

The Clapham Society

Newsletter



Issue 431

November 2020

Trailblazer in our midst

What did you do during lockdown? Member Helen Esmonde, Past Master of the Stationers' Company (2015-16) and, until July, Chair of its Education Committee, was quietly beaver away on her iMac in Abbeville village, aided by a techno-savvy co-Stationer, creating a game-changing website. Called Apprentice Futures (apprenticefutures.com), its strapline, 'Discover your potential', could not be more apt or, quite literally, more opportune. Given the pessimism the pandemic has whipped up among school leavers – and their justifiably anxious parents – it offers anyone enterprising enough to



click on to its extremely well-designed domain the chance to see what's out there in terms of training schemes and how many abound. This forms part of the apprenticeship initiative started by Helen's newly formed Stationers' Education Committee in 2017.

The Stationers' Company represents the content and communications industries and the website reflects this, from opportunities in the digital and technology sector to printing and paper, marketing, media and publishing. Other sectors represented include finance, food and many, many more in between. The site is inviting, intelligent and user-friendly,

and a number of big names have subscribed: the BBC, Accenture, Pearson, Queen Mary University, Peabody Trust, PWC, AON, Bloomberg, the Army, the RAF, the *Evening Standard*, *The Telegraph* and WhiteHat; the list goes on.

Helen, whose married name is Couldrey, holds the distinction of being the first woman to be Master in the Stationers' Livery Company's 617-year history. She has now handed over the apprentice initiative to a successor to pursue her work in Education as a member of the board of Leigh Academies Trust, where she can continue an involvement with careers education.

A star of the *Evening Standard's* apprentice diversity scheme, supported by the Stationers' Company, is Abbianca Makoni. Abbianca approached the *Standard* in 2018. 'I applied for its apprenticeship scheme because I felt university was not the right path for me. I was eager to get started and to learn from the best of the best, and that's what this apprenticeship has allowed me to do. Since I started over two years ago, I have reported from crime scenes, Downing Street and travelled up and down the city working on community stories. I believe apprenticeships are a great route for young people looking to get hands-on experience, mentorship (*Continued overleaf*)

As we go to press, slightly earlier than usual now that the Newsletter is being printed in colour, it is our hope that we are not entering another lockdown and all the live events listed in this issue will still be able to go ahead. Our November meeting will be held virtually, but our 2021 meetings will be held at Omnibus. Look out for more details in the next Newsletter.

November meeting

The Fatal Illness of Emperor Frederick III of Prussia – a disaster for the world. On **Monday 16 November** at 8 pm, Dr Ian Calder, whose talk

about Shackleton drew a record (real) audience in 2018, will return virtually to tell the story of Emperor Frederick III, who possessed almost everything required to become one of the world's truly great rulers – except good health and a reasonably sane heir. The medical management of



Frederick's illness by an English expert aggravated his son Wilhelm's paranoia about Britain. Frederick died of a smoking-related disease shortly after his coronation and 'Kaiser Bill' messed things up completely, allowing German military hawks to start World War I. The English doctor's treatment was probably correct, but his medical career, sadly, was wrecked. To register for this Zoom talk, please email christinearms52@hotmail.com and Christine will send you login details a few days beforehand.

Next year's meetings and walks

The diary for next year's meetings is finalised. All the speakers who had been booked for 2020 have agreed to come in 2021 (January to May), and we will have new speakers from June to November covering a range of fields from the arts to medicine to local affairs. A full list will be published in the next Newsletter. Unfortunately, as things stand, it is not possible to know if these will be Zoom meetings or real, but Omnibus Theatre is booked. A full programme of walks will also be arranged, as usual.

(Continued from previous page) and guidance from those who spent years perfecting their skills and are ready to give back.’

Recently, Abbianca, now a news reporter, landed the much-publicised scoop interview with the Duke and Duchess of Sussex from their home in California as part of the coverage for Black History Month. She proved herself a natural.

