

The Clapham Society

Newsletter



Issue 444 March 2022

Up close and architectural

Many members attended our January meeting at which Laura Harford, Curator (Participation), described Studio Voltaire's recent transformation. In early February, **Sinclair Johnston** attended a lecture tour of the buildings organised by the Architecture Foundation and led by Jason Whiteley of Matheson Whiteley, the project's architects. We are grateful for his report.



Studio Voltaire was founded in 1994 by a collective of artists who set up a studio space in a disused tram shed on Voltaire Road. In 1999 the group moved to its current location on Nelsons Row, becoming a registered charity in 2001. The larger site enabled them to expand their provision of affordable studios, offer a dedicated gallery space in a Victorian former mission hall and increase

their engagement with the local community. Studio Voltaire hosts a year-round programme of exhibitions, displays, symposiums, open studios and events.

On the tour we learnt that the footprint of the buildings has barely altered but the appearance, access and public facilities have been transformed. The generous entrance is now through the old vehicle gates and stunning new garden, a secluded courtyard designed by artist Anthea Hamilton. A second iron gate, facing east, by artist Nicholas Byrne, creates a welcome prospect for pedestrians entering from the adjacent William Bonney Estate.

The building is divided into public space comprising a gallery, café and shop, the House of Voltaire (*below right*); learning and events space housing a Project Studio and studio space for 61 artists, two residency studios, the Henry Moore Workshop and Communal Studio (*above*), as well as the Artists' Kitchen and amazing arty lavatories. Almost every room and corridor enjoys generous natural lighting and offers intriguing glimpses into the less-explored areas off the High Street while maintaining the aesthetic of the previously industrial buildings. Prior to the transformation they were occupied by a structural steel fabricator and, before that, a stonemasons.

The architects explained the technical (*Continued overleaf*)



Our meetings take place at Omnibus Theatre, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW. The talk starts 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. As Covid numbers in Lambeth are still up, we would encourage audience members to take a lateral flow test (no more than 36 hours prior to the meeting) and only come if the result is negative; please wear masks throughout.

Monday 21 March

The life course of health (we can't start soon enough). Research in pregnancy disorders and consequences for the mother and child, including influences of Covid. Society member **Professor Lucilla Poston**, CBE, Head of School of Life Course and Population Sciences, King's College London (KCL), will speak about latest pregnancy research at KCL/Guy's and St Thomas' Trust. Illustrating the 'Developmental Origins of Health and Disease' hypothesis with examples from scientific literature, she will show how this is influencing public health advice about parenthood and the management of common complications of pregnancy. Professor Poston holds the Tommy's Charity Chair of Maternal and Fetal Health. Her research team aims to improve the health of women and their children in the UK and globally by better understanding the processes which lead to premature birth, gestational diabetes and pre-eclampsia.

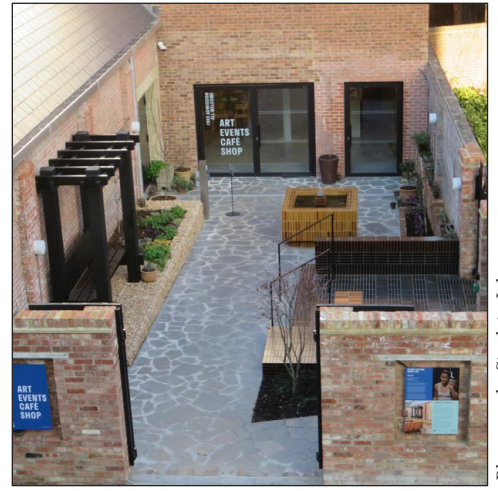
Monday 11 April

William Morris: Arts and Crafts and so much more. The famous Merton Abbey works of the great Victorian designer were just four miles down the A24 from Clapham. **John Hawks** traces Morris's life, character and the extraordinary range of his activities. After 25 years in advertising, John founded and managed Merton Abbey Mills arts and crafts centre in the abandoned Liberty silk printing works on the River Wandle – just upstream from the site of Morris's works. He is a trustee of the Wandle Industrial Museum, a director of Wandle Heritage Limited, vice chair of Merton Priory Trust, and curator of the Chapter House Museum. (This meeting was originally scheduled for 18 April.)



