



The Clapham Society Newsletter

Issue 310

September 2008

IMPORTANT SPECIAL MEETING

Cathedral Group, the developers of Mary Seacole House in Clapham High Street, the Leisure Centre in Clapham Manor Street and the Old Town Library have invited Clapham Society members to attend a presentation of their amended scheme, prior to submitting their planning application, anticipated for early October 2008.

This presentation follows previous consultation with the Society and will reflect Cathedral's final scheme. The scheme has been amended following advice from the Society and other consultations that have taken place.

The application has been delayed due to the downturn in the property markets caused by the credit crunch which has resulted in Cathedral amending its proposals.

The presentation will take place on **Thursday 4 September at 6.30 pm at Mary Seacole House** in Clapham High Street. This is an important meeting. We are sorry about the very short notice but urge you to come and encourage others to do so.

Our regular monthly meetings are held at Clapham Manor Primary School, Belmont Road, SW4. The hall is open from 7.30 pm when coffee and tea are normally available. The talk begins promptly at 8 pm and most meetings finish by 9.30 pm. Please try to arrive before the talk starts as latecomers are disturbing for both audience and speaker.

All meetings are open to non-members and are free of charge. Please bring your friends along.

Wednesday 17 September

Underground London.

This illustrated talk about the deep shelters under London, concentrating on those in Clapham, will give an account of their construction, their use as air raid shelters at the end of World War Two, in 1948 by immigrants from the West Indies who arrived on the *SS Windrush*, and later as accommodation for students and soldiers. We shall include personal reminiscences and bring the story up to date with recent pictures of the shelters.

Du Cane Court

A book has been published recently about the history, architecture and people of Du Cane Court, the large block of flats in Balham High Road built in the 1930s. The author, a resident of the block, includes interviews with many long-term residents, who recall amusing incidents and personalities over at least 50 years. The book also has many plans and archive photographs.

Du Cane Court still retains its art deco foyer and Japanese garden, though the restaurant, ballroom, billiard room and roof garden, which were part of the original design, have long since disappeared. *A History of Du Cane Court: Land, Architecture, People and Politics* by Gregory K Vincent, price £11.99 is available from the author, Email: gregory_vincent2003@yahoo.co.uk

Clapham Society Concert

The Society's own free concert on Clapham Common Bandstand on **Sunday 21 September** at 4.30 pm features Big Road, South London's premier 60s' style Rock and Blues band. For the past fifteen years, Big Road have been packing out venues across London with their mix of Chicago blues and vintage rock. Their gigs always feature a large dose of 60s' and 70s' classics delivered with 60s' style commitment. You can find out more about Big Road on their website: www.bigroad.net. Keep the afternoon free and bring your friends along.

Book and Print Sale There will be a sale of old books and prints on **Saturday 6 September** from 12 noon until at 5 pm at Clapham Picture House, Venn Street. The sale is sponsored by the Picture House and Eton Antique Bookshop to raise funds for the RSPCA and Save the Children. Bar and refreshments available.

Michael Strong We were very sad to learn of the death of Michael Strong in early June. Michael was a member of the Society for many years and our Treasurer from 1997 to 2003. He performed an enormous service for the Society in that role, since it was he who first computerised our financial records. His skills as a chartered accountant were invaluable and we owe him a debt of gratitude for years of efficient

and painstaking record keeping and preparation of the annual accounts.

Michael had a wide variety of interests, and his knowledge and delight in music, in particular, were celebrated by the performers at his funeral and thanksgiving Service at St Paul's Church. He shared with his wife, Judith, a love of travel and took great delight in their award-winning garden, in which he ably assisted as undergardener.

Wednesday 22 October

Annual General Meeting. Our guest speaker will be Kate Hoey who, since 1989, has been Member of Parliament for the Vauxhall constituency, which includes much of Clapham.

Wednesday 19 November

Clapham 1945-1960. Clapham Society member Peter Skuse, who was born in Abbeville Road, will give an illustrated talk about the people, shops and children's lives in that area during his childhood. Please note change of subject for this evening.