If you know anyone who would like to discover their potential early on, suggest they visit apprenticefutures.com. The full video interview of Abbianca talking to Meghan and Harry can be seen at standard.co.uk/news/uk/bhm-next-gen-trailblazers-abbianca-makoni-a4560926.html. *Ruth Eastman*

Abbianca Makoni (right), who was part of the *Evening Standard's* apprentice programme, talks to students at the Stationers' Company's 'Apprentice 19' event at Guildhall about what the scheme did for her. In early July 2021, this event will form a central part of the City of London's Careers Festival. Last month, Abbianca became a member of the Stationers' Company.



Next up at Omnibus Theatre

Fans of music and comedy, take note. On Friday 13 November improv supHER group *Hell Yeah!* are back with a cast that have been seen on the BBC, Netflix and Amazon Prime. Then EFG London Jazz Festival sets up camp. On Sunday 15 November, catch BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artist Misha Mullov-Abbado, award-winning cellist Shirley Smart (*left*) and 'genuine original' (*The Guardian*) Alice Zawadzki. On Sunday 22 November, Shirley Smart returns to perform with some of London's leading jazz musicians in a programme that draws on Middle Eastern melodies and jazz improvisation. For tickets and times, visit omnibus-clapham.org.

In tune and online

Clapham Community Choir is continuing its sessions through Zoom to keep you safe in this new normal every Tuesday at 7.30 pm. Visit singclapham.org/join-us. *Pauline Bertrand*



'All together now...'

Vasari Singers are planning their second online Come and Sing this season on Saturday 21 November, 2.30-3.30 pm. Due to popular demand – and because we really want to – we are ambitiously going for *Spem in Alium*, Thomas Tallis's 40-part motet and Renaissance choral masterpiece, led by our Music Director, Jeremy Backhouse (*right*). For further details about the event, a Zoom sign-up form and (most importantly!) the music, email alisonbenton@vasarisingers.org or visit vasarisingers.org. *Alison Benton*



Beethoven and beyond

On Friday 13 November, Clapham Chamber Concerts presents a programme by Amanda Lake (violin), Jonathan Parkin (clarinet) and regular guest John Paul Ekins (piano). Opening with Beethoven's Sonata for Violin & Piano No 3 in E-flat major, it will also feature Bartok's rustic and characterful *Contrasts* as well as the live premiere of composer-in-residence David Wallace's *Isolations*, written in collaboration with the performers during lockdown. There will be two performances, 6 pm and 8 pm, at St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove. In line with Covid safety guidelines, the socially distanced audience will be limited to 30. Tickets in advance (only) at £15/£12 concessions; £10 Friends and children under 12. Email claphamchamberconcerts@gmail.com.

Dulwich Picture Gallery will re-open on 21 November with *Unearthed: Photography's Roots*. Running until 9 May 2021, it is the Gallery's first major photography exhibition. Discover some of the earliest known photographs by Victorian pioneers such as William Henry Fox Talbot and cyanotypes by one of the first female photographers, Anna Atkins, through to leading 20th-century photographers including Robert Mapplethorpe and Imogen Cunningham. You will



also see rare works by Japanese artist Kazumasa Ogawa and the English gardener Charles Jones, whose striking modernist photographs went undiscovered for 20 years after his death until they were found in a trunk at Bermondsey Market in 1981. At the centre of the exhibition, the mausoleum will host an installation that pays homage to a still life by Jan Brueghel the Elder, which appears to shatter into pieces before our eyes.

Planning matters

Holy Trinity Church, Clapham Common Proposals are currently at pre-application stage with Lambeth. We understand that in response to comment from the Diocesan Advisory Committee there has been modification to aspects of the design that we gave comment to back in March. We await notification of a formal planning application when it is made, at which point we will give the design our forensic attention.