(Continued from page 1) issues involved, in particular the use of the Building Information Management (BIM) system, to prepare and integrate all the technical information, architecture, structure, drainage, heating, etc into one digital model, which was used to prepare pre-cut panels and by the building contractors for all their work without the usual need for drawings and sketches.

With the Society's fascinating talk fresh in my memory, this more specialist tour was such a treat. Bring on another. For more information about both organisations, visit studiovoltaire.org and architecturefoundation.org.uk.



Photographs Sinclair Johnston

Clapham Society tour of Studio Voltaire

If you attended our meeting, referred to at the start of the article above, you will remember Laura Harford mooted the possibility of a tour of Studio Voltaire whose renovation she had so vividly presented. We're thrilled to announce that one will take place on **Friday 8 April, 11am**. Studio Voltaire is at **1a Nelsons Row, SW4 7JR** – just off the High Street. It recently reopened after a £2.8 million capital project to expand and redevelop its site and artistic programmes, the most ambitious transition in its 27-year history. The tour is free and refreshments will be provided by The Café (highly recommended), but places are limited so book early to avoid disappointment; email events@claphamsociety.com.

Royal Trinity Hospice steps into spring

On **Sunday 20 March** Royal Trinity Hospice is asking everyone in the local community to get a walking group together and enjoy a day out in the British countryside, while raising vital funds for the Hospice. For its Step into Spring challenge Trinity has partnered with Vespucci Adventures, a company that makes the great outdoors fun and accessible



for everyone, with their self-guided hiking packs that do all the planning and research for you.

The hikes are within reach of London on public transport, making it easy to escape to the countryside for a wonderful day out. To sign up to support the Hospice and receive your hiking pack, visit royaltrinityhospice.london/spring or email sgleave@royaltrinityhospice.london. Shannon Gleave

Get walking locally

We have planned a full programme of guided walks for 2022, which you can now find on our website at claphamsociety.com/walks. There are repeats of popular walks, brand-new ones and new takes on old favourites. Each guided walk is different, depending on the audience as well as on the leader. Remember, if you think you know an area, you may well discover new details about it as our regular research constantly reveals fascinating information.

The South London Guided Walks leaflet is to be produced by Lambeth Local History Forum as a printed leaflet, after two years when it was only online. Look out for it in libraries towards the end of March. If you want to find out more about Clapham history on foot in your own chosen time, remember we have a pack of seven self-guided walks leaflets which are available on our website and from Clapham Books, for only £5.

Membership renewals

A note from our Membership Secretary that renewals for annual subscriptions are due on 1 April. Reminders are attached to Newsletters for those members who do not have a standing order. Please can members check that your standing order request with your bank has the correct payment amount: £10 for an individual; £15 for household; plus £10 for postage, if required. If you have any queries, please email Jennifer Everett at membership@claphamsociety.com or telephone 020 7627 4770 and she will be pleased to help.

New members

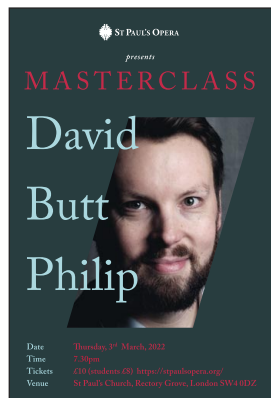
We extend warm welcomes to the following new members: Andrew Fingret and Kate Francis; Historic Buildings Studio Ltd; Agustin Pangaro; and Maureen Tarroni.

Advance Care Planning

Sixteen members attended a Zoom workshop on Advance Care Planning on 13 January. We discussed the value of producing an Advance Statement, an Advance Decision to Refuse Treatment and a Lasting Power of Attorney for Health and Welfare. Lambeth residents can obtain free advice from the Lambeth Advance Care Planning Consortium (healthwatchlambeth.org.uk/lambethadvancecareplanningproject). For free support to make an Advance Care Plan, you can fill out the referral form on ageuk.org.uk/lambeth/our-services/mycommunity-lambeth. Select the link 'Click here to make a referral', or telephone 0333 360 3700. Jenny Cobley

St Paul's Opera – twice in one month!

