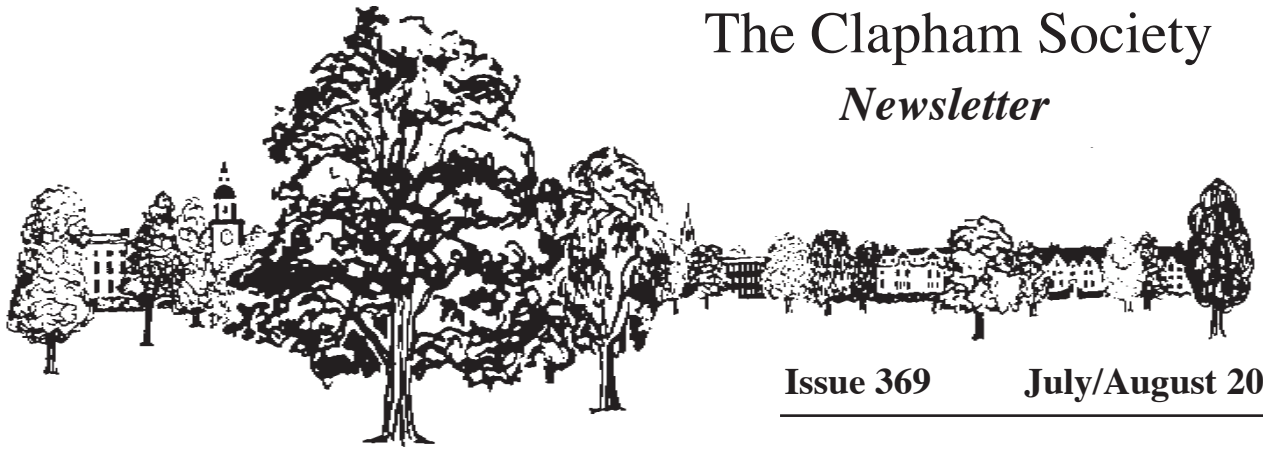


The Clapham Society

Newsletter



Issue 369

July/August 2014

Angels and a Dragon come to Old Town!

Glorious June sunshine, a merry throng of all ages, and Angels Gabriel and Lucinda (complete with a very long ribbon) gathered for the official 'opening' of Old Town's new town square to the north of The Polygon on Friday 6 June. The event, organised by Lambeth and Transport for London (TfL), with entertainments laid on by Omnibus was to commemorate practical completion of a substantial programme of works that commenced last September to reshape, transform and rejuvenate the public realm in Old Town. The scheme represents the result of several years' debate about how the townscape and amenity of the scruffy 'gateway' into Clapham should and could be improved. In the end the principal driver was pressure from TfL to reorganise its bus stand arrangements around Old Town, and a sizeable budget was allotted by the Mayor of London to achieve this, topped up by Lambeth.

The proposals have been controversial, and there have been winners and losers as a result of the project. On the negative side most would agree that the scheme has been hugely disruptive, and the delayed completion due to heavy rains exacerbated this. But on the plus side, there is considerable agreement on the enhanced physical appearance and amenity around The Polygon; the improved pavement along Old Town east; the high quality of the paving and kerb materials used throughout the scheme; the redirection of southbound traffic; curbing of vehicular speeds; and priority for pedestrians around most of the area through the introduction of 'Copenhagen' crossings (the use of continuous paving) at road junctions and new road geometry – though in regard to these latter features, some have expressed concern that children may be especially vulnerable if vehicles fail to anticipate the need to give way on these shared surfaces. Overall, the scheme has transformed what had become a very shabby and neglected heart of Clapham.

continued overleaf



photo Dana Kubick

There are no meetings in July and August, instead we have the following guided walks

Wednesday 16 July

Central Clapham. Leaving from Clapham Common Underground Station at 6.30 pm, Peter Jefferson Smith will lead a walk from the modern centre of Clapham to the heart of the old village, including Old Town, Grafton Square, Rectory Grove, and visiting St Paul's Church.

Sunday 17 August

Some Clapham plaques. Leaving from Clapham Common Underground Station at 3.00 pm, Derrick Johnson will lead a walk looking at English Heritage blue plaques (Graham Greene, Charles Barry, JF Bentley), Clapham Society green plaques (Old Fire Station, Sycamore House, Clapham Parochial School) and several others.

The first event in September is our Annual Bandstand concert on:

Saturday 6 September

The Dixie Strollers on Clapham Common Bandstand from 3 pm to 5 pm. The Dixie Strollers are a young seven-piece jazz band in the Dixie/New Orleans style of the 1920s-50s, made up of students from two of the top music conservatories in London. Free – toe-tapping music for a late summer afternoon.

