

The Clapham Society

Newsletter



Issue 321

October 2009

Commemorative Trees

On **Saturday 24 October** at 11 am there will be a Clapham Society tree planting event on Clapham Common. With the help of Trees for Cities two commemorative trees will be planted. In memory of Norman Marsh (1913-2008) the eminent lawyer, long-standing member and former President of the Clapham Society, a plane tree will be planted near the west end of Holy Trinity Church. The site has been chosen as being close to the house on North Side in which he lived for over 40 years and to the church of which he was an active member.

This will be followed by the planting of a black poplar tree near Eagle Pond as a tribute to all the work that John How (who is still very much alive!) has done for the Clapham Society over nearly 30 years, as a member of several committees and finally as Vice-Chairman. John, who lived in Lynette Avenue, moved to the country in 2008.

Our regular monthly meetings are held at **Clapham Manor Primary School, Belmont Road, SW4 0BZ. The hall is open from 7.30 pm when coffee and tea are normally available. The talk begins promptly at 8 pm and most meetings finish by 9.30 pm.**

Wednesday 21 October

Annual General Meeting. After the official business of the meeting there will be a break for refreshments followed by the Guest Speaker, Martin Linton, Member of Parliament for Battersea. The Agenda for the meeting was published in our September newsletter (No. 320)

Wednesday 18 November

A musical entertainment to mark St Cecilia's Day. Henry Purcell – one of the earliest great English composers – was born in London 350 years ago, and died 36 years later on the eve of the feast of St Cecilia, patron saint of music, which falls on 22 November. So it is appropriate that some of his music should be included, with works by some later British composers, in our musical entertainment which will be given by young musicians from the Clapham Chamber Concerts team. Tickets are £10, which includes a glass of wine during the interval. The concert will begin promptly at 8 pm in the Upper Hall at Clapham Manor School. Please complete the booking form on the back page of this newsletter to apply for your tickets.

There is no meeting in December.

Details of the January meeting will be given in the next (November) newsletter and the full programme for 2010 will be published in the December newsletter.



Jessica Maryon-Davies and Amanda Lake of the Clapham Chamber Concerts team who will be entertaining us on 18 November.

Clapham Gateway Improvements

There will be an exhibition and consultation about this project at Clapham Library from **Monday 28 September** until **Saturday 3 October**. The project architect will be on hand to answer questions at certain times during the week. Check with the library for full details.

The display will also be at Clapham Picturehouse from 1 pm to 4 pm on **Saturday 3 October** and outside Trinity Close, on The Pavement from 1 pm to 4 pm on **Sunday 4 October**. You are strongly encouraged to see the proposals and express your views while there is still time to influence the design.

July Meeting

Nearly 90 members and guests turned out on a warm summer evening for John Adams' re-scheduled meeting to survey the changes in Clapham during the last 40 years – roughly the life of the Clapham Society and John's time in Clapham.

He divided his talk into three broad areas: the 1970/80s which was the era of Lambeth Council's major redevelopment of parts of Clapham; the boom years from the late 1980s to about 2000 which saw the refurbishment of many streets of terraced houses by middle-class families, the replacement of small businesses and factories by private housing and the arrival of bars and restaurants; and finally the present.

In the 1950s and early 60s Clapham was still suffering from war damage and lack of investment. It was possible to buy property inexpensively, but mortgages were not available for old houses, though there were some discretionary and improvement grants. There were several light industries; Clapham High Street was run down though it did have the wonderful Transport Museum (where Sainsbury's now is), which sadly moved in 1972.

From the mid-1960s Edward Hollamby, Lambeth Council's controversial Director of Planning and Architecture, addressed the issue of the clearance of bomb-damaged areas and large-scale redevelopment. The first choice was tower blocks, as in Clarence Avenue and Stockwell Park Estate. Quite soon these lost favour and low-rise developments with cottage-style houses as on the Clapham Manor Estate were introduced. Although well landscaped,

these presented security problems with pedestrianised areas and dead ends. There were also bitter battles when the council tried to acquire older properties for demolition, and local campaigns in the area of St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove and Lillieshall Road were energetically backed by the Clapham Society.

