

The Clapham Society Newsletter



Issue 328

June 2010

Open Houses

The owners of two very different but special buildings have kindly agreed to host Clapham Society visits in July.



One is the Old Glass Works (shown above) in Mysore Road. This is a modern house originally designed by the Pike Practice, which is shoe-horned into the space running between the gardens of Mysore and Marjorie Roads, off the north side of Clapham Common. This building is now the home of John and Anna French, the well-known designer of wallpaper and fabrics and owner of the Anna French Collections.

The other is Sycamore House, Old Town, which was the subject of last February's fascinating and well-attended talk given to the Society by Tim Gosling, its owner and the renowned furniture and interior designer. Tim has kindly offered to give us a tour of the house to show us his restoration work and how he has combined original features with new designs based on classical precedents.

The visits will take place on **Thursday 1 July** from 6.00 to 8.00 pm. Numbers will be limited, so apply as soon as possible to Maev Sullivan (contact details on back page of newsletter).



The Brown Dog statue

Our regular monthly meetings are held at Clapham Manor Primary School, Belmont Road, SW4 0BZ. The entrance to the school in Stonhouse Street, through the new building, is **NOT open for our evening meetings. Use the Belmont Road entrance, cross the playground and enter the building on the right. 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 16 June

Animals and Battersea. In an illustrated talk **Dr Hilda Kean**, FRHistS author of *Animal Rights: Political and Social Change in Britain since 1800* and Dean of Ruskin College, Oxford, will explore why the Dogs Home, the Brown Animal Sanatory Institution, the Anti-Vivisection Hospital (which refused to employ any staff who experimented on animals) and a controversial statue commemorating a brown terrier dog killed at University College, London, were all in Battersea in the early 1900s.

She will discuss what this aspect of the past adds to our understanding of this part of London.

Wednesday 7 July

Summer Party. This year's party will be held in the delightful garden of Mr and Mrs Richard Roxburgh on Clapham Common West Side. In view of the popularity of last year's delicious refreshments, canapés will again be provided by the North Street Deli. Tickets, which include drinks and canapés, are £12 each. The ticket application form is on the back page of this newsletter. Order your ticket without delay, as numbers will be limited.

During July and August our monthly meetings are replaced by the following free guided walks. Both walks will leave from the Clock Tower outside Clapham Common Underground Station at 6.30 pm.

Wednesday 14 July. Clapham Common North Side

walk led by Mary Coales. The North Side is full of wonderful sights – some of Clapham's oldest houses, two 'French chateaux' and a Pre-Raphaelite chapel, and of stories – Samuel Pepys lived here, so did Henry Hoare the Magnificent, members of the Clapham Sect, and many more historic figures. The walk will finish near St Barnabas Church at the west end of the Common, near Battersea Rise, at about 8 pm.

Wednesday 18 August. Historic Clapham led by David Perkin. An exploration of the heart of old Clapham from The Pavement and Old Town to Rectory Grove and St Paul's Church, returning via Grafton Square, finishing at Holy Trinity Church at about 8 pm.

Planning News

Since February we have been notified of some 110 applications, reviewed 25 of them and made representations on 16, most of which are summarised below.

2 Rectory Grove. Comments on and support for a revised application for this listed building. It involves dividing the building into two houses and putting a mansard roof on the Victorian part, hence maintaining the distinctiveness between the Victorian and Georgian elements of the group.

1 Scout Lane. Support for a revised scheme for a modestly sized building for business use on the site of the old scout hut.

8 Belmont Road. Comments on the design for a modern rear extension to this house. Although arguably an improvement on what is there, it will be very visible from the nearby street.

24 Northbourne Road. Objection to a poorly designed new house attached to 24, which will damage the appearance of the host building and the character of this part of the conservation area.

1 The Pavement. Objection to an application to convert basement, ground and first floors to restaurant use. The proposal represents further over-intensification of restaurant and bar activity and is likely to damage any original interiors of what is an 18th century building.

82 Rodenhurst Road. Objection to an application to build a small new house in the rear garden fronting on to Hambalt Road. The house will affect neighbours' privacy and substantially reduce the private garden space of 82, prejudicing its scope to ever return to a family house. Information to demonstrate that it will improve the street scene is unconvincing.

