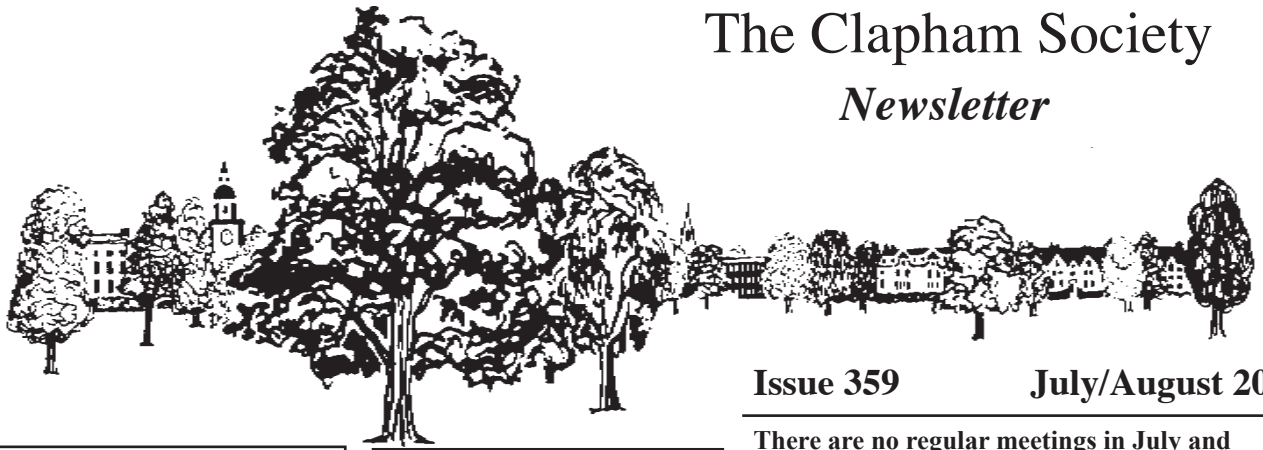


The Clapham Society

Newsletter



Issue 359

July/August 2013

There are no regular meetings in July and August – but we have the following summer events

Wednesday 3 July. Annual Summer Party in the garden of our President, Martin Drury in Victoria Rise. A ticket application form was in the last newsletter, but there may still be a few tickets available. Check with Nina Murdoch (020 7738 8740).

Wednesday 17 July. A guided walk along Clapham Common West Side led by Derrick Johnson. Meet at Clapham South Underground Station at 6.30 pm.

Wednesday 14 August. A guided walk around the Clapham North area led by Peter Jefferson Smith. Meet at Clapham North Underground Station at 6.30 pm.

Sunday 1 September. Our 50th Anniversary celebration concert on Clapham Common Bandstand at 3 pm. Junction Jazz, a 10-piece traditional jazz group.

The next meeting will be on

Wednesday 18 September

Sew Over It. Lisa Comfort, a local entrepreneur with a passion for sewing and a concern that it is becoming a lost skill, will talk about setting up and running Sew Over It, her sewing café in Landor Road, SW9. It opened in 2011 offering classes in dressmaking, pattern cutting, soft furnishings, quilting, crochet and knitting as well as sewing parties and the opportunity to hire a sewing machine and a knowledgeable helper for an afternoon. Lisa studied at the London College of Fashion and later worked for British Designer Bruce Oldfield and bridal couture designer Philippa Lepley.

Wednesday 16 October

Annual General Meeting at which our Guest Speaker will be Baron O'Donnell of Clapham (Gus O'Donnell) former Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Home Civil Service.

The Clapham Society is 50 years old this year.

To commemorate the occasion we have published a booklet giving a snapshot of our activities during these years. A copy will be delivered to you with this newsletter. This is rather like a scrapbook into which we have pasted memories which we hope will give a flavour of the Society and what it has done and continues to do. You are welcome to have as many copies as you wish, and we would like you to pass them on to friends to encourage them to join the Society. Please contact Alyson Wilson (020 7622 6360) for more copies.