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Published by **The Clapham Society**, a registered charity No 279595
Member Society of the Civic Trust and of the London Forum
Printed by Cantate 020 7622 3401

A Local History Series on our website

The Society's website has a new feature, a series of articles on aspects of local history. At our evening meetings we often hear interesting talks, by our members or others, which are summarised in the newsletter, but deserve to be preserved at greater length. Some contain original research which ought to be put on record.

So we have started a series on the website (www.claphamsociety.com) where visitors can read, and download if they like, a selection of these talks. We appreciate that not everyone has access to the internet, but this seems the most practical way of getting the articles into circulation. If members who do not have internet access would like articles, our Publications Officer Alyson Wilson will supply hard copy, at a charge to cover costs.

The first four articles are:

1. **Eric Smith and the Historians of Clapham** by Peter Jefferson Smith. A tribute to Eric Smith, the leading Clapham historian of the twentieth century. Eric Smith's predecessors from the Revd Daniel Lysons in 1792 onwards are described, with the contributions they made to the local record. There are descriptions of the work of other twentieth century local historians, and comments on local history at the present time.
2. **Ada Alice Pullan (Dorothy Dene)** by David Perkin. A working class girl who made a career for herself as one of Lord Leighton's favourite models, followed by a second career as an actress. As well as being the model for some of Leighton's most famous paintings, was she also the inspiration for Shaw's Eliza Doolittle? An appendix tells the story of *Flaming June*, Leighton's masterpiece once lost, but rediscovered in a shop in Lavender Hill.
3. **Jack Hobbs** by Derrick Johnson. A Clapham resident from 1913, Hobbs was one of the all time greats of English cricket. The 61,237 runs he scored in first class cricket with 197 centuries were world records.
4. **From Farmyard to Factory Floor: a brief history of the QAS site at Clapham Common** by Michael Green. Three hundred years of the site now occupied by the offices of QAS on Clapham Common North Side, from the cottages on the former estate of William Hewer, through to Ross Optical's works and the present day. Comprehensively illustrated with maps and images of the former building

Quiz Night

There will be a quiz night on **Friday 12 September** at 7.30 pm at St Peter's Hall (Prescott Place entrance). Bring a team along and pit your wits against others or simply come along on your own and we will introduce you and join you up with a team.

Tickets are £10 (Concessions £7.50) to include a very good supper. Bring your own drink. Plenty of prizes. For further details and to reserve tickets telephone 020 7622 6285.

Local History Listings

Historian Peter Marcan has published a new edition of his *Greater London History and Heritage Book*, an invaluable handbook for local historians and researchers, which lists a wide range of contacts for heritage and environmental societies, archives, libraries and museums.

For more details or to purchase a copy (£25 plus £2.50 p/p) telephone Peter Marcan on 020 7357 0368.

London Open House

The programme giving full details of all the buildings taking part in London Open House on **Saturday 20 and Sunday 21 September**, is now available. Go to www.londonopenhouse.org.uk to download a copy or to purchase a copy on line. Copies should also be available at local libraries. This is a chance to explore free of charge, hundreds of buildings, many not normally open to the public.

SW11 Literary Festival

On **Monday 8 September** two weeks of literary events start in SW11. There are book readings and signings at Waterstone's, Clapham Junction, Battersea Arts Centre and St Mary's Church Battersea. Authors include Victoria Hislop (*The Return*), David Loyn (*Butcher and Bolt*) and Nadeem Aslam (*The Wasted Vigil*). For a full programme, and to book tickets call in to Waterstone's, St John's Road, SW11 or telephone 020 7978 5844.

London Maze 2008

London's free local history fair is due to return this year to the refurbished Guildhall complex on **Saturday 11 October**. There will be stalls from libraries, archives, museums and local history societies as well as guided city walks. Plans are not yet finalised; more details next month.

