

The Clapham Society

Newsletter



Issue 449 September 2022

Lambeth College redevelopment: does Clapham need this?



Fronting Clapham Common at 45 Clapham Common South Side, on the site that for many years was occupied by Henry Thornton School, stands Lambeth College. Its large modern block was granted planning permission in 2007, while its converted school buildings are from an earlier period. The college had been due to close at the end of the summer term but was then kept open. There has been much speculation about the future of the site, with its 80-metre frontage overlooking Long Pond.

In July, some local residents received a flyer announcing that South Bank Colleges, the body formed in 2019 incorporating South Bank University and Lambeth Colleges, had teamed up with London Realty, the developer of the adjoining Thornton Park. It invited residents to attend one of a series of online Q&A events later that month. These have been recorded and can be accessed at lambethcollegeproject.site where you can explore the plans and watch the recordings.

It is proposed that all the current buildings will be demolished, and a six-storey teaching block will be built on the southern edge, well back from the main road, behind existing privately owned properties. Most of the site is to be residential, and includes 505 apartments in six blocks. Three of the blocks, roughly on the site of the current Clapham Common South Side buildings, with views over the Common, will contain 355 apartments to be privately managed and rented. The remaining 150 are to be managed by a Housing Association, the majority for low-cost rent, but to include some for shared ownership. **The intention is for these blocks to range in height from 10 (facing the Common) to 13 storeys.**

The proposal raises many concerns for local residents, not least of which is the continued disruption they will face as a result of another major development project commencing alongside Thornton Park, which currently remains far from completion. **Thornton Park itself has been a constant source of problems for residents on the Notre Dame Estate and in Abbeville Road**, who have had to put up with noise, fumes, vibrations and loss of privacy. **They, and residents in Waldo Close, off Elms Road, are understandably concerned that the height and proximity of some of the new blocks will result in a further loss of privacy, light and views.** Wider concerns relate to the reliance by the Council and the developer on the high public transport accessibility level (PTAL) rating that is being applied to justify the residential density for this and Thornton Park. **Local residents are all too aware of the extreme congestion of the Northern Line at peak times, and the dangers inherent on the single-island platforms at Clapham Common and Clapham North stations.**

The density in terms of the number of homes and its building mass seems excessive on a number of counts. **It is not clear why the College needs to demolish a relatively new building to construct a new one of similar size elsewhere on the site.** Not doing so would have the advantage of considerably reducing costs and also the carbon footprint of the development, while at the same time removing concerns of many of the residents of both Notre Dame and Waldo Close. **Clearly there is value in building private apartments facing the Common, but that could have been confined to the low-rise Henry Thornton block alongside.** A lower-density scheme that sought to retain and reuse what is serviceable would make so much more sense in an increasingly environmentally conscious world, and would almost certainly provide a more harmonious boundary for the Common, and one more in keeping with the Conservation Area. It might reduce a developer's profit, but that may well be a price worth paying! It is anticipated that a planning application will be submitted in the autumn.

Report and photograph by Mark Leffler, Chairman

Our meetings take place at Omnibus Theatre, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW. The talk starts promptly at 8pm and our guest normally speaks for 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 so the speaker can start promptly. The Café Bar is open from 6pm for drinks and snacks – a great opportunity to socialise with other members before (and after!) the meeting.

Monday 19 September

Our original speaker for this date has regrettably had to cancel owing to ill health, but a meeting will still take place and the subject will be: **The history of the gardens of Royal Trinity Hospice.** **Alyson Wilson** will trace the story of these lovely gardens from the time they were laid out for Clapham Place, the home of Denis Gauden (where his friend Samuel Pepys died), through various ownerships including that of the plant collector and MP, George Hibbert, and a redesign for the Hospice by the American garden designer Lanning Roper. This beautifully maintained garden, one of the gems of Clapham, www.royaltrinityhospice.london/our-gardens, is regularly open to the public.