Parts of Clapham were the victim of planning blight since there was a plan for an inner ring road, which would have cut straight through old Clapham. Fortunately, this scheme was abandoned, but not before a huge block of flats had been built (still to be seen in Coldharbour Lane, Brixton) with an almost windowless façade which was to have faced the multi-lane road. A slogan 'Save Lambeth from Hollamby' was adopted locally.

However, Lambeth was saved because Hollamby came round to conservation. In fact, in 1975 he himself pinned a Building Preservation Notice on the door at Bedford Buildings (Clapham Park Road) when demolition was about to start. Even so Lambeth Council, under the leadership of Ted Knight ('Red Ted') saw conservation as a middle-class privilege, and it was some time before the rescue and refurbishment of older housing was considered preferable to demolition.

John then went on to show the changes over the last 20-30 years. Young families discovered Clapham as a relatively inexpensive area to buy property, which they then restored, often converting from multiple occupancy. At the same time small businesses closed, and the character of Clapham High Street changed with a lack of uniformity in the new building. John was severely

critical of Sainsbury's building which he considers out of character. He likes the Revolution development, but has fears of the Mary Seacole House replacement and the proposed addition to the Methodist Church.

Not surprisingly the vexed question of the Tesco building at Clapham South, over which the Clapham Society fought a long and frustrating battle, arose. John lamented the loss of some historic buildings – Clifton Lodge, the last remnant of Thomas Cubitt's Lincoln House; Clapham Lodge, South Side (on the OCS site); The People's Church in Grafton Square, which survives but has been converted to flats. He also aired some personal bêtes noires, including the proliferation of gated estates and the destruction of fences, walls and front gardens for car parking.

He highlighted some of the good new developments: the refurbishment of George West House on North Side for QAS (now Experian), the housing development at the Welmar Piano factory in Clapham Park Road, King's Acre School, the eco-friendly Tree House in Lyham Road and the station building in Voltaire Road. In particular, he drew our attention to notable buildings which have been completed very recently: Trinity Hospice extension, Wingate Square (opposite The Polygon), Lambeth College's new building and Clapham Manor School extension.

John's lively, personal, sometimes biased, scamper around Clapham, engaged and enthused his audience, bearing witness to the interest members have in their surroundings.

Dedication Ceremony

As reported in the September 2008 newsletter (No. 310), Lambeth College's new Sixth Form Centre, 45 Clapham Common South Side, is the venue for a short service to rededicate a plaque commemorating 54 former pupils of Henry Thornton School who lost their lives during the Second World War. The service, to be conducted by the Reverend Deborah Matthews, Vicar of St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove, will be held on **Saturday 31 October**, starting at 2.30 pm.

Invitations have been extended to relatives, where traceable, of those named; members of the Old Thorntonians Association (Clapham); the Mayors of Lambeth and Wandsworth (the school was located in the latter borough until local government re-organisation in 1965); and representatives of Lambeth College, Lambeth Academy, the Clapham Society and the Royal British Legion.

Please contact the organiser, Ted Hayward (Secretary of the Association), by 17 October if you would like to attend. Email: ted.hayward@btinternet.com, telephone: 01494 762838 or write to 31 Linfields, Amersham, HP7 9QH.

Memories

Lambeth Archives is running a project, using photographs, documents and memories for older people to build a picture of the past to share with young people in the community. The sessions will be held during October and will end with a

celebration with the Mayor at Lambeth Town Hall in November.

If you would like to find out more contact Kim Connell, Community Services Manager, Age Concern on 020 7346 6809, as soon as possible.

