

# The Clapham Society Newsletter



Issue 364

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## Crystal Palace Subway



The subway was originally used as an underpass between Crystal Palace High Level station and the Crystal Palace itself. With its Byzantine inspired architecture and stunning geometric brickwork, the subway is a hidden gem of the Victorian era, first opened to the public in December 1865. It was used as an air-raid shelter during the Second World War and was closed to the public in 1954. The Friends of Crystal Palace Subway plan to reopen the space to the public eventually.

In the meantime they are collecting memories of the subway for an exhibition in September 2014. If you have any memories, plans, drawings or photographs of the subway that you would be willing to share contact the project leader, Sue Giovanni on 07956 861052 or [inspired@cpsubway.org.uk](mailto:inspired@cpsubway.org.uk).

## Panorama of the Thames

Members are invited by the Battersea Society to a showing of the film about the Panorama of the Thames Project. In 1829 the London publisher Samuel Leigh produced a panorama depicting both banks of the River Thames between Richmond and Westminster in one continuous painting. This 60 ft scroll has been digitally restored and transformed into a film. The Panorama of the Thames Project is currently creating a contemporary version of the Leigh

Panorama, showing the Thames riverside of the past and present.

The film will be shown at the Royal College of Art Dyson Building, 1 Hester Road, SW11 4AN on **Thursday 20 February** at 7.30 pm. Admission free.

## New members

We have recently welcomed the following new members: Caroline Booth, Hash Chavda and Mark Crouch, Chris and Francine Corbin, Susannah Hamilton, Amalie and Mia Kjaergaard and Anthony Horah, Ben Kind, and Megan Lawler.

## NEW VENUE AND DAY FOR MEETINGS IN 2014

This year our meetings will be held at Clapham's new arts centre, Omnibus, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW on **MONDAY** evenings. The bar at Omnibus will be open from 7 pm, and meetings will commence at 8 pm. Our guest will normally speak for about 45 minutes, followed by around 15 minutes for questions and discussion, and the bar will remain open after meetings. Meetings are free and open to non-members, so please bring your friends along.

### Monday 17 February

**Sir Frank Baines.** **Chris Pond** (formerly of the House of Commons Library and chairman of the Loughton Historical Society) will trace the life of Frank Baines, long-term, if part-time, Clapham resident, eminent architect, arts and crafts exponent, and world conservation expert. He was an East-End boy who became the friend of George V – his private life was a web of enigma.

### Monday 17 March

**Sustaining the High Street.** **Jeremy Keates**, Clapham and Brixton Town Centre Manager at Lambeth Council will talk about the Council's current approach to town centres and work at present being done in Clapham, led by the local business community.

## Award Winner

Our *Clapham Common Trees* leaflet won a 'Highly Commended' certificate at the London Forum's Media Awards ceremony at the end of last year. Congratulations to Claire Fry and Jennifer Everett who put it together! We still have plenty of copies available, and they are **free** so please do ask for copies to give to anyone who would be interested.

## Survey of London, Battersea

It is 56 years since the *Survey of London* produced a volume on South London, and then in 2013, along came three! Early in the year Volume 47, Woolwich, was published and in November, Volumes 49 and 50 covering Battersea – the area of the old parish and the former metropolitan borough. This includes Clapham Common, and much of North Side, West Side and areas west as far as Clapham Junction, which confusingly is not strictly in Clapham.

The area is so large (2164 acres) and diverse that the survey team adopted a new approach in dividing it into two books covering different aspects: Volume 49 entitled Public, Commercial and Cultural and Volume 50 Houses and Housing. It is tempting to go to the second volume first to check out streets that one knows. This is a fine, provided it is followed up by a serious perusal of the first volume to find out about the back-up provided for the housing – the industry, schools, libraries, theatres, churches and open spaces. The advent, development and often demise of these is well covered in Volume 49 which brings us right up to date with a chapter on Battersea Power Station and the final chapter entitled ‘The Reconstruction of Nine Elms’.

Intriguing details about 19th century life are revealed in the text: did you know about the ‘dust destructor’ which burnt local refuse to produce clinker used for road fill and to make flagstones, or the ‘disinfecting station’ attached to the mortuary where clothing and bedding belonging to those with infectious diseases were disinfected? The rise and fall of industry along the river bank is well documented and illustrated, and there are pictures of demolished churches, theatres, bath houses and so on, as well as lively descriptions of architecture old and new: e.g. Northcote Road Library ‘a building of unsurpassed municipal grimness.’ Parks, open spaces and commons are covered in this volume, and I was pleased by a slight straying over the borough boundary on Clapham Common to include the story of the evolution of the bandstand café from Alfred Vago’s ‘tent’ in 1892.

