

The Clapham Society

Newsletter



Issue 379

July/August 2015

Clapham Leaf Club

The Club's Grand Finale is on **Saturday 4 July** at Venn Street Market (10 am – 4 pm). Clapham Leaf Club is a project designed to enable pupils of the Clapham and Larkhall Collaborative primary schools (Allen Edwards, Clapham Manor, Heathbrook, Larkhall, Macaulay CE) to learn all aspects of growing their own food from preparing the soil using organic matter, to sowing seeds and culturing their crops which will be harvested and sold as fruit and vegetables or used in a cuisine and cooked and sold at the Market every year in July.

Now in its fifth year, the Grand Finale will show the great efforts made by the schools over the past two terms. Each year Larkhall Primary deliver the best hanging baskets along with a variety of fresh berries from their allotment and freshly laid eggs from their hen and duck pen! Heathbrook Primary will be showing their horticultural skills selling fresh lettuces, strawberries, spring onions, peas and tomatoes and Allen Edwards Primary have been busy planting potatoes, carrots, onions, runner beans, tomatoes and courgettes in March and radishes and rocket just before half term. And if you're feeling hungry Clapham Manor Primary will be making and selling fresh pasta, pea pesto and beetroot brownies – all from their harvest!

This is the first year all five schools have been able to take part together and this project is all about the local primary pupils working together learning skills for life in school and at the market, so please come along and support their work and help raise money for each school's PTA programme.

Kate Greening



If you would like to go to the Summer Party on Thursday 9 July, and have not yet bought a ticket there may still be one available. Check with Alyson Wilson on 020 7622 6360.

We have no regular meetings at Omnibus during July and August. The next meeting will be on **Monday 21 September** when Nobby Clark, photographer will talk about his work as production photographer for many major theatre directors and for newspapers. Full details are on our website at claphamsociety.com/clapsoevents.html.

Meanwhile we have the following walks during the summer:

Sunday 19 July

Beware of the Flowers, 'Cos I'm Sure They're Going to Get You – Yeah! A tour of Clapham Common looking at plants as sources of medicines and poisons, and how we have used them, in the past and now, for both good and bad. Led by Dr Iain Boulton on behalf of the Clapham Society. Meet at the Bandstand for 11 am start.

Sunday 26 July

Larkhall area. Anne Wilson will lead a walk along Wandsworth Road passing the former Weights and Measures Office, the National Trust house at 575 Wandsworth Road, Matrimony Place and the Eden Garden, the former Boys' Home chapel in Rectory Grove, Grade II listed Larkhall Estate, and through Larkhall Park to finish at 'The Surprise'. Meet at Wandsworth Road Station for a 3 pm start.

Saturday 22 August

Our Small and Furry Friends: Wild Small Mammals – an Interactive Study Session. Learn (and ask) about shrews, voles, mice and many other wild small mammals in open spaces; what they are, where to find them, how to study them and why we welcome and encourage them. Led by Dr Iain Boulton on behalf of the Clapham Society. Come any time between 11 am and 2 pm, and meet at the rear of La Baita Bandstand Café.

Saturday 5 September

Clapham Common North Side. Peter Jefferson Smith will lead a walk along the most historic part of North Side and its hinterland, introducing some of the famous people who

continued overleaf

continued from front page

have lived there, from Samuel Pepys to Graham Greene. About 1½ hours. Meet at Omnibus, 1 Clapham Common North Side, for a 3 pm start.

Throughout the summer there are also many guided walks organised by Lambeth Local History societies. Ask for the leaflet, *Heritage Walks in South London*, on one of our guided walks or pick it up at Lambeth libraries. We also have seven self-guided walks leaflets for sale at £1 each, or £5 for all seven. Full details at claphamsociety.com/clapsocpublications.html, where they can be bought. They are also available on our walks.

Early Baroque Music

Don't miss the evening of baroque music on **Thursday 2 July**, organised by Marie Soulier's OPUS. There will be music by Monteverdi, Handel and Purcell amongst other others, sung by the Maltese mezzo-soprano Claire Gigho. The Hungarian recorder player Laszlo Rozsa and cellist Lucia Capellaro will be joined by Alex McCartney on theorbo. Tickets £17, concessions £13, available online at operapourunsalon.net or email Marie Soulier (marie@operapourunsalon.net). Doors open at 7 pm, and the performance starts at 7.30 pm at the Church of the Holy Spirit, Narbonne Avenue, SW4 9LQ.