Private tour of Lambeth Palace Library

A special tour for members has been arranged for **Friday 7 October, 10am** (see page 4). Numbers are limited and names must be submitted in advance for security reasons. Please **email your names to events@claphamsociety.com before 28 September.** Lambeth Palace Library is at 15 Lambeth Palace Road, SE1 7JT. Visit lambethpalacelibrary.org/using-the-library/getting-here. *Christine Armstrong*

Marcus Hope (1942-2022)

Marcus was a distinguished diplomat, fluent in German, French, and Arabic, who served in Indonesia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (as Ambassador) and Montreal, Canada (as Consul General). His diplomatic skills served him well when he accepted the Chair/Vice-chairmanship of the Friends of Clapham Common between 2002 to 2016; indeed, it was Marcus who first suggested the Bandstand be restored and quietly launched a campaign to ensure it was. He also organised the planting of so many trees on the Common, putting the 100th in the ground himself. Public service and duty were the hallmarks of Marcus Hope's life. He served as a JP and he supported Awards for Young Musicians. As a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society, he organised its lecture programme, as well as enthusing young people to look up at the stars. A man of wide interests and a long-standing and engaged member of The Clapham Society (he and his wife, Uta, often attended meetings), he was also an avid cyclist and had a passion for the classical guitar. Happy memories abide of sharing Christmas Eve with Uta and their son, Alexander, whilst Marcus accompanied our Christmas carols on his guitar. He was courageous and his devotion to the Clapham community will be much missed. *Christine Green*



Summer Party

The Society's Summer Party on 20 July, held again with the Friends of Clapham Common, was a splendid success. Thanks so very much to Friends Chair Shirley Kermer (*above, far right*), and a committed band of party organisers and helpers, especially Emma de Cassan, Margot de Dominicis and Ed Allnutt.



Dana Kubick

Suzanna and Richard Roxburgh (*above, centre*) were splendid hosts as always, and in the thick of things throughout. The weather was especially helpful – a brief shower towards the end served as a reminder that people should be thinking of departing, but there was no huddling under the canopy on the terrace to stay dry like last year, and guests could spread out on the whole garden.

Shirley delivered an excellent speech containing messages of thanks and outlining the successes that have been achieved on the Common over the past year. Special acknowledgement was made of the tireless efforts and expertise of Gareth James, who throughout the year has spearheaded our planting ambitions for the Common and won over hearts and minds in the process.

As with last year, the party was not just a wonderful social event – with over 150 attending this time – it was also an important fund-raiser for Wild Clapham, our initiative to rebalance the biodiversity of the Common. With thanks to the many local businesses that provided prizes for the raffle, and particularly to Waitrose and Hayden's Gin who very generously contributed in kind, we managed to raise just over £3,500. *Mark Leffler (above left)*

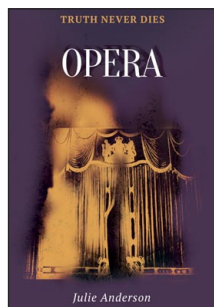
Bravo Albert Herring

St Paul's Opera produced an incredible rendering in early July of Benjamin Britten's comic opera *Albert Herring*. For three successive evenings, all of them with perfect weather for audience picnickers in the churchyard, the show fizzed with energy, wit, pink (!) and, as ever at SPO, music-making and direction of extremely high quality. Classical music critic, composer and blogger Robert Hugill has kindly permitted us to share a link to his review, which paints a vivid picture of the performance. If you missed the opera or would like to see what Robert thought, visit www.planethugill.com/2022/07/dutch-director-annemiek-van-elst-brings.html. We await news of next summer's SPO production with bated breath. *Ruth Eastman*

History in September

September is a busy month for anyone in Clapham interested in local history.

- **Lambeth Local History Fair on Saturday 3 September, 10am to 4.30pm**, is at the recently refurbished **St John's Church, Waterloo, 73 Waterloo Road, SE1 8TY**, directly opposite the station. Among its many displays and stands, ours will tell the history of Clapham in maps. There are also talks, walks and tours of this Grade II* church.
- The first of September marks the start of the month-long **Lambeth Heritage Festival** with walks, talks and exhibitions by members of the Local History Forum. Clapham Society contributions include **two walks (Clapham Common history and Clapham Park development)**, a talk about the **history of Royal Trinity Hospice Gardens** (see page 1) and, most excitingly, an **exhibition at Omnibus Theatre café/bar**. On show will be photographs taken 50 years ago by **local photographer John S Webb** of the Stonhouse Street area, just before major demolition and rebuilding. You can hear John talking about his work at youtu.be/R-LWASZHIJg. The full Festival programme is available at local libraries, Omnibus Theatre and some local shops, and it will be online at claphamsociety.com/news.
- On **Saturday 10 September, 12-6pm**, you will have another chance to visit our display, speak to historians and browse and purchase our books, among the varied activities at the annual **Clapham Fair** on The Polygon. *Alyson Wilson*



Opera: Who pulls the strings?

