

The Clapham Society

Newsletter



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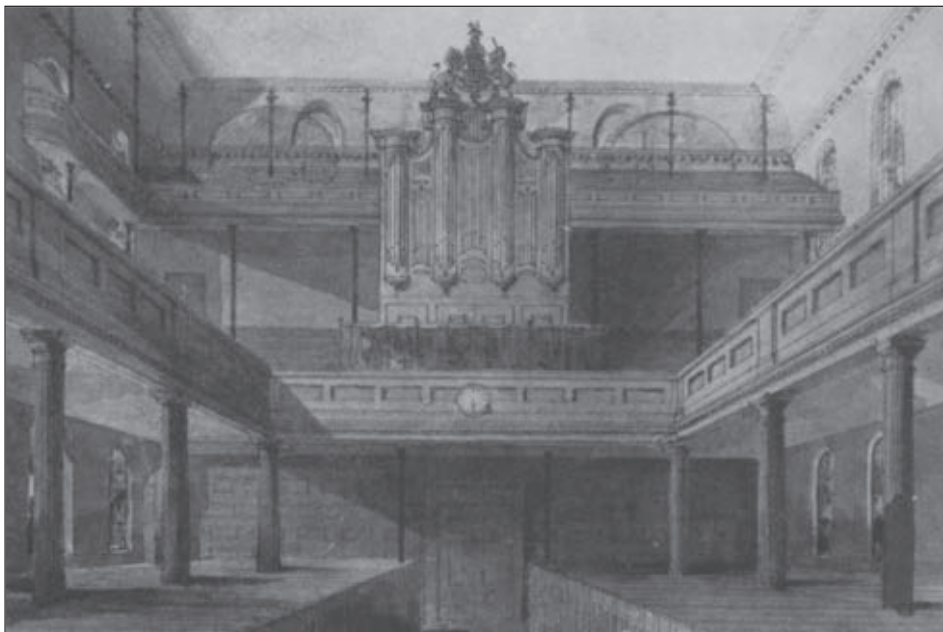
Holy Trinity Church Organs

On **Saturday 11 May** at St John's Church, Lansdowne Crescent, Notting Hill, W11 2NN the celebrated organist, Thomas Trotter, will give a concert on the newly restored organ that originally came from Holy Trinity Church, Clapham Common.

The organ was installed in 1794 at Holy Trinity and arrived in Notting Hill in 1845 where it has been a working part of the community ever since. The organ has been recently restored, and this concert celebrates its return to the church. Thomas Trotter is one of Britain's most widely admired musicians. This solo concert includes a programme of works by Bach, Elgar, and Messiaen among others.

The evening will commence at 6 pm with the launch of the new permanent exhibition about the history of the organ and the church. This will be followed at 7 pm by a short talk entitled *The Curious History of the St John's Organ* by organ specialist John Norman, who will explain the historical provenance of the organ and its links to William Wilberforce and Holy Trinity. The concert will commence at 8 pm. You are invited to join an historic evening of musical performance and culture, with complimentary drinks reception. Tickets £15, concession £10, are available in advance from nottinghillmayfest.org.uk or on the door.

Back in Clapham, on the same day **Saturday 11 May** at 5.30 pm Holy Trinity organist, Antony le Fleming, will introduce and play 50 minutes of popular organ classics on the magnificent 1910 Hunter organ at Holy Trinity Church, Clapham Common. Admission free.



Holy Trinity Church in 1842 showing the original organ, which is now in St John's Church, Notting Hill

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 15 May

Trees for life and beyond. This year is the 20th anniversary of Trees for Cities, with whom the Society has had a close working relationship over the past five years. A representative of Trees for Cities will talk to us about what has been achieved on Clapham Common so far, their plans for further planting and the intriguing relationship between trees and people, particularly how working with trees can change lives.

