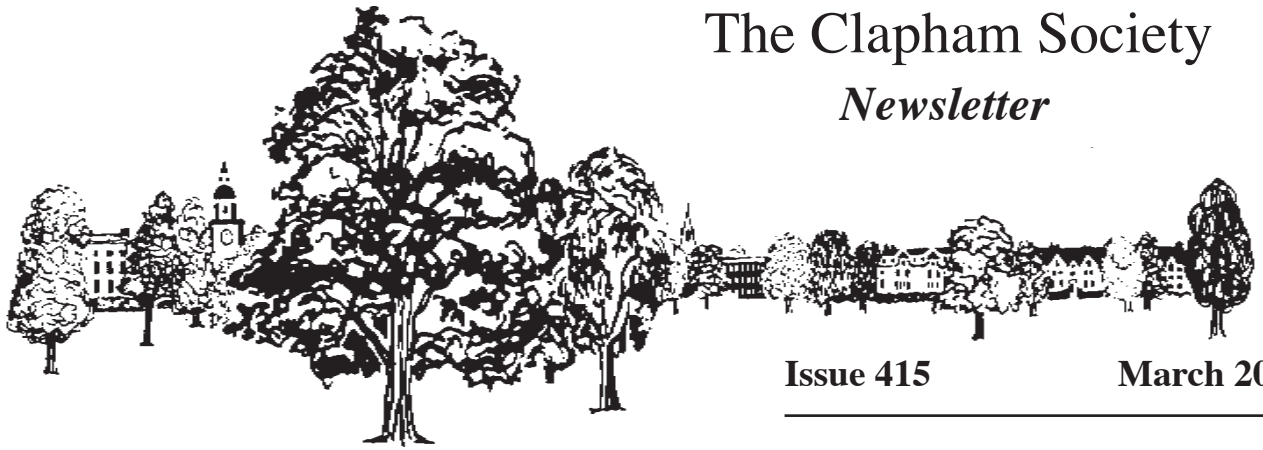


The Clapham Society Newsletter



Issue 415

March 2019

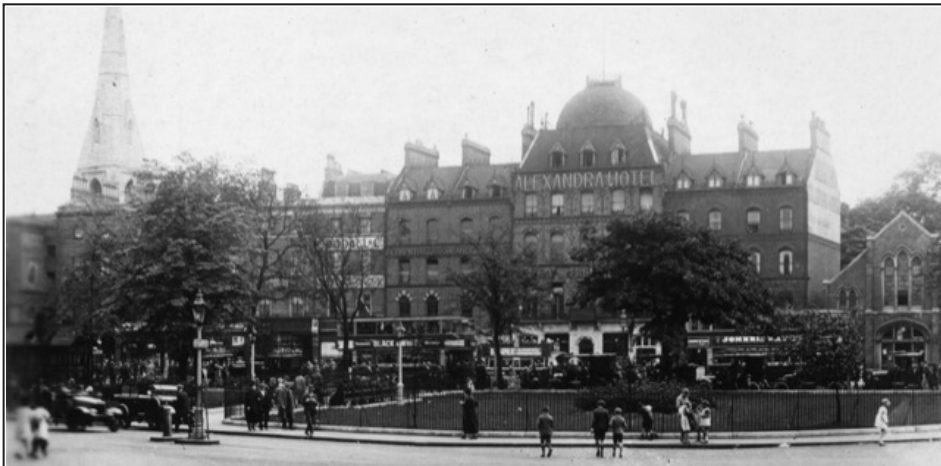
Commemorating Peter Jefferson Smith

Members may not know that Peter spent many years researching three generations of the Clapham-based I'Anson family of architects. Not only did they live here for some time, but they were the architects of several important surviving local buildings, including the former Clapham Library (now Omnibus Theatre) and The Alexandra Hotel (shown below).

At the time of Peter's death the resulting book was written, but sadly not yet published. We think that the most appropriate tribute to such a notable local resident would be to get this book completed and published. This will entail professional historical advice in addition to publication and associated costs, so we need to raise funds. We propose to set up a Peter Jefferson Smith fund in the Clapham Society and to invite donations.

We have already started work on the project and will keep you informed of progress, but if you would like to support it now you may send a cheque (payable to The Clapham Society) to the Treasurer, David Brown at 15 Turret Grove SW4 0ES. Or go to our website for details if you wish to pay by bank transfer. Remember if you gift aid your donation it is increased by 25%.

