

# The Clapham Society Newsletter



Issue 370

September 2014

## On the Bandstand

**Saturday 6 September** at 3 pm. The Dixie Strollers will give the Clapham Society's Annual Bandstand concert. 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.



*The Dixie Strollers at the Old Town event earlier this year*

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

**Saturday 13 September** at 2 pm. London Gay Symphonic Winds. A varied performance of classical, show tunes, pop arrangements and film music.

**Sunday 14 September** at 3 pm. London Metropolitan Brass Band.

**Saturday 20 September** at 2 pm. Crystal Palace Band.

**Sunday 21 September** at 2 pm. Merton Concert Band.

**Sunday 28 September** at 3 pm. London Saxophone Choir.

All concerts are FREE.

**Trinity Hospice Magnolia Tree** The Magnolia Tree offers an opportunity to remember and celebrate the lives of loved ones, and to show support for the work of the hospice. The copper leaves that can be engraved with a name that will remain on the tree for a year. Supporters will then have the option to have their leaf returned as a keepsake or renew the leaf for a further year.

There are 300 leaves on the Magnolia Tree and supporters can choose from bronze, silver, gold or large gold leaves. A bronze leaf costs £150, a silver leaf £300, a gold leaf £500 and a large gold leaf £1,000. For more details go to [trinityhospice.org.uk/magnoliatree](http://trinityhospice.org.uk/magnoliatree).

This year our meetings will be held at 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 15 September

**Annual General Meeting.** Please note that this will start at 7.30 pm, earlier than our normal meeting time. Please try to be on time, so that we make a prompt start. The Agenda appeared in our July/August newsletter. The AGM will be followed by **Commemorating the First World War** (starting at 8.15 pm). Members of the Society will speak about their relatives who fought in the War, and what their families were told of their experiences. Photos from family collections will be shown, and members will read from letters and war journals, including two moving descriptions of life and death in the trenches of Flanders.

### Monday 20 October

**The Nigerian centenary: 100 degrees and rising? A voice from the diaspora.**

In 2014, Nigeria commemorates its centenary. With its name inspired by the principal West African waterway, the River Niger, today Nigeria stands at a volatile cusp of change. **Onyekachi Wambu** – a specialist in print as well as broadcast media and former Clapham resident – will provide a historical account of Nigeria's cultural, political and socio-economic development since 1914. He will also explore the importance of the Nigerian-British diaspora in shaping the country's future.

### Autumn walk

**Sunday 21 September.** Anne Wilson of our Local History Sub-committee will lead a walk around the Larkhall area of northern Clapham, following the medieval route of Larkhall Lane past the probable site of the Old Larkhall tavern to Larkhall Park and 'The Surprise'. Meet at Wandsworth Road Station at 3 pm.

## The Clapham Opera Festival

Following the success of the inaugural Clapham Opera Festival last year, this year's Festival promises to be bigger and even better. The Clapham Society is pleased to be associated with this achievement in bringing opera to a wide community, and this year we are sponsoring the **Grand Opening on Sunday 21 September**.

The Clapham Opera Festival was created to support and promote up-and-coming opera singers and musicians, and to bring this art form in an affordable manner to our community. It was founded by local resident Marie Soulier, the Festival's Artistic Director, and has as its patron Lucy Crowe, the well-known lyric soprano, while Philip Voldman is Festival Music Director.

The theme this year is a celebration of the great contribution that the diva and divo have made to opera. She, or he, is that rare singer whose talents, artistry, presence and charisma combine to transport the listener to extraordinary emotional states.

The schedule is as follows:

**Sunday 21 September** at 4 pm. **Grand Opening**. Sophie Yelland (mezzo-soprano), Georgina Rosanna Murray (soprano), Ricardo Panella (baritone) and Alberto Sousa (tenor) will be performing a selection of arias made famous by the great divas and divos. You will hear pieces from Verdi, Strauss, Saint-Saëns, Bellini, Rossini, Bizet and Mozart amongst others. Followed by afternoon tea.

**Friday 3 October** at 7.30 pm.

**Simply Baroque**. Baroque musicians alongside the young rising star countertenor Mei Li Li, will perform a selection of pieces from composers including Dowland, Purcell and Handel. The performance will also feature a baroque instrument that once fell out of favour but has recently enjoyed a revival.