Congratulations!

In the Queen's Birthday Honours George Owen, Chairman of Omnibus, was awarded the MBE for 'Services to the Arts and the community in Clapham'. It is good to know that all his hard work at Omnibus has been recognised.

On the Bandstand

The programme of concerts on Clapham Common Bandstand continues throughout the summer.

Sunday 5 July at 3 pm. Becontree Brass Band.

Traditional British Brass Band music.

Saturday 11 July at 2 pm. The Fabulous Honeys. Ladies swing band.

Sunday 12 July at 3 pm. London Saxophone Choir.

Sunday 19 July at 3 pm. Siswa Sukra. Javanese Gamelan music.

Saturday 25 July at 3 pm. London Saxophone Quartet.

Sunday 26 July at 3 pm. New London Concert Band.

Marches and show tunes.

Saturday 1 August at 3 pm. Southwark Concert Band.

Sunday 2 August at 2 pm. The Heroes Band. Official Band of the Help the Heroes charity.

Saturday 8 August at 3 pm. South London Jazz Orchestra.

And note especially:

Sunday 6 September at 3 pm **The Clapham Society Annual Bandstand Concert** with the Baker Street Blues.

Don Giovanni

The annual St Paul's Church opera this year is Mozart's *Don Giovanni* on **Friday 3 July** and **Saturday 4 July**. The churchyard is open from 5.30 pm for picnics and the opera starts at 7 pm. Tickets at £25 are available from Nicola White on 020 7622 2128 or admin@stpaulssw4.org. St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DX.

New planning policies

In the last few months we have participated in several Lambeth consultation exercises. On the bigger issues facing Clapham we have drawn attention to the pressures to enlarge and alter existing homes to such an extent that their original character is lost, the change of use from commercial and employment floorspace in the town centre to residential use, the difficulties that small independent businesses face competing with large retailers, and the need for public transport improvements. On the positive side we acknowledged the success of projects such as the Old Town improvement scheme.

The first of these issues is being addressed now with Lambeth preparing new planning guidance on house alterations and extensions. We have commented on what we feel are generally useful and well-founded draft policies. But guidance on basement extensions, a matter of increasing concern to residents, is unduly relaxed and we are urging Lambeth to develop more stringent controls.

Planning applications

Since the last Planning Report in March we have been notified of some 90 planning applications, reviewed 15 of them and made representations on the following:

3-5 Nightingale Lane. This application involves replacing what was a police office with a residential care home for dementia sufferers. While the new building presents a well-designed face to the Common, the size of the wing at the rear is over-large, cutting out daylight and privacy to neighbours, and making for poor garden space for residents.

24 Offerton Road. Objection to a new basement structure which covers the full extent of the back garden and whose concrete roof will support no more vegetation than a layer of grass. If other neighbours were to follow this precedent the verdant tree lined character of these rear gardens would disappear.

Lillieshall Road. We have continued to draw Lambeth's attention to work on these listed buildings where it exceeds the consents granted, and some enforcement action is being taken as a result. In addition we have made detailed representations on new applications at Nos.13 and 22, as well as recording details for archive purposes.

691 Wandsworth Road. Objection to another unrealistic application to construct four, four-storey houses on a site which is really only suitable to be a back garden.

Turnchapel Mews. Having been refused planning permission to rebuild one of the mews buildings, the applicant has appealed. Because of the significance of the scheme, we have made representations to the Planning Inspectorate, pointing out the damage we consider the proposals make to the unique character of the mews.

Clapham Common Quietway

Lambeth Council is working with Transport for London (TfL) on a proposed Quietway from Waterloo to Croydon. The TfL website has this to say about what a Quietway is:

'Quietways will be a network of radial and orbital cycle routes throughout London. Linking key destinations, they will follow backstreet routes, through parks, along waterways or tree-lined streets.'

'The routes will overcome barriers to cycling, targeting less confident cyclists who want to use low-traffic routes, while also providing for existing cyclists who want to travel at a more gentle pace.'