*Annabel Allott
Chairman*



The Alexandra Hotel built 1863. Architect Edward I'Anson, Junior

Have you changed your Standing Order?

As announced last month the committee has decided that we have to increase the annual subscription from 1 April 2019. Please contact your bank to ensure that your standing order is paid on the correct day and for the right amount. The new rates are:

Individual £10; Household £15; Business £25. Postage (if required) remains at £10. Payment can also be made by bank transfer direct to the Society's bank account – full details are on the website. If you use this method please use as reference (surname), (initial), (postcode) and M for membership, D for donation. If you have any queries ask the Membership Secretary.

Our meetings are held at Omnibus Theatre, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW. The talk will commence promptly at 8 pm and the bar will open prior to the talk at 7 pm. Our guest will normally speak for about 45 minutes, followed by around 15 minutes for questions and discussion, and the bar will remain open after the talk. Meetings are free and open to non-members, who are invited to make a donation.

Please arrive in good time to ensure entry. There is a limit on the number the room can accommodate and you will not be admitted when that number is reached.

Monday 18 March

Bill Linskey Chair of the Brixton Society will tell the story of the local sugar magnate and philanthropist, **Henry Tate**. Perhaps best known for his donation of paintings, which formed the basis of the Gallery of British Art, later known as Tate Gallery and now Tate Britain, Henry Tate also donated three libraries in Lambeth including the striking Brixton Library in Windrush Square. Bill's recent book about Henry Tate and the Brixton Library will be available at the meeting.

Monday 15 April

Three years after it was destroyed by a devastating fire, **Battersea Arts Centre's** Grand Hall has reopened following a multi-million pound refurbishment and restoration by architects Haworth Tompkins. The first production was *Missing* the show that was running at the time of the fire. **Maddie Wilson**, formerly assistant to the Director of Battersea Arts Centre, now a producer and coordinator of their new co-working space, the Scratch Hub, will talk about the development of this atmospheric and iconic building.

Common Walks

Dr Iain Boulton of Lambeth Parks and Open Spaces has now confirmed plans for his popular walks on Clapham Common this year as follows:

Sunday 14 April.

Clapham Common Bugs and Beasties Hunt. A hands-on opportunity to find out what interesting invertebrates, bugs and other creepy crawlies are found on Clapham Common; one for all ages and interests. A search through the Common's ponds, grasslands and other wildlife habitats, turning over a few stones and logs, to see what colourful things the Common is hiding from us – and learn about some of the interesting things these animals do or how they affect us! Meet at the Wildlife Pond beside Eagle Pond, Windmill Drive at 2 pm. Duration about two hours – but come and leave as you please. All equipment provided.

Friday 17 May

Spring Bat Walk. Always popular, we'll use bat detectors and our own eyes to look for, listen to and be amazed at these fascinating creatures, and who knows, we might find some new and interesting species as well as the more common ones! Wrap up warm and comfortable for a journey into the world of our night time companions. Meet at 9 pm at the Bandstand; duration approximately 60 minutes.

Sunday 21 July

The Great Plant Hunt. Come and find out what interesting wild plants have turned up on Clapham Common this year, from new and mightier trees through to herbs and wildflowers, and why might this be happening? Is it the weather or something more interesting? A short circular walk to see how we identify plants and learn about some of their mysterious ways of survival. Meet at the Bandstand at 2 pm. Duration about 90 minutes, but come and leave as you please

Friday 6 September

Autumn Bat Walk. A repeat of the May walk but meeting at 7.45 pm at the Bandstand.

First history walk

Our first Clapham Society guided walk will be on **Thursday 16 May** when Anne Wilson will lead a walk entitled 'From Matrimony Place to The Surprise', leaving at 6.30 pm from St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DR.

The full programme of guided walks can be found on our website, and watch out for the leaflet South London Walks, which lists guided walks offered by many local societies. This will be available soon at local libraries.