Our next meeting at Omnibus, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW will be on:

Monday 15 September

Annual General Meeting at 7.30 pm followed by **Commemorating the First World War** (at 8.15 pm). Few British families were unaffected by the first of the twentieth century's great turmoils. Many still have memories of parents or grandparents who fought in that war, perhaps of uncles and great-uncles who died, and of women whose lives were changed. In this meeting, Clapham Society members will look back on the experiences of their own families.

Another important feature of the scheme is the increased priority given to cyclists over motor vehicles. It is fair to say this has not met with unanimous approval, particularly in regard to the daunting northbound contra-flow route for cyclists along Old Town east. However, we are informed that amendments are already planned, and it is proposed to widen the carriageway by 0.5m along this stretch, and that the junction just north of the central 'dead' bus stands where a temporary barrier has been placed will be reconfigured, to ease these problems.

The island around Clapham Common Underground Station remains only partially complete, but the new cut-through for pedestrians between The Pavement and bus stops on South Side; removal of railings; creation of a café in the former toilets; promised new seating; removal of clutter; and replanting of the soft landscaping should all be welcomed.

Disagreements remain over some features of the scheme, notably the new dropping-off and alighting points for certain bus services in Old Town; the relocation of a pedestrian crossing in Old Town; the loss of parking, and a convenient route northbound for residents of The Polygon. Concerns also remain over how well the yet-to-be-implemented revised carriageway arrangements around the junction of Rookery Road and Macaulay Road will work for local residents wanting to cross Clapham Common North Side once the filter lane is removed.

Some of the Society's concerns relate to changes introduced post-consultation, and on which, in some cases, scant detail was made available prior to implementation. During the consultation a website documenting progress of the project was promised. This could have been helpful, but sadly did not happen. The proposed planting scheme has not been followed in respect of the planters around the new square, and in the selection of tree species. The creation of a screened area for refuse bins serving Trinity Restaurant and nearby pubs appears to have been dropped. Many of the proposals for cyclists emerged only after the consultation, and a decision to extend the scheme to include the area around the tube station apparently resulted in these plans not being included as part of the consultation at all.

Perhaps of greater concern is our strong understanding that the extensive tree-planting programme has not been undertaken according to specification nor in a manner likely to enable the new trees to flourish. We understand the tree pits in many cases lack adequate drainage, and that the growing medium is severely deficient. Sadly some trees are already showing signs of die back and are unlikely to survive. Furthermore the opportunity to plant a 'hero' tree in the form of a London Plane in front of Maritime House was dropped from the plan.

We also share some of the safety concerns that have been raised about the Copenhagen crossings and restricted junctions, and earnestly hope that those concerns are unfounded and drivers will quickly adjust to the new arrangements.

Thanks to our splendid angels, to the Jelly Rollers' cantankerous dragon machine, and to all our entertainers for making this such a jolly event. We look forward to corrective action on matters already agreed in principle, and an undertaking by the Council to take seriously the remaining matters of concern, to ensure the long-term success of this flagship project.

Mark Leffler
Convenor, Roads and Transport Sub-committee

On the Common

Many members will have noticed that the puddle in the grass between the paddling pool and the Temperance Fountain had, over at least the last six months, grown into a pond. It was believed to be caused by a fractured pipe.

The paddling pool was scheduled for opening at the late May Bank Holiday in time for the schools' half-term break. This did not happen and we were told that the blame lay both with the leak and a defect with the valve controls that allow the pool to be washed each day.

During a spell of glorious sunny weather in June the pool remained padlocked. We were sufficiently concerned about the loss of this facility to draw it to the attention of the local press. The fractured pipe was repaired within 48 hours, and the pool is now open.

Events

The emergence of South Field, adjacent to Clapham South Underground Station, as a second event site is already causing problems. These include, in the case of Foodies Festival, loss of amenity (see photo), gridlocked traffic and ground damage.

As we go to press we will be seeing Live Nation setting up for their two-day event on 28 and 29 June. They will be on site for 16 days and will cover a large swathe of the Common. Interestingly, they have cut their attendance figures from 45,000 to 25,000 on both days.

We would like to repeat our concern that, quite apart from the growing commercialisation of the Common, it is now being put under too much pressure to retain its appeal in the long-term future. Serious consideration of issues of sustainability must be addressed. It is worth noting again that damage from the Freeze Festival held last November is still clearly evident.

Legal Issues

Where do we go from here? Following the receipt of advice from the barrister we recently instructed, a small group of members, most of whom have a legal background, has been set up to discuss and decide upon how his advice might be used, and also what further advice we might require.