Wednesday 19 June

Emily Wilding Davison and the Suffragette Campaign in 1913. In this centenary year of the death of Emily Davison, who made the ultimate sacrifice of her life in support of the suffragette campaign, **Beverley Cook**, Social and Working History Curator at the Museum of London will talk to us about this and other campaigning activities of the suffragettes, such as arson and attacks on art works and the response by the government of the day to these activities.

Centenary year

This year, the Church of the Holy Spirit in Narbonne Avenue celebrates its centenary. The building was actually consecrated as a place of worship in January 1913, but its Feast of Title at Pentecost lends itself to a more celebratory occasion, with the hope for some sunshine at least.

On **Sunday 19 May** there will be a full sung Festival Eucharist with Bishop Richard of Kingston presiding and Canon Leanne Roberts of Southwark Cathedral preaching. During the service banners, doves and flames that will have been made during a parish day on **Saturday 18 May** will be displayed. The service will conclude with the sending out of the Easter flame and thereby the work of the Holy Spirit into the community.

Later that afternoon the church will host a street party for the local community. The party will take place on the stretch of Narbonne Avenue between Abbeville Road and Klea Avenue (inside the church if wet). As well as being a 100th birthday party for the Church of the Holy Spirit the occasion will also be raising awareness of and funds for Christian Aid. There will be a variety of games and activities including the chance to enter a cake baking competition and fancy dress parade and to throw wet sponges at the vicar! There will be a tea of sandwiches and cakes all washed down with a glass of Pimms. We will be joined for the afternoon by Bishop Christopher of Southwark.

Wandsworth Heritage Festival

Wandsworth's Annual Heritage Festival starts on **Thursday 30 May** with the unveiling of a blue plaque in Brewhouse Lane, Putney to Thomas Cromwell by Hilary Mantel, Booker-prize winning author of two books about him, *Wolf Hall* and *Bring up the Bodies*.

Two weeks of walks, talks, exhibitions and events follow. The full programme is in the Heritage Festival booklet available at Wandsworth libraries, or download from wandsworth.gov.uk/download/6196/heritage_festival

Note especially that Peter Jefferson Smith will be giving a talk on **Tuesday 4 June** at 6.30 pm at Battersea Library, entitled *The Good, the Bad and the Beautiful* about some of the more colourful residents of Clapham Common West Side. This will be followed up on **Tuesday 11 June** by a walk along West Side identifying some of their former houses, commencing at Clapham South Tube Station at 6.30 pm.

The New American Embassy

Around 80 members and guests came to our March meeting to hear Lynne Platt, Press Office Director from the US Embassy in London, talk about the new embassy to be built in the Nine Elms area.

Lynne started by telling us why the embassy needs to move from Grosvenor Square, and gave us a quick run-down on the history of the design of US embassies around the world.

Since the bombing of the US embassy in Beirut in 1983 there have been several attacks on embassies and consulates around the world, including the Benghazi, Libya attack and intruders scaling the embassy walls in Cairo. After Beirut the fiercely defensive Inman standards were adopted, which tilted US diplomatic architecture toward much criticised 'fortress America' buildings. Lynne showed some illustrations of the resulting grim, soulless buildings. More recently, the State Department has embraced a design excellence programme to meet security requirements in the context of more attractive buildings.

The present US embassy in Grosvenor Square, designed by Eero Saarinen in the 1950s and opened in 1960, is no longer fit for purpose. The search for a new site started in 2008, and after considering around 80 sites Nine Elms was chosen because it fulfilled several criteria: a 5-acre urban, brownfield site where the freehold could be purchased, it was affordable and sustainable. An added bonus was that it would be at the centre of a huge planned regeneration of the area from Vauxhall Bridge to Battersea Power Station.

The architectural competition in 2009 attracted 37 entries, and after several rounds the Philadelphia-based architects KieranTimberlake won the contract. The glass cube, of ten storeys over a two-storey colonnade is designed to reflect the transparency of US democracy, while at the same time being secure and protected. In reference to the English landscape tradition a large pond (not actually a moat as it has been called) surrounds part of the building and there is a ha-ha round the rest, with walkways spiralling towards the building. Beyond the secure boundaries will be a public park with through walkways.

