

The Clapham Society Newsletter



Issue 376

April 2015

Another Green Plaque

The next Clapham Society Green Plaque marking a notable local building which has changed its use since it was built will be unveiled on **Thursday 16 April** at 7.30 pm on the Oddfellows Hall in Belmont Close. The hall was built in 1852 as a Chapel for the Ebenezer Strict Baptists. In 1908 it was purchased by the Pride of Clapham Lodge of the Independent Order of Oddfellows, a charitable society which still owns it and holds its meetings there. Part of the building is now the home of the Shambhala Meditation Centre.

The plaque will be unveiled by Edmund Bird, Heritage Advisor to the Mayor of London. After the ceremony the Trustees of the Oddfellows have kindly invited members in to the hall for refreshments and to see some of their archive material. All are welcome, so please come along and take advantage of the opportunity to see inside this local treasure!

Clapham Books Events

Wednesday 22 April at 7 pm, local resident and well known economist, Vicky Pryce will speak about her book *It's the Economy, Stupid, Economics for Voters*, and Polly Toynbee, former Clapham resident and *Guardian* columnist will introduce *Cameron's Coup: How the Tories took Britain to the Brink*.

Vicky argues that it is important to dig behind the claims made by politicians of any party and cut through the potential untruths, half truths or mis-representations by politicians. The book explodes some of the most entrenched myths of British political debate.

Polly dissects the record of the Cameron coalition, arguing he used the pretext of financial crisis to pursue a nakedly ideological agenda in health, schooling, and welfare, going further than Margaret Thatcher dared.

This event will be held at Omnibus, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW.



Spring is here – and a grey squirrel tucks into a large, if not healthy, breakfast on Clapham Common Photo: Claire Fry

Thursday 23 April at 7.30 pm. Launch of Edition 30 of Southbank Poetry Magazine.

Thursday 30 April at 7.30 pm. Marion Coutts will be reading from, and discussing her memoir, *The Iceberg*. Nothing is kept from the reader: the fury, the occasional spells of selfishness, the indignity of being trapped in a hopeless situation. Yet out of all of this pain, comes an uplifting and life-affirming tale of great fortitude, courage, determination - and above all love. These two events will be at Clapham Books, 26 The Pavement, SW4 0JA. For updates and more details go to claphambooks.com or call 020 7627 2797.

This year our meetings will be held at Omnibus, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW. 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 20 April

A Brave New World. Edmund Bird, Heritage Advisor to the Mayor of London and former Lambeth Head of Conservation, will introduce his recently published book about the architecture of Lambeth in the 20 years following the Second World War (including Clapham which was then in Wandsworth). A final chapter is on buildings of this period which have already been demolished. His talk will look at the whole of the present borough, with particular reference to Clapham.

Monday 18 May

'My name is not Wigs'. Angela Cobbin, MBE, theatrical wig designer, and Clapham Society member will talk about her 40-year international career designing and making wigs for West End, Broadway, TV and film productions. Her credits include Spitting Image, Madame Tussauds, Royal Opera House Covent Garden and Royal National Theatre – *Guys and Dolls, Richard III, The Madness of George III* and many more. 'Best wig I've ever seen', Barry Humphries.

If you want to check on future meetings the full year's events are on our website at claphamsociety.com/clapsocevents.html.

Saint Mary's Church Repairs

You may have noticed that extensive work with Heritage Lottery Funding is underway on the Catholic Church in Clapham Park Road. This became essential when bits of the ragstone spire began to drop off.

Would anyone be interested in a visit? No contact has been made with church, architects or contractor yet but other visits have taken place so it should be possible. But it will entail climbing the spire to view the repair work – and of course descending! So a head for heights, being fit enough to climb lots of steep steps, wearing sensible clothes and substantial lace-up boots or shoes will be essential. Hard hats will be needed and hopefully provided by the contractor. This is a building site so rigorous Health and Safety regulations, including sorting any insurance needs, will be essential.

Expressions of interest to petercoble23@aol.com or 020 7720 by **Monday 6 April**. Ten is maximum number possible. The aim is to fix a weekday in May when the stone repairs are underway.

There is a possibility that later in the year we may be able to arrange a talk about the work by the project architects.

