



Another secondhand structure for the Common

Clapham Common has a history of receiving secondhand structures. The huge drinking fountain near The Pavement, depicting a woman giving water to a beggar, was originally erected by the United Kingdom Temperance and General Provident Institution on the northern approach to London Bridge but was removed to the Common in 1895 when its weight began to crack the bridge approach. The bandstand itself was for many years believed to be one of two designed for the Royal Horticultural Society's Gardens in South Kensington and removed here when the gardens closed. However, this has subsequently been disproved and the Clapham Common bandstand shown to have been modelled on them.

It was therefore no surprise when a secondhand public lavatory labelled 'Lower Marsh' made its appearance near Clapham South station earlier this year.

The original brick built lavatory block, derelict for many years, had been demolished and was due to be replaced under a Section 106 arrangement with the Tesco supermarket on the former South London Hospital site. However, as our photograph shows, the lavatory still stands, wrongly labelled and unusable, in a fenced-off compound surrounded by builders' debris. Hardly a tribute to Tesco or Lambeth Council whose message it bears. How much longer will the weary traveller arriving at Clapham South and seeing the notice 'No public toilets at this station' have to wait for relief?



Photo: Derrick Johnson

Derrick Johnson

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. Meetings are free and non-members are very welcome.

Wednesday 19 September

The greening of a small Victorian terraced house in Clapham Old Town – a follow-up on Iain McCaig's talk last year about ways to reduce heat loss in traditional buildings. **Peter and Jenny Coble** have downsized and modernised a house with the aim of reducing running costs, and providing a more comfortable home, whilst at the same time doing their bit to save the planet. Susan Venner, the project architect and specialist in green buildings, will be present to explain the problems involved in constructing both new and old sustainable buildings.

Wednesday 17 October

Annual General Meeting. See inside for agenda and details of this year's guest speaker.

Wednesday 21 November

The Cinema Museum. **Martin Humphries**, co-founder and Director of the Cinema Museum will talk about the history and development of the museum which is located in the Master's House of the former Lambeth Workhouse in Kennington.

There is no meeting in December.

September on the Bandstand

The following events are planned on Clapham Common bandstand this month:

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| Saturday 1 September | Becontree Brass Band |
| Sunday 2 September | Lambeth Wind Orchestra |
| Saturday 8 September | Southwark Concert Band |
| Sunday 9 September | Bandstand Marathon – The No Frills Band from 1pm to 2.30 pm and The Incredible Sax Band from 3.15 pm to 4.45 pm |
| Saturday 22 September | London Consorts of Winds |
| Sunday 23 September | The New London Concert Band |
| Saturday 29 September | The Incredible Sax Band |
| Sunday 30 September | South London Concert Band |

All concerts start at 3 pm, except for the two on 9 September, and all are free.

New members We have welcomed the following new members recently: Annabel and Gerry Boyle, Carrie Hast, and Josephine Osikena.

The New Library

Clapham's new library (aka Community Hub) was officially opened on 20 July by local author, John O'Farrell, seen here with the leader of Lambeth Council, Steve Reed, and a portrait of Mary Seacole, after whom the building is named. Local councillors, and representatives of the developers and architects joined guests from the local community to explore the building, where the books are displayed on shelves lining the ramps which encircle a central well. The latter is intended for community activities; small study rooms lead off at first floor level, and there are also meeting rooms.

Among the guests was the sculptor, Andrew Logan, whose striking sculpture/seats outside the library incorporate assorted donations from local people ranging from buttons and pieces of broken china to a small calculator and an electric toothbrush – said to be still working when installed!



Photo: Alyson Wilson

Brixton Windmill

Richard Santhiri, Vice-Chair of the Friends of Windmill Gardens, who spoke at our June meeting writes about the restoration project.

I would like to start by thanking the members of the Clapham Society for the warm and wonderful welcome which I received on my talk about John Ashby's Mill. It was a real pleasure to give a talk on the windmill project which I have worked on for 14 years. Our success on this project has been a community effort and the Friends of Windmill Gardens have been amazing in their selfless contribution to this unique project in South London.

It was very special to give a talk in Clapham as this is where I grew up, and still have my family home in Abbeville Road. My talk on the Mill started with a brief introduction on the history of mills in Britain and the different types of mills, starting with the 'post mill' – a poorly designed structure which often burnt down or blew down as it was not a very strong building. Hence the invention of the 'tower mill'. Built with millers in mind these structures were practical, strong, and built to last. This why the Brixton Windmill built in 1816, with its solid foundations, still stands to this day and is a focal point for the community in South London.

I was also very keen to look at both the interior and exterior of the Mill, before and after the restoration, and the approach and materials used when working with a historical structure. A miller called Mildred Cookson, who is the only female miller in Britain, from the Mill section of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings advised the Friends of Windmill Gardens on every aspect of the restoration and has been a rock to us through out the years.