The blast proof walls will be clad with EFTE panels with integrated photovoltaic cells. There are to be six garden areas within the embassy, each representing a different climatic area of the USA. There will also be a large 'art wall' and an art gallery, and a wall listing the names of the US ambassadors to the UK. Lynne showed us many pictures of the building, so that we have a good idea of what our new neighbour will look like. She then answered several questions about the scheme and the projected transport to the area touching on the regeneration of the area in general. The building contractor has already been selected (McAlpine) and work is due to start this spring for completion in 2017.

Full information about the project with drawings can be seen at london.usembassy.gov/new_embassy.html, including a presentation by the architect Stephen Kieran (go to 13 July 2012 under News).

John Lamb

We are sorry to report the death of John Lamb. He was 85, and one of the earliest members of the Clapham Society.

John grew up and spent all his life in Clapham. In 2001, he made three fascinating contributions to our publication *Clapham in the Twentieth Century*. In the first, he describes his boyhood, and the very different world of the 1930s – horse-drawn deliveries, trams, holidays at Southend – and the growing shadow of war. His second piece describes life in Clapham during the war, including the story of how his mother's stew stuck to the ceiling when their house was bombed, and dodging the doodlebugs and helping look after Channel Islands servicemen. Lastly, he describes the activities of himself and his brother as Young Conservatives in the post-war years.

For over half a century, John was a leading member of Holy Trinity Church. He continued to be active in a vast range of Clapham affairs until well into his seventies.

Peter Jefferson Smith

Respect: Past Present and Future

is the title of a talk at Holy Trinity Church on **Wednesday 12 June** at 6.30 pm. Special ticket price for Clapham Society members £8 includes curry supper. More details at nested.org.uk, call Julian Whiting on 07899 723620 or email jwhiting@yahoo.co.uk to book.

Henry Tate's Garden

On **Sunday 5 May** at 2 pm and 3 pm the Streatham Society is conducting tours of the historic gardens of Henry Tate's former house on the Park Hill estate (now Henry Tate Mews), Streatham Common. For details contact Brian Bloice on 020 8674 8314.

Clapham Chamber Concerts

The summer series opens with a family concert and musical adventure, *If a tree falls in the forest*, on **Friday 17 May** at 7 pm (note earlier time than usual); doors open 6.30 pm. The concert will last about 50 minutes and is most suitable for children aged seven and over, though all are welcome.

Sophie Rivlin (cello), Catherine Carter (mezzo soprano), Kate Wakeling (dancer and story-teller) and Jessie Maryon Davies (piano) will lead this lively interactive exploration of music and song with dance and story-telling. You are invited to solve the riddle of the story without an end, to try to crack Elgar's enigma code, navigate the seas on a ship with silken sails and sing the lost bird's song in Bartok's Hungarian forest. St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DX. Tickets are £10 adults, £8 Friends and concessions, £3 children, on the door. There will be a cash bar for soft drinks and wine before and after the show.

Clapham Chamber Concerts (CCC) was founded in 2008 by violinist Amanda Lake and pianist Jessica Maryon Davies. Both are passionate about bringing affordable and accessible music to Clapham. Amanda grew up locally and became a scholarship student of the violin at the Royal College of Music, while Jessie specialised in piano accompaniment at the Royal Academy of Music after taking a degree in History and Music at Leeds. The duo has been praised by the Mayor and Council of Lambeth for their commitment to putting something back into their community.

As well as performing for CCC themselves, Amanda and Jessie have brought together other talented young professionals who have gone on to establish high profiles – baritone Marcus Farnsworth and the Hampden Quartet.

CCC's annual programmes cover a broad range of instrumental and vocal music – classical, jazz, folk, improvisation – as well as themed evenings like a Shakespeare-inspired recital, and last year's programme illuminating the history of Clapham itself.

