

# The Clapham Society

## Newsletter



Issue 450 October 2022

The Annual Report comes with this issue so do have a good read, especially if you would like to stand for the Committee. We are especially keen to fill gaps in Local History, Planning, and Roads and Transport, but all posts are open. Nominations for the Committee close on 3 October, as described below. As we went to press the nation had entered a period of mourning for Elizabeth II, who died on 8 September. The Society extends its condolences to the Royal Family and wishes the late Queen's heir, His Majesty Charles III, every success as our new King.



### Nick White (1948-2022)

Nick grew up in Tooting; his father, George, was English and his mother, Paula, Austrian. He was a friendly and confident child who became a superb swimmer, lifeguard and an excellent rugby player during his schooldays at Hillcroft School – now Ernest Bevin. He met his soulmate Gill [Secretary of The Clapham Society] when he was 15. I have never known a happier

couple. Their 51 years of marriage, five children (Nicola, Matthew, Oliver, Jonathan and Max), and 10 grandchildren with another grandchild due in February, were a source of the greatest happiness and delight to them both.

Nick's deep sense of fair play and his endless patience made him a magnet to the young. He was a naturally modest man, but this didn't stop him being a successful Chartered Quantity Surveyor, highly professional and with an enormous depth of knowledge, always ready to help his friends with their projects. The underdog and those in need always benefitted from his practical support. He was most generous with his time, listening to others' woes, driving pals to hospital appointments and just making us feel nurtured. I don't know a kinder man.

He was also a skilled fly fisherman, and a delightful companion on the banks of his beloved River Test. There was no better friend with whom to share the wonders of the natural world.

Nick and Gill were a sociable couple, loved by many in Clapham and beyond. His funeral on Friday 9 September filled St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove, with over 250 mourners all of whom were there to show their affection. Many had enjoyed his legendary hospitality whilst watching a rugby match, the cricket or perhaps celebrating a birthday or birth of a grandchild. How lucky we were to have known him and how much we will miss his dry wit and steadfast friendship. *Patrick Hurst*

### Battersea Society

**New Covent Garden – Past, present and future** is a talk by **Jo Breare**, general manager of Covent Garden Market Authority, about London's huge but largely unnoticed hub for businesses that work throughout the night, selling produce on site and delivering tonnes of fruit, vegetables and flowers across the region before most people's alarm clocks go off. **Thursday 6 October, 6.30pm for 7pm. St Mary's Church, Battersea Church Road, SW11 3NA. £5, payable via [batterseasociety.org.uk/events](http://batterseasociety.org.uk/events) or on the door. Sue Demont**



Our meetings take place at Omnibus Theatre, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW. The talk starts at 8pm and our guest usually 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. The Café Bar is open from 6pm for drinks and snacks before (and after) the meeting.

### Monday 17 October

**Annual General Meeting.** This is a fantastic chance to hear what the Society has been doing on your behalf this year and to offer your views and concerns. We do our best to keep the formal part of the meeting brief. Afterwards **Marie McCarthy**, Artistic Director of Omnibus Theatre, will tell us how the theatre survived the pandemic and take us through latest developments that will help keep it afloat in the years to come. Enjoy a chat with other members over a glass of wine and nibbles which will be served before Marie speaks.

**Nominations for the election of Officers and Committee Members are open until 3 October.** Please email the Membership Secretary, Jennifer Everett, at [membership@claphamsociety.com](mailto:membership@claphamsociety.com) with the names of your proposer and seconder.

### Monday 21 November

**Women of Lambeth.** Lambeth is the backdrop to the stories of some extraordinary women. **Jenny Rossiter** will reveal a historical perspective on why we are more familiar with pioneering women of north rather than south London and provide a glimpse of mountaineers, artists, architects, actors, politicians, doctors, nurses, novelists, theatre directors and campaigners – all women who have either lived, worked or set up organisations within Lambeth. Jenny is a founder member of Lambeth Tour Guides Association and has been involved in voluntary organisations concerned with housing, homelessness and social welfare. In 2012 she wrote and published *Nobler and Better Things* about the work of social reformer Octavia Hill.

## Clapham Book Festival – the stage is set

This year's Festival runs from Sunday 9 October. It includes walks, online interviews and an excellent line-up of live events on the **Showcase Day of 15 October** at Omnibus Theatre. A **guided walk around the literary sites of Clapham** takes place at **3-5pm on Sunday 9 October**, led by local crime writer **Julie Anderson**. You'll be surprised by what you don't know about Clapham's literary antecedents.