**Sunday 12 October** at 4 pm. **Mozart**

**and his contemporaries**. A selection of pieces from Mozart and others such as Salieri, Haydn and Righini, performed by Mei Li Li (countertenor), Jenavieve Moore (soprano) and Chloe De Backer (mezzo-soprano).

**Friday 14 November** at 7.30 pm

and **Sunday 16 November** at 5 pm **La Cenerentola** (Cinderella). An abridged version of Rossini's masterpiece, under the stage direction of Pedro Ribeiro from the Royal Opera House. The visual concept for the performance is by founder Marie Soulier, and is what she refers to as her 'Clapham Twist' to the opera.

Advance tickets are available at [claphamoperafestival.com/booking-tickets/](http://claphamoperafestival.com/booking-tickets/) or

from Marie Soulier [info@claphamoperafestival.com](mailto:info@claphamoperafestival.com).

**Festival Pass** Access to all four concerts £60 (Adult) and £160 (Family 2 Adults, 2 Children), Tickets for **Grand Opening, Simply Baroque, Mozart and contemporaries** £17 (Adult), £12.50 (Concession), £55 (Family),

**La Cenerentola** £23 (Adult), £18 (Concession), £70 (Family).

The venue is the Church of the Holy Spirit, Narbonne Avenue, SW4 NLQ. Tickets on the door will be limited and slightly more expensive.



*Sophie Yelland*



*Ricardo Panella*

## How far did your pint travel?

So many pubs are closing and so many having new names or new signs, that a bit more attention may be appropriate to preserve some of the oddities of brewing history that were once on almost every corner, but now much further apart. So I offer the following reflections on a couple of pubs in Old Town.

Walking along Clapham Common North Side, I noticed the blue plaque for Graham Greene and was then pleased to see that the Rose and Crown pub was now owned by the Suffolk brewer, Greene King; Graham Greene came from the same family. Earlier the pub was owned by Simonds, which for a time was a part of the Courage brewery. Simonds was in Reading so a relatively long journey for beer to travel, compared to the distance from the once many London breweries.

A further journey for beer to travel was to the Prince of Wales in Old Town, as this was a Lacon's pub belonging to the brewery in Great Yarmouth. On the front there is still the name Lacon's on a plaque showing a falcon which was the trademark.

Lacon's was one of the oldest breweries to remain in the same family since it was started in 1641 by Jeffery Ward in Great Yarmouth; in the mid 18th century, his great-grand-daughter, Elizabeth Ward married her first cousin (their mothers were sisters), John Lacon of Otley in Yorkshire. John moved south to Great Yarmouth and thus Ward's brewery became Lacon's brewery, and the family were still running it when it closed in 1968, having been taken over by Whitbread's a few years earlier.

The Lacon family crest was a falcon which became the trademark and appeared on all the beer labels and associated merchandise. At the Prince of Wales, the falcon may still be seen on the tiled fireplace and on one of the beer engines. Nearly all Lacon's trade was in East Anglia, but a few pubs were in London and apparently were once served by the beer being brought by sea from Yarmouth.

Thus some small bits of brewing curiosity survive (and hopefully will continue to survive) here in Clapham, and as the name of Lacon has been brought back by a new micro-brewery in Great Yarmouth, the Prince of Wales might yet sell Lacon's beer – still a long way for your pint to travel, but these days not by sea.

*Christopher Kevill-Davies*

## Nine Elms Development

Most Clapham residents who travel into the centre of London will be well aware of the huge redevelopment currently taking shape on the south side of the river between Lambeth Bridge and Chelsea Bridge. The US Embassy was one of the first buildings to be planned, but many others are now taking shape on the site. Helen Fisher, Programme Director for Nine Elms on the South Bank, spoke to us on 16 June about the challenges and opportunities this presents.

The development site is currently the biggest in London, if not in Europe, consisting of 30 interconnected areas covering 450 acres; three-quarters of the land is in Wandsworth and a quarter in Lambeth. Until now, it has had a number of relatively low density uses: New Covent Garden market, numerous logistics depots, office blocks dating from the 1960s. Its closeness to central London – and in particular to Westminster – was a major element in attracting the US and other embassies; and plans for new and improved transport links have drawn the interest of various other, mostly private sector, organisations.

