

The Clapham Society Newsletter



Issue 391

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BIDding for Clapham

In August the blank frontage of 17-18 The Pavement, a site long derelict, became a major talking point for passers by. It was transformed by a large scale 'cultural map' of the area, and panels describing the work of notable local people and other historical connections. The display was created by illustrator Jenni Starks with support from members of the Society's Local History Sub-committee. The double panel display is the conception of This is Clapham, the local Business Improvement District (BID) which came into existence in October 2014, and which has become a close ally of The Clapham Society in promoting townscape improvements, and interest in the area.



photo: Mark Leffler

The stated prime purpose of the BID – a limited company run by a board of 12 local businesses, established under the BID Regulations 2004 – is to improve Clapham as a place to work, live, visit and do business. It has the ability to levy a modest rate on business premises within its designated area, which raises c. £220,000 per annum. From the outset the BID has demonstrated its determination to work with local groups, such as The Clapham Society, and has set up a number of theme groups to promote local initiatives, some of which aim to plug gaps in existing services, such as street cleaning. Others bring a welcome focus on creating a better local environment, and can attract extra funding from Lambeth Council, and other statutory bodies.

The BID's priorities in its first two years have, understandably, been to improve the management of the night time economy, to control anti-social behaviour and petty crime by introducing street wardens, and a radio link-up to local businesses, supporting the work of the HUB on Friday and Saturday nights,
(continued overleaf)

Our meetings are held at Omnibus, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW. The bar at Omnibus is open from 7 pm, and meetings commence at 8 pm. Our guest normally speaks for about 45 minutes, followed by around 15 minutes for questions and discussion, and the bar remains open after the talk. Meetings are free and open to non-members, so please bring your friends along.

Monday 24 October

Annual General Meeting. There is still time to stand for the committee for 2017, or to join one of the sub-committees. See details in the September newsletter, and the Annual Report enclosed with this newsletter. Please consider taking an active role in the Society.

After the formal business of the meeting our guest speaker is local designer, **Tim Gosling**, who has an international reputation for exquisite, beautifully crafted furniture and a deep commitment to working with highly skilled British craftsmen. Tim's knowledge and interest in classic and contemporary design, his talent for sketching combined with his interest in the arts, create the perfect blend for producing the most innovative designs. Tim designed The Clapham Society's Green Plaque, and the first one was unveiled on his home, Sycamore House, in 2011.

Monday 28 November

Slavery, Commerce and the Hibbert Family. Dr Katie Donington, Research Associate on the Antislavery Usable Past project at the University of Nottingham, will explore the Hibbert family and their links to slavery and Clapham. George Hibbert MP was a leading parliamentary proslavery advocate, a Chairman of the Society of West India Merchants, Agent for Jamaica and an extensive plantation and slave-owner. He lived in a large house with a renowned garden on Clapham Common North Side.

There is no meeting in December.

and introducing weekend street cleaning services. It has also promoted a range of Business to Business services and events.

A number of initiatives that concern Clapham's streetscape deserve special mention here. In the main these take forward ideas generated during the Common Ground Green Infrastructure Audit undertaken last year.

Proposals have been drawn up or submitted to undertake a range of works on the green space behind Clapham Common tube station, sometimes referred to as the Grassy Knoll. The scheme involves some landscaping, new seating, and installation of programmable lighting in certain large trees here and down the High Street. Pressure remains to include the removal of some of the street clutter around this key meeting point as part of the scheme.

It was a major disappointment to the Society that the regeneration scheme undertaken in 2013/14 never fully implemented the proposed planting scheme. The BID is currently working on a proposal to undertake a planting programme that would deliver the original planting vision for Old Town, tied in with a proper maintenance plan.

The BID is working with Lambeth and TfL on a strategy to enhance the High Street. This initiative is led by Lambeth, with design work by TfL. A number of potential areas have been identified where townscape improvements could be achieved within the highway, and the intention is to select three areas initially for priority treatment. Consultation on sketch ideas is planned for early October.

High on the list of potential candidates for improvement are areas at the northern end of the High Street, around Voltaire Road and Clapham North tube station, and improving the pedestrian experience between the underground and overground transport services in this area. Other areas include the top end of Clapham Park Road where it meets the High Street, the potential to introduce more trees along the High Street, and the junctions at Venn Street and at Clapham Manor Street.

Other BID proposals under consideration include the installation and maintenance of hanging baskets in the fringe shopping areas, and installation of raised planting beds in certain areas.