What a delicious read! Suspenseful, rich in detail, inventive, atmospheric – the storyline that local author Julie Anderson has spun in *Opera*, the third book in her Cassandra Fortune series, is the plot that keeps giving. Picking up from where we left off in *Oracle*, when Cassandra (Cassie) was on a high-security mission in Delphi, *Opera* starts as pacily as it means to go on. From Pakistan to leafy Sussex, then back to Westminster, Covent Garden (of course) and, yes, even Clapham, our

heroine takes the reader on a magical mystery ride as she seeks to decrypt clues sent to her from beyond the grave. What she unearths rocks the very foundations of the Palace of Westminster. Fearless, determined, forthright and efficient, Cassie is unremitting in her search for justice and fight for democracy.

As to why she lost her high-profile job in GCHQ all those years ago, a riddle first posed at the start of the first book, *Plague*, and threading through the Fortune series like a leitmotif, we might just be lucky and find out... All is not what it seems in *Opera*. The ending is the best proof of that. *Ruth Eastman* 'Opera' (Claret Press, £9.99) is published on 5 September and will be available at Clapham Books. 'Plague' and 'Oracle' are reviewed in Newsletters 429 and 437.

Clapham Chamber Concerts

The 2022/23 season opens with two masterpieces of the string quartet repertoire performed by artistic director **Amanda Lake** alongside colleagues from the Welsh National Opera Orchestra. Listen out for the lively warbling of a lark in **Haydn's** String Quartet Op 64 No 5, whilst **Dvořák's** String Quartet Op 96 'American' features folk music from both sides of the Atlantic interspersed with the song of the exotic scarlet tanager. **Two performances, 6pm and 8pm, Friday 30 September, St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DZ. For details and advance booking via Eventbrite (recommended), please visit claphamchamberconcerts.org.uk. Barbara Lake**



Open garden

We are opening again for the National Garden Scheme. The garden is full of roses (*Rosa* ‘Chilterns’ and *R. rugosa* ‘Roseraie de l’Hay’, **upper right**) hibiscus and phlox, and the dahlias, just starting, will be out in time for the opening.

The garden looks fabulous despite the heat and drought. A tulip tree, given to us by one of our NGS visitors last year, lost all its leaves in the first heatwave but after two weeks was covered with new foliage. Come and see for yourself. **Sunday 4 September, 12-5pm. £4.50 on the gate (to the National Garden Scheme, ngs.org.uk/51-the-chase), 51 The Chase, SW4 0NP. Charles Rutherford**

Arts and Crafts Festival

Holy Trinity Sloane Street, dubbed by Sir John Betjeman ‘the Cathedral to the Arts and Crafts Movement’, is holding a Festival celebrating ‘Craft Life’ in all its forms as well as guided tours and lectures, including **William Morris: Utopian Design**, on **Saturday 10 September**. Local international Dutch artist **Anthony Krikhaar** will be exhibiting his paintings (‘Seated Figure’, **right**) in the Old Parish Room. A pop-up café in the garden patio is a further attraction. **8-18 September, Holy Trinity Sloane Street, SW1X 9BZ. For more details and tickets visit holyltrinityartsandcrafts.org. Christine Green**



‘King of Instruments’ organ recitals

In 2019 the restoration of the historic Forster & Andrews organ at St Paul’s was completed. The cost, £110,000, was 20 times its original price in 1881. The instrument is powerful and versatile, and



when Clapham was in rural Surrey, locals expected to hear transcriptions from the concert hall and palm court in addition to Sunday church music. The organ is ready to take its place again as part of music-making at St Paul’s post pandemic. The autumn programme starts on **Thursday 15 September, 7pm**, with resident organist **Alan Saggerson** in ‘Songs without Words’ and continues on **Thursdays 13 October**

and **10 November** with international recitalists **Marilyn and Norman Harper**. Visit stpaulsclapham.org/whats-on for tickets. **St Paul’s Church, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DZ. Alan Saggerson**

The Arts Society Clapham Common

JMW Turner is often regarded as the great artistic traveller of his age, yet one of his most enduring subjects was in his native city of London. This lecture, **River of England: Turner and the Thames**, examines Turner’s engagement with the river. Living by or near its banks throughout his life, the artist was endlessly fascinated by it. From Oxford to the Thames Estuary, he variously explored its views and moods, its cultural and national symbolism, and its historic and contemporary associations. The speaker, **Nicola Moorby**, is an art historian specialising in British art of the 19th and early 20th centuries, and a former curator at Tate Britain. **Wednesday 21 September, 11am, Clapham Picturehouse, 76 Venn Street, SW4 0AT. Tickets: £10 visitors and non-members; members free. To join The Arts Society for free entry to this and future events, email claphamcommon@theartsociety.org. You can also come and see us at the Clapham Picturehouse before the lecture, from 10.30am. Susan Holder**