Each chapter of Volume 50 on housing covers a specific area (19 different ones) and is prefaced by a map of the area today, followed by older maps and plans within the text which make the growth of the area easy to follow. There is a wealth of information to be found in the

## Events on the Common

The hearing by the Lambeth Licensing Sub-committee of the application by Live Nation, the UK’s biggest music business, for an open ended Premises Licence for a much extended events area on the Common was held on 9 January. The original date set, 23 December, drew opposition from objectors for obvious reasons. Subsequently Lambeth Council named two different dates and one different time. Prior to the meeting Live Nation had conceded that the Licence would be time limited to a three-day rock festival on 27, 28 and 29 June which was good news.

After Live Nation had put their case there was some quite tough questioning from the three councillors representing Lambeth Council. Objectors were encouraged by the presence of MP Kate Hoey who had been quoted in the press as saying: ‘The proposals by Live Nation will fundamentally change the nature of the Common. It is a step too far in the direction of commercialisation of what should be first and foremost a common.’ The strong team of objectors, which included representatives of the Clapham Society, Friends of Clapham Common, Clapham Common Management Advisory Committee, a local resident who had hired a sound expert and a local barrister who was an expert in licensing law, expressed their opinions in a fairly low key but comprehensive and competent manner.

The main problems highlighted were the size of the crowd (45,000) the greatly extended events area, the likelihood of unacceptable noise levels and the long hours, 12 noon until 10.30 pm, to be cleared by 11 pm on three consecutive nights. A little after 11 pm the sub-committee retired to reach their decision but soon returned to tell us that a majority decision had been reached but that because of the late hour and the need for further discussion we would be informed of what it was within five working days.

As we go to press we have learned that Live Nation have been granted a time limited Premises Licence for a three day rock concert in June. Three conditions were imposed, two of which involve relatively small changes but disappointingly the maximum capacity remains at 45,000, which most people agree is far too many for an event of this kind on Clapham Common. This event will clearly have a major impact on the local community and we will be encouraging our members to contribute their views at the time.

## Moonwalk

Another new event for the Common will be Moonwalk which is held annually in aid of breast cancer charities. While we are fully supportive of its aims and objectives the organisers are seeking a Premises Licence for music throughout the night of 10 May, unprecedented for the Common. We are concerned about noise levels and will aim to get reassurance that these will be properly monitored and controlled. Up to 17,000 participants are expected.

illustrations even without reading the text, which is crammed full of detail. While so many industrial and public buildings have gone, most residential buildings have survived, albeit slightly adapted, as the character of the area has changed. The extensive research by the *Survey of London* team has for the first time identified architects for some larger houses around Clapham Common.

The really outstanding feature of these books is their clear presentation and lavish use of maps, photographs – old and new (including aerial) and especially drawings, some floor plans and elevations of buildings but also details, such as door surrounds and designs of moulded brick panels. The detailed research and scholarship is impressive: and all is impeccably sourced and annotated. It is easy to think of the *Survey of London* as a work of reference, but that is to

underestimate these volumes which are a very good read and wear their scholarship lightly. You will find you go to look something up and in no time you are totally absorbed!

Abyson Wilson

The special offer to members by Yale University Press has been extended until the end of March. The retail price of each volume is £75, and £60 to members. For both volumes bought together the retail price is £135, and £110 to members. Prices include free postage and packing (in the UK only). Orders may be placed on line at [yalebooks.co.uk](http://yalebooks.co.uk). On checkout enter the promo code SLB13. If you do not have internet access you may order by telephone: call 020 7079 4900, ask for Sales and quote the code above to receive your discount. Order your copies now – you will not regret it!

## Omnibus

We would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a Happy New Year from Omnibus and to thank you for your support last season. We are very proud to announce that in our first month of operating, 1500 people attended our events and paved the way for an exciting year ahead.

Our **Classic Sunday** season continues on **Sunday 26 January** at 4.30 pm with Kosmos Ensemble who will be performing Gypsy, Jewish, Balkan, Arabic, Tango and Jazz with their own contemporary twist. On **Sunday 9 February** Australian guitar and flute duo Bronte Hudnott and Andrey Lebedev bring an entertaining exploration of music from Australia and the wider world to Omnibus.