Helen Fisher told us that two new ‘town centres’ are planned – a metropolitan centre at Battersea Power Station and a district centre at Vauxhall. These will be linked by a landscaped linear park running through the whole site; and almost two miles of river frontage will be lined with cafés, restaurants, bars, cultural attractions and public spaces. There are plans – not yet finalised – for a new bridge for pedestrians and cyclists between the site and Pimlico, and for a network of cycle lanes and footpaths throughout the area. Two new Northern Line underground stations – at the Power Station and at the northern end of Wandsworth Road – should open in 2020. New quays are to be constructed, with river transport taking priority over roads.

We learned that the first of the seven phases of the Battersea Power Station redevelopment was about to get under way: the chimneys would be taken down and rebuilt one by one (each to be completed before the next one may be started). The QVC building was about to be demolished and replaced by flats. The old Royal Mail site would accommodate 2,000 new homes, a primary school and part of the linear park; New Covent Garden would be redeveloped to provide housing; in addition to the wholesale market, a new retail food market would be added, and Market Towers would be replaced by the tallest tower in Vauxhall

containing housing and a hotel.

A good many questions were raised, suggesting that many in the audience were uneasy about many aspects of the development. Matters of particular concern included:

housing: 16,000 new homes were planned but because of the predominance of private sector provision, the amount of ‘affordable’ housing seemed likely to be limited and there was a risk that flats would be bought for investment purposes and left to lie empty;

whether a complete riverside path could be provided, given the obstacles presented by the pumping station and waste transfer station;

the future of Vauxhall bus station, where all options for redevelopment appeared to involve its demolition and the scattering of bus-stops around the seven roads that converge there.

It was clear that Helen Fisher and her team face a challenging few years, and we are grateful for the clear account she

gave us of the current state of play. We – and our sister societies in the area – shall be keeping a close eye on these linked developments and their possible effects.

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**Philosophy in Pubs** On **Tuesday 30 September** at 7 pm at the Bread & Roses, 68 Clapham Manor Street, SW4 6DZ there is an informal evening of discussion, thought and discourse, based on the national Philosophy in Pubs scheme. All are welcome for a think with a drink. This month’s topic is ‘The price of justice’.

**New members** We are pleased to welcome the following new members who have joined us over the summer: Wayne AAmiel and Richard Evans, Tom and Hayley Balls, Christopher and Georgie Birrell, Jean Borg, Ann and Ian Calder, Rebecca Macnair, David McLean, Amrit Madhoo and Jenny Ryan, Rose and Julian Milford, Maggie O’Neill, Peter Sinclair and Allister Bowe.

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**Clapham Community Project** With great sadness and regret the Clapham Community Project (CCP) announces its closure.

CCP was founded in 1971, the last survivor of a series of local initiatives to offer services to disadvantaged people in the Clapham area. From various premises which proved too small for its activities, CCP moved in 1977 into St Anne’s Hall and Mission House on the corner of Venn Street and Bromells Road, at the instigation of the then Rector and Churchwardens of Holy Trinity Church on Clapham Common, ex-officio Trustees of this splendid late Victorian building.

Over time, public funding for social welfare projects such as CCP provided dried up, especially with the demise of the Greater London Council and the Inner London Education Authority in the 1980s. Providing advice to local people particularly on welfare benefits had always been a key CCP service, in which considerable expertise was developed – such that in addition to funding from Lambeth Council, CCP also secured a contract from the Legal Services Commission to work on more complex cases; this lasted more than ten years until legal aid was recently largely abolished. The Legal Services Commission awarded CCP a Quality Mark in recognition of the high standards of its work. To bolster resources to support the high level of service necessary to meet local demand, space at St Anne’s began in 1999 to be hired out to arts companies for rehearsals. As word spread, this valuable source of extra income grew – to support CCP’s activities, to care for the building, and to give local youngsters a chance to work with performance professionals.

In 2012 the present Rector and Churchwardens of Holy Trinity informed CCP of their intention to take back St Anne’s under their own management to provide office space for their own staff, and a range of community services. While non-renewal of its lease for this reason was within the law, CCP expected to be able to reach a reasonable compromise with its landlord to share the building and enable the advice service to continue. However, all attempts failed, and CCP moved out last December. Since then CCP has been based at St John’s Church in Clapham Road, where the clergy have made the remaining staff very welcome – CCP is most grateful to them.

Meanwhile CCP has learnt that the way Lambeth Council, now CCP’s sole source of income, wished to deliver advice services in future has narrowed, because of cuts to local authority budgets. Lambeth’s stipulations do not allow for the level of service to local people appropriate to the skills and experience of our staff, and so CCP has reluctantly decided to terminate its contract. Lambeth’s longstanding support is nevertheless much appreciated.