The Clapham Hunt

Despite misgivings about fundraising in the current economic climate, the sixth annual Clapham Treasure Hunt held in June raised the astonishing sum of £9,453 for the medical charity, Médecins Sans Frontières. This means that the total raised by the hunts so far is in excess of £30,000. Congratulations to Sarah Turtle and her organising team! We look forward to hearing the date for 2010.

If you would like to find out more about the hunt and see photographs go to www.msftreasurehunt.co.uk.

Planning News

Since May we have been notified of some 90 applications, reviewed 20 and made representations on ten, most of which are summarised below.

41 The Chase. Objection to a full width rear roof extension because it substantially changes the form of the roof, damaging the character of the building.

5 Northbourne Road. Objection to the two-storey side extension element of this application, the size and position of which damages the form and composition of the host building as well as substantially filling the gap between houses, an important feature of the street.

The Farm House, Broadhinton Road. Having supported the initial application, we continue to raise no objections to this second and smaller version, the effect of which is to further reduce impact on the character of the conservation area and neighbours.

24 and 24A Abbeville Road. Objection to a proposal to redevelop these shops with a three-storey residential building; it is a poorly designed pastiche which fails to offer any evidence of the necessary quality of details and materials needed to complement its older neighbours.

Macaulay Square. Comments on applications to install new timber windows, urging that they are carefully designed to match the originals.

12 Rodenhurst Road. Objection to a badly designed pair of houses which damages neighbours' amenity and looks out of place in the street. The site deserves a new building of architectural merit.

Crown and Anchor, Belmont Close. Continued objection to a second application to convert and extend the pub for residential use. The large size of the second floor extension has a negative effect on the character of the host building and its surroundings.

Rear of 50 Larkhall Rise. Objection to a proposal for a new house on a tiny site; it provides inadequate amenity for its own occupants and sits uncomfortably with its Killyon Road neighbours.

Flynns close their shop

Another independent shop has gone from Clapham High Street, with the closure of Flynns, the stationers, at the beginning of October.

Pat, Des and Tim's father opened the original shop at 122 Clapham High Street, now a café, at the start of the 1970s. Two subsequent moves brought them to their present shop at 72 Clapham High Street in 1993.

Flynns main business has been that of commercial wholesalers, and in view of the heavy costs of a Clapham High Street shop, principally the business rates, they have reluctantly decided to close their retail business.

This means for us more than just the loss of a valued local shop, which not only had a vast stationery range, but would get you anything not stocked, usually within 24 hours. Flynns was also one of those places where you could generally rely on bumping into people to exchange local news and gossip – a part of life in the urban village.

Pat, Des and Tim will remain in business as commercial wholesalers, and will continue to supply their many customers in the Clapham area. They can be contacted at tim@flynns.demon.co.uk or des@flynns.demon.co.uk. We wish them well.

Pegasus Choir

Pegasus, one of London's leading chamber choirs, accompanied by string-players from the Royal College of Music, will present 'Baroque Classics' – a programme of beautiful and uplifting music – on **Saturday 10 October** from 7.30 to 9.30 pm at Holy Trinity Church, Prince Consort Road, London SW7 2BA to raise funds for Trinity Hospice.

The concert forms part of the biennial 'Voices for Hospices' event, a 'Mexican wave' of music, singing, dancing and poetry which, with all performances starting at the same time, stretches around the globe to celebrate World Hospice and Palliative Care Day and raise awareness of, and vital funds for, participating hospices. It is anticipated that, in 2009, there will be over 400 performances taking place across 80 countries. Tickets at £12 (£5 concession) are available on the door.

St Luke's Music Society

The new season starts with a gala concert on **Saturday 17 October** at St Luke's Church, Thurleigh Road, SW12 8RQ at 7.30 pm. Organist Martin Baker will be joined by the London Mozart Players to mark the launch of the newly restored organ at St Luke's Church. The concert, conducted by Derek Carden, will feature music by Handel, Poulenc, Bach and Mozart.

