

The Clapham Society Newsletter



Issue 400

September 2017

Our next Green Plaque

On **Wednesday 6 September** at 6.30 pm join us for the unveiling of the Clapham Society's 11th Green Plaque on the former Plough Brewery at 516 Wandsworth Road, SW8 3JX. The unveiling, by Anya Hindmarch, will be followed by a tour of the building and a drink in the courtyard. Free, but you **MUST** reserve your place in advance with Joy Breen joy.breen@marstonproperties.co.uk or 020 7736 7133.



Our meetings are held at Omnibus, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4. The bar at Omnibus is open from 7 pm, and meetings 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 the talk. Meetings are free and open to non-members. Non-members are invited to make a donation.

PLEASE ARRIVE IN GOOD TIME TO ENSURE ENTRY. THERE IS A LIMIT ON THE NUMBER THE THEATRE CAN ACCOMMODATE AND YOU WILL NOT BE ADMITTED WHEN THAT NUMBER IS REACHED.

Clapham Old Town Fair

On **Saturday 2 September** Clapham will be in festive mood when Clapham Old Town Fair returns to The Polygon from 12 noon to 6 pm. There will be traditional fairground activities, food and drink, music, a dog show, craft and local interest stands. The Clapham Society stand will highlight some of the recent concerns of our planning experts, who will be available to answer questions.

Lambeth Local History Fair

Also on **Saturday 2 September** from 10.30 am to 4.30 pm some of the Clapham Society local historians will be manning the Society's stand (with a historical display) at the Lambeth Local History Fair at St Leonard's Church, Streatham High Road, SW16 1HS. There will be tours of the church crypt throughout the day, talks, displays and Lambeth local society stands. This is the opening event of Lambeth's Heritage Festival, a month of talks, walks and events throughout the borough provided by Lambeth Archives and member societies of the Local History Forum. The full programme can be picked up at Lambeth Libraries or Omnibus or downloaded at lambeth.gov.uk/heritagefestival.



Speakers for 2018

During September we shall be planning the programme of talks for 2018 meetings. We welcome suggestions from members. If you have heard a particularly good speaker or know anyone who speaks on a subject you think members might enjoy please contact the Events Organiser, Christine Armstrong, details back page.

Monday 25 September Architectural Icons. Julia Barfield of Clapham-based Marks Barfield Architects will talk about the history and design development of the practice's iconic London Eye, Brighton's i360 Tower as well as some local schemes.

Monday 23 October Annual General Meeting.

Following the business meeting the guest speaker is **James Le Fanu**. For

all the many impressive achievements of modern medicine, there is growing concern at the progressive 'medicalization' of people's lives to no good purpose. *Daily Telegraph* medical columnist and Vauxhall GP **James Le Fanu** will explore the ramifications and the reasons behind the massive threefold increase in drug prescribing over the past 15 years and its many potential harmful consequences.

Walks in September

Wednesday 13 September.

Old Clapham: People and Places. A guided walk around central Clapham focusing on the stories of notable people and buildings. Led by Peter Jefferson Smith. Meet outside Omnibus, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW for 2.30 pm start.

Friday 15 September

Clapham Common Bat Walk. Dr Iain Boulton, of Lambeth Parks and Open Spaces, will lead another of his popular bat walks. Bat detectors and information will be provided, but please bring a torch if you have one. Warm outdoor clothing and sensible footwear are advised. Meet at Clapham Common Bandstand for a 7.30 pm start.

Saturday 16 September

The Rocks and Waters Beneath Our Feet: a geological and hydrological study of Clapham Common with Dr Iain Boulton. A guided hands-on walk looking at the rocks and soils that have made Clapham Common, and how we have changed them or used other rocks and minerals to mould the landscape we see today. A chance to look into the earth and find out what the rocks and waters are up to beneath our feet. Start at 2 pm at the Bandstand.

Bandstand Beds

Since its humble beginnings with a few raised beds next to La Baita café on the Common, Bandstand Beds has blossomed into the biggest food growing project in Clapham.

The community garden on Windmill Drive is a hive of activity on Saturday mornings. As well as sowing seeds and growing veg, the group has been working flat out to build and fill beds in the extended part of the garden and build a kitchen in the new shipping container.