The Showcase Day begins with a repeat of the literary walk at **10.30am-12.30pm**. At **3pm** bestselling crime writer **Abir Mukherjee**, twice winner of the CWA Historical Dagger Award, will be discussing his latest book, *The Shadows of Men*, from his prize-winning mystery

series set in 1920s India. At **5pm**, veteran BBC Radio 4 journalist and campaigner **Dame Jenni Murray** talks about significant women, as well as her long broadcasting career as presenter of *Woman's Hour* with bestselling novelist and Clapham resident **Elizabeth Buchan**. Then at **7pm** two of the UK's best-known eminent historians (**Sir Antony Beevor** in conversation with **Dr Piers Brendon**) will be discussing the history and impact of Russia on Europe and the world over the past century. Sir Antony's latest book is *Russia: Revolution and Civil War 1917-1921*. Come along and have your books signed.

The Festival doesn't end on Showcase Day. Online events continue, presented with media partner, *Time & Leisure* magazine, and on **17 October** Polari Prize short-listed local novelist **West Camel** discusses his latest novel, *Fall*, set in Deptford. On **Tuesday 22 November** we go globetrotting with local travel writer **Shafik Meghji** (Rough Guides), whose latest book is *Crossed off the map: Travels in Bolivia*.

**Tickets and further details for all events, live and virtual, at [payhip.com/claphambookfestival](http://payhip.com/claphambookfestival). Walks begin (and end) at Omnibus Theatre, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW. Julie Anderson**

Authors, above from left. Top row: Julie Anderson, Elizabeth Buchan. Second row: Abir Mukherjee, Sir Antony Beevor. Third row: West Camel, Dame Jenni Murray, Shafik Meghji, Dr Piers Brendon.



### October walks

• **Seeing the woods for the trees? Dr Iain Boulton's** walk will discuss the trees and plants of Clapham Common, looking at which trees relate back to the older history and management of the Common, and how changes in attitudes and views have also changed the trees and plants we now find on it. **Sunday**

**2 October. Leaving from the Bandstand on Clapham Common at 2.30pm. Free, but booking essential. Email: [iboulton@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:iboulton@lambeth.gov.uk).**

• **Clapham Old Town. Gillian Robinson** will take a fresh look at some familiar places in Old Town and along North Side. On this walk we will discuss the development of Old Town, meet some famous and infamous past residents, and look at some interesting buildings. **Wednesday 12 October. Leaving from St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DZ, at 2.30pm. Free, but booking essential. Email: [thenightingales95@gmail.com](mailto:thenightingales95@gmail.com).**

• **Around Park Hill. Alyson Wilson** will follow Crescent Lane towards Park Hill to trace the start of the building of Cubitt's Clapham Park Estate, as far as Clarence Avenue and back along King's Avenue. **Thursday 20 October. Leaving from The Clock Tower, Clapham Common Underground Station, SW4 7AJ, at 2.30pm. Free, but booking essential. Email: [alysonwilson.sw4@gmail.com](mailto:alysonwilson.sw4@gmail.com). Alyson Wilson**

### What's on at Omnibus Theatre

**Omnibus Young Company** is back in full swing. Our **Saturday morning** youth theatre for people aged between 5 and 16 kicked off last month, but you can join at any point in the school term. It offers a fun, creative and inclusive environment where Young Company members are encouraged to use theatre and the arts to build confidence and develop skills. Find out more at [omnibus-clapham.org/young-company](http://omnibus-clapham.org/young-company).

On the Omnibus Theatre stage in October, we are delighted to welcome the UK premiere of *Cassandra* by Ukraine's pioneering feminist writer Lesia Ukrainka in an award-winning new translation presented by Live Canon and The Ukrainian Institute, London. Stuck in besieged Troy and knowing exactly how the war will end, *Cassandra (above)* sees the destruction unfold around her, just as she knew it would. **4-16 October, Omnibus Theatre, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW. Book at: [omnibus-clapham.org/cassandra](http://omnibus-clapham.org/cassandra).**