Thursday Pop In On **Thursday 18 September** from 10 am to noon and every Thursday those who are fed up, lonely or simply want a cup of tea, homemade cakes and a chat can drop in to St Peter's Hall in Clapham Manor Street. Everyone is welcome. Just pop in! If you want someone to go with you call 020 7622 6285 and leave a message.



Members and their guests enjoyed our annual Summer Party on a sunny July evening in Annabel and Stephen Allott's delightful garden

SLAS lectures

Southwark and Lambeth Archaeological Society has a monthly lecture at 106, The Cut (almost opposite the Old Vic Theatre). The series commences on **Tuesday 14 October** when Andrew Westman, Senior Archaeologist of the Museum of London Archaeological Service will talk about the Archaeology of Standing Buildings. For details and the full programme contact: Richard Buchanan, 79 Ashridge Crescent, Shooters Hill. London SE18 3EA.

Painting Family

The exhibition about The De Brays, the important family of Master Painters in 17th Century Holland continues at Dulwich Picture Gallery until 5 October.

This exhibition examines a remarkable but largely forgotten family whose place at the heart of the Dutch Golden Age deserves to be reassessed. They painted historic and mythological figures, portraits, flower paintings and still lives. For more details telephone 020 8693 5254 visit www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk.

Clapham Books

There is a varied programme of events at Clapham Books this autumn. Events are normally on Thursday evenings and start at 7.15 pm. Those already confirmed include: Sebastian Horsley reading from and talking about his book, *Dandy In The Underworld* on **Thursday 2 October**, Will Self talking about his new book *Liver* on **Thursday 23 October** and Clapham Society member, Diana Ross, reading from her forthcoming book *Gardeners: Encounters With Exceptional People* on **Thursday 20 November**.

Trinity Hospice visits

We anticipate that members will have the opportunity to visit the new Trinity Hospice building in small groups from about mid-October. The visits will be by pre-booked appointment only. This arrangement will be not be definitely confirmed until our October newsletter, due out on 27 September, when we will give the telephone number for booking.

The City's Heritage (no longer in the City)

An exhibition of objects once in the City of London which are now elsewhere is to be held at the Guildhall Art Gallery from **19 September to 12 November**. Over 300 objects have been traced in five continents including Tompion clocks in Spain, a paperweight made of lead from the roof of Temple Bar in New Zealand, Rennie's London Bridge on the Colorado River, a Wren church in Fulton Missouri and bells from St. Dunstons-in-the-East at a winery in Napa Valley. Inevitably the exhibition will be mostly 'then and now' photographs, but there will also be some artefacts.

For more details and opening times telephone the Guildhall Art Gallery on 020 7606 3030.

Trees and Biodiversity

Our June meeting focused on Clapham's wild life, both as it is and as it might be. Members of the Common and Open Spaces sub-committee gave a three-part presentation which (once a hardware problem had been sorted out, thanks to an IT-friendly member) succeeded in entertaining, informing and challenging all who attended.

The boat in **Mike Fry's** first illustration was floating not on the Common's boating pool but in the harbour at Rio de Janeiro, where the 1992 UN Earth Summit centred international attention on growing concerns about the causes and effects of climate change. Two resulting conventions – on climate change and biological diversity – embodied principles relating to the conservation, sustainable use and equitable sharing of the earth's resources. The UK was the first nation to produce (in 1994) an action plan, and a UK Biodiversity steering group was established to set a national framework for local action.

Mike then examined three local examples of threatened species. While everyone knows that the house sparrow is in decline, no-one knows why. Increasingly house-proud residents may be to blame, by blocking access to nesting sites in roof-spaces and over-cultivating their gardens. Surprisingly, London is home to 30% of the UK stag beetle population: again, a preoccupation with tidiness may be causing problems, since the beetle needs rotting wood and tree stumps to house its larvae. Finally, mistletoe is becoming increasingly uncommon, and needs help. The Lambeth Biodiversity Action Plan (you can ask the Council for a copy, or download it from its website) notes the importance of private gardens in encouraging and sustaining biodiversity, and contains suggestions we could all usefully act on.