Further celebrations include our Annual Party on **Wednesday 3 July** and the Bandstand Concert on **Sunday 1 September** (see details alongside).

Ruth Ling

We were shocked and saddened to hear of the sudden death of Councillor Ruth Ling. Ruth was a much-respected member of our local community and for many years a councillor for Clapham Common ward. A full tribute will appear in a future newsletter.

Wine and Roses

The garden of 18 Sibella Road will be open this year on **Sunday 30 June** from 5 pm to 8 pm in aid of the Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation. A suggested donation of £5 will give you a glass of wine and the chance to relax on a summer evening with friends and neighbours.

The Old Fire Station

The fourth of the Clapham Society's green plaques, commemorating the former uses of historic buildings, has been unveiled on The Lodge, 33 The Pavement (opposite The Frog pub). This was built in 1868 as Clapham Fire Station, and remained in that use until 1902. We are very grateful to Matthew and Gillian Bennett for their permission to erect the plaque.

It was unveiled on 5 June by Professor Andrew Saint, General Editor of the *Survey of London*. He spoke about the formation in 1866 of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade as the first publicly funded fire service for London. Twenty-six new fire stations were built, but as fire appliances became larger and more were required, most of these stations have been demolished or drastically altered to make way for larger ones. Because of its constricted site, the Clapham station had to be replaced on a new site in Old Town, leaving the old building as a unique survivor. It is also a rare example of the work of the architect Edward Cressy junior.

The unveiling went with a hitch. When the cord was pulled, the cloth covering the plaque tore, leaving it half stuck to the plaque. So a resourceful member fetched a bar stool from The Frog, and the tallest person there, who lives in The Lodge, stood precariously on it to complete the unveiling. After that, the company adjourned to The Frog, where Andrew Saint recalled the story of how, when George VI opened the New Bodleian Library in Oxford, the ceremonial key broke in the lock.

Trees for Cities

At our May meeting our speaker Richard Lambert, Youth, Community and Education Manager at Trees for Cities, took his very attentive audience through many aspects of the work of the organisation, now celebrating its 20th birthday. An independent charity, its main brief is to plant trees in urban areas, but it goes far wider than that with a conviction that trees can change lives for the better. Critical to all their projects is community involvement and a level of local commitment that will ensure future viability.

Richard gave a few statistics to illustrate the scale of their work. They currently deliver around 20 projects in London each year; are present in 16 regional UK cities and eight international cities. They have planted over 160,000 trees in London involving over 65,000 people. Working with the Friends of Clapham Common and Lambeth Council they have planted 38 species of trees on the Common over the past five years.

A lot of their work is educational and involves schools and colleges, including seven schools around Clapham Common. They are able to offer specialist City & Guilds qualifications in work-based horticulture – certificate level 1 and diploma level 2.

A highlight of the evening was a video about an Edible Playground created at Rotherfield Primary School in Islington. The children's happiness at being able to show the food which they had grown and harvested was good to see. (It is on the Trees for Cities website treesforcities.org and well worth a look.)

In contrast, we were shown a joint project in La Paz, Bolivia, which involved the reforestation of hillsides where the land had become unstable resulting in landslides.

Trees for Cities would welcome donations from our members. If you can contribute to this valuable and very interesting cause please visit treesforcities.org/donate or contact heather@treesforcities.org or 020 7820 4419 and you will be helping Trees for Cities to plant trees where they are most needed.

Anna Jefferson Smith

True Stories

In September Battersea Arts Centre is presenting a festival based on members of the public telling stories about extraordinary episodes in their lives. The aim is to get stories from as wide a range of people as possible. About 50 stories will be selected and the storytellers will attend two workshops prior to the performances which will be between 16 and 28 September. A small fee will be paid to performers. If you are interested in submitting a story go to bac.org.uk/truestories for more details and to download an application form.