The Dudley Hotel, Clapham Common South Side The Committee registered strong objections this summer to two applications, both re-runs of previous applications to extend the capacity of the hotel in what we believe would be a gross overdevelopment of the site. We are pleased to learn that both applications have been rejected. A further four applications, however, have now been submitted, all seeking approval, this time for umpteen additional guestrooms on four subterranean levels. We shall be commenting. *Martin Pratt*



Essential Clapham This guide by Callum Moy really will fit in most pockets! From snippets of history to entertainment and cafés, its 100 little pages are crammed with new photographs and information, hopefully leading the reader on to finding out even more at thisisclapham.co.uk and claphamsociety.com. £5.99, Clapham Books.

New members We welcome Simon and Emmanuelle Brown, Julian Mowbray and Maria Alonso, Monica Sasso and Chris Cammish, and Pedro Usuriaga and Keith Endersen. To join, visit our website or contact our Membership Secretary (details overleaf). Membership also makes a great gift.



Harrowing the grass paddocks around Holy Trinity, these handsome shire horses, Murdoch and Joey, are part of Operation Centaur in Richmond Park and were captured on camera recently by Iain Boulton, Parks Officer, London Borough of Lambeth. They are some of the last working heavy horses in inner London, he reports, and were being used to convert areas of poor-quality land on the Common into species-rich meadow grassland as part of a wider initiative to improve biodiversity and restore traditional landscapes in an environmentally and visually sustainable manner.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2019

These minutes would have been presented at our 2020 AGM which had been due to take place on Monday 19 October but, owing to the pandemic, had to be cancelled. We had hoped to include them with our last Newsletter but there simply wasn't space.

The 56th Annual General Meeting of the Clapham Society was held at 8 pm on Monday 14 October 2019 at Omnibus, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4. The Society's President, Martin Drury, took the chair and 52 members were present.

1. The Secretary had received apologies for absence from John and Marina Adams and Kathleen Derrig. The Minutes of the previous AGM (15 October 2018) were Approved.
2. The Chairman of the Society, Annabel Allott, presented the Annual Report, which had been circulated with the September 2019 newsletter (Issue 420) and reported enthusiastically on the events of the past year, with specific reference to anonymous donations received that had enabled The Society to make legal representation to Lambeth Council challenging their use of the Common. In this regard she referred to the letter from Lambeth (*Kevin Crook, Assistant Director Neighbourhoods*) published in Newsletter 421 setting out Lambeth's acceptance of the various issues raised. It was encouraging that Winterville would not be happening on the Common this year and any possible future application would be subject to a relocation to the surfaced Funfair area and Redgra pitches. Reiterating her thanks to all those who helped with the running of the Society, she was sad to include in her Report the death of Peter Jefferson Smith at the end of last year [2018] and more recently the death of Derrick Johnson, both of whom were long-serving members and irreplaceable. She also reported that Bill Emmett, who has been a member of the Main Committee for a number of years, was unfortunately standing down because of health issues. She continued that Alyson Wilson was standing down from her long-serving involvement on production of the Newsletter, and Ruth Eastman had kindly agreed to take this on.
3. The Treasurer, David Brown, presented the Financial Report and Accounts year ended 31 March 2019. He reported that additional funds had been received for the Peter Jefferson Smith Memorial Fund, which will be used to cover the costs of publication of Peter's book on the three generations of the I'Anson family of Clapham architects. A huge amount of work has gone into the project and Alyson Wilson, together with a team of Clapham Society members, are to be congratulated. David added that Alyson would be available after the business of the Annual General Meeting with information for ordering the book.
4. The following were elected as **Officers and Committee Members** for the year 2019-2020:
Chairman Annabel Allott **Treasurer** David Brown **Solicitor** Daniel Dovar
Secretary Gillian White **Membership Secretary** Jennifer Everett
Also elected as **Committee Members** were: Christine Armstrong, Ruth Eastman, Mark Leffler, Martin Pratt, Andrew Summers and Alyson Wilson.
5. Anna Long, FCA, was thanked for her work during the past year and reappointed as **Independent Examiner**.
6. There was no other business. *Gillian White, 17 October 2019*

Is Covid an excuse for covert changes to the public realm?

