



# The Clapham Society *Newsletter*

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## The Battle for our Roads

The competing pressures on our road network and public realm are immense. During the last two years Clapham Old Town has seen the main road system dug up and redesigned, to redirect the traffic flows, introduce new cycle lanes, and adjust pavement widths and on-street parking provision as part of the Old Town Regeneration Project. Almost immediately following this Southern Gas commenced the replacement of gas mains around Clapham Common tube station, necessitating the closure of Clapham Park Road and re-routing of several important bus services for several months. At the same time power lines along the High Street required renewal, and the pavements were dug up causing problems for pedestrians.



For some months users of Chelsea Bridge have experienced severe delays due to road works at the Queenstown Road roundabout to create a complicated arrangement designed to assist cyclists at this junction, and just before Easter Transport for London (TfL) commenced major road works at The Oval on another link in their plans for cycling superhighways across the capital.

Whilst all these schemes achieve undoubted benefits, and in some cases are essential, there are winners and losers, and their planning and execution can sometimes leave a lot to be desired.

A major criticism is that in some cases the works are dragged out over a longer period than necessary, imposing higher costs to the general public, in order to avoid the costs of overtime and weekend working. In

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Our meetings are held at Omnibus, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW. The bar at Omnibus is 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 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, Royal National Theatre and Cameron Mackintosh Productions. 'Best wig I've ever seen', Barry Humphries.

### Monday 15 June

**The Garden Museum. Christopher Woodward** has been Director of the Garden Museum since 2006. The Museum was set up in 1977 to rescue from demolition the former parish church of St Mary-at-Lambeth, where John Tradescant is buried in a celebrated carved tomb. Tradescant was a 17th century scholar, gardener to King Charles I and a keen collector – he displayed his collection of 'curiosities' from his travels at his house in Lambeth. The Museum recently received funds from the Heritage Lottery Fund for modernisation and improvement of the facilities. Christopher will be speaking about the Museum, and the story of the Tradescants.

There is no meeting in July, but our annual party is on **Thursday 9 July**. A ticket application form will be in the June newsletter.

The first of our summer walks will be on **Wednesday 27 May**. Leaving at 6.30 pm from Clapham South Underground Station, Derrick Johnson will lead a walk of the Nightingale Lane area, illustrating the way in which areas of London were developed piecemeal over a period of time.

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the case of the Southern Gas works referred to above, for large parts of the working day nothing much seemed to be happening at all.

A major proposed development that has been exercising a number of people locally is the plan to redevelop the bus station that was created just ten years ago at Vauxhall Cross, as part of a proposal to remove the gyratory road system surrounding Vauxhall Station to make it safer for cyclists, and as part of Nine Elms Regeneration Master Plan. Lambeth is keen to create a new district shopping centre next to the station, and the planners suggest that this will necessitate relocating and reducing the footprint of the bus station away from the two railway stations. Whilst there is broad support for many objectives of the plan, its impact on bus users, and the location of new retailing remain controversial. A report on the consultation exercise that ended in January is now available on TfL's website: [consultations.tfl.gov.uk/roads/vauxhall-cross](http://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/roads/vauxhall-cross). The concerns expressed and alternative proposals submitted by the Vauxhall Society can be found on their website together with a petition to support their campaign to retain the bus station, [vauxhallcivicsociety.org.uk/](http://vauxhallcivicsociety.org.uk/). More detailed proposals will be the subject of a further round of consultation later in the year.

Gyratory road systems, which were much favoured among transport planners during the late 60s and 70s are no longer in fashion, and TfL is keen to replace them with a reversion to two-way working and traffic light-operated junctions, and the release of former highway for use by cyclists and pedestrians. Plans have recently been approved, following a short period of consultation, for the removal of the gyratory at Stockwell. This will result in the short stretch of South Lambeth Road that is one-way northbound alongside the war memorial being pedestrianised, and Clapham Road remaining two-way to the East of the memorial. Full details are available at: [consultations.tfl.gov.uk/betterjunctions/stockwell-cross](http://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/betterjunctions/stockwell-cross). Also in the frame for removal of its gyratory system is Wandsworth Town Centre, on which preliminary consultation concluded on 14 December.

A major piece of long-term transport planning currently being undertaken by TfL and the GLA concerns the infrastructure that will be required to service London's growing population. London recently surpassed its previous peak population in 1939, and it is reckoned we could see a 37% increase on the 2011 census estimated population to 11.3m by 2050. This scale of growth has not been seen since the 19th Century and clearly holds implications for all London's services – housing, health, education, policing, as well as utilities and mass transportation.