St Paul's opera

On Saturday 15 June St Paul's Church hosted an excellent opera evening in aid of the church restoration fund. The church was crowded for the performance of two one act operas – Mozart's *Der Schauspieldirektor* and Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* – expertly and imaginatively presented under the direction of local opera singer and teacher, Jennifer McGregor. The beautiful rendering by the young Australian lyric soprano, Phoebe Humphreys, of the familiar aria *O mio bambino caro* from the latter opera, was received with particular enthusiasm.

Some opera goers even braved the intermittent rain and cold wind to picnic in the church grounds.



Summer Fete

On **Sunday 7 July** from 12.30 pm to 5 pm the Friends of Clapham Common are holding a fete around the bandstand on the Common. There will be games, entertainment, a steel band and many local charities – including the Clapham Society – will have stands. The Men's Final from Wimbledon will be shown in a special TV marquee and La Baita café will have a barbecue.

Clapham meets Jamaica

The exotic garden at 35 Turret Grove, SW4 0ES is open for the National Gardens Scheme this year on **Sunday 21 July** from 10 am to 5 pm. The tiny garden (8 m x 25 m) is packed with plants including bamboos, ginger, bananas and tree ferns. Get a foretaste at turretgrove.com.

On the Common

On the August Bank Holiday weekend SW4 Festival celebrates its 10th year. Dates and times of this large music festival are **Saturday 24 August** from 12 noon to 10.30 pm and **Sunday 25 August** from 12 noon to 10 pm.

Literary Putney

This is a fascinating survey of literary figures from Samuel Pepys to Jilly Cooper, with connections, sometimes tenuous, to Putney. For some of them it was a safe haven from the bustle and smoke of Central London or a backwater for gay writers like EM Forster, who didn't come out, or JR Ackerley, who did. Mary Wollstonecraft tried to commit suicide by jumping from Putney Bridge and Algernon Swinburne was sent there in 1879 to dry out and remained until his death 30 years later. Laurie Lee found work as a labourer and started writing and William Cooper set his *Scenes from Married Life* here. Some of them are commemorated by Putney Society blue plaques and there is a map, showing where many of them lived, which would make an interesting literary walk.

Literary Putney and its Environs by Sue Rolfe with contributions by Hugh Thompson, is published by Wandsworth Historical Society and the Putney Society, price £6 plus £1.50 p & p. It is available from Sue Rolfe, 15 Werter Road, SW15 2LL. Cheques should be made payable to The Putney Society.

Derrick Johnson

New members

We are pleased to welcome the following new members this month: Rachel Carpenter and Stephen Barney, Hannah Ginnett, Nicholas Philpot, The London Shambhala Meditation Centre and Studio Voltaire.

Monday evening sewing

From 15 July our local sewing café, Sew Over It, (see September meeting) will be open on Monday evenings from 6 to 9 pm, so you can drop in to buy supplies, do some sewing or have a chat. They also now offer an alterations service for those who can't cope without help. 78 Landor Road, SW9 9PH. Tel. 020 7326 0376.

Haunted Lambeth

Even if you don't believe in ghosts, these stories of the many varied manifestations bring local history to life in an unusual way. They provide a focus for weekend family trips out and about to different destinations with the added spice of the supernatural for those who like a shiver down their spine. For example, the Victorian gothic delights of Platform One on Tulse Hill Station on a deserted Sunday afternoon provide an ideal setting for listening for the ghostly footsteps of a platelayer who didn't hear the new electric train. It is a good story to bear in mind when electric cars become commonplace. The Tradescant tomb is tailor-made for an MR James ghost story and worth a visit to the Garden Museum even though any attempt to raise this particular spirit would now involve breaking into the Museum at midnight. This book provides an unusual approach to exploring Lambeth, it is great fun and is recommended entertainment for residents, visitors and would-be ghost hunters alike.

Haunted Lambeth by James Clark, price £9.99 is available from Clapham Books, 120 Clapham High Street, SW4 7UH.

Anne Wilson

Clapham Common Bandstand

The following events are planned on the bandstand during the summer. All concerts start at 3 pm and are FREE.