It was also important to me that the talk I gave on the Mill was not only about a building but also included the human story of the Ashby family who ran the mill for all of its working life, and the community in Brixton who have supported this project from the start. We feel very lucky and blessed to have the Mill restored for the benefit and pride of the community. Members of the Clapham Society also had lots of stories to share about the Mill which I found of great interest. We would like to invite the Clapham Society for a guided tour of the Mill and hope to be able to arrange this soon.

Richard Santhiri

THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 49th Annual General Meeting of the Clapham Society will be held on **Wednesday 17 October** at Clapham Manor Primary School, Belmont Road, London SW4 0BZ starting at 8 pm.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Approval of the Minutes of the previous AGM (19 October 2011) published in the Newsletter No 343, December 2011/January 2012, and available at the meeting
3. Adoption of the Annual Report for the year ended 30 September 2012
4. Adoption of the Financial Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2012
5. Election of the Officers and Committee Members for the year 2012-2013

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| Chairman | Treasurer |
| Vice-Chairman | Solicitor |
| Secretary | Membership Secretary |
| A maximum of ten further Committee Members | |
6. Re-appointment of the Independent Examiner
7. Any other business and announcements

After the formal business there will be a break for refreshments.

Following the break the guest speaker will be Clapham Society President, **Martin Drury**, who will talk about the origins, evolution and role of the Landmark Trust which gives new life to worthwhile old buildings. Appointed as a trustee in 1988, Martin retired this year after 13 years as Chairman.

NOMINATIONS

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.

Jill Cramphorn, Hon Secretary, 552 Wandsworth Road, London SW8 3JX

Umbrella Will Self will be at Clapham Books, 120 Clapham High Street, SW4 7UH on **Tuesday 25 September** at 7.30 pm, reading from and talking about his Man Booker nominated novel *Umbrella*. The event is free.

Planning News – Since March the Planning Sub-committee has been notified of some 180 applications, reviewed 40 of them and made representations on the eight listed below.

Mews house at the rear of 13 Clapham Common North Side. Comments on an application to extend the mews house at first floor level, involving replacing the present quirky modernist style extension with something larger and more ‘old fashioned’.

Public toilets next to Clapham Common station. Support for an application to bring the old toilet buildings back into use as a café. The design and outside table layout complements the improvements proposed for the adjacent open space, part of the Clapham Old Town proposals. The café’s toilets will be available for public use.

8 Old Town. Objection to an application to convert much of the present ground floor shop unit into a flat and to rebuild the present extension at the rear. The reduction in retail floor space limits the ground floor’s future viability as a shop, and the extension does not do the listed host building justice.

26A and 26B The Pavement. Objection to the part of an application which involves creating a third floor roof extension which will damage the historic character of the building and this part of the conservation area. Otherwise the application proposes to create restaurant space in the ground floors and basements, a more sensible use – subject to reasonable opening hours – of what has traditionally been the commercial part of these buildings.

68-70 Clapham High Street. Continuing objections, this time to two similar applications, to extend the present bar/restaurant out to the first floor rear of the existing building. The evening economy should be contained not expanded because of its effect on nearby residents’ amenity. The extension also damages the character of the mews behind the High Street.

8a Clapham Park Road. Some of the new BT broadband cabinets continue to be located insensitively outside historic buildings or where they impede pedestrian circulation. This one at the corner of Clapham Park Road and St Alphonsus Road is one of them; they should be located more sensitively and coherently.

4-14 Bromell’s Road. Comments on an application to convert the existing commercial building into a day nursery. The proposals improve the appearance of the present building but do not appear to make for an attractive environment for a nursery, and are likely to cause traffic congestion in a narrow street.

Lillieshall Road

Lambeth is auctioning off the early Victorian cottages that it owns in this road and has licensed to housing co-operatives since the 1970s. Notwithstanding the effect on the lives of tenants, new owners are making rapid changes to modernise the houses, and removing a lot of the original features in the process.

The Society campaigned against their demolition and redevelopment in the 1970s and Planning Sub-committee members are now recording the internal features within some of them, so at least there is a record of what they were originally like.

London Open House

On **Saturday 22 September** and **Sunday 23 September** London celebrates its annual feast of architecture when 750 buildings of all kinds open their doors to the public – free of charge. Buildings open this year include the Heron Tower and 30 St Mary Axe, a wide range of historic buildings as well as award-winning contemporary houses. Also included will be the newly landscaped King’s Cross area, and the Emirate Airline cable car. Full details are now on line at www.londonopenhouse.org, and the booklet is available at local libraries.

