

The Clapham Society

Newsletter



Issue 435 April 2021

Clapham made headlines for all the wrong reasons last month when 33-year-old Sarah Everard was brutally murdered on her way home on the evening of 3 March, shortly after walking past Clapham Common. Dana Kubick, who sent in this photograph 10 days later, was moved by the stream of mourners who arrived at the Bandstand to pay their respects. 'It became a focal point for hundreds of people who wished to do *something* to show solidarity with Sarah,' she wrote. 'The atmosphere was one of a community with a sole purpose: to congregate, some with flowers, as gestures of sympathy and hope.' The Clapham Society extends heartfelt condolences and deepest sympathy to the family and friends of Sarah. One of our members has suggested composting some of the spent flowers, subject to family approval of course, and using the newly created earth to plant a tree in Sarah Everard's memory.



Cut to The Chase

One of Clapham's botanic gems is *Charles Rutherfoord's* garden in *The Chase*. A past chairman of the Society of Garden Designers, he and Rupert Tyler, the garden's co-creator, are celebrating Rupert's recent appointment as Chairman of the National Garden Scheme. Here Charles shares his planting passions and reveals a few top tips

In this, our 15th year, we are delighted to be opening for the National Garden Scheme on **Sunday 25 April**, 12-5 pm, and **Tuesday 27 April**, 5-8 pm, for 2,000 tulips, camellias, roses, irises, hellebores, and many other spring flowers and unusual trees. We shall also open on **Sundays 4 July, 8 August and 3 October**, from 12 to 5 pm. We were unable to open last spring but did in July, August, September and October and raised £2,300 for the charities the NGS supports.

I renew the plantings of tulip bulbs every year as tulips are highly bred and do not come back except for a few, with a virus producing the flamed (streaked) tulips inventing their own new markings and colouring. I plant them about 100-150 mm apart; the pink tulips in front of the house (*right*) are 'Synaeda Amor'.

I aim for colour in the garden all year round. A year and half ago I planted a camellia walk with varieties in pairs to flower between October and May. I love scent in the garden; the aroma from the *Lonicera fragrantissima* by the steps to the front door has been beautiful these past two months. Later in the season, *Euphorbia mellifera* comes into its own; the (*Continued on page 2*)



Our meetings are normally held at Omnibus Theatre, but with restrictions still in place our next two will be held on Zoom, at 8 pm as usual. Email events@claphamsociety.com to book (in the appropriate month, please). Login details will be sent a day or two ahead.

Monday 19 April

The House on the Hill. Journalist and author **Christopher Impey** will tell the story of HMP Brixton, London's oldest prison, which was 200 years old in 2019 and is told in his recent book of this name. It began as the Surrey House of Correction, infamously introducing the brutal treadmill. Later, it became the first convict prison solely for women. By the millennium it was rated the worst prison in the country, but in recent years it has been transformed and now boasts prisoner rehabilitation schemes such as Clink@Home.

Monday 17 May

Discovering Battersea's Open Spaces: a walking guide. **Dr Clare Graham** has lived in Battersea since 1983. She has a PhD in architectural history and worked as a curator at the Victoria and Albert Museum. A trustee of the Battersea Society since 2018, she is Chair of its Open Spaces Committee. During lockdown she put together the Society's first publication, the eponymous title of her talk. In it she will take us through the guide's creation. *Yehuda and Eilat Negev* have chosen to speak in person and will now address us in May 2022.



(Continued from page 1) honey scent is strong when it flowers in May. A wonderful structural plant, it grows to 2 m high with a spread of about 1.5 m. It is evergreen and looks magnificent in rain, providing wonderful punctuation throughout the year. It can be cut down totally or selectively to reduce its size periodically, or left to attain its full potential.

I think there is a magic to trees that flower on bare branches. The Judas tree, *Cercis siliquastrum* (left), has striking pink flowers along its bare branches in May. Actually a shrub, the tree peony 'Rinpo' (right) stands in a lush carpet of tulips; among them orange 'Fly Away' tulips open like twisted propellers in the most baroque way. When I look round, it's hard to think that this space was a mass of brambles 36 years ago.

Tickets to the garden at 51 The Chase, SW4 0NP (see opening dates on page 1), are available at ngs.org.uk for £4.50. Refreshments. Dogs welcome.



Guided walks

We have planned a full season of guided walks this year, starting at the end of April. Because of the uncertainty about Covid-related regulations every walk **must be pre-booked by email** with the leader as shown below. This means the leader can control the number of bookings and advise any changes.

