

The Clapham Society Newsletter

With thanks
to our sponsor:



Issue 467 June 2024

Meet our new sponsor

We are grateful to Audley Villages for their extremely generous donation, covering the period May to April 2024/25, towards the printing costs of The Clapham Society Newsletter. This will ensure that members who prefer a printed edition of the Newsletter can still receive it in that form. The digital option, of course, will remain for those who opt to receive theirs by email.

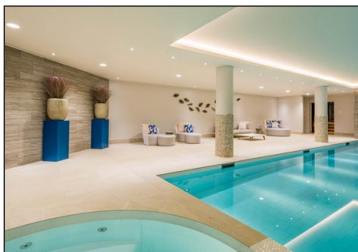
In his letter of thanks to Wesley Ridgway, General Manager of Nightingale Place Village at 3 Nightingale Place, our Chair, **Mark Leffler**, wrote: 'When Nightingale Place was being planned the



Society very much welcomed the ambition of Audley Villages to create such a high-quality residential scheme for your client group on this key site. We very much hope that your residents will always feel welcome in Clapham and able to enjoy what it has to offer. As Ruth Eastman has already said, at some stage we hope there will be opportunities to meet and discuss how we might work together to promote events of mutual interest and benefit.'

In recent communications with the committee, Mark also registered thanks to **Alison Inglis-Jones** for opening the conversation with Audley. As NL editor, I would very much like to add my own.

Nightingale Place Village is in a brilliant location overlooking the Common, footsteps away from Clapham South Station. Even



if you do not live there or meet its minimum resident age requirement of 55, there is so much to enjoy: aqua-robic classes in the beautiful pool (*left*); health club; cinema with plush seating for 29 (private screenings by arrangement – fun idea for a party); café; restaurant; and, outside, comfy tables and chairs for tea or coffee in the open air. There is also a library for residents. More details at: audleyvillages.co.uk/retirement-villages/London; health club: audleyvillages.co.uk/audley-club/nightingale-place; cinema and restaurant: audleyrestaurants.co.uk/no3-clapham.

As this new relationship evolves, we will keep you abreast of developments. Thank you again, Audley Villages. **Ruth Eastman**

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 questions and discussion. Meetings are free and open to non-members, who are invited to donate. The Café Bar is open from 6pm for drinks and snacks – a chance to socialise with other members before (and after) the meeting.

Monday 17 June

The Hibbert Almshouse, Wandsworth Road: Conservation and rehabilitation. The repair and rehabilitation of these eight almshouses for 21st-century use is a tale of research, investigation and appraisal in the pursuit of being faithful to the original. It is a tale, too, of design and construction, of challenges on site and the eventual restoration of a building which was designed by a local architect of national renown, Edward I'Anson, and built in 1859 for Sarah and Mary Ann Hibbert in memory of their father. No one is better qualified to tell the recent story of the Hibbert Almshouse than architect **Sherry Bates**, Director of Bates Zambelli Chartered Architects who are overseeing the conservation.

Save the date: Clapham Society summer party

We are excited to announce that the Society's summer party will be held on **Thursday 18 July, 6pm to 9pm**, in a private garden in the heart of Clapham Old Town. The number of guests is limited to 60 and entry is by ticket only. Tickets, to cover food and drink, cost £25 per person. If you wish to buy tickets for this important local social event, send a cheque, made out to The Clapham Society, to: Treasurer, David Brown, at 15 Turret Grove, SW4 0ES, including the names of those attending (**members only** because of space restrictions) and your contact details so we can send you information about the venue closer to the time. Look for more details and other payment options next month. **Mark Leffler**

Friends' party

As mentioned here last month, the Friends of Clapham Common are holding their Summer Party on **Thursday 20 June**. It will be in aid of the wetland project and other FCC projects. To book, please scan the QR code (*below*).