Anna Jefferson Smith then took us on a short tour of remarkable Clapham trees, starting with one of the oldest: the holm oak in front of Trinity Hospice, probably planted by one of Clapham's more ethically ambiguous figures, George Hibbert. The daughters of his brother William endowed the almshouses in Wandsworth Road, whose back garden houses a fine whitebeam planted in 1994. Other interesting illustrations included the 'Ride' of plane trees (1877), the first improvement to the Common after its acquisition by the Metropolitan Board of Works; and blackthorn in Battersea Woods (which blossomed as early as January this year): unemployed people were paid 1/- (5p) under an LCC scheme for each one they planted, which probably explains why they are so close together. The Clapham Society's copse (1997) is also very closely planted, apparently because not all the trees were expected to survive – but they did! Overall, though, the Common's tree population is declining: a 1974 mapping exercise recorded 2,260 trees; now there are 1800.

Diana Bell set this fact in the broader context of the past, present and possible future of the Common. A Turner painting (c1800) showed what Thomas Macaulay described as a 'delightful wilderness ... of inexhaustible romance and mystery'. But by 1900 it had been drained and tamed; later, wartime cultivation finished off the acid heathland. Since then, more trees and vegetation have been lost and the undulating sylvan scene has gone: today's Common is flat and unrelenting, with hard edges in place of soft slopes. She suggested that we now needed a care and planting scheme that would break up the 'prairie' appearance, balance sports/events areas with wilder 'fingers of vegetation' and restore some variety to the landscape – as found on Wimbledon, Wandsworth and Tooting Commons.

This was a fascinating and thought-provoking evening: we are extremely fortunate to have such knowledgeable and distinguished people as members of our sub-committee, and are grateful for the time and effort they continue to devote to these important issues.

New members We are pleased to welcome the following new members to the Society this summer: Elizabeth Burdett, Fiona Davy, Susan Swift Flusfeder, Tony Howcroft, Joan Jackson, Angus and Samantha Kirk, Tom and Caroline McConnon, Richard Saull, Sarah Riley-Smith and Heard Creative.

A Clapham Cup Winner's medal is sold

When Clapham Rovers won the FA Cup in 1880, the only goal of the match was scored by CA Lloyd Jones. His Cup Winner's medal was recently sold at a Bristol auction for £4,200.

Article continues on back page

A Clapham Cup Winner's medal is sold - con't

In 1879, Clapham Rovers had reached the final, but lost 0-1 to Old Etonians. The following year, they beat Old Etonians in Round 5 to reach the final, where their opponents were Oxford University. Although the Rovers were slight favourites, the match was evenly balanced, and appeared to be heading for a draw. Six minutes before the end, a long run along the centre by FJ Sparks, with a poor kick by an Oxford University defender, gave Lloyd Jones his chance to score 'amid vociferous cheering, throwing up of hats, and other demonstrations of delight from [Rovers'] supporters'.

Clopton Lloyd Jones was born in Shropshire in 1858. Educated at Trent College, Nottingham, where he was an outstanding footballer and played for the school against Nottingham Forest, he came to London in the late 1870s to work for a firm of indigo brokers. A keen all round sportsman, between 1877 and 1879 he played football for a club in Walthamstow, before joining Clapham Rovers for the 1879-1880 season. At some stage he moved to this area; in the 1881 census he was living in lodgings in Hetherington Road, off Acre Lane.

These were the years when Clapham Rovers were one of the top six clubs in the Football Association. As such they attracted ambitious players from well beyond our area, including Lloyd Jones and Sparks. They played football under both rules, association (soccer) and rugby; the goalkeeper in both the 1879 and 1880 Cup Finals was Reginald Birkett, who was also a talented rugby full-back, and represented England under both rules. Clapham Rovers also played cricket, and had a lawn tennis section; Lloyd Jones played both these games, and played cricket for the Stock Exchange XI.