The current intention is for the Quietway to run from the corner of Bromell's Road and The Pavement, across Clapham Common by the side of Long Pond, the Windmill play area, the Spinney (formerly the One O'Clock Club) and Eagle Pond before turning towards West Side. There would be associated improvements to the crossings and the area around the Quietway. Among these would be narrowing part of Rookery Road, and putting into effect the long-planned closure to traffic of Windmill Drive.

Lambeth are beginning consultation by presenting the plans to the Clapham Common Management Advisory Committee in July.

Wigs galore!

At our May meeting, wig-maker *par excellence* Angela Cobbin gave us a fascinating insight into her career. Starting as a hairdresser in Brighton during the 1960s she soon tired of routine Jean Shrimpton and Vidal Sassoon hair styles and, in search of something more challenging, joined Nathan's theatrical costumiers in Covent Garden. She was soon hooked, and quickly learned the history of wigs and styles from ancient Egypt onwards, of which she gave us a brief summary.



photo Dana Kubick

After a while Angela moved to Madame Tussauds, and two years later to the Royal Opera House. She gave us a taste of the excitement and frenzy back stage, with incidents such as the time she and one other person had to put wigs on 36 members of the chorus in 35 minutes! By the 1980s she had moved to the National Theatre, and again the speed and skill required was evident when she told us that at that time sometimes an actor would play a small part in both the Olivier and the Lyttleton theatres in the same evening!

Angela toured internationally with the National Theatre, and then work for *Spitting Image* came because of her experience at Madame Tussauds. She also worked on productions at the Donmar and Almeida, and very soon she was in demand for a wide range of musicals, including *Les Miserables*, *Phantom of the Opera* and *Mary Poppins*, both in London and touring the USA. For *Mary Poppins* she was asked do a dog for the first time, and she showed us the result – a very appealing shaggy, long-haired Yorkshire Terrier made with real, human hair. Angela told us that for 18th century styles, she sometimes uses yak hair as originally used. Her very entertaining talk was well illustrated with many photographs of the stars for whom she has provided wigs during her career.

We also learned how wig-making has changed over the years. Wigs have become much lighter and are designed to look as real as possible. Nowadays a wig is often put just behind the hairline so that the natural hair is in front and the hairpiece looks more like the real hair.

There were several questions from the audience who were clearly fascinated by this subject – yet another of the theatre skills we so easily take for granted, until something goes wrong! We are most grateful to Angela for an entertaining and informative evening.

A NADFAS Society in Clapham?

To many people the initials NADFAS (National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies) and the organisation are familiar. NADFAS is a leading arts charity which opens up the world of the arts through a network of local Societies and national events.

With inspiring monthly lectures given by some of the country's top experts, together with days of special interest, educational visits and cultural holidays, NADFAS is a great way to learn, have fun and make new and lasting friendships. Society Members and Affiliate Members can become involved in worthwhile conservation volunteering projects in churches, museums and stately homes. There are over 375 Societies throughout the UK and mainland Europe, as well as in Australia and New Zealand. The Greater London area has twenty-one Societies affiliated to the central NADFAS organisation.

Clapham does not have a NADFAS Society and we are hoping to open one in the area. If you would be interested in joining or helping to set it up please call 020 3206 9331 or email membership@nadfasc.org.uk. You can find out more at nadfasc.org.uk.

Margaret Barrie

Stephen Beaven (1940-2015)

The trustees of the Hibbert Almshouse Charity were saddened to learn, only in June, of the death of Stephen Beaven on 24 March. Stephen used to live in Kennington, but following a heart attack in 2009 he moved to Battle in Sussex. He came to our Summer Party each year since then, and it was only when a neighbour responded to our invitation to this year's party, that we learnt this news.

Stephen was involved in the early days of the Clapham Society, and was its Secretary, jointly from 1965-68 and then from 1973-75.

He became a trustee of the almshouses in 1976 and remained one until 2009. As the principal trustee involved in the major refurbishment in the early 1980s Stephen was very effective and considerate. It was his practice to visit the almshouses every Saturday, take the readings of the gas and electricity meters, and call in on the residents to deal with any problems that they had.

Stephen worked in the printing industry, was a Lambeth Labour Councillor and a trustee of Lambeth and Southwark Housing Association. He was a bachelor, and kept his private life much to himself.