Last summer the Mayor's office launched a very interesting series of documents for consultation on how London's infrastructure may need to develop to accommodate this increase in population, and how this growth might be channelled. The plan brings together a number of key developments that are already well advanced, e.g. Crossrail, and the Cycle Super Highway, but also some more speculative schemes that may never happen. Much of the plan is devoted to investment in rail-based solutions to improve connectivity, including extensions to the tube network and more efficient use of track.

Probably the most controversial proposal envisages a new Inner Orbital Highway encircling the central boroughs in tunnels with limited points of access to the existing road network. It is suggested this would be a toll system. Older readers may recall plans for Ringway One, which blighted much of Inner London, including Clapham, until it was dropped in 1973. The schematic plans show a major intersection at Battersea. The closing date for comment was 31 October 2014, and we currently await the report on the consultation exercise. This will make interesting reading, and will surely attract considerable press comment, just as some aspirations of the plan have done already.

*Mark Leffler*

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This walk is part of the **Wandsworth Heritage Festival**, which commences with an Open Day at Wandsworth Town Library on **Saturday 23 May** (11 am to 4.30 pm) and continues until **Sunday 7 June**. Many other guided walks take place during the festival, as well as illustrated talks and workshops. The full programme is available at all Wandsworth libraries.

### More walks

Lambeth Local History Forum's leaflet, *Heritage Walks in South London*, is now available at Lambeth libraries, Omnibus and at our meetings. This is a comprehensive guide to walks arranged by local history societies in the area, all through the summer and right up until the end of October.

## De Morgan Foundation

Since the closure of the De Morgan Centre in Wandsworth last summer the Foundation has been unable to find suitable alternative gallery premises. The office, archive and photographs are now based at the Watts Gallery, Compton, Surrey while a series of loans will make the collection accessible at institutions around the country, which include the National Trust property, Wightwick Manor near Wolverhampton and Blackwell House, Windermere. For more information and regular updates go to the website [demorgan.org.uk](http://demorgan.org.uk).

## Summer fetes

The Clapham Society will have a stand at the following events during the summer. For each event we need several volunteers to help put up the stand, man (or woman) it for an hour or two, and help take down. If you have some time to spare on any of these days please contact the appropriate organiser shown below. The same stalwart volunteers have helped on our stands for many years and we urgently need some new faces. It is not an arduous task, and it is our best opportunity to meet local residents and introduce them to the Society.

**Saturday 13 June** St Paul's Church Fair 12 noon to 4 pm – Maev Sullivan ([maevsullivan@gmail.com](mailto:maevsullivan@gmail.com) or 020 7498 9205)

**Saturday 20 June** Holy Trinity Church Fayre 11am to 5 pm – Jennifer Everett ([jeverett@waitrose.com](mailto:jeverett@waitrose.com) or 020 7627 4770)

**Saturday 27 June** Abbeville Fete 12 noon to 4 pm – Bill Emmett ([bill-sue@perlem.demon.co.uk](mailto:bill-sue@perlem.demon.co.uk) or 020 7622 9234)

## Clapham Common Bat Walk

On **Friday 22 May** Dr Iain Boulton of Lambeth Parks and Open Spaces will lead a one hour Bat Walk. Meet at Clapham Common Bandstand for a 9 pm start. Bat detectors and information will be provided, but please bring a torch if you have one. Warm outdoor clothing and sensible footwear are advised.

## The Children's Hour

Southside Players are performing this challenging and controversial 1930s play by Lillian Hellman from **Wednesday 27 May to Saturday 30 May** at the theatre at Chestnut Grove School, Boundaries Road, SW12 8JZ. For tickets at £10, concessions (Wednesday and Saturday) £7.50 call 07914 657524 or visit [southsideplayers.org.uk](http://southsideplayers.org.uk).



## Henry Thornton School

On 21 March the Mayor of Lambeth, Councillor Adedamola Aminu, unveiled a plaque at the entrance to Lambeth Academy in Elms Road to celebrate the fact that Henry Thornton School was formerly on this site. The ceremony was attended by several members of the Old Thorntonians Association as well as local residents.

## The NHS in Lambeth

At our March meeting Dr Adrian McLachlan, Chair of the Lambeth Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and a local GP, explained the complex organisation of healthcare services in Lambeth.