Oral History

I am currently studying for a postgraduate degree in Contemporary History at the University of Sussex. I am doing a research project exploring youth culture in Brixton and the surrounding areas in the 1980s, particularly around the time of the Brixton Riots. I would love to include an oral history project and am looking for people who would be willing to meet me to discuss their youth during the period.

Would any members of the Clapham Society be willing to have a friendly discussion with me? I would like to be able to bring the story of the dynamic

Citizens for Sanctuary

On **Thursday 20 September** Jonathan Cox will be the guest speaker at the Wandsworth Society Meeting at West Side Church (corner of Allfarthing Lane and Melody Road) at 7.45 pm for 8 pm.

Jonathan Cox has over four years experience working as a Community Organiser, has trained over 1,000 local leaders in Community Organising and is the Lead Organiser for the New Citizens Organising Team (NCOT). Between 2009 and 2010 he built Citizens for Sanctuary, a network of citizens’ alliances trained to use Community Organising techniques to secure local improvements for vulnerable people seeking sanctuary from persecution. This work culminated in the successful Sanctuary Pledge campaign at the 2010 election which secured a commitment from the coalition government to end the detention of children for immigration purposes.

In the summer of 2010 Jonathan was seconded to the College of Community Organising to act as Lead Adviser to Rt Hon David Miliband, MP, leading a team which trained over a thousand people across the UK in basic Community Organising skills.

After the riots last year, South London citizens ran a listening campaign, with hundreds of people interviewed. A meeting was held in May with Councillor Ravi Govindia, leader of Wandsworth Council, to discuss concerns about youth unemployment, housing issues etc, which was attended by over 300 people, from churches, pressure groups, and council estates. On 9 June the CitySafe initiative was officially launched. This scheme asks shopkeepers and cafe owners to let their premises become safe havens in the event of any sort of crime taking place in their immediate vicinity. The police agree to support this by making these venues priority callouts. Shopkeepers in Northcote Road, St Johns Road and Clapham Junction, (McDonalds and Asda among them) agreed to put stickers in their windows to this effect.

A youth training programme has now been set up in Wandsworth to train young people to develop community leadership skills. The welfare of everyone in the borough must surely concern all of us.

Libby Spurrier

youth culture of the local area to life in my project, but I desperately need people who would be able to talk to me, even if just for half an hour. If you would be willing to help me, email sp308@sussex.ac.uk.

Sophie Pearson

A Summer walk

Despite a rainy evening, two dozen brave members took part in our July walk, exploring around Park Hill. On the way we stopped at Parsons Corner (the junction of Clapham Park Road, Park Hill and Abbeville Road) which as the walk leader, Peter Jefferson Smith, explained had no clerical connections. Before the Second World War, a Mr Parsons had kept a newsagent's shop, but was bombed out. The family then moved across the road, to the house which still has 'Parsons Corner' in large lettering on it. They opened a kiosk in front of the house, from which they sold newspapers into the 1980s. The present owner of the house, daughter of Mr Parsons, saw our group outside, came out, and kindly explained this to us.

She also touched on another mystery. The railings in front of the house incorporate the arms of the City of London – but why? When the Parsons family took over the house, there was a builder's yard behind it, and they found the railings there and built them into their front wall. They thought the railings came from St Paul's Cathedral, but St Paul's actually kept its railings: so where and how the builder got them will remain one of those wartime mysteries.

Wimbledon Bookfest

Wimbledon's annual bookfest has a preview event on **Saturday 29 September** when Sir John Major talks about his new book, *My Old Man: A Personal History of the Music Hall*, the story of his father's life in music hall, including anecdotes about great performers such as Marie Lloyd, Vesta Tilley and George Robey.

During the following two weeks authors talking about their books include John Suchet, Margaret Drabble, Jack Straw, Shirley Conran, Salley Vickers, Sebastian Faulks and Rose Tremain. Details and booking at www.wimbledonbookfest.org or telephone 020 8545 8342.

Incredible Edible Lambeth

Not everyone has the opportunity to grow their own food, particularly in an inner city borough like Lambeth. By making public spaces available for local people to share both planting and harvesting fresh, healthy produce at low cost, individuals and organisations can make a difference within their communities. Landor Road in north Clapham even hosts an 'edible bus stop'.

For more information go to www.incredibleediblelambeth.org



Volunteer Pamela Woodroffe tends the raised beds near Clapham Common Bandstand. Photo: Anna Jefferson Smith

The Olympics in Clapham

The torch approaches Parson's Corner



Photo above: Bill Emmett Other photos: Dana Kubick



and it arrives!

The Stonehenge bouncy castle on the Common was very popular with the kids!



The French musicians performing on the Common: Les Grooms—Fanfare Tout Terrain



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.

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