Peter Cobley

St Matthew Passion

On **Good Friday 3 April** at 7 pm there will be a candlelit performance of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* at the Church of the Holy Spirit, Narbonne Avenue, SW4 9LQ. The orchestra, chorus and singers of the Hashtag Opera Company will be conducted by Frederick Platt. The name of the soprano soloist is a closely guarded secret, which can be revealed soon....

For details and to buy tickets go to holyspirit-clapham.org.uk/what-s-happening/stmatthewpassionongoodfriday.

Wandsworth Museum

As reported in our last newsletter Wandsworth Museum has recently joined forces with Battersea Arts Centre. We have been assured that at the time of the major fire at Battersea Arts Centre on Friday 13 March the Wandsworth Borough Collection was safely stored offsite. It is hoped that operations will soon be resumed and an updated programme will be available. If you wish to make a donation to help, send a cheque payable to the FoWM to: FoWM, Battersea Arts Centre, Lavender Hill, SW11 5TW or make a donation to Battersea Arts Centre at [BAC donation page](#).

Lambeth Culture 2020

Members ask me how they can influence decisions made by Lambeth on issues they feel strongly about: events on the Common, care of open spaces, sports facilities, cultural activities, libraries, and archives. Here is an excellent opportunity to have your say before it is too late for us to make a difference.

The Lambeth Culture 2020 consultation was highlighted in the March 2015 newsletter, with details and a link to the website lambeth.gov.uk/culture2020consultation. There is a simple on-line questionnaire which you can fill in and submit. It takes a few minutes and means you will have registered your views. **Please do it!** If you find the questions do not address the issues which particularly concern you there is space for additional comments on each page.

Great News! We have set up three small working parties as a result of members responding to our March newsletter. Please join us if you feel strongly about the future funding, investment and management of:

- the Common and open spaces – events, upkeep
- libraries and archives – closures
- sports facilities – outsourcing

There are three proposed management levels: council-led, cooperative and community-led. Which do you think would work best for Clapham? Can a community-led model be democratic? Do local people have the skills and the time to make big decisions about the Common? Should Lambeth even try and shift its responsibilities? Should they be the ones to make hard-headed decisions?

If you don't have the time to join a working party, then write or email Lambethculture2020@lambeth.gov.uk or speak to your local ward Councillor. Five minutes of your time now might seem worth it by 2020 when the decisions are out of our hands and remember: Lambeth have to save £90 million so the cuts will not be pretty.

Annabel Allott

Fair Trade talk

In preparation for FairTrade Fortnight (23 February to 8 March) our well-attended meeting on 16 February heard from Nicolas Mounard about the linked charity and ethical trading organisation, *Twin and Twin Trading*, which he manages, and about the concepts and realities underlying the Fair Trade movement.

Although the basic idea behind fair trade is straightforward – that small farmers in developing countries should receive a fair price for their produce – immense complexities are involved in any attempt to put it into practice. A few international companies control the global market in commodities such as tea, coffee and cocoa: individual growers have little power unless they can be brought together, for example in producer co-operatives. Small producers need access to working capital and to advice about improving the quality and sustainability of their agricultural, financial and marketing practices. They need support when the volatility of commodity markets threatens the viability of their enterprises. For consumers, there is also an image problem to be overcome: the fair trade label is too often seen as providing a comforting feel-good assurance for the well-off but having little relevance for the majority of shoppers.

The fair trade movement therefore

faces big challenges. At present, it accounts for no more than 3 per cent of global trade in tea, coffee and cocoa.

While this does not necessarily mean that the remaining 97 per cent of trade is not fair – many long-established companies do follow fair trade principles but do not see the need to use the label – there is still a huge amount to be done to change commercial and consumer attitudes and practices in the developed world, and to achieve a fairer balance between small-scale producers and the multinationals they supply. Those offering support to small farmers too often target men, though women form the great majority of agricultural workers. Some simplification of commodity markets is badly needed: supply chains tend to be long and complex, and may involve outsourced stages where traceability and accountability become obscure. Consumers need to become more discriminating, to distinguish more clearly between cheapness and value, and to demand much greater transparency about where a product comes from and how it has been produced.

The questions and discussion generated by Mr Mounard's informative talk and his strong belief in, and commitment to, the principles of fair trade could have gone on well beyond the time available. Food for thought (and vice versa) indeed.