Anna Jefferson Smith
Convenor, Commons and Open Spaces Sub-committee



At the time of writing there are still a few tickets available for our Summer Party on **Thursday 10 July**. Check availability with Alyson Wilson (020 7622 6360). Please DO NOT turn up at the party without a ticket. Space is very limited and you will not be admitted.

THE 2014 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 51st Annual General Meeting of the Clapham Society will be held on **Monday 15 September** at Omnibus, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW starting at 7.30 pm.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Approval of the Minutes of the previous AGM (16 October 2013) published in Newsletter No 363, December 2013/January 2014, and available at the meeting
3. Adoption of the Annual Report for the year 2013-14
4. Adoption of the Financial Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2014
5. Election of the Officers and Committee Members for the year 2014-2015

Chairman	Treasurer
Vice-Chairman	Solicitor
Secretary	Membership Secretary
A maximum of ten further Committee Members	

6. Appointment of the Independent Examiner
7. Any other business and announcements

*The formal business will be followed by **Commemorating the First World War***

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

Summer Cinema

Trinity Hospice Summer Cinema Series is back this August. You are invited to bring your own refreshments and watch cult films in the hospice gardens. Popcorn, home-made cakes and wine will be available to buy on the night.

Thursday 14 August *Some Like It Hot*

Friday 15 August *Blues Brothers*

Saturday 16 August *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*

Tickets for last year's films completely sold out, so buy yours early to avoid disappointment! Doors open at 7.30 pm, with the film starting at sunset, which will be around 8.45 pm. Tickets: £15 for adults and £10 for children under 15. There is also a VIP package which includes two tickets, a bottle of Prosecco, popcorn and some summer treats, all for £45. Book tickets at trinityhospice.org.uk/cinema or call Catherine on 020 7787 1012.

Clapham and the Bicycle

At our May meeting Clapham Society member, bicycle enthusiast and historian, Roger Armstrong, gave us a detailed and copiously illustrated account of the early history of the bicycle, and of the many bicycle makers based in Clapham.

His first pictures of the bicycle, or rather the velocipede dated, from around 1820 when the cartoonist George Cruickshank made fun of the strange contraption, which actually bore more resemblance to the present bicycle than some later versions. The front wheel got bigger and the back wheel smaller so that by about the 1870s what we know as the 'penny-farthing' was the norm. Roger had some splendid pictures of races and accidents on these ungainly bicycles.

The wheel sizes equalised within a few years and by the 1880s the Pioneer 'the only real Safety Bicycle' was made by Pausey in Park Road (now Clapham Park Road), while Porters in

Crescent Place (South Side) advertised the Clapham Bicycle, Travers in York Terrace, Clapham Station made the Travers Racer and The Rowe Paragon Cycles were made at a works on The Pavement. The London Teachers' Cycle Agency in Cautley Avenue supplied all makes paid for monthly and including 'free lamp, bell, pouch, tools, clips, crate and carriage' with every purchase. Most makers also offered tricycles and hire arrangements. Roger showed splendid catalogues from the makers and photographs of the bicycles in use.

The leading Clapham cycle maker, still a well-known manufacturer, was Claud Butler, whose works were in Clapham Manor Street. As the recognised 'King' of the lightweight, he advertised 'High Class Racing and Touring machines built entirely to order for the connoisseur regardless of cost.' He also had showrooms in Wandsworth, Lewisham

Pirates of Penzance

On **Saturday 5 July** at 7.30 pm, the Festival Chorus will be performing Gilbert and Sullivan's *Pirates of Penzance* with their Conductor and Musical Director, David Fawcett and the Sinclair Sinfonia, at St Luke's Church, Thurleigh Road, SW12 8RQ. Tickets £12, concessions £8 on the door or from Northcote Music, 155 Northcote Road, SW11 6QB. More details at festivalchorus.co.uk.

Open Studios

On **Saturday 9 August** from 10 am to 4 pm the artists' studios at Studio Voltaire will be open to the public with special gallery events, music, food and exhibitions. Various local businesses will have stands in the yard space including produce, crafts and books. The Clapham Society will also have a stand, selling our books and showing our local history display. Studio Voltaire, 1a Nelsons Row, SW4 7JR. Tel. 020 7622 1294.

Summer at Omnibus

Omnibus has a full and varied programme throughout the summer, including Comedy Theatre on **3, 4, 11 and 18 July**, *Alice in Wonderland* in the day time and Jazz in the evening on **6 July**, *Casting the Runes*, a chilling ghost story on **17 July** as well as an exhibition of abstract expressionist paintings and prints from mid-July to mid-August. For details updates and tickets go to omnibus-clapham.org or call in at 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW.

and Harringay. Roger showed us many pictures and catalogues of Claud Butler bicycles, as well as tandems and tricycles also made in the Clapham works. He brought the story on into the 20th century, concluding with a picture of himself working in the Southern Cycles shop in Ascot Parade, Clapham Park Road, which some members will remember.