You are what you eat: A talk by Professor Tim Spector, OBE

‘Your diet is the most important choice you can make for your overall health’ were Professor Tim Spector’s opening words to a predictably packed Omnibus Theatre in April. What a pleasure it was to hear from an academic medical doctor using scientific evidence to back up his statement. Working at St Thomas’s Hospital, Professor Spector spent more than 30 years studying



Ruth Eastman

15,000 identical twins, publishing more than 600 scientific papers, which led him to conclude that the gut microbiome (the 100 trillion bacteria and archaea, and 500 trillion viruses, fungi and protozoa that inhabit our intestines) was the single major difference between identical

twins; and, through their microbiomes, identical twins can have very different life expectancies with, for example, one developing a life-limiting cancer or cardiovascular disease whilst the other never does so.

Yes, we may have genetic/inherited predispositions to certain diseases, but it was heartening to hear that we can minimise genetic effects by influencing our microbiome. Most importantly, we could gain a healthier, more diverse microbiome by limiting ultra-processed foods (such as biscuits, cornflakes, certain stackable potato crisps) from the national average of about 57 to 10% of our diet. Were you aware that ultra-processed foods encourage us to overeat? Certain foods leave you 25% more hungry than others; and ultra-processed foods are associated with a 10 to 20% greater risk of cancer, heart disease, depression, anxiety and other common conditions.

So, what should we eat? First, we need to listen to our bodies. Does your breakfast leave you hungry or fill you up? Is your mood/energy/hunger control better if you have porridge, or an egg? We should ‘eat the rainbow’; we benefit if we manage to eat 30 different plant foods a week and include fermented foods, such as yogurt, cheese, sauerkraut, on a daily basis. Additionally, foods such as nuts, berries, dark chocolate, red wine, coffee and olive oil contain polyphenols (defence chemicals) that are good for us.

Professor Spector reminded us that scientists change their minds based on new scientific evidence. For example, in the 1980s he co-authored a paper associating coffee with pancreatic cancer (not confirmed in more recent studies), whereas current evidence is that three cups of coffee a day can reduce risk of heart disease by up to 30%. Likewise, since writing his best-selling book *Food for Life* (Jonathan Cape), the professor has updated his evidence on five foods: bread, milk, mushrooms, fish and salad. For example, many of us will not benefit from cow’s milk (it does not protect the bones in the way that we learnt when we grew up and is more beneficial as yogurt and cheese) and, although fish can reduce heart disease by 11%, we are not as dependent on it for our intelligence as once commonly reported (70% of fish sold is farmed, which is not so healthy).

How often does a Clapham Society lecture have the potential to leave us all inspired to have a healthier future? We need to consider following Professor Spector’s scientifically backed advice. **Susan Ashworth (aka Dr Susan Hill, paediatric gastroenterologist, Great Ormond Street Hospital)**

Local (garden) heroes

There are people all over Clapham who, unpaid and often unrecognised, cultivate otherwise neglected bits of land. Take Holy Trinity churchyard. Early in the year, for many of us the first sign that winter will eventually end is the sight of the snowdrops **Marion Prideaux** has planted there. As spring advances the snowdrops are succeeded by daffodils and the vivid blue of *Anemone blanda*, the winter windflower, also known as sapphire anemone. Marion has been planting bulbs here for perhaps 20 years, and helps to maintain the hollyhocks, roses and other plants in the containers placed at the entrance to Holy Trinity to deter traffic.

In Clapham Manor Street the tiny areas at the foot of many lampposts and street trees have been intensively planted with spring bulbs and summer bedding. The display of plants extends to wooden planters that are now old enough to need replacing. Tending these is local resident **Alan Tidwell**. He took up gardening after being diagnosed with multiple sclerosis – and hearing from his neurologist that he would be in a wheelchair in five to ten years. That was 26 years ago, and he walks unaided around his own garden and the pavements around his house, where flowers bloom continuously all spring and summer.