**Northside Jazz**, a fortnightly Sunday evening Jazz concert launches on **Sunday 2 February** with Last Summer's Tealights – music with strong melodies, jazz harmonies and a potent sense of nostalgia. Part classical, part folk, part pop, part hymnal, the music is a wonderful hotchpotch of shared influences.

**Route 88**, our rolling programme of Monday events starts on **Monday 27 January** with an acoustic evening and **Monday 10 February** sees the return of **Route 88: Comedy**. Regular monthly film nights will start in March.

On **Saturday 25 January** we are launching two groups – our **Youth Theatre, Actors Alive** will run in the mornings, and **Saturday Plays** is for adults who love reading plays as well as, after a few rehearsals, reading them to an invited audience of friends and family. For details and booking go to [omnibus-clapham.org](http://omnibus-clapham.org).

February also sees the installation of a lift from the foyer to the first floor recital room making us completely wheelchair accessible.

We are delighted that Clapham Society meetings will be relocating to Omnibus and we look forward to welcoming you to 1 Clapham Common North Side.

*Marie McCarthy*

*Artistic Director Omnibus*

## Reading in primary schools

Local primary schools (amongst them Clapham Manor, Heathbrook, Macaulay) welcome volunteers to listen to children reading. This is especially important for children whose family may not speak English at home. Schools may also need help with their libraries. They can be flexible about the time you go in and how long you spend. A DBS/CRB check may be required, but regulations have been relaxed for some activities. Contact one of the schools direct if you are interested.

*Jenny Cobley*

## Children of the Great War

You are invited to a **Children of the Great War Open Day** on **Tuesday 25 February** from 11 am to 4 pm at Clapham Library, Mary Seacole Centre, 91 Clapham High Street, SW4 7DB. Age Exchange and Lambeth Libraries are recording stories, collecting photographs, letters and memorabilia about the First World War for a centenary display later in the year. If you have a relative who fought in the war and have memories which you would like to record, book a slot in advance with Annicka Anciff, email [AAncliff@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:AAncliff@lambeth.gov.uk) or telephone 020 7926 4788.

## Clapham Chamber Concerts

Clapham Chamber Concerts opens its spring season on **Friday 31 January** with a violin and piano recital by Amanda Lake and Jessie Maryon Davies. This performance by the two founders of the series has become a highlight in the annual programme of concerts.

The recital will feature three well known works of quite distinct emotional and musical character: Beethoven's *'Spring' Sonata* for Piano and Violin, Schumann's *Violin Sonata in A minor*, and Elgar's *Sonata for Violin and Piano*.

The second concert in the season is on **Friday 28 February**, a commemorative concert entitled **A Line in the Sand: 100 years since WW1**. Following their popular retelling of Clapham's history in our winter series 2012, TROUPE return with another cross-arts programme of movement, physical theatre and spoken word featuring chamber works for voice, strings, flute and piano by Debussy, Kodaly, Handel, Gurney, Cage and Ives.

Both concerts are at St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DX at 7.30 pm (doors open 7.00 pm). Tickets on the door: £12, £9 concessions and students. For more details go to [claphamchamberconcerts.org.uk](http://claphamchamberconcerts.org.uk).

## Photographing Clapham

In the September newsletter we announced the project to photograph Clapham's streets to provide a record of its buildings and other structures – something that has never been easier with the advent of digital photography. Unfortunately the response has been disappointing with few volunteers coming forward to photograph their own, or other, streets. If we are to achieve anything like comprehensive coverage we need many more volunteers. We are seeking an historical record which may be compared with the same streets in five years time when, in a fast changing environment, the main ones may have altered considerably.

Despite the sometimes indifferent weather the next few months are the best time to photograph buildings as there are few leaves on the trees and the light is not too bright. We show one of Phil Stubbington's excellent photos of Abbeville Road to illustrate what we need.

If you are interested in taking part please contact Jennifer Everett (30

Trinity Close, SW4 0JD e-mail [jeverett@waitrose.com](mailto:jeverett@waitrose.com)). She will send you details of the format, size and quality needed together with the information required to catalogue the image. So please get out your cameras, or use the ones you got for Christmas, and start snapping the local streets. You may even see them in a different way from behind the lens.

*Derrick Johnson*



**Makerhood** For locally made goods, art, design and food go to [makerhood.com](http://makerhood.com). This new website promotes locally made goods in Lambeth. Started in Brixton three years ago it is now spreading across the borough, encouraging independent enterprises to flourish in the community.