Full details of the work of the BID can be found on its website thisisclapham.co.uk.

Mark Leffler

Member of the This is Clapham BID Board

Omnibus October Highlights

The packed autumn programme includes:

Sunday 2 October at 7.30 pm.

Messiaen's *Quartet For The End Of Time*, which was composed during World War II whilst Messiaen was imprisoned at a German POW camp. This is one of the most influential works of the 20th century chamber repertoire. Tickets £12, £10 concessions, £5 under 25s.

Thursday 27 October at 7.30 pm.

Three Stories from Radio 4. A special evening of stories, written and performed for Radio 4 presented by John Osborne. Tickets £12, £10 concessions.

For tickets and the full Omnibus

programme go to omnibus-clapham.org.

or, call 020 7498 4699 or drop in at 1 Clapham Common North Side SW4 0QW.

Fun Dog Show

Clapham Common Fun Dog Show is on **Sunday 2 October**, on the Event Site on the Common, starting at 12 noon, and lasting for two hours with breaks. Some of the classes are serious and traditional, while others will test features of your dog such as the wagginess of its tail. There will be stalls for dog-related goods and services, as well as food and drink, a bouncy castle for children, a beer and wine tent for the grown-ups, and more – including a Clapham Society stand with an opportunity to purchase our books and walks leaflets. Check the publications list on the back of the enclosed Annual Report to see that you are up-to-date with your books about Clapham.

The event is organised by the Friends of Clapham Common with support from Chestertons Estate Agents.

Belgian Refugees

We have recently been sent some fascinating information about a hostel for Belgian Refugees at 83 Clapham Common West Side. Looking through his grandmother's letters and documents, Clapham Society member Sidney Emery found some papers which belonged to her sister, who was lady-in-waiting to the Duchess of Vendome (sister of Albert I of Belgium).

There is a letter from the Treasurer of the Hospitality Committee, dated 28th October 1914, inviting the Duchess to open the Hostel for Belgian Refugees at 83 West Side, formerly Carlyle College for Girls, at 3 pm on Saturday 31st October 1914. It's not clear if she did attend (maybe the short notice was a problem?) because a second letter, dated 31st December 1914, reads 'Reverting to your promise to visit our Hostel, we should feel honoured if you would be so gracious as to favour us with your presence on Saturday the 30th January at 3 pm'.

Another document refers to the formation of the '**Hospitality Committee** of local residents for assisting in dealing with the **immediate and pressing necessity** that exists for accommodation of **Refugees from Belgium**.' It goes on to mention the generosity of the owner who has placed at their disposal the mansion 'which is capable of accommodating some 50 guests'. The names of members of the Committee, who are all residents of West Side and the streets immediately adjoining, are listed. This document states 'loans of beds, bedding, furniture and cooking utensils are urgently required'. These could be delivered to 83 West Side, where 'a duly authorised official will be in attendance daily from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m.', or they would be collected if a card was sent to the Secretary. 'Articles **loaned** should have the name and address of sender securely attached.' 'Gifts of money or in kind will also be most gratefully received by the Committee.'

On looking further in to the subject of Belgian Refugees I found it is estimated that between 225,000 and 265,00 refugees came to Britain during WWI and many to this area of south London. Wounded Belgian soldiers and refugees were also accommodated in a house in Cedars Road and one on Clapham Common North Side, and in Balham. The monthly magazine of St Andrew's Church in Battersea Rise had a regular column headed Belgian Notes, giving news of the Hostel on West Side, and one of the refugees wrote an article for the magazine. Wandsworth Heritage Service has the programme of a Belgian Refugees' Garden Party in June 1915, opened by the Duchess of Vendome and recorded in some detail in the *Wandsworth Borough News*.

There is no record of when the hostel closed, but it was probably soon after the end of the war in 1918, when up to 90% of refugees are said to have returned home almost immediately.

Alyson Wilson

Coming soon!

Further to the taster lecture last March, the subsequent formation of a committee and plenty of planning over the summer, Clapham Common Decorative and Fine Arts Society (CCDFS) is almost ready to launch. The programme of lectures is now being finalised and in the next newsletter we hope to have full details, dates and titles of lectures, and how to join the Society.

Planning News

Details of representations made on planning applications since May are set out below.