Jill Cramphorn

Clapham through Time

We are currently working on a new book of pictures of Clapham in the past which are shown beside the same view photographed today. The aim is to show how the area has changed over the years. We have many historic views of Old Town, the High Street and around the Common but there are areas we would like to include which are not so well recorded. These include Clapham Park, and buildings which have been replaced or converted to flats quite recently, amongst which are Cannons and Osborne House in Macaulay Road, the former council planning offices in Clapham Park Road and Ingleton House in Rectory Grove. Unusual, interesting photographs of the Common would also be welcome.

If you have any photographs which you think might be of interest please contact me alysonwilson.sw4@virgin.net or 020 7622 6360.

Alyson Wilson

Behind and Below the Common Eye

On **Sunday 19 April** Dr Iain Boulton from Lambeth Parks and Open Spaces will lead a walk based on the hidden (and not so hidden) history and evolution of Clapham Common. His guided walk will look at some of the landscape, wildlife and historical features of Clapham Common that are hidden away from public view or the untrained eye, and tell how they came to be there, what happened to them and whether we can get them back!

The walk will start at 2 pm at the Bandstand, Clapham Common and last 90 minutes. Please wear sensible outdoor clothing and footwear – and bring your own recollections and knowledge to share with others on the day!

Dr Boulton will lead more walks later in the year, so watch out for details and if there is any topic you would particularly like covered please contact the Newsletter Editor.

Meet the Author

Local author and long-time Clapham resident, JJ Anderson, will be talking about her new collection of short stories *The Village; A Year in Twelve Tales* at MacFarlane's Fromagerie, 48 Abbeville Road on **Saturday 25 April** from 10 am. This is the first in a planned series of literary events with local authors.

The Village is published by on-line imprint The Story Bazaar and is available on Amazon, Kobo, Nook and other on-line

Planning News

Lillieshall Road. For years the early 19th century workers' cottages in Lillieshall Road were leased to a housing co-operative by Lambeth but they are now being sold off and extended and modernised by new owners. Where possible we are making photographic records of their simple and often original interiors (one of the houses even has its own working well) before these features are lost. As planning applications come forward, we continue to urge Lambeth to ensure that original features are retained and new extensions kept to modest sizes.

Lambeth Local Plan

Lambeth has recently been consulting on new planning policies. We have taken part in one of the workshops and will provide details in a future newsletter.

Planning applications

Since last October the Planning Sub-committee has been notified of some 180 planning applications. The great majority were not contentious, and we made representations on the following.

Holy Trinity Church. The church has long been developing plans to meet the increasing demand for space for community activities. Ideally these would have been met within the existing building. Having demonstrated that this was not possible, and that there were no suitable buildings available off-site, the case for a further extension (the east end of the church has already been extended) was convincing. We think the design of this latest extension works reasonably well. It is modern but simple and complements the architecture and materials of the church, so we have supported it.

121 Park Hill. This application involves the construction of two new mews style houses on Park Hill along with the restoration and extension of the detached villa, a listed building. The repair of the house is welcome but the extension is very large and bears little relationship to the form or style of the host building.

691 Wandsworth Road. Proposals for a mixed use development (commercial and residential) on what was the parking lot of the mini cab operator opposite the Artesian Well makes for very poor quality accommodation on a site that is really only suitable for use as a back garden, so we objected.

9-11 Old Town. We made suggestions on how to restore the traditional brick facades on this proposal to amalgamate the two retail units and construct a mansard roof across the top of both buildings.

Clapham Common North Side. An application to install dormer windows in the roof of the western block of the J T Knowles buildings either side of Cedars Road. Symmetry and balance of the pair is key to their qualities, and to install dormers, albeit well designed and scaled, in one building and not the other is inappropriate.

16-22 Prescott Place. An application to demolish commercial floorspace and replace it with three new houses. They are cleverly designed but extremely intensive in their use of the site, do not make for good residential accommodation and involve the loss of useful work space, so we objected.

17 The Pavement. The new retail operator on the ground floor of this listed building received consent to make changes on condition that the historic pharmacy shop fittings were retained. They have subsequently been taken out. We have asked Lambeth what they are going to do about it.

Turnchapel Mews. An application to rebuild one of the mews buildings at the expense of the character of this unique part of Clapham has now been refused following extensive and lengthy representations from the Sub-committee.

retailers from 6 April 2015. The twelve, inter-linked stories chronicle the life of a modern, semi-rural English village and its varied inhabitants across the course of one calendar year. A limited number of copies will be available for sale at the event.

