea Society, on the influence of Georgian era explorers, scientists, engineers and campaigners. In April we had record turnout for Professor Tim Spector explaining his ground breaking research into the human gut microbiome. The Conservation and Restoration of the Hibbert Almshouses on Wandsworth Road by architect Sherry Bates was the subject of our June meeting, and our latest talk was by member and Past Master of the Stationers' Company Helen Esmonde together with author and historian Margaret Willes about their book tracing the history and continuing relevance of the Livery movement. Gareth James, the founder and driving force of Wild Clapham, will be talking at the close of AGM business about the efforts to improve the biodiversity of the Common in recent years, what has been achieved, and plans for the future.

In addition to our talks at Omnibus, some of us have also enjoyed a range of outings. A small party visited the Merton Priory Chapter House Museum, thanks to John Hawks, and two groups were able to visit the Victorian gem that is the house of Society member Christopher Claxton Stevens. We had a tour of the disused underground station at Aldwych, thanks to Edmund Bird, and to the De Morgan Archives, thanks to archivist Sarah Hardy.

Local History – Our Local History sub-committee has again been our only functioning standing sub-committee during the past year, with the amazingly resourceful Alyson Wilson at its helm. Alyson writes: "The opening of the state-of-the-art Lambeth Archives, close to the Town Hall complex on Brixton Hill, was the highlight of the year. After many years tucked away on the edge of the borough the archives are finally in a central location, with a ground floor showcase window providing a timeline in pictures, to draw in curious passers-by. Inside is a spacious search room, and extensive underground storage using thermal inertia to maintain a constant temperature and humidity. There is a ground floor gallery for exhibitions, and a display case containing local treasures. Lambeth Archives is open to all, free, and well worth a visit. Some of our members helped with packing up archive material ahead of the move, and with the reopening."

Alyson's team also "receives regular enquiries about local history, which often set us off on new lines of enquiry. This year two members contacted us about research they have carried out themselves. We always welcome others to join in." The Society's website continues to host a unique collection of articles about various facets of Clapham's history.

The Unbuilt Clapham series of regular articles in the Newsletter finished at the end of 2023 and the current series is about the origin of street names. This is proving popular and encourages members' questions – though despite our best efforts, some remain elusive.

The Society remains an active member of Lambeth's Local History Forum and has contributed to September's Heritage Festival as well as to the Local History Fair at Saint Leonard's Church, Streatham. The Society's special contribution to the festival was a talk about the recent discovery of a long-lost 1815 map of Clapham, drawn by Daniel Gould, showing details of houses and residents at that time.

Guided walks have continued throughout the year, run by a small team of volunteers, details of which are on the website, as are the self-guided walks leaflets. We remain grateful to Clapham Books at 26, The Pavement for the steady sale of our publications.

Newsletter – Our principal publication is, of course, the Newsletter which covers matters of local interest and concern. Ruthie Eastman writes: "We are lucky to have a growing body of contributors who describe them accurately and well. Alyson Wilson's local history team have struck a rich seam with their streets series, and we are fortunate, too, to have members, often in the same or similar field as our speakers, who are willing and able to write up our talks. Special mention also goes to Dana Kubick who photographs our speakers so brilliantly."

The Newsletter gave extensive coverage to the loss of our Crown Post Office, and the campaign to retain it in our February, March, and April editions. There has been talk of a new sub-post office in the area to re-provide some of the vital services that have been lost, though we have nothing further to report on this.

In April we covered the visit of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh to Omnibus Theatre where he unveiled a plaque commemorating the theatre's 10th anniversary. The opening of the new Lambeth Archives was covered in the May issue to coincide with local photographer Jim Grover's exhibition 'Behind the Blue Doors' about Trinity Homes almshouses in Acre Lane, which was staged there.

As well as our own talks, walks and tours, the Newsletter regularly carries news of local events including performances by St Paul's Opera; the Clapham Book Festival; Clapham Chamber Concerts; The Arts Society Clapham Common; St Luke's Music Festival; Royal Trinity Hospice; local National Garden Scheme openings and the Battersea Society so members can tap into the vibrant local scene. And, of course, we regularly update members on what is happening on the Common.



Ruthie writes: “So many people contribute to the Newsletter. Thank you to everyone who has made it a joy to edit and thank you to our readers! As ever, I am grateful to Jennifer Everett for her major part in its distribution and to our fabulous delivery volunteers. And last but certainly not least, a huge vote of thanks to Audley Villages for their generous sponsorship this year towards printing costs. It is wonderful to have their support.”