With this done, the aim for the coming year is to set up regular gardening sessions for people over 50 who want to get outdoors, get active, and have fun food growing and meeting people. Trial sessions are already running in the safer areas, but the new pathways will enable us to open up the whole garden and make full use of the container



kitchen. To make this facility safe and accessible to everyone we need to raise just over £5000 for pathways.

To achieve this goal, we have set up a crowdfunding project. Each Saturday

Clapham Common Updates

Planning application for use for temporary events. Despite the Society's objections, regrettably the planning application for use of the Common for temporary events was approved. This is sadly yet another example of Lambeth Council ignoring the reasonable wishes of residents; we didn't think it appropriate that the council can now wave through events for up to 5000 people without going through a specific planning approval process so residents can scrutinise each event on a case-by-case basis. The Society is not blind to the benefits events on the Common can provide the community, nor is it unaware of the need for the council to seek commercial revenue. We will continue to adopt a balanced, pragmatic approach to the use of the Common for commercial gain, and we feel this step is dangerously in the wrong direction.

Winterville. Whilst we have objected in principle to Winterville, we suspect that its approval is a foregone conclusion given the council's support for almost any event on the Common that generates revenue. We have therefore requested that the council and Winterville work with the Society and other resident groups to agree a comprehensive and detailed programme of preparation and remediation work in the area of the Common covered. An abridged version of our letter to the council can be found on the council's planning portal.

Litter. For many residents, including myself, the litter situation on the Common, especially during busy summer months, is an absolute disgrace. The Society has been working with CCMAC and other interested parties to improve the situation. We are glad to report that the council has finally given a number of undertakings to improve the situation, including better litter receptacles and cleaning equipment and, crucially, the recruitment of weekend park attendants whose primary role will be litter collection. They will be on duty each weekend between 7 am and 8 pm from July to the end of October. After a pretty rocky start in early July, things seem to have improved over the past few weekends. Time will tell.

Clapham South Deep Shelter. The Secretary of State has given approval for the redevelopment of the rotunda of the Clapham South air raid shelter for a café and exhibition space.

Park Run. An application has been made for not-for-profit 'Park Runs' to be given permission to use the Common each Saturday from 9 am to 10 am for a weekly volunteer-led 5km run. These park runs are already very popular in a number of other London parks. Whilst there are a few issues to be clarified with regard to route and possible damage to the Common from potentially such a large number of people using the circular track of the main part of the Common each week, at this stage the Society is minded to give the application its support.

Andrew Summers

Convenor, Common and Open Spaces Sub-committee

morning there is a table in the community garden on Windmill Drive with a plethora of produce – probably the freshest veg you'll find in Clapham! There are also delicious pickles homemade with ingredients from the garden. All the money donated for the food on offer is going towards the crowdfunding project for safer pathways.

If you are unable to make it to the garden on Saturdays to pick up produce but would still like to help Bandstand Beds achieve its target you can pledge a donation by visiting spacehive.com/safe-paths-for-clapham-community-garden. To find out more about how to get involved with Bandstand Beds food growing in the heart of Clapham Common, visit bandstandbeds.org.uk or email ccbandstandbeds@gmail.com.

*David Dandridge,
Chair of Bandstand Beds*

Black Cultural Archives

At our last meeting before the summer break Victoria Northridge, Collections Manager of Black Cultural Archives (BCA) in Brixton, gave us an interesting talk about the history of Black people in England, and about the foundation and development of BCA, Britain's first National Black Heritage Centre.

Victoria reminded us that there have been Black people in England since Roman times, but numbers did not increase significantly until after WWII and the arrival of Empire *Windrush* from the West Indies in 1948.

In the 1970s West Indian born, Brixton-resident Len Garrison established ACER (Afro-Caribbean Education Resource) project to promote better education for Black people. Then, determined to record the history and achievements of Black people, he became a co-founder and trustee of Black Cultural Archives in 1981. Initially the BCA was based at the radical bookshop, Sabarr at 378 Coldharbour Lane – a temporary base which lasted for over 20 years.