St Paul’s Big Green Day

Come along for our second annual Big Green Day. Engage with your local community to learn how, together, we can make a difference in the fight against climate change. The day will include speakers from Crew Energy, Lambeth Friends of the Earth, Repowering London, Faith for the Climate, and Resole; workshops (art, eco activism, composting, mend and repair); stalls (Wild Clapham, London Beekeepers Association and more); and a bring-and-share lunch. There will also be a competition for Key Stage 2 children to create a garden feature from recycled material; a lucky dip; and a seed swap. **Free. Sunday 25 September, 11am to 3pm, St Paul’s Churchyard and Eden Nature Garden, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DZ. For details, visit stpaulsclapham.org/big-green-day-2022. Allison Clark**

Events, large and small, on the Common

Lambeth Council has confirmed that **Festival Republic will not be hosting any large-scale events on Clapham Common in 2023**. This is because it cannot be confident that Lambeth and the Planning Inspectorate will have all the necessary permissions in sufficient time to plan for the event.

However, because Lambeth has signed a five-year contract with Festival Republic for it to use Clapham Common, and because FR will not have used the site for two years, **Lambeth is rolling the contract forward and confirms that it is preparing for an application to resume events in 2024**.

All parties continue to await the **public inquiry** into whether to allow FR’s event to take place. **The Clapham Society’s view is that Lambeth should not be permitted to fence off very large parts of the Common for any commercial activity which people have to pay to participate in**. We continue to support sensible, limited use of the Common for events, in particular those with a charitable angle and those taking place on the hard-surfaced Circus Site.

The effort and expense that Lambeth continues to be willing to go to in order to house large-scale events on Clapham Common seem totally at odds with the revenue the events generate, which is very modest in the context of the borough’s overall budget.

Through CCMAC (Clapham Common Management Advisory Committee) the Society continues to work with Lambeth and to urge it to consider a smaller programme of events of more interest to the local community. Few local people attended the last major event, and we have seen no robust evidence to suggest that the event helped local businesses. We note that the grass in the area where large-scale events are held was already in very poor condition – before the recent drought and after a very expensive restoration exercise by Lambeth. **Andrew Summers, Common and Open Spaces**

In early July a group from the Society attended Studio Voltaire to hear Nicola Wright, curator of the Maeve Gilmore exhibition, speak about this important 20th-century local artist’s work. Many thanks to Christine Armstrong (*second from left*) for organising it. SV’s Laura Harford (*third from left*) had addressed the Society in January (NL 442) when the exhibition was still in its very early planning stage. **RE**



Dana Kubick

New members

Welcome to Lisa Barash; Simon James; Richard Leach; Emma Mahmood; Julian and Anita Nairn; David Robson; and Anthony Van Benschoten. If you know anyone who would like to join the Society, encourage them to email membership@claphamsociety.com, visit claphamsociety.com/join-the-society or come to any of our events mentioned in this issue when we can tell you more. **Jennifer Everett**

Lambeth Palace Library: The new building and its collections



Ruth Eastman

It was a full house at Omnibus Theatre on 20 June for **Giles Mandelbrote's** talk to the Society about the new Lambeth Palace Library, a major project which he spearheaded. **Helen Esmonde** reports

Giles Mandelbrote (left) was appointed Librarian and Archivist at Lambeth Palace Library in 2010. Prior to this, Giles was a curator of early printed books at the British Library. By the time of his arrival at Lambeth, it was obvious to many people that Lambeth Palace Library needed to change to be fit for the future.

Lambeth Palace was established in the early 13th century as the main home of the Archbishop of Canterbury, near the centres of power at Westminster and Whitehall. The Library's earliest treasures were part of the collection of its founder, Archbishop Richard Bancroft (1544-1610). During this period, archbishops needed to 'shore up' the new Church and the Library provided scholarly credibility and helped to bolster the Church of England against other factions.

Matthew Parker, archbishop under Elizabeth I, had the most extraordinary library but, following his death in 1575, it was left to Corpus Christi, Cambridge. Bancroft was anxious to redress this loss, and he and other archbishops of the period – John Whitgift, George Abbot and Gilbert Sheldon – extended the Lambeth collection by at least 11,000 printed books and manuscripts. Among its treasures were the Lambeth Bible, thought to date from the mid-12th century; the richly illustrated Lambeth Apocalypse; a book of hours that was presented to Richard III; and a Gutenberg Bible with 15th-century decoration. Bancroft borrowed books from the Royal Library, and many remain at Lambeth, including a book by Catherine of Aragon's chaplain defending her marriage to Henry VIII, with the king's handwritten criticisms in the margins.