Find out more by following Julie's blog at thestorybazaar.com or twitter at [#macfarlanesdeli](https://twitter.com/macfarlanesdeli). Go to thevillagedirect.com for more about the short story collection.

Beware!

Lambeth's parking sub-contractors are not sending out renewal notices for parking permits this year. It is up to you to check the expiry date of your permit and renew it in good time, or you are likely to get a parking ticket fairly promptly. No notice has been given of this change and many residents who have received renewal notices for many years are getting caught out. You can renew on-line.

'This is Clapham'

'This is Clapham' is a Business Improvement District (BID) which is primarily financed by 367 Clapham businesses through a mandatory levy, in full accordance with the Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004.

It is a not-for-profit company governed by volunteers from the local business community through its board and sub-groups. These volunteers determine which projects to pursue and how the collected levies and any additional income is spent.

The BID's overarching aim is to improve Clapham as a place to live, work, visit and do business. All businesses with a rateable value of over £7,999 are required to pay a levy to help finance 'This is Clapham'. The size of the levy is determined by the rateable value of the premises in which they operate. Charities receive an 80% discount.

'This is Clapham' also raises income from external sources to supplement the BID levy. It has raised income from sponsorship, Lambeth Council and the Mayor of London to deliver events and programmes.

The BID began operating in October 2014. For the first six months of operation it has been putting the governance and financial structures in place to ensure it is well placed to deliver its five-year programme of improvement. However, it has already launched new services and delivered projects, these include:

- the Christmas Tree in Old Town and Christmas lights switch on event
- cleaning of 14 hotspots across Clapham identified by businesses
- a new free recycling programme for businesses

- continued funding of the night time hub at Clapham Methodist Church
- raising over £40k of funding from external sources
- creation of a new brand for Clapham
- successful lobbying for increased police resources at weekends
- support of a new radio and intranet system for businesses

As well as the BID board that oversees the management and finances, there are four groups who come up with project ideas and oversee their delivery. These theme groups are called Promote, Connect, Enhance and Safe. Meetings take place every two months. Going forward the BID hopes to deliver a number of exciting projects, which include:

- a green infrastructure audit of the High Street to increase resilience to climate change and improve the area
- a new website to promote Clapham and its businesses
- a public art competition focusing on forgotten spaces throughout the town
- promotion of creative industries in Clapham
- wardens to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and implement a new dispersal policy for the High Street
- a programme of town centre events
- expansion of the High Street cleaning programme
- help for businesses to save more money on jointly procured services

Although the BID is primarily set up to support local businesses, we are keen to work with local groups and listen to local residents. For more details go to claphambusiness.com, contact me on 020 7622 5905 or info@claphambusiness.com.

Jeremy Keates, Clapham BID Manager

Omnibus

Last month Omnibus launched a membership scheme, with several levels of membership starting at £25 per year.

Benefits, which vary according to the level chosen, include invitations to private views and house productions, free tickets and opportunities to meet the cast. For full details and an application form go to omnibus-clapham.org/get-involved/memberships.

Events in April include the first in a series of 'In Conversation with....' events on **Sunday 19 April** at 7 pm when Sir Michael Gambon will be talking to writer and editor, Xan Brooks. Tickets at £18, concessions £15 are available on the website, which has recently been relaunched and now has calendar listings so that it is easy to check events day by day. Or if you prefer you can still search by type of event. omnibus-clapham.org/whats-on or 0207 7498 4699.

Membership Subscriptions

Annual subscriptions are due on 1 April. Current rates are: Individual £6.00; Household (up to three names): £9.00; Corporate: £15.00. Members receiving the newsletter by post pay an additional £8.00 to cover the cost of postage.

Cheques should be made payable to *The Clapham Society* and sent to the Membership Secretary (address below). Members renewing their subscription by standing order are asked to ensure that their bank is making the correct payment. Membership will lapse if the subscription is not renewed by 30 June. Contact the Membership Secretary if you have a query about your subscription.

New members We are pleased to welcome the following new members this month: Tom Duckering and Iain Ridley, Florence Mele, Rebecca Nicholson and Michael Trees, and Bridget O'Brien-Twohig.

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.