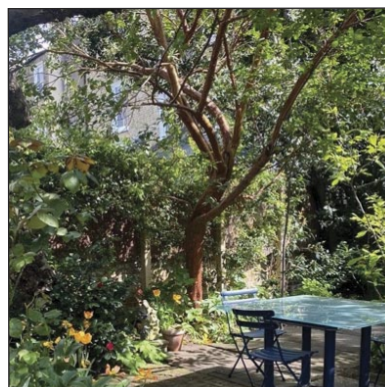
The main entrance to Clapham Manor Estate was converted to a ‘pocket park’ by Lambeth Council, as part of the same TfL-funded programme that enabled improvements to the Old Town. On the estate, grassed-over areas were cleared and planted up, without any thought to how they would be maintained. Much of the new planting was ill-chosen for the site and put in without the grass and perennial weeds that had been there before having been eradicated.

The beds on this part of the estate (*above*) have come to look a lot more cheerful as a result of planting, including hundreds of bulbs put in, over several successive years, by Clapham Society Committee member **Michael Barry**. Michael has also introduced a lot of tough grasses that flourish without watering.

These are only a few of the local people whom we should be thanking and, maybe, emulating – if only by scattering a packet of seeds somewhere to see what might happen; or by watering a young pavement tree during the summer months. **Alison Macnair**

Garden opening at 51 The Chase

Created over the past 40 years, the garden of Rupert Tyler, chairman of the National Garden Scheme (NGS) and Garden Museum, and Charles Rutherford, former chairman of the Society of Garden Designers, is open on **Sunday 16 June, 12-5pm**. Located at **51 The Chase, SW4 0NP**, the garden is renowned for its unusual collection of trees: a bay tree as



tall as the house; Indian chestnut; prehistoric Wollemi pine; three different mimosas – *Acacia pravissima*, *A. baileyana* and *A. dealbata*; a Judas tree; and *Arbutus x andrachnoides* (*left*) with its spectacular red bark, among other fine specimens. There is also a new vegetable garden, created in 2023, which enjoys a high prospect out over roses. The Secret Saxophone Quartet, who play for the NGS

and give their time to support it, have been three times to us and it will be a fantastic treat to have them again. Entry: £5. Proceeds go to the National Garden Scheme. **Charles Rutherford**

Clapham Chamber Concerts

The final concert of the 2023-24 season, a year in the works, showcases all three of CCC's artistic directors. Founder and violinist **Amanda Lake** leads Ensemble SW4; clarinettist **Jonathan Parkin** features as the soloist in Debussy's stunning and atmospheric *Première rhapsodie*; and composer-in-residence **David Wallace** presents his new work, *Canticles*, composed especially for this gala concert. The first half celebrates the harp in chamber music, opening with Ravel's exquisite *Introduction et allegro*, considered by most harpists – **Lise Vandersmissen (right)** – as a miniature harp concerto. David Wallace's première was composed for exactly the same instrumentation as Ravel's famous work, and Debussy's *Première rhapsodie* will be performed in a special arrangement for the group as well. In the second half, audiences will be treated to Brahms's much-loved Clarinet Quintet, Op. 115, regarded as one of his best instrumental pieces. You won't want to miss this one!

Friday 21 June, 7pm. St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DX. Tickets are available in advance via Eventbrite at claphamchamberconcerts.org.uk, or on the door. £18 adults (including OAPs); £12 concessions (those on benefits and under 25s); £10 Friends of CCC; £5 children under 12.



St Paul's Opera: A diva, a maid and an eccentric go to a ball...

For punchlines, kicklines, fräuleins and good times, join St Paul's Opera for *Die Fledermaus* at **St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DZ**, from **4 to 6 July**. The word will be spread all around the neighbourhood, thanks to the support of local estate agents,



Noble Estates, with a display of advertising boards publicising the opera festival.