12 Kings Avenue. Objection to a proposal to extend this Cubitt building at the side and to construct many new homes at the rear. The proposals provide very poor living conditions and represent overdevelopment of the site.

12 Rodenhurst Road. Objection to a further application to build two semi-detached houses on the site. The design and materials are banal and dated, and out of character with the rich diversity of the street.

25 Crescent Grove. Objection to that part of an application which involves a new sliding door at the rear of this listed building, because of its damaging effect on the special interest of the building.

New Leisure Centre, Clapham Manor Street. Comments on the proposal to substantially change the elevation designs of the new leisure centre. We expressed a preference for the original design, and are surprised that such an extensive change to this most visible element of the project is being made at this late stage, given all the consultation that had been carried out on the initial design.

220 Broomwood Road. Objection to an application to construct a basement area in the middle of this terrace of listed houses. It is very prominent and damages the unity of the group.

57-63 Old Town. Comments on the shop front design of the new Sainsbury's Local, one side of which is little more than a large advertisement rather than a visible and inviting shop front, and which will no doubt have a negative impact on local independent stores.

Saturday 7 September 1940

Do you remember that day and were you in London? If so I would love to hear from you. Testimony Films are making a commemorative television documentary about the first day and night of the Blitz during World War Two and are looking to hear from anyone who remembers this date. By Sunday morning around 450 Londoners had been killed and 1,600 seriously injured. The main target was the London docks and the worst hit area was the old East End. Some bombs however were dropped on other parts of the capital including the West End. We want to build up a detailed picture of what happened in the first 24 hours of the Blitz which left so many dead, injured or homeless.

Do you have any memories of this day? Perhaps you or your family were injured or survived a near miss; perhaps you lost a loved one or your home; or perhaps you were involved in the emergency services. If you have a vivid memory and stories to tell, I would love to hear from you. Please contact me in confidence on 0117 925 8589, email: amy.dunn@testimonyfilms.com or write to Blitz Appeal, Testimony Films, 12 Great George Street Bristol, BS1 5RH.

Amy Dunn, Testimony Films

Clapham Common Bandstand

The following events are planned for the next few weeks:

Sunday 6 June 2 pm to 4 pm
Tango Heat. A free Argentine Tango 'taster' dance class for beginners followed by a Tango demonstration.

Sunday 13 June at 3 pm
Becontree Brass Band.

Sunday 27 June at 3 pm
South London Jazz Orchestra.

Sunday 4 July at 3 pm
Merton Concert Band.

Sunday 11 July at 3 pm
South London Concert Band.

If you would like to hold an event on the bandstand, or get more details of any of the above you should contact Lambeth Events Service on 020 7926 1017 or bandstands@lambeth.gov.uk.

The Wyeth Family

Opening on **Wednesday 9 June** at Dulwich Picture Gallery is an exhibition of works from the Bank of America Merrill Lynch collection of paintings by three generations of this family of American painters. Most well-known is Andrew Wyeth (1917-2009), but his father NC Wyeth (1882-1945) as well as his son, daughter and son-in-law are also notable painters. This is a unique opportunity to see, in this country, works by all the members of the family displayed together.

For more information go to www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk or telephone 020 8639 5254.

Festivals in June

St Paul's Church Fair is on **Saturday 12 June** from 12 noon to 3 pm.

Holy Trinity Church hosts London's largest church Fayre on **Saturday 19 June** from 11 am until late

afternoon. Attractions include a dog show, tombola, side stalls, donkeys, bouncy castles and games, BBQs and Caribbean food, raffle, fair trade stalls and great musical entertainment. This year's proceeds will be shared between the church and Ace of Clubs Clapham, a day-care centre serving around 1900 homeless people 365 days a year.

Abbeville Fete is on **Saturday 26 June** from 12 noon to 4 pm. This year's theme is Fairytales and Fables. For the 14th year local businesses will join in a day of activities to raise money for local charities.

The rising global population: a contemporary art show and public debate

Two of our members, Alex and Gregor Harvie, have set up a company with the aim of proving that contemporary art can engage with the real social issues of our time, stimulate debate and help make a real difference. Their first installation tackles the difficult issue of rising global population, and uses painting, prose, public debate and educational materials to explore the subject and at the same time raise money to help vulnerable children through the charity Street Child Africa.