His connection with Clapham was short-lived. In 1884, he moved to Shrewsbury, where he set up as a commission agent, i.e. a bookmaker. He continued his active involvement in sport, playing cricket at county level. At football, he was selected for Wales in 1884-5 but was unavailable to play. In his later years he was active in sports organisations around Shrewsbury. He died in 1918.

He did not forget Clapham. In 1892, he entered a fancy dress ball held by the Shrewsbury Amateur Dramatic Society in the character of a member of 'Clapham Rovers CC'. He won no prize; but if the cricket colours were the same as for football, he would have been a striking figure in cerise and French grey.

I am grateful to Keith Grant-Peterkin for drawing my attention to the sale of the medal. Most of the information in the article is taken from *The Early FA Cup Finals and the Southern Amateurs* by Keith Warsop, which has biographical notes on all the players in the Cup Finals between 1872 and 1883.

Peter Jefferson Smith

Are you related?

I am trying to trace any living relatives of 54 former pupils of Henry Thornton School, South Side, Clapham, who were at the school (or, before 1929, the predecessor Battersea County School) in the 1920s and 1930s. Their names and years are:

T J **Adamson** (1924-6); P S **Allcoat** (1931-8); R J **Allen** (1923-30); R G **Ballantine** (1935-8); K O **Bate** (1931-6); A E **Belasco** (1921-6); L A **Birch** (1918-25); D S **Campbell** (1932-6); J C **Cole** (1926-31); A L F **Collingwood** (1930-4); G C **Foers** (1927-32); E H **Garrod** (1931-6); J V **Gibbs** (1933-6); R **Godfrey** (1935-41); P **Godsmark** (1933-9); J **Gray** (1931-7); E J **Green** (1918-20); N W **Greer** (1930-6); C E **Grey** (1934-9); H D **Handley** (1935-9); W G **Hardcastle** (1931-6); W C F **Harris** (1932-7); I H **Hazard** (1931-8); S R **Hellings** (1918-21); F C **Higgins** (1926-31); D H **Higgs** (1934-6); R **Highman** (1927-34); S W **Holmes** (1930-5); D G **Jackson** (1922-9); A D C **Jamieson** (1932-9); D O **Lane** (1932-9); G E **Lewis** (1932-5); V B **Lloyd-Smith** (1929-34); S W **Martin** (1920-8); C J E **Moody** (1931-6); E M **Norrie** (1930-7); R H **Paton** (1935-9); L B **Russell** (1931-6); A F C **Saunders** (1932-8); B W **Smith** (1934-9); V J **Smith** (1932-9); D C **Staples** (1929-34); D **Steel** (1930-5); A J D **Teece** (1934-40); J R **Turner** (1925-32); J H **Weaver** (1924-9); R W **Webb** (1931-6); H **Welfare** (1917-23); G A **Wilde** (1931-7); J E T **Wilkinson** (1934-8); E C K **Wilson** (1935-43); R **Wiltshire** (1930-5); R **Wright-Laurence** (1931-6); L R **Wright** (1934-9).

All lost their lives during the Second World War and are commemorated on a plaque originally erected at the school in the 1950s. Henry Thornton School closed in 1987, and it is believed the plaque was, sadly, lost at about this time; despite exhaustive enquiries in recent years no trace has been found.

Thanks to the generosity of Association members and other ex-pupils a replacement plaque has been commissioned and will be displayed at the new sixth form centre of Lambeth College (which occupies part of the site of the school). The centre is due to open during the academic year 2009/10.

It is planned to have a dedication ceremony to mark the installation, to which all relatives (as well as OTs themselves) will be warmly invited.

If you can help in any way with this appeal for information please contact me on 01494 762838 or by email: ted.hayward@btinternet.com.

E A Hayward,

Secretary, Old Thorntonians Association (Clapham)

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** web site at www.claphamsociety.com