In a recent review of 11 national health care systems, the NHS came top for quality of care and efficiency, but for outcomes it came tenth. The NHS in England and Wales gets £113bn per year of which £50bn goes on staff and £13bn on medicines. Due to current financial constraints and increasing demand a £30bn funding gap is anticipated by 2020. During the last few months many hospitals have missed key targets, such as A&E waits, and waiting times for inpatient treatment and diagnostic tests. It was interesting to learn that the cost to the NHS of a ten-minute GP visit is £31, while an A&E visit costs £114 and a trip by ambulance £235. The financial pressure on GP services is particularly tight, with only 6% of the NHS London budget going to GPs. Due to the problem of underfunding and increasing demand, the life of a GP is not currently an attractive option for doctors.

In Lambeth there are 48 GP practices serving approximately 380,000 patients.

Lambeth CCG receives about £400m and funds most of the hospital and community services for the population, but not GPs, dentists and specialised services. 56% of the funding goes to the acute hospitals and 17% to mental health services, while Lambeth Council is responsible for disease prevention. Lambeth is lucky to be served by three excellent hospitals, which belong to an Academic Health Sciences Centre – Guy's and St Thomas', King's College and South London and Maudsley (SLAM) Hospitals, working with King's College London.

The good news is that Lambeth residents are living longer, but unfortunately many older residents have long-term medical conditions. Heart disease, cancer and lung diseases are the top three causes of death, and there is a high rate of emergency hospital admissions and mental health problems in the borough. The recent Big Lambeth Health debate resulted in a five-year strategy. It was agreed that care should be person centred and consistent, with emphasis on prevention, integration, innovation and delivering value for money. An uncoordinated service, increasing demand, financial constraints and an ageing workforce are recognised as challenges.

## Omnibus

The Omnibus Literary Festival on **Friday 8 May** and **Saturday 9 May** includes OmniWrite when four established playwrights are each allotted a 15-minute slot; a Creative Writing workshop; a musical double bill and a Poetry and Printing Workshop.

Music events cover flamenco on **Sunday 24 May** and a Flute and Harp Duo on **Sunday 31 May**. There's plenty more going on at Omnibus during May so go to the website and sign up for regular updates, [omnibus-clapham.org](http://omnibus-clapham.org), or call in for a leaflet at 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW. Better still become a Member of Omnibus (from £25 per annum) to enjoy special benefits.

## Wonderful Watercolours

Don't miss the stunning exhibition of watercolours by Eric Ravilious (1903-42) at Dulwich Picture Gallery until the end of August. The exhibition includes well-known works like the Westbury Horse and rarely seen works from private collections. For details, opening times, and special talks by the exhibition curator go to [dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk](http://dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk) or call 020 8693 5254.

The CCG has divided Lambeth into three Local Care Networks, in which GP practices will work together, providing services beyond the usual GP hours and introducing more services near to peoples' homes. It is important to support people to stay healthy and independent, intervening early and enabling recovery. However, Lambeth Council's budget will be halved over eight years, with reduced funding for social care, which will have an impact on the health of the population. Encouraging results have been seen from the introduction of Integrated Care in Lambeth and Southwark. Multidisciplinary teams (health and social care) have been established, with the aim of keeping patients in their own homes, rather than sending them to hospital or a nursing home. It is also hoped that this service will help patients to leave hospital more quickly, which will help to reduce costs.

### For more information read:

Better Health for London (2014) [londonhealthcommission.org.uk/better-health-for-london/](http://londonhealthcommission.org.uk/better-health-for-london/)

The NHS Five Year Forward View (2015) [england.nhs.uk/ourwork/futurenhs/5yfv-exec-sum/](http://england.nhs.uk/ourwork/futurenhs/5yfv-exec-sum/)

The NHS in a Nutshell (2015) [kingsfund.org.uk/projects/nhs-in-a-nutshell](http://kingsfund.org.uk/projects/nhs-in-a-nutshell)

*Jenny Cobley*

## Clapham Books Events

**Saturday 9 May** at 1 pm at Omnibus Literary Festival Zoe Williams will be in the bar reading from and talking about her new book *The Madness of Modern Parenting*. This event will take place at Omnibus, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW and the following at Clapham Books, 26 The Pavement, SW4 0JA.