Over time the collection overflowed from the archbishop's study into the cloisters and elsewhere. In 1830 it was decided to bring the Library together in the Great Hall. Following firebombing in 1940, which damaged the Great Hall, the collection was housed in multiple locations in the old buildings. This was totally unsuitable for the preservation of such an important collection. In the 1990s the 60,000-volume Sion College Library collection arrived. As Giles remarked, the Library had become so crowded you needed to go on a diet to work there.

The National Archives and others let it be known that storage conditions had to be improved. Luckily, Giles found a sympathetic ear in Archbishop Justin Welby and in 2014 the Church Commissioners gave the go-ahead for a new library to be built in Lambeth Palace Garden. The garden was redesigned around the library. The brief was to provide a better public profile, better public access and state-of-the-art storage. Consisting of 20km of books and manuscripts, the collection was to be housed from the second to the seventh floors in a temperature-controlled environment – above possible flood levels and with minimal windows to avoid light damage.

Work started in 2018 and was completed in June 2020. Today books are housed in much more suitable conditions. There is an exceptional conservation studio, a reading room with plenty of light and space, and an excellent lecture room with views of Westminster Palace.

Giles encouraged Society members to consider becoming a Friend of Lambeth Palace Library. Benefits include regular invitations to lectures, exhibitions and behind-the-scenes tours. Visit lambethpalacelibrary.org for details. Asked at Q&A about a private tour for Clapham Society members, Giles was receptive. *If you would like to admire the fruits of Giles Mandelbrote's success, reply to the invitation on page 1 of this Newsletter.*

The 58th Annual General Meeting of the Clapham Society will be held on **Monday 17 October 2022** at Omnibus Theatre, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW, at 8 pm.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Approval of the Minutes of the previous AGM (18 October 2021), published in Newsletter 442 (December 2021/January 2022) and available at the meeting
3. Adoption of the Annual Report for the year 2021/22
4. Adoption of the Financial Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022
5. Election of the Officers and Committee Members for the year 2022/2023

Chairman	Treasurer
Vice-Chair	Solicitor
Secretary	Membership Secretary

A maximum of ten further Committee Members
6. Appointment of the Independent Examiner
7. Any other business and announcements

The formal business will be followed by a discussion of the Wild Clapham initiative and other matters arising.

Nominations for the election of Officers and Committee Members must be made to the Secretary at least 14 days before the Annual General Meeting. Every nomination must be in writing, supported by a seconder. The consent of the person nominated must be obtained.

Gillian White, Secretary, 2a Sibella Road, SW4 6HX

October save the dates

Wednesday 5 October, 6.30pm

Join **Royal Trinity Hospice** for an evening of French Resistance bravery to celebrate **Andrée's War**. Author and Hospice supporter Francelle Bradford White BEM will talk about this book which tells the story of her mother, Andrée Griotteray White, one of France's most decorated WW2 heroines. Canapés and complimentary drinks will be served at the event, in the Music Room of Killik & Co in Mayfair. Free, but donations to the Hospice are welcomed. To book, visit www.royaltrinityhospice.london/event/andrees-war.

Saturday 15 October

Closer to home, the **Clapham Book Festival** returns to Omnibus Theatre. The line-up includes historians **Sir Antony Beevor** and **Dr Piers Brendon**, broadcaster and writer **Dame Jenni Murray**, and crime writer **Abir Mukherjee**. There will also be a walk and online events. **Tickets from 1 September:** claphambookfestival.com.

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

Chairman	Mark Leffler chairman@claphamsociety.com	Common and Open Spaces	Andrew Summers openspaces@claphamsociety.com
Vice Chair	Alison Macnair vicechair@claphamsociety.com	Meetings and Events	Christine Armstrong events@claphamsociety.com
Secretary	Gillian White secretary@claphamsociety.com	Local History and Publications	Alyson Wilson history@claphamsociety.com
Treasurer	David Brown treasurer@claphamsociety.com	Social Media	Alison Inglis-Jones socialmedia@claphamsociety.com
Membership Secretary	Jennifer Everett membership@claphamsociety.com	Newsletter Editor and Instagram	Ruth Eastman news@claphamsociety.com

Previous Newsletters and details of our meetings, activities and publications can all be found at claphamsociety.com.