In 2006 they moved to Kennington where the national Black Heritage Centre was opened. Two years later funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund allowed the Centre to catalogue the collection, and to fundraise for the elusive permanent home. For the first time heritage professionals worked on the collection and by the end of three years, despite difficulties in imposing standards on a collection that had been created by the community, 10,000 archival records had been catalogued and all the material stored in preservation quality boxes. This marked a huge shift in the growing professionalisation of the archive, and allowed BCA to interact with the rest of the heritage professions.

A number of collections were taken in at this time including material related to the Black Women's movement as well as material from Mike Phillips the author and Anton Phillips the theatre writer and director. Volunteers were taken on, with the majority of them under 35 and from a Black background; a volunteer oral history programme was initiated and a reading room set up.

In 2003 BCA wrote to Lambeth Council expressing a formal interest in taking over Raleigh Hall, originally 1-3 Effra Road, a Grade II listed building, built in 1824 which had been a girls' school, the home of the Brixton Liberal Club, the Raleigh College for young boys and the base for Orange Coaches, and was then owned by the council and in a state of disrepair. While the council were deciding its fate, Raleigh Hall had become a centre of community activity and local residents joined Brixton Town Centre (BTC) office and Brixton Area Forum (BAF) in urging the regeneration of the area, without losing the political and cultural significance Brixton had to the wider Black population.

In July 2010 the HLF approved funding for the repair of Raleigh Hall for Black Cultural Archives' use. After a delay when the contractors went in to administration the present building was officially opened in July 2014.

Wide ranging discussion followed the talk and members, were pleased to be able to meet and chat to Len Garrison's widow, Maria, his son, Tunde and colleague Beryl Bonsu who were in the audience.

September Highlights at Omnibus

The new season starts with a powerful one-act play by renowned playwright, Howard Brenton, starring Catherine Cusack. *Judith: A Parting From The Body*



retells the story of Judith – the daring widow who, on the night before battle, infiltrated the enemy camp to seduce

and kill the head of the invading army, Holofernes. This play which in 2015 had a 4-week run at the Arcola in north London is at Omnibus from **Wednesday 13 September to Friday 15 September.**

From **Tuesday 26 September to**

Saturday 30 September

talented comedian Marcus Brigstoke leads an all-star cast in *There will be Cake*.

The theme of the show is birthdays, and it will include the best and the worst moments inspired by parties, balloons, surprises, bitter disappointments, gifts and cake!

For details of these shows, the full month's programme and tickets go

to omnibus-clapham.org or call 0207 498 4699.

London Symphony

This brand new silent film offering a poetic journey through the capital will be screened at Clapham's Shambhala Meditation Centre on **Friday 6**

October, followed by a Q&A with the film's director and editor, Alex Barrett.

The film is an artistic snapshot of the city as it stands today, and a celebration of its rich diversity of culture, architecture and religion. It was filmed in over 300 locations around every borough of London, and it was nominated for the Michael Powell Award for Best British Film at the Edinburgh International Film Festival 2017.

London Symphony is a beautiful and enjoyable modern-day variation on the 'city symphony', a genre of creative non-fiction that flourished in the 1920s and consisted of works that attempted to build poetic portraits of city life. Examples are *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City* (1927) and *Man With A Movie Camera* (1929). City symphonies are a form of virtual tourism and also raise important and universal questions about the nature of community life. Venue: London Shambhala Meditation Centre, 27 Belmont Close, SW4 6AY.

More details and tickets (£8) at shambhala.org.uk/program-details/?id=316331 or 020 7720 3207. Doors open at 7.30 pm, and screening at 8 pm.

Battersea Arts Centre Tours

The volunteer guides at Battersea Arts Centre have put together tours uncovering layers of the building's rich 124-year history.

Each tour is unique as every guide has a personal connection to the building, whether it be going there as a child to take part in drama workshops or protesting to save the building when it was threatened with demolition. The volunteer guides have been delving back into the building's history and seeking out stories that resonate with them. They have collaborated with artist Nick Cassenbaum to share these stories in playful and personalised tours.

The September tours are on **Wednesday 6 September** at 6.30 pm and **Saturday 16 September** at 12 noon, 2 pm and 4 pm at Battersea Arts Centre, Lavender Hill, SW11 5TN. Tours are free but book in advance on line bac.org.uk or call 020 7223 2223.