It was interesting to learn how rapidly the cycling craze developed in the 19th century, although initially it was quite an expensive pastime. Catalogues from the 1880s show bicycles costing upwards of £15 – a not inconsiderable sum, especially in the context of today's relatively inexpensive cycles. Roger spent a long time after his presentation discussing the finer points of bicycles and bicycling with enthusiasts in the audience before mounting his 1888 Premier safety bicycle for his journey back to Clapham Junction!

Planning News

Since March the Planning Sub-committee has been notified of 105 planning applications, reviewed some 20 of them and made representations on those listed below.

52 Clarence Avenue. Objection to an application to build seven new houses in the rear garden of one of the few remaining original houses in Clarence Avenue. In addition to the loss of the original plot layout, the extremely high density creates poor living conditions for the occupants as well as damaging existing neighbours' amenity and privacy.

The Frog, 32 The Pavement. Strong objections to two applications; one to use the first floor flat roof at the rear for drinking and eating, the other to install additional folding doors on the front and side elevations with associated pavement seating. The Frog already causes problems for local residents, and additional outdoor facilities for customers are expected to make the situation worse.

29 Lillieshall Road. Further comments on the nature of alterations to this listed building, following its sale by Lambeth.

3 Prescott Place. Objection to an application to replace the present garages with two new homes. With its location immediately behind the High Street, the site is unsuitable for this amount of residential development. Living conditions would be poor and design of the buildings lacks the qualities needed to overcome the constraints of the site.

Summer on the Bandstand

Saturday 5 July at 2 pm. DJ Chico. Live art and poets with modern dance and dj performances.

Sunday 6 July at 3 pm. New London Concert Band. A mixture of medleys, marches, show tunes and classical pieces.

Saturday 12 July at 3 pm. Spiral Saxophone Quartet with pop, jazz, classical and show tunes.

Saturday 9 August at 3 pm. Merton Concert Band. Mixed repertoire, specialising in big band and show music.

Sunday 10 August at 3 pm. No Frills Band. Brixton-based band with fiddle, banjo, mandolin, mandola, double bass, melodeon, Hurdy Gurdy, Darbuka and voice.

Saturday 16 August at 3 pm. Here to Havana. Brass and percussion based orchestra playing Afro-Cuban selection with original arrangements.

Sunday 17 August at 3 pm. Performance Group Flute Ensemble. From piccolo to brass, a mixture of classical with a touch of jazz to engage all ages.

Saturday 30 August at 3 pm. Junction Jazz. Seven-piece jazz band with guest vocalist.

Saturday 6 September at 3 pm. Clapham Society Event (see above) with The Dixie Strollers.

Sunday 7 September at 2 pm. London Consorts of Winds. Combining ancient music with contemporary instrumentation, playing popular and light classical pieces.

Putney Bridge

It is worth noting that Putney Bridge is to be closed to all traffic (apart from bicycles) from 14 July for about three months, for major repairs. There will be an inevitable effect on other bridges, so be aware!

Eagle House

On a sunny Sunday in early June, Sinclair and Madeline Johnston hosted a lunch at their home, the remaining wing of Eagle House on Clapham Common South Side for Joan Barrett, a descendant of the builder of the house, Benjamin Bond. Joan, who lives in Canada, has done much research into her family history and contacted the Society and then Sinclair when she found the history of Eagle House in the section on Green Plaques on our website.

Lord Hankey who unveiled the Green Plaque on Eagle House, together with his wife and representatives of the Clapham Society were invited to the lunch to meet Joan Barrett.

Ms Cupcake

On **Saturday 9 August** at 12 noon Ms Cupcake will be at Clapham Books to talk about cupcakes and her book, *The Naughtiest Vegan Cakes in Town*, and to hand out free samples of her cupcakes. Clapham Books, 26 The Pavement, SW4.

Wandsworth Museum

It has been announced that Wandsworth Museum will be closing on its present site at the end of June, and reopening on a new site in September. So far we have no more information. The De Morgan Centre, which is on the same site, is also closing and at the time of writing is seeking a new location.

New Members

We have welcomed the following new members this month: Paul Bay, Marie Soulier and Batiste Bay, Ian and Ann Calder, Jacqueline Cremer and Gordon Gardiner, and Victoria Jaye and Russell Eatough.

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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22 Iveley Road, SW4 0EW

Tel: 020 7622 8285

Annabel Allott

30 Trinity Close, SW4 0JD

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Tel: 020 7627 4770

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