Summer fairs

St Paul's Church Fair is on **Saturday 8 June**, Holy Trinity Common Fayre on **Saturday 22 June**, and the Abbeville Fair on **Saturday 29 June**. As usual we shall have a Clapham Society stand at each event, to give information about the Society and to sell our publications. If you could spare an hour or two to help on any of these days please contact the Chairman.

The London Book of Days

The History Press has recently published *The London Book of Days* by Clapham author Peter de Loriol. This is a compact volume in cheerful London Bus red at under £10. Its tasteful typeface is easy to read: its contents stimulating. Each day page contains something that is genuinely entertaining and often enthralling on virtually every aspect of our capital's dramatic history – from the 11th to the 21st centuries.

Engaging ordinary characters merge well with vignettes of politicians, kings and queens, great events, well-known and unknown buildings and some endearing as well as many preposterously macabre anecdotes.

Clapham Society members will probably be acquainted already with Peter de Loriol's well-researched historical articles in the south London local press over many years and his book *Famous and Infamous Londoners*. This time we are brought up to date with entries such as '13 September 2011: The House of Commons Culture, Media and Sports Select Committee announced its intention to recall James Murdoch in its probe into the News International phone hacking scandal'.

It also includes such little known facts as '22 February 1557: The first Russian Embassy opened in London today. Exactly a year later a trade mission from Russia reached London, bringing many sable skins'.

In his clever choices from the press and the juxtaposition of the serious and the comic on each date, Peter de Loriol reveals his skills in bringing history alive. Clapham and Battersea have a couple of interesting entries including '12 March 1912: The last four-horse team pulling an ordinary garden seat bus, operated by Thomas Tilling, ran today from the foot of Balham Hill to Gracechurch St.'

Few would fail to be intrigued by the entry for '13 January 1583: Eight people were killed on this day at Paris Gardens, to the west of Southwark, when the scaffolds crowded with people watching bear-baiting collapsed. It was considered God's wrath as it happened on the Sabbath'.

The London Book of Days might even offer a seductive adjunct to the history curriculum? It is certainly a worthwhile read and would make a good gift. At least one copy will be crossing the Channel shortly as the perfect present for French friends – London being very much in fashion since the Olympics.

Celia Bibby

Peter de Loriol will be speaking at Clapham Books on **Wednesday 22 May** – see over.

London Fire Brigade

London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA) is consulting on its Draft Fifth London Safety Plan, and would like to hear your views. At a public meeting on **Thursday 16 May** at 7 pm at Lambeth Assembly Hall, Lambeth Town Hall, Brixton Hill, London SW2 1RW they will outline their plan, which sets out how the fire and rescue service could be delivered over the next few years. Amongst other things, it includes plans to keep within target attendance times for getting to incidents and details of how savings worth £28.8m could be made. These proposals also involve the closure of 12 fire stations, the removal of 18 fire engines, the redeployment of four fire engines and a reduction in the number of fire-fighter posts. If you can't make the meeting for details of the proposals and the online consultation go to london-fire.gov.uk/LSP5.asp

Bomb sites

A member has recently told us about two websites which will be useful to those interested in war time activity and damage in their area. One, bombsight.org records bombs dropped during the London Blitz of 1940/41 and the other flyingbombsandrockets.com tells the story of the V1s and V2s which destroyed tens of thousands of houses and killed nearly 9000 people in South London in 1944/45.

Trinity Hospice Country Fayre

On **Sunday 19 May** Trinity Hospice gardens will be open for a family fun day. There will be a farmers' market, petting farm, hog roast, homemade cake stall, Morris dancers and much more! Tickets – £5 for adults, £1 for children under 12 – can be bought in advance by visiting trinityhospice.org.uk/countryfare, or on the day.

Old Town Bus Stops

Members will know that the plans for regeneration of the Old Town area, which have been discussed over a very long period, include changes to the bus stops. Changes are proposed for the first and the last stops and the stands for the 88, 417, 249 and 322 buses. Transport for London is conducting a survey to find out the views of bus users. Go to consultations.tfl.gov.uk/buses/cot to complete the survey, but hurry because the closing day is **Wednesday 1 May**.