New helpers

We are very grateful to two members who have recently offered to help the Society: Wanda Pratt has joined the Planning Sub-committee, and Ruth Eastman has kindly taken on running our Social Media. Watch out for our increased presence on Facebook and Twitter and please share, like and retweet to make the Clapham Society more widely known. We aim to draw attention to our activities and achievements, by getting more people to look at our website. **So please help spread the word.**

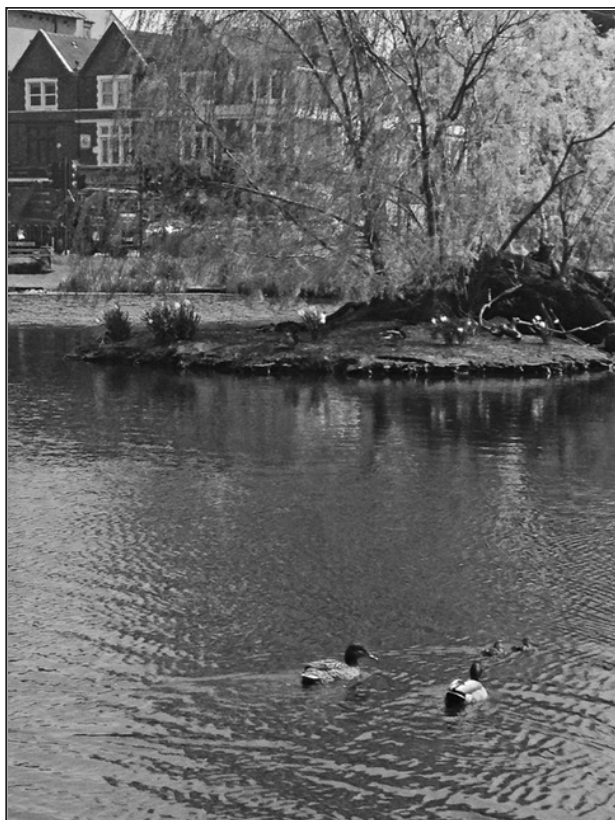


photo: Dana Kubick

Clapham Community Choir

The next concert is different and special! Clapham Community Choir has made a recording with choirs from three local primary schools, Clapham Manor, Heathbrook and Macaulay.

At a concert on **Thursday 28 March** the choir and the schools will come together again to perform the recorded songs and others, on a London theme. The concert is at St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DX at 7.30 pm (doors open 7.00 pm). Admission is free (donations are invited). For information about Clapham Community Choir see the website, singclapham.org.

Red Hedgehogs in St Luke's

Zum Roten Igel – The Red Hedgehog – was an early nineteenth century Viennese tavern where Schubert, in between composing some of the most exquisite music ever written, downed the odd pint whilst listening to the traditional music that influenced his compositions. ZRI today is the name of an outstanding group of virtuoso musicians who not only reproduce some of that music but reinterpret Schubert's own compositions on the instruments he would have listened to. And they are in St Luke's on **Saturday 2 March** for what promises to be an astonishing musical treat. Check them out on YouTube, and then come and hear the real thing! Tickets £18 and £14 from slms.org.uk or call the Box Office on 07951 791619.

George West House, Clapham Common North Side

It is a matter of concern that the developer of the former Experian offices, now being converted into apartments, has cut down most of the fine Edwardian cast iron railings (c. 60 ft in length) along the frontage of the building. These railings constitute an important feature within the Conservation Area, and, as such, we understand their removal should have necessitated listed building consent. We are not aware of consent being requested.

West Norwood Cemetery

Professor Bob Flanagan, Chairman of the Friends of Norwood Cemetery, the speaker at our January meeting, gave a talk packed with fascinating detail about how Norwood Cemetery came into being; the threats it faced from redevelopment by Lambeth Council in the 1970s and 80s; and the huge range of local Clapham personalities – saints and sinners, rich and poor – that were buried there.

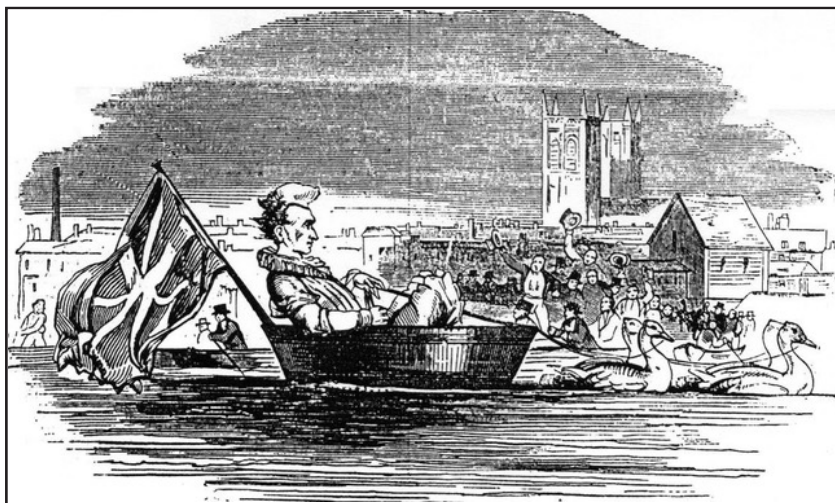
The cemetery itself came into being in 1837. By the early 19th century, small burial grounds established by the parishes of inner London to relieve overcrowding in local churchyards had themselves become seriously overcrowded, and Parliament passed a number of Acts between 1837 and 1841 authorising the establishment of seven commercial cemeteries in a ring around London's suburbs. In 1837, the South Metropolitan Cemetery Company acquired and had consecrated its initial 40 acres of hillside in the hamlet of Norwood. Sir William Tite was appointed architect and designed the first neo-Gothic cemetery with a garden layout, and two grand perpendicular chapels modelled on Kings College Chapel, Cambridge. Catacombs were created, served by a hydraulic lift, which awaits restoration, but is one of the earliest examples of such machinery in London. During the rest of the century handsome mausolea were erected to provide the final resting place for many South London dignitaries.