This boisterous new production sees Strauss's operetta reimagined in a vintage movie studio. Expect references to Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton and other familiar film characters in a script by award-winning writer/director Jonny

Danciger. The tunes are roared into life by musical director George Ireland and his chamber ensemble. For tickets, showtimes (two Saturday performances, including matinee with local school children) and cast, visit stpaulsopera.org/die-fledermaus. **Tricia Ninian**

Battersea Society events

There is so much of interest going on this month at the Battersea Society that we do not have space to print it all, so check their website for the full programme. Two events that caught our eye were the **Battersea Power Station Coffee Morning Tours on Tuesday 4 June and Wednesday 5 June, 10.30am**. Meet at **No. 1 Village Courtyard, Circus West Village, Battersea Power Station, SW11 8AH**, for a behind-the-scenes tour round Battersea Power Station, followed by coffee in Control Room B. Max 20 people per tour. Please register in advance online at batterseasociety.org.uk. Free event.



An invitation from Lambeth Tour Guides

If you already know and love Clapham, the South Bank, the heritage of entertainers such as Charlie Chaplin and the history of the Festival of Britain, why not discover more about your borough and learn to become a Lambeth Tour Guide at Morley College from September? From parks to museums; architecture ranging from designs by Austen Hall to Zaha Hadid; regal connections, from the Duchy of Cornwall to the Royal Vauxhall Tavern; high art and street art, you can find it all in Lambeth. Applications are open at: lambethtourguides.org/lambeth-guiding-course.

Omnibus Theatre 96 Festival

London's longest-running queer arts festival is twice as big as last year and back by popular demand. This no-holds-barred extravaganza of theatre, comedy, cabaret, music, art and activism, now in its ninth year, was conceived in celebration of the Pride party on Clapham Common in 1996. Look out for:

- **Joe Carstairs**, a biopic offering a fresh look at one of the 20th-century's boldest queer figures. **4-22 June**.

- **George**, the story of the French novelist George Sand, who daringly defied all rules of living and writing in 19th-century France. **25 June to 14 July**.

- **Hasbian**, a coming-of-age comedy of growing up in Brighton (the UK's gay capital) under Section 28, set to a soundtrack of Y2K pop classics. **25-29 June**.

- **Standing in the Shadows of Giants**, an autobiographical play about being a rockstar's sister in the early 2000s. **24-29 June**.

- **Out of the Shadows (one night only)**, music by Brixton-based contemporary classical composer **Robert Hugill**, features tenor Ben Vonberg-Clark (precentor at St John the Divine, Kennington), baritone Jonathan Evers (Young Artist at the National Opera Studio) and pianist Nigel Foster (artistic director of the London Song Festival) performing two of Hugill's cantatas. *Out of the Shadows*, inspired by a re-reading of Graham Robb's *Strangers: Homosexual Love in the Nineteenth Century*, uses historic texts; *Et expecto* explores ideas of life after death via Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Whitman's poetry among others. **16 June**.

Omnibus Theatre, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW. For showtimes and further details, visit omnibus-clapham.org.

The Arts Society Clapham Common

At the beginning of the 20th century the Orientalist artist Jacques Majorelle arrived in Morocco. His artistic output started with tourist posters but extensive travel in the Atlas Mountains inspired glorious blue-dominated canvases and a stunning garden in Marrakech. His horticultural testament was saved by Yves St Laurent who re-tailored Jardin Majorelle with pattern and panache. You can learn more about this botanic paradise from garden historian **Caroline Holmes** in her talk: *A Symphony in Blue – The Artist, the Couturier and 'Atlas, the most fabulous mountain of all Afrique'*. **Wednesday 19 June, 11am. Clapham Picturehouse, 76 Venn Street, SW4 0AT.** Visitor (non-member) tickets, £10, or email claphamcommon@theartsociety.org to join the Arts Society. **Susan Holder**