This is a sad and sour end to a noble and valuable enterprise which over forty years provided real help, financial and social, to the community of Clapham. On their behalf, thanks to all CCP’s staff and well-wishers over the years.

*Endellion Sharpe, Chair, CCP’s Management Committee*

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## This month at Omnibus

September at Omnibus is another action-packed month. Just a few events are shown below, but for full details go to [omnibus-clapham.org](http://omnibus-clapham.org) and sign up to the mailing list to keep up-to-date.

**Sunday 7 September** at 7 pm. Dominic Marshall Trio. Through jazz, classical, hip-hop, soul, folk and everything in between, Dominic Marshall Trio bring together myriad influences to create a sound that is uncompromisingly their own. Selected unanimously in 2013 to perform at the 'BBC Introduces' showcase as part of Manchester Jazz Festival. Tickets £10.

**Friday 12 September** at 8 pm. Crooked Pieces presents *And Then She Said a Funny Thing....* A live recording of this brand new comedy podcast, featuring bite-sized comedy sketches, spoken word and more from some of the funniest women writers around. Tickets £7/£6 concessions.

**Sunday 14 September** at 7 pm. Acclaimed pianist Lucy Parham chronicles the romantic life of one of the greatest and most popular composers for solo piano – Frederic Chopin, using his words and music. She is joined by Dame Harriet Walter and Robert Glenister to perform some of the composer's most beautiful works while exploring his life through a collection of letters, diaries and correspondence. Tickets £15/ £12 concessions.

**Friday 26 September** at 7.30 pm. Laura Mugridge presents *The Watery Journey of Nereus Pike*. This is a new, extraordinary tale of myth, magic, adventure and angler fish by Fringe First Award winning comedian and theatre maker Laura Mugridge, with original music by Tom Adams. Tickets £9/£7 concessions.

**Sunday 28 September** at 2.30 pm Theatre Rites presents *Recycled Rubbish*. Imagine a world that celebrates its rubbish; where, at the touch of a puppeteer's hand, the

contents of a bin bag can transform before your eyes. A visually stunning and playful production, exploring the unexpected value of discarded objects. Suitable for 5+. Tickets £9/£7 concessions

**Sunday 28 September** at 7 pm. Pianocity (a piano dialogue). Will Pickvance makes the piano the centre of gravity in this one-hour music encounter. As well as playing it, he invites two special guests to relate their unrelated field of excellence to the piano before asking them to join him for a jam. Tickets £10/8 concessions.

## Lambeth Heritage Festival

Lambeth Archives and Lambeth Local History Forum (a group which includes the Clapham Society) organise this annual festival which runs throughout September. There are events every day of the month – films, walks, talks, workshops, tours – at different venues throughout the borough.

The Clapham Society's meeting on **Monday 15 September** and walk on **Sunday 21 September** (details above) form part of the festival, and other Clapham events include 'Tracing your First World War Military Ancestors' at Clapham Library on **Thursday 11 September** from 2 pm to 4 pm and a talk by the curator of Khadambi Asalache's house, 575 Wandsworth Road, on **Tuesday 23 September** at 7 pm at Tate South Lambeth Library.

Other events include walks around the Waterloo area, the site of the famous Vauxhall Gardens, and William Blake's Lambeth; a talk entitled *Zeppelin nights: London in the First World War*; and a tour of the new Black Cultural Archives Centre in Brixton. The festival concludes with Lambeth Archives Open Day on **Saturday 27 September** from 10 am to 4 pm at the Minet Library, 52 Knatchbull

Road, SE5 9QY. The day will focus on the First World War, with talks throughout the day, and local societies will have related displays. Make sure to come along and visit the Clapham Society stand.

A brochure with full details of Lambeth Heritage Festival can be collected from any Lambeth Library, from Omnibus or Clapham Books or downloaded at [lambeth.gov.uk/heritagefestival](http://lambeth.gov.uk/heritagefestival).

## Summer events

We had our Clapham Society display at several events this summer, and on most occasions were lucky with the weather. Despite a heavy downpour at the Abbeville Fete the children enjoyed themselves, as our picture shows.



Photo: Dana Kubick

The display of old photographs of Clapham which we put together for the Old Town opening event proved very popular, and the maps showing local bomb damage as always attracted plenty of attention. If you have missed them so far this year, we shall have them out again at the Bandstand Concert on **6 September**.

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).