On **Friday 23 April Dr Iain Boulton** will lead one of his popular **Bat walks** on Clapham Common. If you have not been on a Bat walk before, this is well worth doing and a great opportunity to find out more about these fascinating creatures, using bat detectors and guided by an expert. You will need to wrap up well for this night-time adventure. Leaving at 8.15 pm from the Bandstand. Free, but booking essential by emailing iboulton@lambeth.gov.uk.

On **Wednesday 5 May Tom Jansz's** walk, **Clapham in World War Two**, will show how Clapham, in particular the Common, was affected by and adapted to the war. From bomb damage to air-raid shelters, barrage balloons, a military encampment, allotments and 'prefab' housing, we had it all here. Leaving at 6.30 pm from the Clock Tower outside Clapham Common Underground Station. Free, but booking essential by emailing tom.jansz@hotmail.co.uk.

A list of Clapham Society walks planned for the season is on the Walks page of our website. Visit claphamsociety.com/clapsocwalks.html.



English Delftware drug jars

In her talk '**In Paynted Pots is Hidden the Deadliest Poyson**' on **21 April at 11 am**, Briony Hudson (left) will demonstrate that drug jars have an undervalued role in understanding medical

practices in the 17th and 18th centuries. Briony is a past President of the British Society for the History of Pharmacy and lectures on wide-ranging topics in that field. To enjoy the lecture, which is free to The Arts Society members (or join for £10), email claphamcommon@theartsociety.org and log on at 10.50 am.

Susan Holder, The Arts Society Clapham Common

Opera al fresco

There might be light at the end of the Covid tunnel but there's still no guarantee when we might see a return to normality. And that means **St Paul's Opera** has decided to postpone its performances of Benjamin Britten's *Albert Herring* this year. But all is not lost, as there will be a **Summer Opera Festival**, designed to comply with whatever social distancing restrictions might be in place in July.

'We have decided to postpone *Herring* to 2022 for a number of reasons,' says SPO's founder and principal soprano, Tricia Ninian. 'The first is that it has a big



Gianni Schicchi, St Paul's Opera's first performance (2013), will return this summer. Tricia Ninian (centre back)

cast and we simply cannot get that many people together at the moment to rehearse. It's not a cheap production to stage, either, as there are royalties to be paid to the Britten Pears Foundation. Also, we fully intend to stage it with a 12-13-piece chamber orchestra rather than simply piano accompaniment and that has a cost element, too.

'To ensure that we are able to cover our costs,

we would need a full house at our home at St Paul's Church, but social distancing restrictions are still likely to be in place this summer so we cannot guarantee large audiences,' she adds.

'This is where Plan B comes into play. One of the highlights of last summer was an al fresco gala concert in the expansive grounds of St Paul's Church. The musicians were delighted to perform to a real audience after months of lockdown, little knowing another would ensue, while the tickets all went within a couple of hours of being released, Glastonbury-style.

'It was a real joy for our audience to see and hear some wonderful live music at last,' Tricia continues. 'So we have decided to repeat the idea this summer by moving our **Opera Festival** outside. As usual there will be three performances – the dates are **1-3 July** – and we have chosen to revisit Puccini's one-act comic opera *Gianni Schicchi*: it was the very first opera staged by SPO and there is no doubt we can all do with a little comedy right now.

'With a running time of just under an hour it will require fewer rehearsals, which hopefully will mean we can fit in adequate rehearsal even if restrictions are lifted slower than anticipated,' Tricia adds. 'We are also planning a full programme for each of the three days with additional vocal and instrumental treats.

'Although St Paul's Opera normally introduces new voices for each production (true to its ethos of providing opportunities for singers developing their careers), current restrictions prevent live auditions. Instead, the cast will be recruited from the considerable pool of talent who regularly perform with us.

'Meanwhile, we suggest you build a bubble of fellow music lovers, think of a picnic to be enjoyed before the performance and in the interval, and look forward to a summer evening of glorious music in the grounds of St Paul's, Rectory Grove.' To keep abreast of St Paul's Opera news, including details of ticket sales when tickets become available, visit stpaulsopera.org and subscribe to ensure receipt of breaking news and updates.

Of primary interest

Macaulay Church of England Primary School is a one-form-entry school and nursery in Victoria Rise close to Clapham Common. We have happy children, great outdoor space and a strong supportive community. We are excited about our brand-new nursery building, which will open in September 2021, and our new Art and Science space. Please visit our website, macaulaycofeschool.co.uk, to learn more about us – our Year 6 video on the Welcome page describes us well. If you are interested in discussing a school place for your child, please contact the school office by telephoning 020 7622 1355.