By the 1960s the cemetery had become seriously neglected and overgrown, and it was compulsorily acquired by Lambeth who controversially extinguished past rights to create a public park, and to release land for residential development. To local dismay about half of the original cemetery was cleared, and a large number of monuments destroyed in the process, before the Ecclesiastical Court stepped in to prevent further clearance. The Friends were formed in 1990.

Among Clapham residents buried at West Norwood Cemetery are: Thomas Barry, Irish clown, towed down the Thames in a tub pulled by geese, Manor Street d.1857 (pictured above); Katti Lanner, Austrian ballerina and ballet teacher, 40 North Side d.1907; Tom King, successful bare knuckle prize fighter and bookmaker, Clarence Road, d.1888; Henry Craven Thornton, actor/dramatist, Elms Road, d.1905; Charles Spurgeon, charismatic Baptist Minister, who attracted a congregation of 23,000 at Crystal Palace, Founder of Spurgeon's College, Nightingale Lane, d.1857; General Sir William Napier, veteran of Napoleonic war, Scinde House, Clapham Park, d.1860; Corporal Henry Wickham, veteran of Crimean War and Charge of the Light Brigade, Heath Road, d.1892; Richard Merryweather, fire engine maker, Clapham House, Clapham Common, d.1877; Thomas Cubitt, architect and masterbuilder, notable for laying out much of Belgravia, Pimlico and Bloomsbury, and developer of Clapham Park, Cavendish Road, d.1855; Sir William Cubitt, inventor and master civil engineer, involved in canals and railway projects and chief engineer of the Crystal Palace, d. 1861; Anna Pigeon, born and died in Clapham, daughter of a wine importer, adventurous mountaineer in the Alps, 42 South Side, d. 1917; Alexander Vlasto, born in Trieste, merchant and early trader in commodity futures, Chios House, Poynders Rd., d.1899; Catherine I'Anson and two of her daughters, wife of architect Edward I'Anson jnr, 37 North Side, d.1888; John Doulton, master potter and founder of Doulton Pottery, Springwell Cottage, Clapham Common, d.1873; Hannah and Florence Barlow, renowned specialist painters at Doulton's, d.1916 & 1909.

For those who don't know the cemetery it is a true gem to be greatly treasured, and well worth a visit.

Mark Leffler



Chamber Music at St Paul's

On **Friday 8 March** Clapham Chamber Concerts continues to celebrate its 10th anniversary season of concerts when founder Amanda Lake is joined by musicians from the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, making their second appearance at the concert series, to perform three masterpieces of the string quartet repertoire. Elegant and witty Haydn, 'father of the string quartet' is juxtaposed with vividly colourful writing from Polish composer Karol Szymanowski. The evening concludes with the first of Beethoven's Razumovsky quartets, a majestic pillarstone of the repertoire.

Studio Voltaire

Studio Voltaire has launched a £2.3m scheme to redevelop their Clapham base in Nelson's Row. This entails creating more artists' studios, new exhibition spaces, a dedicated learning space, public garden and café. The increase of affordable artists' studios by more than 40% is particularly exciting and welcome. Find full details on their website studiovoltaire.org.

St. Paul's Church, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DX at 7.30 pm. Tickets £12 adults, £10 CCC Friends and concessions, £5 children. For further information, email claphamchamberconcerts@gmail.com.

Edouard Manet and Music

On **Wednesday 20 March** Dr Lois Oliver's talk for The Arts Society Clapham Common will immerse you in Manet's world, bringing together his art and the music that inspired him: Spanish flamenco, Haydn string quartets, Wagner piano reductions, café songs and opera highlights. Clapham Picturehouse, 76 Venn Street, SW4 0AT starting at 11 am. Tickets £10 on the door.