Saturday 6 July Merton Concert Band Mixed concert band repertoire, specialising in big band and show music.

Saturday 13 July Alvarez Theory Original songs of a folk Americana style with vocals, fiddles, guitar, concertina and mandolin.

Sunday 14 July Siswa Sukra Traditional and modern Javanese gamelan (percussion orchestra).

Saturday 27 July Lewisham Concert Band Mixture of light classical music including marches, waltzes and west end tunes.

Sunday 28 July South London Sax Quartet An upbeat mixture of popular swing and jazz and popular classical songs.

Sunday 4 August Bloomsbury Music Group A mix of professional arrangements of classics, showtunes, ballet music and light summer numbers for a large wind ensemble.

Saturday 10 August Lambeth Wind Orchestra Light-hearted, family-friendly, repertoire including folk songs, marches, show tunes, pop classics and music from the movies.

Sunday 11 August Southwark Concert Band A varied programme of rousing marches, Broadway and West End show tunes, children's themes and modern interpretations of classics.

Roads and Transport Sub-committee

Further to the note in last month's newsletter on 30 May a small band of members attended the first meeting of the re-convened Roads and Transport Sub-committee.

As a first step we have agreed a broad overall remit covering the following:

- quality and maintenance of Clapham's streetscape/public realm;
- health and safety;
- improvements to the local network;
- management of works to the highway;
- public transport issues; and parking policy and controls.

We then considered a range of issues that are likely to provide the focus of our energies for the time being. Some of the main ones are:

- i the future of Clapham Fire Station, which is currently threatened with closure as part of a package of cuts being imposed on the London Fire Service.
- ii implementation of the Clapham Gateway project and consequential proposals in regard to cycle routes and parking around Old Town that have largely emerged since the approved scheme was drafted.
- iii maintenance of footpaths and streets, and the presence of obstructions that are unsightly and present a hazard.
- iv improvements in public transport, including seeking re-instatement of a direct rail service to Victoria from Clapham High Street and Wandsworth Road stations.
- v rationalising parking controls to better cater for local needs.
- vi maintenance of trees in residential streets.
- vii pressing for greater control over changes of use and licensing of premises – a concern shared with the Planning Sub-committee.

We are currently undertaking a small survey of short term parking in Old Town, and have submitted comments to the London Fire Commissioner opposing closure of our local Fire Station.

The Sub-committee aims to meet every two months, and seeks ideas and feedback from members as well as potential volunteers prepared to serve on the sub-committee and to help with surveys, etc. Please contact Mark Leffler (contact details on back page).

Saturday 17 August No Frills Band Brixton based five-piece offering a lively mix of traditional dance music and songs from the Celtic traditions, and across Europe to the Americas.

Sunday 18 August London Consorts of Winds A combination of ancient music and contemporary instrumentation playing popular and light classical pieces.

Saturday 31 August Crystal Palace Band A traditional brass band appealing to a wide audience performing light classical and popular music for all to enjoy.

Sunday 1 September. The Clapham Society's 50th Anniversary celebration concert. An afternoon of traditional jazz by Lambeth favourites, Junction Jazz.

Local history books

To coincide with publication of the *Survey of London* Battersea volumes this autumn, Patrick Loobey's book of historic local images, *Battersea & Clapham: The Second Selection* has been reprinted by The History Press after many years out of print. This is now the only book of historic photographs of Battersea and Clapham in print. Available in Wandsworth Museum shop, price £9.99.

The Wandsworth Historical Society has also reprinted *House Building and Builders in Wandsworth c.1850-1915*, by Keith Bailey, which examines the achievement of builders in the area. Price £4 plus £1.50 p & p. Email nrobson@tiscali.co.uk.

Broadhinton Road Street Party

On 8 June we held a street party to celebrate our 150th birthday. Broadhinton Road in Clapham Old Town – ‘A street of Remarkable Unity and Quiet Charm’ – was (mostly) built in 1863, its name apparently coming from the Wiltshire village of Broad Hinton where the owner and developer of the land, a Mr. Frederick Hewitt, met his wife Elizabeth in the 1820s.