Back in 2020, at the beginning of March, we welcomed **David Butt Philip** for the increasingly popular Masterclass. Little did we know then what was about to befall the world! So it is a huge joy to tell you that David is returning to St Paul's Opera not once but twice in March 2022. He will preside over the **Masterclass** that we have



missed in the last 24 months. Our singer candidates will be SPO vocalists who have been waiting patiently all this time, and also some new recruits who are joining us for this summer's production of *Albert Herring*. Tickets, £10 and £8 (students), are available through stpaulsopera.org. **Thursday 3 March, 7.30 pm.**

Later in the month David Butt Philip has offered to stage a **fundraising gala** for SPO. It is such a treat to welcome this rising star of the opera world who is in demand at some of the world's top

opera houses including the Royal Opera House, the Metropolitan Opera, Staatsoper Berlin and the Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich. David is inviting other big-name colleagues to join him, making this an event that will attract opera lovers way beyond the bounds of Clapham. Book early to avoid disappointment. Tickets, £30, will go on sale in early March, available through stpaulsopera.org. Please consider subscribing to the website to make sure you are the first to hear of this release date. **Thursday 24 March, 7.30 pm. St Paul's Church, Rectorry Grove, SW4 0DZ. Tricia Ninian**

Clapham Common Film Club

After an example of contemporary Vietnamese cinema last month, our next screening is a recent British film. *Lynn + Lucy* (2019) is about class, community, self-esteem and female friendship. It is set in an Essex council estate at the centre of which the story unfolds.

'Two stunning performances' in the words of Mark Kermode by *(from left)* Roxanne Scrimshaw and Nichola Burley draw us into a contemporary reality with echoes of an archetypal classical tragedy. Produced by Ken Loach's Sixteen Films, this is the first feature film by prize-winning short film director Fyzal Boulifa. It runs for 87 minutes.



For further details of this season's programme and Clapham Common Film Club membership information, email Roger Booker at ccfilmrb@gmail.com. **Sunday 13 March, 7.30pm. Omnibus Theatre, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW.**

Big Ben – the inside story

Big Ben is one of the most famous structures in the world. This talk, presented by **The Arts Society Clapham Common**, will look into its history and discuss the friction between the often controversial personalities involved in the tower's building and design. The speaker, **Tim Redmond**, is a City of London tour guide who specialises in Big Ben; guests on his live tours have included Michelle Obama and Bill Gates.

For tickets, £10 visitors (members free), email claphamcommon@theartsociety.org or visit theartsociety.org/claphamcommon. **Wednesday 16 March, 11am. Clapham Picturehouse, 76 Venn Street, SW4 0AT. Susan Holder**



Live at St Luke's Music Society

St Luke's Music Society's triumphant return to live performances continues with a recital by **Steven Isserlis**, one of the world's greatest cellists. He will be accompanied by the Finnish pianist and composer Olli Mustonen in a concert generously supported by Savills. The programme will include works by Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Martinu and Mustonen. Tickets and further details are available from slms.org.uk. **Saturday 19 March, 7.30pm. St Luke's Church, Ramsden Road, SW12 8RQ.**

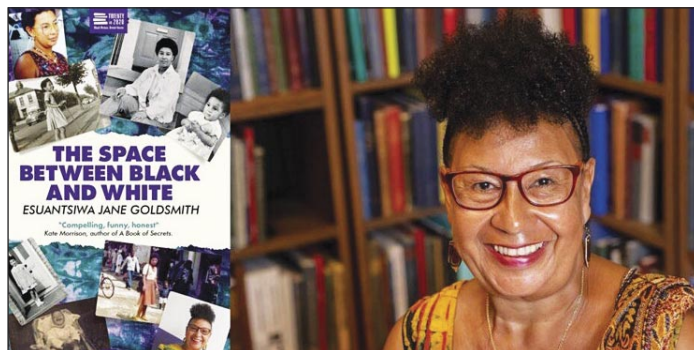


Monteverdi Vespers

Originally planned for November 2020, **Whitehall Choir** is delighted at long last to present Monteverdi Vespers at that great Arts and Crafts church not far from Clapham, Holy Trinity Sloane Square. Conducted by the brilliant Joanna Tomlinson, the choir, two of whose members are also Clapham Society members, will be joined by top soloists Zoë Brookshaw, Rebecca Outram, Gareth Treseder, Greg Tassell, Colin Campbell and James Oldfield, accompanied by the London Baroque Sinfonia. If you like Early Music in beautiful surroundings, this is a concert not to miss. Tickets through whitehallchoir.org/concerts. **Thursday 31 March, 7.45pm. Holy Trinity Sloane Square, 146 Sloane Street, SW1X 9BZ. Ruth Eastman**