Common and Open Spaces – Last October we received the Inspector’s decision regarding the public inquiry into Lambeth’s application to Defra to allow Festival Republic to mount yet another major music festival on the Common in August 2024. The Inspector determined that the festival could go ahead. We later learnt, however, that Festival Republic had decided to cancel their planned return on commercial grounds. While this has undoubtedly been beneficial in many ways, it has also left a hole in the council’s finances that may filter through to spending on the Common in the year ahead.

Two major changes this year have been the replacement of old and damaged park benches, and the resurfacing of the mid-section of Windmill Drive to create a permanent route for pedestrians and cycles. The soft landscaping of this route is planned for later in the year.

Members will be aware that the notable change to the way the Common is being managed in recent years is the commitment to rewilding. There are now three specially created Wildflower meadows (near Holy Trinity, and next to each of the children’s play-grounds). Already many of those flowering species are migrating across the Common due to less intensive mowing, resulting in a very marked improvement in the diversity of ground cover.

While the Friends of Clapham Common take much of the lead in planning, fund raising, and resourcing this increase in biodiversity, members of the Committee are keen for the Society to promote similar activities to enable more planting elsewhere. Working with Clapham BID, we are currently considering the planting of Spring bulbs in the vicinity of Clapham Common Station, and to promote this as an activity in which our members can get involved.

The end of an era – “Ave atque vale. Et salve!”

Earlier in the year Martin Drury CBE, our President, privately indicated his intention to stand down at the AGM. Martin is only the second President of the Society – he was appointed to this position almost 20 years ago following the retirement of Norman Marsh QC CBE, one of the founders of the Society. Martin has been a tour de force in the preservation of Britain’s heritage having led the National Trust as its Director General for many years, and serving on the Board of Trustees of the Landmark Trust since 1988, including 13 years as Chairman – as well as making an important contribution to several other heritage organizations over the years. Martin has been a wise and enthusiastic member and supporter of the Clapham Society since he first moved to Clapham in 1971.

Thank you, Martin, for your service to the Society over so many years. I’m sure I reflect the thoughts of all our members when I say I very much hope that you will remain a supporter of the Society for many years to come.

Martin is a hard act to follow, however I am delighted to report that Sinclair Johnston has agreed to serve as our next President. Sinclair is well known to many people in Clapham - he has been an enthusiastic and active member and friend of the Society for many years, and in his professional capacity he has acquired an intimate knowledge of many of our local buildings. Sinclair has also earned a formidable reputation nationally as a consultant, advisor, and teacher on the repair and conservation of historic buildings, an area about which he evidently has a genuine passion.

Mark Leffler, Chairman
September 2024

COMMITTEE AND OFFICERS 2023-2024

President

Martin Drury

Vice-President

Julia Barfield

Chairman

Mark Leffler

mark.leffler88@gmail.com

Vice Chair

Alison Macnair

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Treasurer

David Brown

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Christine Armstrong

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Ruth Eastman

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Alison Inglis-Jones

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Michael Barry

mbarryuk@gmail.com

John Langley

Gery Roberts

SUB-COMMITTEES AND GROUPS 2023-2024

Common and Open Spaces

Michael Barry.

Meetings and Events

Christine Armstrong.

Local History

Alyson Wilson (Convenor), Tom Jansz, Gillian Robinson, Michael Tuffrey, Timothy Walker.

Planning

Roger Armstrong, Mark Leffler, Gery Roberts, David Whitestone.

NEWSLETTER DELIVERY

The following members were responsible for distributing the Newsletter: Christine Armstrong, Lisa Barash, Richard Batcheler, Valerie and Philip Bingham (from February 2024), Tony Blurton, Claire Brown, Marietta Crichton Stuart (from November 2023), Ruth Eastman, Pamela Eden, Bill Emmett, Jennifer Everett, Marian Gleeson, Rosalind Hedley-Miller, Tom Jansz, Val Johnson, Sue Keegan, Pauline Khng, Alison Macnair, Margi Mahoney, Lili Massey, Nigel Parker, Jennifer Pearson, Martin Richards, Stephen Savage (until December 2023), Joan Sinclair, Andrew Summers, Roberta Tarran, Jean Virgoe, Deryn Watson (until October 2023), Helen Widgery (until April 2024), Alyson Wilson.

If you would like to know who delivers to you, please contact the Membership Secretary.