New members

We have welcomed the following new members recently: Diana Cornforth, Emily Cusack, John Perry, and Nicola Scott and Michael Prescott.

Omnibus Theatre

96 Festival, London's only queer arts event held under one roof gets underway this month and celebrates its second year, going from strength to strength. It runs until **Sunday 31 March**, with over 14 events spanning theatre, drag, music and comedy. The three week headliner *Lipstick: Fairytale of Iran*, is a fearless story that straddles Tehran, Derry and London.

Elf Lyons, Fringe World Best Comedy Show 2018 nominee and British Vogue's '20 Names of Now' will be resident from **25 to 30 March**.

There is also plenty of music in March.

On **Sunday 3 March**, the acclaimed French singer-songwriter Mathieu Boogaerts comes to Clapham! After 22 years, 1000 concerts and 7 albums after *Super*, his world-famous first release, Mathieu will perform a medley of his colourful, personal, and unmissable repertoire of 'French chansons'. And he will sing some of his brand new songs... in English.

On **Sunday 17 March** Jazz fans will be treated to winner of a Kenny Wheeler Jazz Prize, Misha Mullov-Abbado, a bass player and composer whose international following grows and grows. He is a BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artist and has featured in 'Best Jazz Albums of the Year' listings from *The Daily Telegraph* and BBC Radio 3.

Tickets from omnibus-clapham.org, the Box office on 020 7498 4699, or at Omnibus Theatre, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW

FREE Ghostsigns App

Several people were disappointed when they could not secure a place on one of the Clapham Ghostsigns walks we offered during Lambeth Heritage Festival last year. Although we do not intend to repeat that guided walk this year, you will be able to follow the route as a self-guided walk on a new free App. Sam Roberts (Mr Ghostsigns) who devised the walk with some background information input from our local historians, has produced a free App which leads you along the route and shows appropriate historical background for each sign. Go to the App store, look for Ghostsigns Tours, download the free App on to your smart phone and you will get three free tours – Bankside, and Stoke Newington in addition to Clapham.

A Concert of Oratorio

Back in December 2017 the St Paul's Church organ received a fitting send-off for its complete refurbishment from St Paul's Opera, with the much celebrated oratorio, Handel's Messiah. Now, it is only fitting that we welcome the return to its rightful home with a concert on **Friday 22 March** jam-packed with a selection of well-loved arias and ensembles from some of the best-known oratorios. We also welcome Michael Hodges, regular organist and chorus master at St Paul's, regular principal singers, and we are delighted to see the debut of some exciting new voices to our company. Concert starts at 7.30 pm at St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DX. Tickets: £15 on the door or at stpaulsoperaoratorio.eventbrite.co.uk.

Historical research

We frequently have requests for information about Clapham in the past, about former residents and houses long ago demolished. And we also receive information, photographs and various documents from independent researchers and from the families of former Clapham residents who have come across books and archival material. This all adds to our local knowledge.

Recently a member gave us an introduction to someone who is writing the history of a leading firm of City solicitors founded at the end of the 18th century by a member of a Clapham family. He has kindly shared with us documents, maps, diaries and various papers referring to the family, and the sale of their Clapham land and houses. He has also put us in touch with a family member in New Zealand who has spent many years tracking his family history, for which we are very grateful.

Books for sale

We have recently been offered some out-of-print Clapham books to sell. If you would be interested in any of the titles listed below, please contact the Editor (details below).

Battley, John R: *Clapham Guide*, 1935, Clapham Society: *Clapham, Then & Now*, 1984,

Dudman, Jill: *Lambeth, Kennington & Clapham*, 1996,

Smith, Eric EF: *Clapham*, 1976,

Wilson, Alyson (Ed): *The Buildings of Clapham*, 2000.

Train to be a Miller

In preparation for the opening of their new Education Centre in the summer, Brixton Windmill are looking for new volunteers. You can train as a guide, or as a miller. They now regularly mill flour at Brixton Windmill using the electricity-driven modular mill. Sales of wholemeal stoneground flour, produced from organic wheat, provide important income that helps to ensure the long-term future of the windmill.

Once trained you are asked to agree to volunteer for at least one half-day shift every month. If you are interested please email info@brixtonwindmill.org.uk, or for more information about the Windmill visit brixtonwindmill.org.

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

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