Martin Baker, organist at Westminster Cathedral, is one of this country's finest organists and improvisers so the programme will include an improvisation on a theme suggested by a member of the audience. Tickets are £10 (£6 concessions) from the box office 07951 791619 or online at www.slms.org.uk.

Clapham Chamber Concerts

On **Friday 16 October** at 7.30 pm a String Quartet Recital to celebrate the anniversaries of Haydn and Mendelssohn will be given at St. Paul's Church, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DX, by the holders of the Anna Shuttleworth Scholarship at Canterbury Christ Church University: Florence Cooke (violin), Amanda Lake (violin), Clare Fox (viola), Sophie Rivlin (cello). The programme will be: Haydn String Quartet Op 20 No 3, Beethoven String Quartet Op 18 No 1, Mendelssohn String Quartet Op 44 No 1. Tickets available on the door: £9, £6 (concessions), £3 (under 12s).

West Norwood Cemetery

Opened in 1837 the South Metropolitan Cemetery at Norwood was the second of the 'Magnificent Seven' great commercial cemeteries built on the then outskirts of London, and the first to be designed in Gothic style. It was modelled on the Père Lachaise cemetery in Paris. Around 300 people featured in the Dictionary of National Biography are buried in Norwood Cemetery.

The cemetery was damaged in the Second World War and thousands of monuments were cleared following the compulsory purchase of the cemetery by Lambeth Council in 1966. The Friends of Norwood Cemetery joined with English Heritage, the Victorian Society and others to arrest this activity and since 1994 more than 50 monuments have been repaired.

The Friends run public tours of the cemetery, leaving from the main gate, on the first Sunday of every month, from April to October at 1.30 pm and at 11 am from November to March. The Friends have talks in a nearby hall four times a year, and issue a newsletter detailing events and latest research three times a year. They are actively seeking new members. You can obtain more information on their website: www.fownc.org or from the Secretary: 020 8670 5456.

Access to Art

This charity which enables the disabled and frail to visit museums and galleries in London is holding a fundraising concert, given by the Salomon Ensemble, at the Musical Museum in Brentford on **Sunday 11 October**. The programme includes violin and piano music by Beethoven, Schubert and Schumann. There will also be demonstrations of the Museum's collection of automatic instruments, which alone are well worth a visit. The afternoon will start at 2.30 pm with a welcoming drink and canapés and the recital begins at 3.15 pm.

Tickets at £15 (£12 concessions) are available from the Musical Museum on 020 8560 8108. For details about the Museum go to www.musicalmuseum.co.uk and for more about Access to Art go to www.access2art.org.uk.

Pigsties and Paradise

The sub-title of this book is *Lady Diarists and the Tour of Wales 1795-1860*. The relevance to Clapham is that two of the diarists are Mary Anne and Sarah, the daughters of William Hibbert and nieces of George Hibbert, both Clapham residents and the latter an MP, well-known for his opposition to the abolition of the slave trade.

William Hibbert also had a house in Cheshire and it was from there that these two unmarried daughters, who were insatiable travellers, made several visits to Wales, which they recorded in their prolific diaries. Twenty-four volumes of Mary Anne's diaries, which cover her life from the age of 20 until she died aged 79, and 23 volumes of Sarah's diaries survive in the Gloucestershire Record Office.

Mary Anne was the more entertaining writer and her diaries form the basis of a chapter about the sisters. She seemed to be continually dogged by minor mishaps, confusion and misfortunes. On one visit to Wales she records: '...bungling Hostler contrived to wedge the blind of the carriage so that the door would not open, and our dismay at this accident added to the repeated and futile efforts made to conquer the blind either by fair means or foul, served to amuse a smart party in an upper apartment who suspended their breakfast for one half hour to enjoy the scene.'

The Hibbert sisters are remembered in Clapham as the donors of the Hibbert Almshouses in Wandsworth Road, in memory of their father. A tablet on the almshouses records their philanthropy.