Last month I looked at how Pavement Licences have been issued to support hospitality businesses under emergency powers. This month I turn my attention to **Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs)**, somewhat more controversial. Works as a result of the latest proposals from Transport for London (TfL) with regard to Cycle Superhighway 7 (CS7) are affecting Clapham High Street and roads leading off it, and along the A3 to The Oval. Scheduled to complete by the end of October, they will displace loading and short-term parking from the High Street, and preclude a number of turns into side streets. Lambeth and Wandsworth approved policies, as part of their Statutory Local Plans to 2041, to discourage car ownership and short car journeys, and the use of cars on side roads to avoid



congestion on the main road network. This combines with low traffic environments in residential neighbourhoods and near schools to create a safer environment and to encourage people to walk and cycle more. Championed by **Sustrans**, a London-based consultancy and lobby organisation for cyclists, these proposals were originally expected to be phased in over a number of years and to be the subject of local consultation.

In May, the government invited local authorities to bid for £250 million emergency funding to introduce measures to boost cycling and walking, and gave councils powers to close roads and build cycle lanes without prior consultation. Lambeth and Wandsworth, in common with some 50 councils, hastily put in place plans for a series of LTNs using these emergency powers. It is not clear how carefully these schemes were devised, or whether consideration was given to other decisions that might impinge on these proposals.

August saw the closure of, or reduced access to, several London bridges for repair and other reasons; utilities renewals, prompted by a Covid backlog, affecting main roads; a return to work for many and (in September) school; and space restrictions on buses necessitating extra capacity. TfL, meanwhile, was rolling out schemes to limit access to side roads along red routes, making **all bus lanes on red routes operate 24/7** and introducing new cycle lanes. In short order, main roads had gone from being lightly trafficked to severely congested.

On 11 September, responding to public pressure, **Wandsworth suspended all its LTN trials**. The council admitted that an initial review had 'identified concerns with emergency access and traffic flows. And this has been compounded by additional changes that... TfL is

making to red route roads in the borough. We have monitored the traffic flows and listened to feedback from residents and businesses. We have also spoken to local hospitals and key services to hear the impact on them.' In the meantime, **Lambeth introduced LTNs but with minimal consultation**. The **Ferndale scheme** (*above left*), which closes streets bounded by Bedford Road and Acre Lane, was introduced when the footbridge over the railway to the Landor Road area, an important pedestrian link for many, was closed for major repairs – with no sign that works were ready to start – and a burst water main in Bedford Road was under repair.

Many are unhappy about these changes, citing not just the congestion and pollution on the boundary roads and negative impact on the residents, but also potential problems faced by tradespeople, delivery drivers, care workers and emergency services. With limited access to side roads there is a displacement of local traffic which may benefit some, but disadvantage others. Quieter streets are not necessarily safer streets.

On the northern side of Clapham, **Larkhall Rise bridge** (*below*) has been abruptly closed to traffic, again using emergency powers, under the guise of the Quietway 5 route, but further severing links between parts of Clapham divided by the railway. Lambeth appears determined to press ahead with LTNs. It remains to be seen if they are prepared to consult in a more meaningful way with the residents and businesses affected. There is a case for traffic calming in residential areas and, sensibly approached, I suspect it would have public support. Too many cars on our London streets and unnecessary journeys make the opportunity to avoid congestion on the main roads highly attractive. There are also reasons why people should be encouraged to walk, cycle and make more use of public transport.

Such programmes, however, need to be phased in over time, taking in smaller areas and involving part-time restrictions. It is also important to allow time for feedback and a preparedness to implement changes if problems occur. Traffic management measures should be sensitive enough to cope with diverse needs and should not impede essential service traffic. They should consider the disbenefits as well as the actual benefits. *Mark Leffler (Photographs and report)*



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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Details of meetings, activities and a full list of our publications can be found on our website at claphamsociety.com