**Tuesday 12 May** at 7 pm. Matthew Beaumont and Will Self in conversation about Matthew's new book *Night Walking*. Throughout history, London has been two places: the daytime city of business and work and the nighttime place of dark desires, crime, and vagrancy...Why has the city shrouded in darkness been such a compelling subject over the centuries? Before the age of the gas lamp, the city at night was a different place, home to the lost, the licentious, and the insomniac. Matthew Beaumont shines a light on the dark perambulations of poets, novelists, and thinkers from Shakespeare, to the ecstatic strolls of William Blake, the feverish urges of opium addict De Quincey, as well as the master nightwalker, Charles Dickens.

**Thursday 21 May** at 7.30 pm. Lesley Thompson, former Clapham resident, will be reading from and discussing her new thriller (Detective's Daughter series book 3) *The Detective's Secret*. A man has died beneath a late-night train, and Jack's friend Stella, the detective's daughter, suspects it could have been murder. Now Jack and Stella are stirring up the past with questions that no one wants answered - questions that lead to an unsolved case nearly twenty years old.

**Thursday 4 June** at 7.30 pm. Rev. Ivor Rees, minister at the United Reformed Church in Grafton Square from 1967 to 1973, will launch his book, *Clapham Dissenters*. The book tells the 400-year story of the Dissenting congregation, founded in the early 1640s, which became Clapham Congregational Church at Grafton Square, then in 1972, Clapham United Reformed Church, with its theological trends in various centuries, and snapshots of church members in three centuries.

## Clapham Chamber Concerts

On **Friday 15 May** Troupe will perform a cross-arts programme of chamber music, movement, poetry and theatre, building on the group's First World War commemorative concert *A Line in the Sand*, and their earlier *History of Clapham* concert.

The new production, *Story*, is an ongoing project for the Spitalfields Summer Festival. Sophie Rivlin (cello), Catherine Carter (mezzo soprano), Kate Wakelin (dance and text) and Jessie Maryon Davies (piano) will bring together a programme including works by Bach, Dowland, Cage, Schnittke and Ravel, blending with artistry and invention musical works with theatrical performance.

The concert will be in the Church of the Holy Spirit, Narbonne Avenue, SW4 9LQ. Doors open at 7.00 pm (cash bar available) for a 7.30 pm start. Tickets at the door: £12, £9 concessions and students, £5 children. More information at [claphamchamberconcerts.org.uk](http://claphamchamberconcerts.org.uk).

## Wandsworth Fringe

Running from **Friday 1 May** to **Sunday 17 May** Wandsworth Fringe is community focussed and part of a global network of Fringe Festivals, which provide an important testing ground and market place for new work. It is a vibrant festival, led by the people taking part – a spotlight on what's available in Wandsworth.

The full programme can be seen at [wandsworthfringe.com](http://wandsworthfringe.com).

## Open Garden Squares Weekend

This annual opportunity to visit up to 200 gardens for £10 is on **Saturday 13 June** and **Sunday 14 June** this year. For full details go to [opensquares.org](http://opensquares.org).

## Election night concert

Celebrate **Thursday 7 May** at the Church of the Holy Spirit, Narbonne Avenue, SW4 9LQ at a concert by the amazing violinist, Thomas Bowes, who will play Bach's *Partita no 3 in E Major BWV 1006*, *Sonata no 2 in A minor BWV 1003* and *Partita no 2 in D Minor BWV 1004*. Doors open 7 pm for 7.30 pm start. Tickets £8, £4 concessions and more information at [holyspirit-clapham.org.uk/what-s-happening/thomasbowesconcert-7thmay](http://holyspirit-clapham.org.uk/what-s-happening/thomasbowesconcert-7thmay).

## Pentecost

On **Sunday 24 May**, the Church of the Holy Spirit's patronal festival, at the 10.30 am Parish Eucharist Oliver Tarney's *Magnificat* will be sung by the visiting choir, conducted by the composer following its recording the previous day in the church for Sing for Pleasure.

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 our website at [claphamsociety.com](http://claphamsociety.com).

## Historical Miscellany

The current edition of Wandsworth Historian has the usual selection of interesting articles including one about what can be learned from a simple school book prize label, another tracing the origin of the sign at Tibbet's Corner now isolated in the centre of a large roundabout, and a picture of 80-year old politician John Burns outside his house on Clapham Common in 1938. Email [ngrobson@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:ngrobson@tiscali.co.uk) to purchase a copy.