### New members

We are delighted to welcome two new members, Edward Allnutt and Stephanie Thompson. If you know anyone who would like to join the Society at this exciting time, please encourage them to email [membership@claphamsociety.com](mailto:membership@claphamsociety.com) or suggest they visit [claphamsociety.com/join-the-society](http://claphamsociety.com/join-the-society). (Please note that the names of anyone who had not renewed their subscriptions by the end of August have been removed from the membership list.) **Jennifer Everett**



## St Luke's Music Society

St Luke's Music Society is delighted to be starting its 2022/23 season when the wonderful **Vasari Singers** are joined by international baritone **Roderick Williams** at a concert to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the birth of Ralph Vaughan Williams. The programme will include some of the composer's greatest choral pieces including *Five Mystical Songs* together with music by Elgar, Wesley and Stanford; it will also mark the launch of the latest Vasari Singers CD. **Friday 21 October, 7.30pm. St Luke's Church, Ramsden Road, SW12 8RQ. Some tickets are still available at [slms.org.uk](http://slms.org.uk).**

## The flower in art: 1500-2000

This lecture aims to unlock the hidden meanings of flowers, where they have been used by artists to convey religious symbolism, aspects of identity or other emblematic meanings in the fine and the decorative arts. The speaker, **Christopher Garibaldi**, is an independent researcher. From 2010 to 2019 he was Director of Palace House, Newmarket (National Heritage Centre for Horseracing and Sporting Art); 2008 to 2010, Co-Director of the Attingham Summer School for the Study of Historic Houses and Collections; 1998 to 2003, Senior Curator and Assistant Keeper of Decorative Art at Norwich Castle Museum. **Wednesday 19 October, 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](mailto:claphamcommon@theartsociety.org). You can also come and see us at the Clapham Picturehouse before the lecture, from 10.30am. (The Arts Society Clapham Common is a separate organisation to The Clapham Society.)** *Susan Holder*



*Mrs James Guthrie* by Frederic Leighton.

## Dulwich Picture Gallery

**Between Worlds**, which opened in late September, is the first major UK exhibition of work by **M K Čiurlionis** (1875-1911), widely credited as Lithuania's greatest artist. The exhibition features paintings created throughout his short but prolific career, with most having travelled to the UK for the first time. Bringing together his most accomplished masterpieces (*Sonata*, **right**; *Creation of the World*, **below**), it highlights the breadth of the artist's interests and examines the themes and motifs that aligned his art to European Symbolism.

Čiurlionis left a profound imprint on Lithuanian culture and he is among the country's most beloved and famous historical figures – his paintings are widely reproduced and his music is often performed. He, in fact, started his career as a pianist and organist, studying music at the Institute of Music in Warsaw from 1894 to 1899. It was not until 1902 that he took up drawing and painting, enrolling in the Warsaw School of Fine Arts in 1904. For the



following six years, painting dominated his output, although he remained an active and well-regarded composer too. He lived with a mental health condition from an early age and died from pneumonia while recuperating from depression in a sanatorium at the age of just 35. Despite dying so young, he left a substantial body of work: between 1903 and 1909, he produced around 400 paintings and etchings, and as many musical compositions, as well as several literary works and poems.

**Until 12 March 2023. Dulwich Picture Gallery, Gallery Road, SE21 7AD.**

## St Paul's organ recitals

The autumn programme (Newsletter 449) continues with 'Elizabethans – Then & Now', performed on the recently restored Forster & Andrews organ by **Marilyn Harper** (Organist of Christ's Chapel of God's Gift, Dulwich). **Thursday 13 October. St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DZ. Visit [stpaulsclapham.org/whats-on](http://stpaulsclapham.org/whats-on) for tickets.** *Alan Saggerson*