Clapham Common update: Windmill Drive

After some delays because of wet weather, work is underway to re-landscape the middle section of Windmill Drive (*artist's impression, above*). You may recall that this stretch was closed to traffic in 2020 during the pandemic to create a safer place for cyclists and pedestrians. The current work will make the pathways and cycleways a permanent feature, along with plantings to improve the overall environment. Some have expressed concern that the plan is to close all of Windmill Drive to traffic and remove the existing parking bays. This is definitely not the case; the scope of the work is limited, more or less, to that part of Windmill Drive which has been closed to cars for the past four years. The work is scheduled to be complete by early August. *Michael Barry*

Subscription reminder

Many thanks to those of you who have amended your **standing orders** to reflect the new subscription rates from 1 April 2024. Unfortunately, there are still some whose standing orders were paid at the old rate. Please can you amend yours now so that individual reminders do not have to be sent out. It would be helpful to the Society's financial situation if you could also clear the outstanding balance as a one-off payment for this year. This can be done **via the 'Donate' button** on the Society's website, bank transfer or sending a cheque, made out to The Clapham Society, to me: Jennifer Everett, 30 Trinity Close, SW4 0JD. If you have a query please contact me.

Finally, the Treasurer is still keen to have your **Gift Aid Declaration** to ensure he can make an up-to-date request to HMRC for the funding. Details in the May Newsletter, which is on the website. *Jennifer Everett*

Clapham street names: Clarence Avenue

For once there is little doubt about the origin of a Clapham street name. Clarence Avenue, formerly Clarence Road, was named in honour of the Duke of Clarence, later King William IV. William, born in 1765, was the third son of George III. In 1830 he succeeded his elder brother George IV (who had no legitimate heirs) to the throne. In 1789 he had been created Duke of Clarence and Saint Andrew. He had an active naval career for many years and later sat in the House of Lords.

However, it was not until 1825 when William commissioned his home, Clarence House in The Mall, from the renowned architect John Nash that the name became widely used. John Nash had developed Regent's Park and Regent Street right down to The Mall for the Prince Regent (later George IV) and 'Clarence' appears in several street names around Regent's Park.

At exactly that time Thomas Cubitt was laying out his Clapham Park Estate. Perhaps in honour of the Duke, to use a then-fashionable name, or to suggest a link to the famous John Nash, he named the road that led to his own house (called Clarence House), and to several others, Clarence Road.

It is not clear why the name was changed to Clarence Avenue in 1937. From the mid 19th century street names had been changed to prevent duplication. Nearby Kings Road, for example, had been changed to Kings Avenue about 30 years earlier, but why the Clarence Avenue change was made later is a mystery. *Alyson Wilson*

Next month: Rookery 'crooks'

If you can suggest how your street was named or want to find out more about it, please email history@claphamsociety.com.



Duke of Clarence by Thomas Lawrence

New members

We extend a warm welcome this month to: Alison Simcock, Tim Brown and Isaac Simcock-Brown; Anna Harrison-Wydra; and Oliver Rawlins and Freddie Hutchins. *JE*

The Clapham Society Committee is looking for 'new blood' – why not get in touch and play your part in our future?

The approach of summer prompts us to start to think seriously about the election of Officers and Committee members at the AGM (in October). We will, of course, be formally requesting nominations in the September issue as usual. All positions are open but members who came to the Tim Spector talk will recall Mark Leffler announcing that we are keen to have 'new blood' and we currently have two key vacancies. Our Treasurer and our Membership Secretary, both of long and sterling standing, have each indicated a wish to stand down. Both roles call for people of excellent accounting (Treasurer) and record-keeping (Membership) skills. If you are interested in either role, or you would like to become involved in another capacity, please put your name forward in September; or contact Mark Leffler, David Brown or Jennifer Everett (email addresses, below) who can tell you more. We would also very much like to hear from members interested in planning, roads and transport, and matters IT. You are our future!

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

Chair	Mark Leffler mark.leffler88@gmail.com	Meetings and Events	Christine Armstrong events@claphamsociety.com
Vice Chair	Alison Macnair vicechair@claphamsociety.com	Common and Open Spaces	Michael Barry mbarryuk@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 be all found at claphamsociety.com