Charity begins in Clapham

Hibbert Almshouse Charity is run by seven trustees, all local residents. Built in 1859 and Grade II listed, the almshouses, the only ones in Clapham, were quite badly damaged in the last war, and there was doubt if it was worth repairing them. However, Revd Canon A C Raby, Chairman of the Trustees and Rector of Holy Trinity Church (1954-74), had no doubt that there would be a need for social housing in the future. How right he was! A restoration scheme was set up and in the early 1980s with grants and borrowed money some £140,000 was spent on their renovation.

Now, 40 years later, the trustees of the Hibbert Almshouse Charity are faced with the need again to spend a significant amount of money on the building and on improving disabled access. As well as basic renovations, we are ambitious to restore all the original features. This includes the two finials, now missing, and the 12 stone corbels at the front, most of which have been lost or damaged. The estimated cost is £1.496 million, of which we can fund £410K; we have been awarded a grant from the Greater London Authority of £400K and have received private donations of £206K. This leaves £480K to raise. Further details can be found on our website, hibbertalms.org.uk, as well as the opportunity to give.

I have spent ten years as a trustee and have seen how well the almshouses work as a social community. It would be wonderful if in this now, in parts, wealthier corner of London, which increases the need for this type of housing provision, the residents of Clapham could help towards putting this architectural jewel, the work of Edward I'Anson, Junior, distinguished Victorian architect and Clapham resident, into good order.

Anyone who wishes to be shown the almshouses when the restrictions relax, please email info@hibbertalms.org.uk and one of the trustees will be pleased to show you our garden and probably one of the houses, and tell you more about the scheme.
Euan Kennedy, Chair of Trustees, Hibbert Almshouse Charity



Dana Kubick

Take it away, Omnibus

Following the sell-out success of its online programme in February and March, Omnibus Theatre continues to announce new theatrical experiences for you to enjoy from home. We have just had the go-ahead to run a takeaway service from our Café Bar from Friday 16 April (Fri-Sat: 9 am-6 pm; Sun: 10 am-4 pm). There are also plans afoot to stage live performances as soon as government guidance allows. Keep an eye on omnibus-clapham.org and Omnibus Theatre social media for updates. Also check out the theatre's YouTube page for still-streaming events, which include *The Guardian's* hottest front-room seat **WeRNotVirus** and **In Conversation with Miriam Margolyes**.



Wandsworth Historian celebrates its 50th

Spring 2021 marks the 50th anniversary of our journal. In celebration our special number opens with an article looking back on Wandsworth in 1971. Also in this issue is an account of the success over more than a century of the Grand Theatre, Clapham Junction, and a fascinating glimpse into a project-that-never-was – to build a 'City of Health' in Victorian Battersea. Other items include the launch of the Young's Brewery archive, now deposited with the Wandsworth Heritage Service, and the rise and fall of a major drapers' business in Wandsworth High Street.

The *Wandsworth Historian* is published by the Wandsworth Historical Society, wandsworthhistory.org.uk, and copies are available for £3 plus £2 p&p from Neil Robson, 119 Heythorp Street, London SW18 5BT, or by emailing 02oneil119@gmail.com. Online payment preferred, but cheques payable to the 'Wandsworth Historical Society' also accepted.
Neil Robson, Chairman, Wandsworth Historical Society



New members and annual subscriptions

This month we welcome three new members: Lynda and Paul Bailey, and Michael Barry.

Members are reminded that subscriptions are due on 1 April. If you do not currently have a standing order, please arrange to make a payment without delay. Subscription rates are: Individual, £10; Household, £15; Business, £25. Cheques may be sent to 30 Trinity Close, SW4 0JD, and bank transfers to NWB, Sort Code 60-05-34, A/C no 22217045, using your name, initial, postcode and M as the reference. To set up a standing order, or if you have any queries, contact the Membership Secretary on 020 7627 4770 or email membership@claphamsociety.com. You will also see (*overleaf*) that we are asking for email addresses. If we don't have yours already, I look forward to receiving it.
Jennifer Everett, Membership Secretary

Now tell us what you really think!

Many pages of this newsletter, and indeed hours of our Committee members' time, have been devoted to the issue of our beloved Clapham Common. This reflects the importance most of us place on this precious asset. I am delighted and proud that the efforts of so many stakeholders over many years, not least those of Clapham Society members long before I was one, have transformed so many aspects of the Common. However, members will be well aware that the Common faces numerous challenges, most of which fall into two main categories. First, **conflicting visions of what Clapham Common should look like** – a green, peaceful oasis of calm, or a bustling hive of (potentially noisy!) activity and leisure? And, if a mix of the two, what is the right balance? Secondly, money! Council spending on open spaces has fallen precipitously over recent years and much of the controversy around events stems from the fact that they are hosted mainly to raise revenue.