Hidden Heritage

An exhibition opening at the De Morgan Centre on **Wednesday 1 May** tells the story of Mrs Stirling, whose collection of Victorian art was displayed in Old Battersea House in Vicarage Crescent for many years. When the house was threatened with demolition in the 1920s Mrs Stirling persuaded Battersea Council to grant her a lifetime tenancy to display, for the benefit of Battersea residents, her art collection which consisted mainly of paintings by her sister, Evelyn de Morgan and ceramics by her brother-in-law William de Morgan. Tours of the collection were led by Mrs Stirling and her butler, Mr Peters. The exhibits will include Mrs Stirling's hand written catalogues and a list of distinguished visitors.

When Mrs Stirling died in 1965, just before her 100th birthday, plans to run the property as a museum and local history library proved unaffordable and the De Morgan Foundation, which had then been set up, was asked to remove the collection. After a decade of neglect the American publisher, Malcolm Forbes took a lease on the house in the late 1970s and it was his London base until the family sold the lease in 2011. It is now the home of Alexandra Tolstoy and her partner.

The De Morgan Centre at 38 West Hill, SW18 1RX is open Tuesday to Friday 1 pm to 5 pm and Saturday 11 am to 5 pm. Admission £4, children free.

What next for Nine Elms?

On **Wednesday 8 May** at 7 pm the Battersea Society is holding a meeting to learn about the latest proposals for Battersea Power Station, Covent Garden Market and the Nine Elms area from the Director and members of the Strategy Board for the area. The meeting will be at The View at Battersea Power Station, 188 Kirtling Street, SW8 5BP.

Bach pilgrimage

On **Thursday 9 May** Thomas Bowes will give a solo violin concert in the Church of the Holy Spirit Narbonne Avenue, SW4 9LQ in aid of the Centenary Fund. This is one in a series of 50 concerts he is performing on a Bach pilgrimage, during which he will play JS Bach's Sonatas and Partitas for solo violin.

He joined the London Philharmonic in 1987 and since then has performed with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields and The Academy of Ancient Music, as well as releasing CDs and concert-mastering film scores including *The King's Speech* and *Skyfall*. Admission is by donation (suggested minimum £10) at holyspirit-clapham.org.uk or on the door, and there will be a cash bar.

Bookshop news

On **Wednesday 8 May** at 7 pm Ben Pedroche, who in 2011 spoke about his book *Do Not Alight Here: Walking London's Lost Underground and Railway Stations*, returns to talk about his new book *London's Lost Power Stations and Gasworks*. This is a fascinating hidden history of Britain's capital, which covers famous sites that are still standing today, such as Battersea and Bankside (now the Tate Modern), but also the previously untold stories of long-demolished and forgotten sites.

On **Wednesday 22 May** at 7 pm Peter de Loriol will talk about *The London Book of Days* (see review on page 3) This great collection of interesting facts about London takes you through the year day by day, with quirky, eccentric, amusing and important events and facts from different periods of history, many of which had a major impact on the religious and political history of Britain as a whole.

Both are free events at Clapham Books, 120 Clapham High Street, SW4 7UH. All welcome.

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 our website at claphamsociety.com

Art in Rectory Grove

Every Friday and Saturday during May (from 12 noon to 6 pm) I am opening my studio in Rectory Grove to the public for the first time. My exhibition, called *It's hero time*, will feature a 10 metre long drawing and a variety of extraordinary crochet sculptures. Viewers are invited to contemplate 'the heroic' in relation to opposite ends of the age demographic. Explosive images of adolescent boys vie for attention with fluorescent woolly creations more commonly associated with the handiwork of older women. A tour de force of artistic skill and experience, the exhibition aims to inform and entertain. Come along and see for yourself at The Old Army & Navy Store, 3a Rectory Grove, SW4 0DX or find out more at cathywatkins.co.uk.



Gaming boys by Cathy Watkins

Cathy Watkins