Pigsties and Paradise by Liz Pitman is available to order from bookshops, price £7.50.

Wimbledon Bookfest

Wimbledon's annual literary event runs from **Saturday 3 October** until **Sunday 11 October**. Highlights include novelist Salley Vickers talking about her six novels, historian Alison Weir on her forthcoming book *The Fall of Anne Boleyn*, Virginia McKenna talking about The Born Free Foundation, Clare Mulley talking about her biography of Eglantyne Webb the founder of Save the Children, Jon Henderson discussing his biography of Fred Perry, Darwin's publisher John Murray of the publishing dynasty in conversation with literary historian James Hamilton, and lots, lots more. Over 50 events in all include a scriptwriting competition, poetry readings, lunch with June Whitfield and a screening of *Slumdog Millionaire*.

Events take place at various venues in Wimbledon, including the Polka Theatre, where tickets for all events may be purchased from the box office on 020 8543 4888. Full details can be found at www.wimbledonbookfest.org

Writing Freedom

A three-week creative writing course starts at Clapham Library, 1 Clapham Common North Side on **Thursday 5 November**. Both new and experienced writers are welcome to join the group where you will learn new skills and get supportive feedback. Classes run from 6.30 pm to 8 pm on 5, 12 and 19

'Get your Camera Off Auto'

The Papered Parlour at 7 Prescott Place, SW4 6BS (just off Clapham High Street) is running a series of classes this autumn. On **Saturday 3 October** and **Sunday 4 October** you can learn to be more adventurous with your photography. On **Tuesdays 6, 13 and 20 October** knitters at all levels can learn new skills, a silversmithing class on **Sunday 25 October** will teach you to 'Make a Ring' and on **Saturday 31 October** there is a Halloween Special sewing event entitled 'Make a Sock Monkey'.

For more details telephone 020 7627 8703 or go to www.thepaperedparlour.co.uk.

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

Chair **Alison Macnair**
119 Clapham Manor Street,
London SW4 0QU

Email: alisonmacnair@fastmail.co.uk

Secretary **Jill Cramphorn**
552 Wandsworth Road, London SW8 3JX
Tel: 020 7720 3343

Treasurer **David Brown**
15 Turret Grove, London SW4 0ES
Tel: 020 7720 7536

Membership Secretary
Jennifer Everett

30 Trinity Close, London SW4 0JD
Tel: 020 7627 4770

Meetings and Events **Maev Sullivan**
2 Fitzwilliam Road, London SW4 0DN
Tel: 020 7498 9205

Email: maevsullivan@gmail.com

Planning Matters **Philip Ashford**
45 Rodenhurst Road, London SW4 8AE
Tel: 020 8674 1727

Email: pjashford@yahoo.co.uk

Common and Open Spaces

Anna Jefferson Smith
22 Ivey Road, London SW4 0EW
Tel: 020 7622 8285

Email: annaajs@mac.com

Newsletter and Publications

Alyson Wilson
22 Crescent Grove, London SW4 7AH
Tel: 020 7622 6360 Fax: 020 7622 7899

Email: alysonwilson.sw4@virgin.net

Details of meetings, activities and a full list of our publications are on

The Clapham Society web site at

www.claphamsociety.com

November. The cost is £32, or £20 for concessions.

The course leader is award-winning writer, Jenny Mitchell, who has run similar projects at national museums and many libraries. For more details or to reserve a place telephone 020 7274 8414.

TICKET APPLICATION FORM

A Musical Entertainment for St Cecilia's Day on Wednesday 18 November at 8 pm. A glass of wine in the interval is included.

Please send metickets @ £10 each. Cheque, payable to The Clapham Society, for £..... with a stamped addressed envelope to: Maev Sullivan, 2 Fitzwilliam Road, London SW4 0DN

Name.....

Telephone Number.....