## Up in the aria

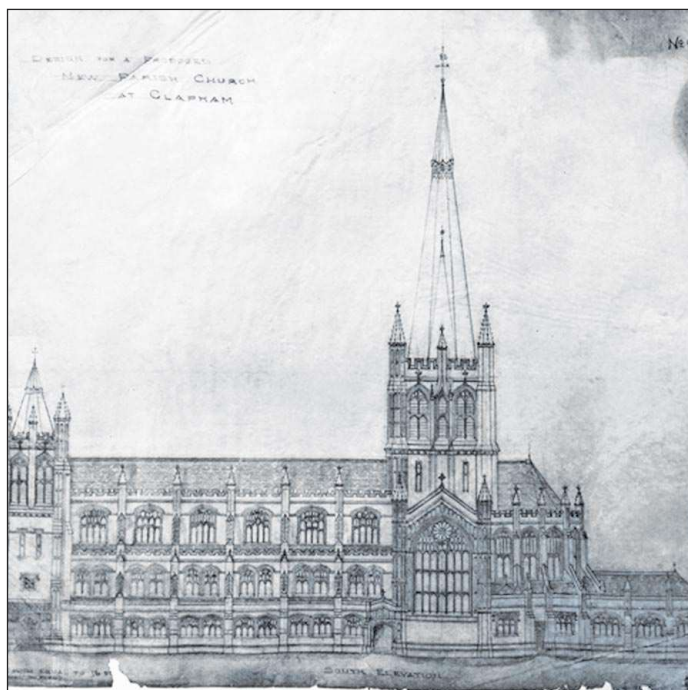
St Paul's Opera presents an opera gala with music to raise a smile. Soloists include SPO regulars and stars of last summer's *Albert Herring* production: Isabella Roberts, Tricia Ninian, Alex Dinwiddie, Natasha Elliott, Adam Brown and Ross Fettes, as well as tenor Luke Horner and pianist Aleksandra Myslek. The programme includes arias and ensembles from Mozart, Rossini, Verdi and Offenbach, and material from the musical theatre and cabaret repertoire. **Friday 14 October, 7.30pm. St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DZ. Tickets on sale at [stpaulsopera.com](http://stpaulsopera.com).** *Tricia Ninian*

## Unbuilt Clapham: Historic plans to knock down Holy Trinity Church

Following our local history Clapham Crooks series earlier this year, we present this new series featuring some structures that were proposed but never built in Clapham.

Holy Trinity Church has been a prominent and much-loved landmark on the Common from when it opened in June 1776, as a larger replacement for the previous parish church on the site of today's St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove. Since then Holy Trinity has been occasionally modified and enlarged. In 1893, however, plans were drawn up for its demolition – to be replaced by a Gothic Revival building at a projected cost of £30,000. The plans were abandoned and, instead, six years later a subscription of £10,000 was raised to build a new chancel. At the time Clapham had five other Gothic-style churches – Congregational, Methodist, Roman Catholic and two Anglican (St Saviour's and St James'). Only St Mary's (RC) in Clapham Park Road survived war-time bomb damage. **Mike Tuffrey**

**Next issue:** *The hospital that never was*



London Metropolitan Archives



## Recent planning matters

The photograph (left) is **St Mary's Hall**, now fallen into sad neglect but which served as an important local community asset, hosting celebratory festivities, meetings, jumble sales and so on since the mid-1930s. It stands opposite the Redemptorist monastery at the top of St Alphonsus Road (named after the founder of the order). The Society welcomes a recent application to redevelop the site, which aims to retain the frontage of the building, and provides for new community space and a separate gym, as well as flats, to the rear, while restricting impact on neighbouring properties.

Another project we support is the construction of a **new electrical sub-station to the rear of the deep-level shelter at the corner of Clapham Park Road and the High Street (below)**. This is to enable Clapham's own market gardener, Growing Underground, to extend its salad growing operations in the tunnels below.

More controversial is a re-application to develop **North Street Mews** for residential use.

Many residents will remember the Mews as a hive of small business operations, until it was acquired by Highlaw Ltd, who quickly secured vacant possession. Access to the Mews is very limited and there are 24-hour parking restrictions on North Street itself. One cannot help but wonder how challenging development of this site will be, and how bulky deliveries and other necessary vehicle access will be managed for any future occupants if it is built out.

Another problematic proposal affects a site that has been vacant for many years. At the **junction of Lillieshall and Macaulay Roads**, and abutting Macaulay Court, this site has also been the subject of earlier applications. The scheme envisages a two-plus-storey building with basement containing four flats. The site is quite narrow, but the main concern has always been the loss of light and obstructed views for occupants of Macaulay Court.

**Report and photographs by 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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<b>Vice Chair</b>	<b>Alison Macnair</b> <a href="mailto:vicechair@claphamsociety.com">vicechair@claphamsociety.com</a>	<b>Meetings and Events</b>	<b>Christine Armstrong</b> <a href="mailto:events@claphamsociety.com">events@claphamsociety.com</a>
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Previous Newsletters and details of our meetings, activities and publications can be all found at [claphamsociety.com](http://claphamsociety.com)