Alex – a writer – and Gregor – an artist – say that they are ‘tired of art that’s designed to baffle. Contemporary art should engage people, it should communicate; it should give more than it takes’. Their installation, Gene Meme, will be open daily from 10 to 20 June between 11 am and 7 pm in the Crypt Gallery under St Pancras Church, Upper Woburn Place, NW1 2BA (the entrance to the gallery is in Duke’s Road) with a private view on **Wednesday 9 June** at 6 pm. For every painting sold, a vulnerable child in Ghana will be offered a year’s apprenticeship including accommodation, food, medical care and support to help lift them out of poverty.

A debate on the issue will take place on **Thursday 10 June** at 6.30 pm in St Pancras Church, Upper Woburn Place, NW1 2BA; speakers will include Professor Aubrey Manning, Fred Pearce, Professor John Guillebaud and the Revd Jeremy Caddick. Tickets for the debate (which will be followed by a drinks reception) are £6 and can be booked online at www.genememearth.blogspot.com – or send a cheque payable to G&A Harvie Ltd to 542 Wandsworth Road, London, SW8 3JX, marked ‘Debate Tickets’. Please include your name and address.

Jill Cramphorn

Gardens Galore

On **Sunday 6 June** the garden of **Trinity Hospice** will be open to the public from 2 pm to 5 pm for an ‘Alice in Wonderland’ themed family afternoon. Alice and her friends will entertain the children with balloon modelling, stilt-walking, magic tricks and face painting whilst adults can relax to the music of a band and purchase a typically English afternoon tea. For those in need of stronger refreshment, a Pimms stall will be on hand and The Urban Wine Company from Tooting, will have glasses of London’s first urban rosé wine on sale. There will also, of course, be the opportunity to see round the recently restored and replanted, award-winning garden.

Tickets for the event, which is sponsored by local company Fidelity International, are available at £3 for adults (children free) from Trinity’s reception area, on the website at www.trinityhospice.org.uk/events/open-garden or from Leah Bull on 020 7787 1085 or lbull@trinityhospice.org.uk.

Saturday 12 June and **Sunday 13 June** is **Open Garden Squares Weekend**, when 200 gardens throughout London are open to the public. Many of these are private squares normally only open to residents. One ticket (price £7.50 in advance or £9 on the day) entitles the holder to visit all participating gardens over the weekend. A comprehensive list of the gardens, opening times, photographs, suggested routes between gardens, and ticket information can be found on the website: www.opensquares.org or telephone 020 8347 3230.

On **Sunday 13 June** the pretty, tranquil garden at **17 Crescent Lane**, SW4 9PT is open from 3 pm to 6 pm. A long lawn with borders opens out into a large square lawn, surrounded by roses, shrubs and trees, and a pond, backed by a yew hedge. Home-made teas and wine. Admission £2.50.

On **Sunday 20 June** from 6 pm to 9 pm Judith Strong’s lovely garden at **18 Sibella Road**, SW4 6HX will be opened privately again this year in support of the Charles Michael Strong Tribute Fund in the Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation. There will be wine and roses.



Judith Strong’s garden

On **Wednesday 30 June** there is an evening opening (from 6 pm to 8.30 pm) of Balham’s secret garden at **28 Old Devonshire Road**, SW12 9RB. Pimms and Prosecco.

Clapham Chamber Concerts

On **Friday 18 June** at 7.30 pm the Svyati Duo, the UK’s first duo for organ and ‘cello which counts Sir John Taverner amongst its supporters, will use the church’s fantastic organ in a programme which includes works by Bach, Vivaldi, Mendelssohn and Shostakovich. Don’t miss this unusual concert at St Paul’s Church, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DX. Tickets available on the door: £9, concessions £7.

Wandsworth Museum

The opening of the museum scheduled for the end of May had to be postponed due to the discovery of quantities of asbestos in the West Hill building. This has now been safely removed and the refurbishment of the building has been resumed. The plan is that there will be a Grand Opening of the new Wandsworth Museum on **Friday 3 September**.