Clapham Common. A recent application by the Council to use the Event Site for three events in July and August was submitted too late for a decision to be taken until after the events had taken place, making a mockery of the planning system. The application was subsequently withdrawn.

Southside Court, Clapham Common South Side. An application to tarmac the grassed area next to this modest block of flats across from the Common, for use as a car park. The proposal would spoil the open view to and from the Common and it is too close to the busy main road for safe vehicle access. The application was refused.

83 Clapham Common North Side. Criticism of an application to convert this house into five flats including a basement extension and a large glass box above the roof ridge. The proposal is unduly exploitative and additionally involves the partial destruction of the front garden which contains remains of the former Georgian house on the site. The application was refused.

The Spinney, Windmill Drive. An application to demolish and re-build what was the old One O'clock Club building for continued use as a school nursery. We felt that the scale and design of the new building damaged the character of the Common and the Conservation Area, and despite the valuable service the nursery provides, it is not an appropriate use of the Common whose role is to provide recreation facilities accessible to all. Planning permission was granted.

St John's Church, 386 Clapham Road. This application is for the construction of a new residential block at the rear of this listed church and the subdivision of the church itself to provide more flats and a reduced area for worship and community use. Notwithstanding the need to give the church a sustainable future we considered the extent of the subdivision damaged the building's special architectural interest. Permission was refused.

32 Crescent Grove. This was an application to convert the existing end-of-terrace listed building, part of which was originally a coach house and then more recently used as bed-sits, into two houses. The building is in need of improvement but we considered the extent of the changes excessive, damaging the building's special historic and architectural interest. The application was approved with some amendments.

22-22a Thornton Road. This application involved the demolition of two semi-detached houses in large gardens and their replacement with a six-storey block of flats. We expressed reservations about the impact of the proposed development on the low-rise character of this suburban street as well as on the setting of the neighbouring listed Cubitt villa. The application was withdrawn.

Lambeth College, Clapham Common South Side. An application to extend the availability of the college facilities for community use to Sundays may affect the amenity of neighbouring residents. No decision has been issued yet.

24 Lillieshall Road. The application proposes wide-ranging alterations as well as a basement extension and the overall effect damages the simple character of this modest listed house. The application was refused.

An Anniversary celebration

The Old Thorntonians Association (OTA) was re-formed ten years ago as an active group – currently numbering 91 – pupils and staff of the former Henry Thornton School, on Clapham Common South Side and Elms Road. To mark the anniversary, which will be combined with the regular annual reunion, members will meet at The Windmill on **Tuesday 8 November** for a formal lunch. The Guest of Honour will be Bryony Hill, widow of Jimmy Hill, OBE, the Association's first President, elected in 2006; his successor, distinguished lawyer Michael Caplan, QC (1964-71), will also be present.

Any Clapham Society members who are Old Thorntonians and interested in joining the Association are invited to contact the Secretary, Ted Hayward, for further information about its work and aims, as well as the forthcoming event: ted.hayward@btinternet.com. 01494 762838. 31 Linfields, Amersham, HP7 9QH. Website oldthorntoniansclapham.org.uk.

New members

We are pleased to welcome the following new members this month: Shona Fisher, Julian and Ana Garel-Jones, Andrew Knight, John and Rosa Phillips, Robert Priest, Tessa Rickards, Philip, Virginie and Sophie Stubbings, Andrew Summers, Juliet, Andrew and Hamish Warren, and Tom and Liv Williams.

Art at The Glebe House

On **Tuesday 11 October** from 9.30 am to 11am and from 6 pm to 9 pm Art 33 are holding an exhibition at The Glebe House, 6 Rectory Grove, SW4 0DZ.

Art 33, founded by artist Emma Thistleton, holds art sales to raise money for charity in which venues give their space free and in turn choose the charity to receive 33% of the sales on the day. In this case The Glebe House London, Grade II listed atmospheric Georgian converted coach house, boutique B and B and small events venue in Clapham Old Town will host the sale. Owner Alix Bateman's chosen charity is The Girls Network, an award winning charity that matches girls between 14 and 19 from the least advantaged communities with professional female mentors. The Girls Network operates around the UK, including Lambeth.

Please support the event and buy some outstanding art at affordable prices.

Clapham Chamber Concerts

The 2016-17 season opens on **Friday 14 October** with the two much loved clarinet sonatas by Johannes Brahms, *Clarinet Sonata No.1 in F minor, Op. 120 No. 1* and *Clarinet Sonata No.2 in E flat major, Op. 120 No. 2*. These paired sonatas were the last chamber works Brahms composed before his death and are considered two of the great masterpieces in the clarinet repertoire.