THE CLAPHAM SOCIETY

(Charity No. 279595)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR YEAR TO 31 MARCH 2024

	2023-24			2022-23		
	Un-restricted	Restricted	Total	Un-restricted	Restricted	Total
Note	£	£	£	£	£	£
INCOME						
Subscriptions: Standing Order	6,408		6,408	5,912		5,912
Other	345		345	406		406
	6,753		6,753	6,318		6,318
Donations	1,201		1,201	1,154		1,154
Income Tax recoverable	2	0	0	1,085		1,085
Summer Party	149		149	240		240
Interest receivable	129		129	42		42
	8,232	0	8,232	8,839	0	8,839
EXPENDITURE						
Newsletter costs	4,419		4,419	3,826		3,826
Printing, postage and stationery	143		143	125		125
Meeting room hire	3,555		3,555	3,420		3,420
Summer Party	0		0	458		458
Events & meetings expenses	421		421	110		110
Subscriptions & affiliations	200		200	315		315
Insurance	152		152	152		152
Website hosting & design	3,541		3,541	2,871		2,871
Legal fees	0		0	0		0
Sundry expenses	0		0	119		119
	12,431	0	12,431	11,396	0	11,396
Deficit	(4,199)	0	(4,199)	(2,557)	0	(2,557)
Surplus from publications	154		154	13		13
Deficit for the year	(4,045)	0	(4,045)	(2,544)	0	(2,544)
Balance brought forward	11,337	3,975	15,312	13,881	3,975	17,856
	7,292	3,975	11,267	11,337	3,975	15,312
Publications						
Sales	617			1,239		
Stock brought forward	1,807			2,554		
Purchases	0			0		
Other publication expenses	10			479		
Stock carried forward	(1,354)			(1,807)		
Cost of sales	463			1,226		
Surplus for the year	154			13		
Cost of Redesign of Website	0			0		
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	154			13		
Balance brought forward	11,790			11,777		
Designated Fund	3	11,944		11,790		

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2024

	2023-24			2022-23	
	Note	£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS					
		Website & CD of News	letters/Display		
		Boards			
Cost		1,331	1,462	2,793	2,793
Less: Depreciation		(1,331)	(1,462)	(2,793)	(2,793)
		0	0	0	0
CURRENT ASSETS					
Stock of publications				1,354	1,807
Debtors: HM Revenue & Customs	2		3,531		4,730
Other & Prepayments			1,581	5,112	1,698
Cash at bank and in hand:					
NatWest Bank				4,801	7,162
				11,266	15,397
Less: CURRENT LIABILITIES					
Creditors				0	85
Net Current Assets				11,266	15,312
TOTAL NET ASSETS					
				11,266	15,312
UNRESTRICTED FUNDS					
Represented by:					
General Fund				(4,653)	(453)
Designated Publication Fund	3			11,944	11,790
				7,291	11,337
RESTRICTED FUNDS					
Local History Fund				453	453
Legal Action and Special Purposes Fund				3,522	3,522
				3,975	3,975
				11,266	15,312

Notes to the Accounts

- General - These Accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with:** the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued on 16 July 2014 and with the Charities Act 2011.
- Income Tax Recoverable - Represents estimated sum recoverable for four years ended 31 March 2024.** As the debtor to HMRC was overstated in the past, there is no income in the current year.
- Unrestricted Funds - The historic surpluses on publications are held in a 'Designated Fund' for financing future publications.** The upgrade and redesign of the website was taken from this fund.
- Risk Policy - The major risks to which the charity is exposed, as identified by the Trustees, have been reviewed and systems established to mitigate those risks.**
- Other Statutory Information - Details of the Society's Committee are shown elsewhere in this Report.**

The financial statements were approved and authorised by the Committee on 8 July 2024

FINANCIAL REPORT

Treasurer's Report

Measures are in hand to increase the income and reduce the expenditure of the Society.

David Brown, Treasurer

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

Independent Examiner's Report to the Committee

I report on the Accounts of the Society for the year to 31 March 2024, as set out above.

Respective Responsibilities of Executive Committee and Examiner

The charity trustees are responsible for the preparation of the Accounts; you consider that an audit is not required for this year under Section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act
- follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiner's Report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission.

An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the Accounts presented with those records.

It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the Accounts, and seeking explanations from you as Committee Members concerning any such matters.

The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent Examiner's Statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act;
- to prepare Accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act have not been met; or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the Accounts to be reached.

Anna Long FCA, 47 Hambalt Road, Clapham SW4 9EQ