The Clapham Society has decided to undertake a thorough survey of members' views, principally regarding Clapham Common. The survey will have several aims, as follows:

1. To understand better our members' views and priorities when representing their interests in discussions with Lambeth and other relevant bodies.
2. To encourage ideas regarding how we effect positive change in an era of limited government funding, e.g. private funding and volunteering.
3. To establish how we translate these ideas into action, i.e. who can afford the time it takes to put these actions into practice.

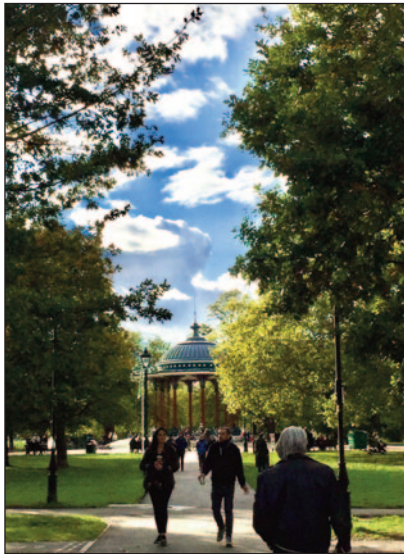
As readers probably know, much of the work of The Clapham Society is undertaken by its Committee members. Perpetuating effective opposition to many of the unfavourable trends we see in relation to Clapham Common is time consuming and potentially costly. Establishing a more **pro-active, positive presence** even more so. To be blunt, currently we have neither the financial means nor the manpower to be as impactful in matters relating to the Common as we or our members would like. We are therefore very keen to reach out to any members who can offer on a regular basis their time, expertise or passion to re-establishing The Clapham Society as a powerful force in effecting positive change on Clapham Common.

To ensure your voice is heard **we will be reaching out to you via email or a direct mailing**. If you haven't already provided your email address to us when you joined, you can still do so by emailing membership@claphamsociety.com. We would very much appreciate as many members as possible participating in the survey.

Andrew Summers, Common and Open Spaces Sub-committee



Dana Kubick



Dana Kubick

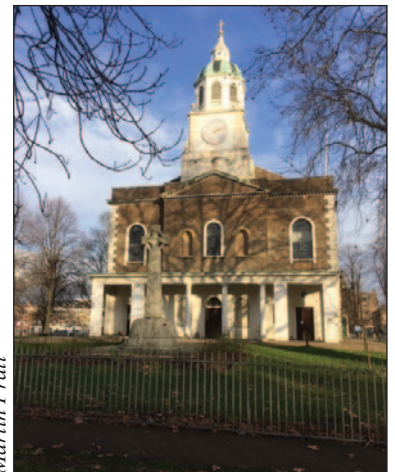
Holy Trinity Church, Clapham Common North Side

Early last year, we first heard news of proposals to make major changes to our famous and historic church. Then, in March this year, the Planning Sub-committee was invited to and attended an online meeting with the church, its design team, stakeholders and Lambeth planning officers at which pre-application proposals were presented and explained. These included the alteration and extension to the north and south vestry wings, the extension and enclosure with glass of the west portico and associated landscape works. All members of the Sub-committee provided their individual comment and opinion on the changes.

The Planning Sub-committee has now received notification of a full application. Its members engaged in a detailed analysis of the proposals (the application contains over 50 documents) and presented the Society's views and concerns to a stakeholders' online meeting on 15 March.

Through our social media platforms **we have asked members to comment** as local residents in support or objection to what was being proposed and thank everyone who replied. The proposals can be viewed at planning.lambeth.gov.uk; search Planning/Simple/reference 21/00447/FUL.

Planning Sub-committee (Chairman, Martin Pratt)



Martin Pratt

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

Chairman	Annabel Allott Email: chairman@claphamsociety.com	Meetings and Events	Christine Armstrong Email: events@claphamsociety.com
Secretary	Gillian White Email: secretary@claphamsociety.com	Planning Matters	Martin Pratt Email: planning@claphamsociety.com
Treasurer	David Brown Email: treasurer@claphamsociety.com	Roads and Transport	Mark Leffler Email: transport@claphamsociety.com
Membership Secretary	Jennifer Everett Email: membership@claphamsociety.com	Local History and Publications	Alyson Wilson Email: history@claphamsociety.com
Common and Open Spaces	Andrew Summers Email: openspaces@claphamsociety.com	Newsletter Editor and Social Media	Ruth Eastman Email: news@claphamsociety.com

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