The programme also features Liszt's *Ballade No.2 in B minor, S. 171*, and Schumann's *Three Romances, Op. 943* in a version for clarinet and piano. CCC clarinettist Jonathan Parkin, will be joined by pianist Sebastian Stanley. The concert starts at 7.30 pm at St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DX. Tickets available on the door at £12, £10 concessions and Friends of CCC, £5 children. For further information email claphamchamberconcerts@gmail.com.

Stockwell Bus Garage Open Day

On **Saturday 15 October** from 11 am to 4 pm Stockwell bus garage, opened in April 1952, a Grade II* listed building and one of the finest examples of post war modernist architecture in the country, will be open to the public. There will be talks on its architectural history, and horse buses and heritage vehicles on display. More details at ltmuseum.co.uk/whats-on/events-calendar/partner-events.

Clapham Cats



photo: Dana Kubick

You may still have a few days left to enjoy the cats or CATS (Citizens Advertising Takeover Service) at Clapham Common Underground Station. A creative group called Glimpse led by James Turner (above), has raised money through Kickstarter to take over the station and replace commercial advertisements with photographs of cats. Some cats are from the feline charity, Cats Protection, and others from Battersea Dogs and Cats Home. See more at weglimpse.co.

Dvořák's Stabat Mater

On **Saturday 8 October** you are invited to join the Whitehall Choir, at the Church of the Holy Spirit, Narbonne Avenue SW4 9JU, in a workshop on Dvořák's *Stabat Mater*. The workshop led by the choir's conductor, Paul Spicer, will be followed by a free informal performance at 4.15 pm, which will include soloists from the opera course at the Royal Academy of Music.

Workshop tickets are £15 on the door from 10 am or in advance on the website whitehallchoir.org/comeandsing8oct16.htm.

One Man, Two Guvners

Southside Players will perform Richard Bean's hit comedy at Chestnut Grove Theatre, Chestnut Grove School, Hearnville Road SW12 8RR from **Wednesday 26 October to Saturday 29 October** at 7.45 pm (5 pm on Saturday). Tickets £10.00, concessions (Wednesday and Saturday only) £7.50. Box office 07914 657524 or online at southsideplayers.org.uk.

Richard Bean's adaptation of the eighteenth-century commedia dell'arte style comedy *A Servant of Two Masters* retains the original storyline, but updates the action to 1960s Brighton – filled with colour, chaos and the discovery that pubs also do food.

St Paul's Church: Organ Restoration Project

The organ at St Paul's was built in 1880 by Forster and Andrews of Hull. Apart from a few minor changes, the organ is almost untouched from its original form. This is rare and very few Forster and Andrews instruments survive in such a preserved state. As such, the organ is of significant heritage value, as well as being integral to every aspect of worship at St Paul's.

Despite regular maintenance, the condition of the organ has deteriorated over the course of time and it now requires a full restoration. Without immediate attention, the life of the organ is no more than five years. The project will cost £120,000.

A contractor has been appointed and the fundraising committee can apply for grants and charity funding, but not until the sum of £60,000 has been raised. Support is needed to raise this. If you would like to make a donation, or help with the fundraising, please contact Nicola White in the Parish Office admin@stpaulssw4.org.

Clapham South Deep Shelter

If you enjoyed the talk earlier this year about the Clapham Deep Shelters but did not manage to get on one of the tours, at the time of writing there is still limited availability for tours on some dates during 2017. Go to ltmuseum.co.uk/whats-on/hidden-london/clapham-south for full details and bookings.

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

Pest Control

On **Saturday 15 October** at 10.30 am join a two-hour workshop to learn about common garden pests such as slugs, aphids, blight and pigeons. We will look at practical tools and strategies to overcome these unwanted visitors, and some tried and tested techniques to help control them.

Saturday Workshops are held at the Bandstand Beds site on the Common and are 'pay what you can'. To reserve a place visit eventbrite.co.uk/e/bandstand-beds-gardening-workshops-tickets-27382478731. To find out more about food growing in the heart of Clapham email ccbstandbeds@gmail.com.

Don't forget The Common People Autumn Feast will be on **Saturday 8 October** from midday until 4 pm. The event is free and everyone is welcome! See September newsletter for details or visit bandstandbeds.org.uk.