Battersea Society

Esuantsiwa Jane Goldsmith (*below*) will talk about her memoir, *The Space Between Black and White*, in which she recounts growing up 'as the only brown kid on the block' on the Shaftesbury Estate in the 1950s. Esu is a writer, feminist activist and development consultant of British Ghanaian heritage. £5, payable on the door or via batterseasociety.org.uk/events. **Thursday 31 March, 6.30-8pm. St Mary's Church, Battersea Church Road, SW11 3NA. Sue Demont**





Mark Leffler

Major events on the Common – again!

The holding of big commercial music events on Clapham Common has been a matter of growing contention locally in recent years. In the October issue (440) of this Newsletter, we wrote about the controversy surrounding major events on the Common last summer.

Lambeth Council, which owns and has responsibility for the Common, argues that the events provide important income to maintain and fund improvements, adding that they are beneficial for nearby businesses. Many local people resent the disruption (crowds, noise and anti-social behaviour) and the exclusion of regular users from a substantial area of the Common during the events, including rigging and derigging, and afterwards to ‘repair’ the grass and impacted soil damaged by the heavy traffic and structures placed upon them.

The Council finally accepted, after two disastrous seasons, that Winterville would not be allowed to return to the ‘events site’ off North Side, which had suffered an immense amount of damage. It was agreed that Winterville would only be allowed to return if the operators occupied the hardstanding off The Avenue, a site that has so far proved unattractive. Lambeth remains keen, however, to encourage music festivals during the summer, and is understood to have entered into a conditional contract with events promoter Festival Republic to organise and mount multiple events over several years into the future.

In 2021 Lambeth applied to Defra for consent under Commons legislation for last year’s music festival, but too late for the application to be determined. Readers will be well aware that the events took place anyway, even though 470 objections were lodged. On 2 February the Council submitted a new application for a festival in August 2022, and public notices to this effect were posted on 4 February.

Those who submitted representations last year should have had an email from the Planning Inspectorate setting out what has been decided with regard to last year’s undetermined application, and how the application will be dealt with. A Planning Inspector has been

appointed to review the 2021 application and representations, with a view to deciding whether or not the Council’s application should have been approved. This email also indicates that the Inspector intends to hold a Public Local Inquiry in May/June 2022 to consider the newly submitted application, thereby allowing sufficient time to make a relevant decision to determine whether the music festival planned for August can proceed. It is proposed that the site will be enclosed for 18 days from 16 August to 3 September.

If this application is approved by Defra it will pave the way for the multi-year programme of music festivals the Council has already agreed in principle with Festival Republic. Furthermore, the festival season is likely to be extended in the future, which will intensify the damage to this c. 20-acre portion of the Common and **the public will be denied access for longer periods as a result.**

The Society remains very concerned about the damage to the Common caused by these large events, and the enclosure of a large area of open meadow for weeks at a time, both for the events and to recondition the area, and it intends to present these concerns at the Inquiry. **However, so little time has been allowed for objections!**

Lambeth’s application to Defra was only submitted on 2 February, as previously stated, and just a month has been allowed to write in. **It is vital that members write to the Planning Inspectorate with your concerns, stating why you think these big events are a bad idea and how they have affected your enjoyment of the Common.** Comments need to be submitted by email on or before **Friday 4 March**, referencing ‘Clapham Common Article 12 Application’, to: commonlandcasework@planninginspectorate.gov.uk.

The Society is taking legal advice on this matter. It is hoped that this is something our membership is prepared to support, in principle and financially, and that some of you will also be prepared to come and express your views at the May/June Public Local Inquiry. Watch this space for developments.

Mark Leffler

If you have any queries about **The Clapham Society** or have news of local events, please email 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