Earlier this year some of the residents decided that we should have a street party to celebrate our 150th birthday. As we had not had one for either the Royal Wedding or the Diamond Jubilee, there was much enthusiasm for this project, and it all came together beautifully. Preparations had been going on for many weeks, and on 8 June we woke up to a brilliant sunny day, and by 2 pm we were ready to party.

The street, clear of cars, was decorated with bunting and balloons, trees and large shrubs lent by Anthony de Grey Gardens. There was tea and coffee and dozens of delicious home-made cakes, Pimm’s, beer (donated by Lost Society), and squash for the children. We had a bouncy castle, which was a great hit with the smaller children, as was the fire engine from our local Clapham Fire Station (threatened with closure). Dozens of excited small people (and some larger ones too) scrambled around in and on the machine for two hours. The firemen were great fun and very kind and helpful with their small fans. There were races for the children, face-painting, pottery-making, and a tug o’ war for the grown-ups... the north side of the road versus the south side! The south side won easily, but we had not done a head count so it could well have been cheating! A raffle with some super prizes donated by many local businesses raised a good sum of money for two local charities: the Hibbert Almshouses, and Clapham Pottery. People came and went all afternoon, enjoying the camaraderie, the food, the freedom and the sunshine.

At around 5 pm, there was a barbecue with tasty burgers and sausages, baked potatoes and salads, all donated by residents, more Pimm’s, beer and wine. We had music and dancing too, until finally the party broke up around 8 pm, by which time the wind was cold and it was time to bring to a close a VERY special day. What fun it had been to walk freely around the road, to meet and talk to neighbours who otherwise we would never come across!

It was lovely to be able to invite former residents of the road, for them to see how it has changed, and to meet their old neighbours and friends again. Everyone involved agreed that all the hard work and planning had been worth every moment, and had created a spectacularly happy and successful day. And the sun shone ALL DAY LONG! In fact, we can’t wait to do it all again.... one day!

Joan Sinclair



Between the Commons

On **Sunday 14 July** Nightingale Lane will be closed to traffic for the Between The Commons Country Fayre organised by local residents. Restaurants and cafes in the Lane will spill out on to the pavements and there will be various stalls – including a Clapham Society one, so you will have another chance to buy those books and walks leaflets you have missed out on. There will also be local bands, sports and games activities. This will all take place between 10 am and 4 pm. Funds raised will be donated to Oak Lodge School for Deaf Children in Nightingale Lane.

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

Chairman **Annabel Allott**

21 Clapham Common West Side,
SW4 9AN

Tel: 020 7228 5551

Email: annabel@allott.plus.com

Secretary **Jill Cramphorn**

552 Wandsworth Road, SW8 3JX

Tel: 020 7720 3343

Treasurer **David Brown**

15 Turret Grove, SW4 0ES

Tel: 020 7720 7536

Meetings and Events **Nina Murdoch**

40 Clapham Manor Street, SW4 6DZ

Tel: 020 7738 8740

Email: info@ninamurdoch.co.uk

Membership Secretary

Jennifer Everett

30 Trinity Close, SW4 0JD

Tel: 020 7627 4770

Planning Matters **Philip Ashford**

45 Rodenhurst Road, SW4 8AE

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Roads and Transport **Mark Leffler**

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Newsletter and Publications

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Details of meetings, activities and a full list of our publications are on our website at claphamsociety.com

Lambeth Heritage Month

Lambeth’s Annual Archives Open Day on **Saturday 28 September** is to be preceded this year by a month of special heritage events provided by various local amenity and history societies in the borough. The launch will be on **Sunday 1 September** at Brunswick House SW8 and the Clapham Society will be hosting a talk about tracing the history of your house at Clapham Library on **Wednesday 24 September**. More details of the month’s programme will be in the September newsletter.