Euan Kennedy
Chairman, Hibbert Almshouse Charity

The Clapham Society urgently needs a new secretary

We have so far had no response to last month's request for a new secretary to join the Main Committee in October. Please consider whether you might be able to spare the time to circulate papers for and take minutes of six meeting a year. This is not an arduous task and a good way to contribute something towards the Society. Contact jennycobley@aol.com.

Local Authors

This month two more local authors will be at Clapham Books.

On **Thursday 16 July** at 7.30 pm JJ Anderson will read from and talk about her collection of short stories *The Village: A Year in Twelve Tales*. Copies will be on sale and the author will be happy to sign them. She will also preview her forthcoming publication, *On the Frontier*, due out later in July. JJ Anderson was at MacFarlane's Fine Foods of Abbeville Road recently, for a similar event and a steady stream of interested locals sat down to discuss the stories, and the experience of writing and publishing. Much of the discussion is reproduced on the 'Ask the Author' page of thevillagedirect.com and in JJ Anderson's interview at Smashwords (smashwords.com).

On **Thursday 23 July** at 7.30 pm another local author, John Taylor, will be reading from his recently published book, *Departing Vienna* and answering questions. In this intriguing novel – part detective story, part thriller – the hero sets out on a search for the author of the book he is translating, explores themes of responsibility, guilt and identity, leading on through a literary maze in which all is not as it seems.

Both events at Clapham Books, 26 The Pavement, SW4 0JA.

Summer at Omnibus

The busy July programme at Omnibus includes the following:

Thursday 9 July at 7 pm. Wine Tasting Evening. Tickets £15 (receive £5 off wine orders of £100 or more).

Friday 10 July at 7.30 pm. *The Element in the Room*: A Radioactive Musical Comedy about the Death and Life of Marie Curie, another popular Tangram Theatre production. Tickets £12, £10 concessions.

Sunday 12 July at 7 pm. Samuel Staples and Friends with highlights of the chamber music repertory. £12, £10 concessions, £5 under 25s.

Saturday 18 July at 7.30 pm. *One Man Harold*. A one-man improvised show. Tickets £10 on the door, £8 in advance.

Sunday 19 July at 7.30 pm. In Conversation With... Miriam Margoyles. Tickets £18, £16 concessions.

Thursday 23 July to Sunday 26 July. Grasshopper. A New Outdoor Arts Festival for Families. Next to the Bandstand on Clapham Common. Join Gregor, our resident Clapham grasshopper, for four days of theatre, puppetry, music, workshops and arts & crafts activities, including the stunning outdoor theatre productions *Meadow* and *Bird*. See the full programme for each day at omnibus-clapham.org/whats-on

Friday 24 July at 7.30 pm. *Invisible Woman*. A tale of derring do in WWII. Tickets £10, £8 concessions.

For the August programme and to receive regular details of What's On make sure you sign up to the mailing list at omnibus-clapham.org.

Summer Cinema

Supporters were asked to vote for their favourite films to be shown this year at the popular Trinity Hospice summer film festival. The results are as follows:

Book on line at trinityhospice.org.uk or contact Palak on pbhatt@trinityhospice.org.uk or 020 7787 1054.

Wednesday 19 August. *The Breakfast Club*

Thursday 20 August. *Casablanca*

Friday 21 August. *Mrs Doubtfire*

Lambeth Heritage Festival

This annual festival lasts for the whole of the month of **September**. There are events – walks, talks and visits – every day somewhere in Lambeth, mostly arranged by member societies of Lambeth Local History Forum. Clapham events include our guided walk led by Peter Jefferson Smith on **Saturday 5 September**, Baker Street Blues Bandstand Concert on **Sunday 6 September**, St Paul's Church bicentenary events – talks on the church history on **Wednesday 16 September** and Celebration Service on **Thursday 24 September** – and our Nobby Clark photographer talk on **Monday 21 September**. The full programme will be available towards the end of July at Lambeth libraries, and we will have more details in the September newsletter and on our website.

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

Badminton for Beginners

Every Tuesday from 10 am to 12 noon you can join a badminton session aimed at over-60s with limited or no experience of the game. The idea is to have a bit of exercise and some fun, in sessions run by professional Badminton England qualified coaches. All equipment is provided. The sessions are at Clapham Leisure Centre, 141 Clapham Manor Street, SW4 6DB and the cost is £10 per session. For more information contact the principal coach, Per, on 07786 101562. Why not try out a session and see how you like it?