The 54th Annual General Meeting of the Clapham Society will be held on **Monday 23 October** at Omnibus, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 starting at 8 pm.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Approval of the Minutes of the previous AGM (24 October 2016) published in the Newsletter No. 393, December 2016/January 2017 and available at the meeting
3. Adoption of the Annual Report for the year 2016-17
4. Adoption of the Financial Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2017
5. Election of the Officers and Committee Members for the year 2017-2018
Chairman Treasurer
Vice-Chairman Solicitor
Secretary Membership Secretary
A maximum of ten further Committee Members
6. Appointment of the Independent Examiner
7. Any other business and announcements

The formal business will be followed by a talk by our guest speaker, *Daily Telegraph* medical columnist and Vauxhall GP **James Le Fanu**,

Nominations for the election of Officers and Committee Members must be made to the Acting Secretary at least 14 days before the Annual General Meeting. Every nomination must be in writing, supported by a seconder. The consent of the person nominated must be obtained.

Maev Sullivan, Acting Secretary, 2 Fitzwilliam Road, SW4 0DN

Amick Vocal Concert Series

On **Sunday 8 October** at 7.30 pm Amick Productions will hold the first of three concerts by international singers at St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DR. Visit AmickProductions.co.uk to see the line-up and to book tickets.

Garden Opening

Trinity Hospice garden will be open for the last time this year as part of the National Garden Scheme on **Sunday 3 September** from 11 am to 5 pm. Admission £3, refreshments available.

Bandstand Concert

The final bandstand concert this year on **Sunday 3 September** at 3 pm is by the popular Crystal Palace Brass Band, sponsored by the Clapham Society, and part of Lambeth Heritage Festival.



Citizen Kane

Trinity Cinema Series of classic films, in conjunction with Clapham Picture House continues with a screening of *Citizen Kane* on **Monday 4 September** at 6 pm. For tickets and details go to royaltrinityhospice.london/Event/trinity-cinema-series.

London Open House

Don't forget that your annual opportunity to see behind many normally closed doors, for free, is on **Saturday 16 September** and **Sunday 17 September** this year. Pick up the brochure showing details of all buildings taking part, at local libraries or order on line at openhouselondon.org.uk.

Breeze

Breeze is British Cycling's initiative for women. As part of this I help to lead free bike rides for women. There are hundreds of champions around the country doing rides of different duration, ability and type. Our little network in Battersea normally leaves from Clapham Common Bandstand or Wandsworth Common. And our rides are usually during school hours as many of us have young children. Mine tend to be about 2 hours long but others do some that are 4-5 hours with a lunch stop. I also run a weekly social ride down the Wandle Trail every Friday. A social ride is for anyone but it still mainly seems to attract women. If you are interested in joining a ride contact me for dates and more details.

Michelle Miller: aisamiller@ntlworld

New members

We are pleased to welcome the following new members this month: Matt Haswell and Sally Howells, John Henderson, Lucy Ismail, Anne Pelle, Kevin Pinto, Libby Spurrier, Ivor Tillier and Kate Bewsey, and Laurelie and William Walter.

If you have any queries about **The Clapham Society** or have news of local events, please contact the appropriate person below:

Chairman

Tel: 020 7228 5551 Email: annabel@allott.plus.com

Acting Secretary

Email: maevsullivan@gmail.com

Treasurer

Tel: 020 7720 7536 Email: david.brown@centrum-uk.com

Membership Secretary

Tel: 020 7627 4770 Email: jeverett@waitrose.com

Annabel Allott

Maev Sullivan

David Brown

Jennifer Everett

Meetings and Events

Tel: 020 7720 7449 Email: christinearms52@hotmail.com

Planning Matters

Tel: 020 8674 1727 Email: pjashford@yahoo.co.uk

Roads and Transport

Tel: 020 7720 9370 Email: mark.leffler88@gmail.com

Newsletter and Publications

Tel: 020 7622 6360 Email: alysonwilson.sw4@gmail.com

Common and Open Spaces

Email: andrew_summers_london@yahoo.co.uk Tel. 07977229

Christine Armstrong

Philip Ashford

Mark Leffler

Alyson Wilson

Andrew Summers

Details of meetings, activities and a full list of our publications are on our website at claphamsociety.com