## November meeting

At our last meeting of the year, Colin Thom, author of Part 2 of the recently published *Survey of London*, the volume which covers housing in Battersea, gave a talk about researching the book and an overview of the development of the area.

He showed, with illustrations, how Battersea changed during the 19th century from a rural area with market gardens in a multiplicity of tenures with just a few large houses – mainly by the river and around the Common – to a densely packed suburb filled with a tight grid of terraced houses.

Development was dramatically affected by the advent of the railways, which carved through the area in the 1840s, halting some prestigious developments but encouraging terraces designed for office workers, who could now travel easily into the city. Gradually the whole area between the river and Clapham Common, with the exception of Battersea Marshes (now Battersea Park) was filled with terraced housing, while industry developed along the riverside. Colin told us about the building of the various churches, board schools, Battersea Town Hall, Library and, of course, Battersea Power Station. He touched on the building of later council estates – some replacing bomb damaged properties, brought us to more recent times with Montevetro and Albion Riverside, and looked ahead to the huge planned Nine Elms site redevelopment.

Our thanks to Colin for his enthusiastic and informative talk to whet the appetite of his audience for these books, which we were able to look at briefly after the meeting. (See review on p 2)

This was our last meeting at Clapham Manor Primary School, our meeting place for the last ten years. We are grateful for the hospitality the school has extended to us over all these years, as we move on to our new venue, Omnibus Arts Centre, which opened recently in the former Clapham Library on North Side.

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**CCMAC AGM** The Annual General Meeting of Clapham Common Management Advisory Committee (CCMAC) will be held on **Monday 3 February** at 7.30 pm in the Studio Theatre at Omnibus, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW. This is an opportunity for anyone who is interested in the Common to find out how Lambeth is progressing towards a co-operative approach to the management of the Common.

**Bandstand Beds** The Annual General Meeting of Clapham Common Bandstand Beds, the growing project run by volunteers on Clapham Common, will be on **Thursday 20 February** at 6.30 pm at Notre Dame Community Hall, off Worsopp Drive, SW4 9QU. (The venue is subject to confirmation so check by email [cbandstandbeds@gmail.com](mailto:cbandstandbeds@gmail.com)). Growers, cooks and people keen on food are welcome to join. For details go to [bandstandbeds.com](http://bandstandbeds.com).

## St Luke's Music Society

The next concert is on **Saturday 1 March** at 7.30 pm when Nicola Benedetti (violin) will be accompanied by Leonard Elschenbroch (cello) and Alexei Grynyuk (piano) at St Luke's Church, Thurleigh Road, SW12 8RQ. Tickets £18, £14 concessions from the Box Office 0951 791619 or [slms.org.uk/2/book/](http://slms.org.uk/2/book/).

## Hockney, Printmaker

The new exhibition opening at Dulwich Picture Gallery on **Wednesday 5 February** marks the 60th anniversary of David Hockney's first print. Hockney is a talented printmaker, and the exhibition will feature over 100 works, giving an overview of his life. More details at [dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk/](http://dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk/) or telephone 020 8693 5254.

## Get Sewing

New classes to be launched at Sewoverit in February include Beginner's Cross Stitch, Recycled Jewellery and Printing on Clothes. Then there is a new fortnightly Dressmaking Club, a Quilter's Block Club, and new Kimono Jacket and Pencil Skirt patterns. So plenty of new ideas to encourage you to sew in 2014. Go to [sewoverit.co.uk](http://sewoverit.co.uk) or call 020 7326 0376.

## Choral workshops

Platinum Choral Music workshops go from strength to strength and after a successful season in 2013 they have scheduled eight Saturday workshops in 2014.

On **Saturday 8 February** the contemporary choral music includes MacMillan's *O Radiant Dawn*, Mealer's *O Sanctissima Maria* and Rutter's *Hymn to the Creator of Light*. Workshops start at 10.30 am (Registration from 10 am) and finish at 5 pm at St Mary's Church, Battersea Church Road, SW11 3NA. Cost: £40 includes break time refreshments.

A new series of Early Music Workshops starts with **Jewels of the Flemish Renaissance** on **Monday 10 February** from 7.30 pm to 9.30 pm at St Barnabas Church, St Barnabas Street, SW1W 8PF. All details and bookings at [platinumconsort.com](http://platinumconsort.com).

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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 [claphamsociety.com](http://claphamsociety.com).

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