Memories

Anna Jefferson Smith’s article in the May newsletter about Clapham Baths prompted memories for George Reeve who writes: ‘The baths played an important part in my childhood too as I learnt to swim there in 1959 and represented Clapham Manor School, in the Annual Wandsworth Council’s Gala, in 1960 (coming last I’m afraid). However, we had future British Olympic star Sheila Clayton on our side, who went to Mexico, and Tony Radford who only just missed out on a team place too. A wonderfully Dickensian place with individual wooden changing booths – we were made to change in pairs and any last vestiges of privacy were wiped away by

the holes scratched through the walls by some errant urchin. The baths also hosted an annual Christmas party – not quite sure who sponsored it and what in fact I was doing there but it was a

fun time with probably a hundred kids running round with silly hats on! Great times’.

Lambeth College Sixth Form Centre.

Due to the disruption to flights caused by volcanic ash problems, the original speakers at our April meeting were replaced by David Arscott, who acted as the client representative on the project team, and Giles Blight, the project architect from Building Design Partnership (BDP). The evening assumed the form of an informal and enjoyable conversation between speakers and audience.

David described the long, demanding and often painful process of taking any large project such as this from inception to completion today. To get any new building up is no mean feat. Each has its own character and here final appearance belies the challenge.

Following the closure of Henry Thornton School various strategies for the site were put forward before the educational review in 2002 committed to tackle the haemorrhage of students to other boroughs and set the scene for the new building. BDP started design in 2004 and the building was handed over in 2009. David referred to the enormous amount of time and hundreds of thousand pounds it takes to get such a project through the planning process today. He emphasised the importance of having confidence in allowing architects to design without interference, especially from committees.

The brief was for a new Arts/ Humanities centre alongside the science and technical subjects which were to be retained in existing buildings. The Learning and Skills Council (who were funding partners) pushed for a landmark building on the front, facing the Common

and replacing much of the old frontage. It was to have an 'iconic identity', a 'wow' factor, and embody a spirit of education for the 21st century. It was essential to reverse the sense of separation and exclusion implied in the old buildings by opening up views into the building and its functions to the community.

Giles described overcoming early reservations from Lambeth planners concerning the height and form of the building. Models and CAD imagery were important in exploring contextual relationships, views along the frontage and the image of the building as a gateway to Clapham and even London. He emphasised the aim of maximising the spatial relationship between the inside and outside by opening up the wonderful views across the Common and from the outside in.

Form and materials define a striking image which clearly interested the audience. Giles explained how the roof wraps over and contains the different forms beneath. Different functions have generated three distinct space / forms which are organised as an enclosed box on either side of an open atrium. The atrium in the middle is several storeys high and is overlooked by the 5-storey classroom block to the north, which is a more conventional rectangular cellular arrangement; and the curvilinear brick drum to the south, which contains the large-span open spaces of the Drama, 3-D and Art departments. The facilities are state-of-the-art, equipped and furnished with latest technology. The large theatre space can be sub-divided into three separate studios by means of soundproof partitions. At ground level the atrium is a

'break-out' space with a café, the social hub of the college and the main point of visual interaction with the public.

The diversity of students and courses is reflected in the palette materials and treatments on the exterior. The use of brick is appropriate to Clapham. The bricks are selected and laid to break up the large surfaces into smaller panels. If you are really observant you may even be able to discern the letters L E A R N on the façade.

Energy-conservation is designed in by orientation, solar shading and the use of thermally efficient materials. The heating and cooling system uses ground-source heat pumps whereby coolant is circulated from below ground (warm) up to the surface (cold) so that the difference may be converted into heat via a heat-exchanger. Here – a truly innovative idea – the tubes are incorporated into the 25 metre deep foundation piles, carefully located to avoid the Northern Line.

In conclusion David said that what we have is a half-way step between where Lambeth College was in 2002 and where it wants to be. In 2008 the Learning and Skills Council realised that they did not have enough money for their ambitious programme of projects. The College's ideas for Brixton Hill Centre and the rest of the Clapham Centre remain unfunded. The game is changing, moving towards smaller and more focused facilities. A change of government may reduce the Labour government's investment in education.

The Chair thanked the two speakers for stepping in at such short notice and delivering an excellent account of what is a fine new building for Clapham.

John Adams

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

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Details of meetings, activities and a full list of our publications are on **The Clapham Society** website at www.claphamsociety.com
Cut here

Summer Party at 82 Clapham Common West Side on Wednesday 7 July 6.30 to 8.30 pm. Drinks and canapés.

Please send metickets @ £12 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..... Email address.....