

The Clapham Society

Newsletter



Issue 407

May 2018

The Clapham Society Summer Party will be on Wednesday 4 July from 6.30 to 8.30 pm at the Eden Community Garden. For more about the garden go to edengardenclapham.org. Keep the date. A ticket application form will be in the June newsletter.

Mind the Gap!

Getting around our congested city and is one of the biggest challenges we all face, while the pattern of people's everyday lives is ever more complex.

On 5 March a good turnout (50+) assembled at Omnibus to share concerns about our roads and transport with a panel of officials from Transport for London (TfL), who came mainly in listening mode. The meeting had been convened under the auspices of the Clapham Transport Users Group (CTUG), chaired by local resident, Nick Biskinis, and covered a wide range of issues.

However, the meat of the meeting was taken up with discussion of our public transport services. With regard to buses, the key issues were the lack of east/west routes linking Clapham Junction via Clapham South and places east along the South Circular, and links to Waterloo and St Thomas' Hospital given the extreme congestion and lack of step-free access on the Northern Line. Redesign of the route served by the 155 was mooted as a potential solution, linked perhaps with a reduction in some excess bus capacity from Brixton.

Turning to rail, capacity issues and overcrowding on the Northern Line are clearly the biggest challenges for residents and planners alike. Resources are unlikely to become available to increase capacity on the tube in the foreseeable future. The frequency of trains is already close to the limit at two-minute intervals, the shared platforms serving northbound and southbound trains at Clapham Common and Clapham North are the last surviving ones on the network, and necessitate occasional crowd control at peak times due to safety concerns. Restrictions on entry at Clapham South station during the morning peak are also not unknown. There is apparently no scope to introduce more efficient

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Our meetings are held at Omnibus Theatre, 1 Clapham Common North Side, SW4 0QW. The talk will commence promptly at 8 pm and the bar will open, prior to the talk, at 7 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, who are invited to make a donation.

Monday 21 May

The South London Botanical Institute (SLBI), in Tulse Hill, was founded by Allan Octavian Hume, who was also a founder of the Indian National Congress, in 1910. The SLBI maintains a small botanical garden, a herbarium and library, and promotes a wide range of plant-related activities.

Roy Vickery worked for over 40 years in the Botany Department of the Natural History Museum, and remains a Scientific Associate at the Museum. He is currently president of the South London Botanical Institute, having served as a trustee for many years, including ten as chairman. His present work focuses on the folklore and uses of plants in Britain and Ireland.

Monday 18 June

ADA - how Lord Byron's daughter became the patron saint of computing

Local resident and Clapham Society member, **David Singmaster** is a retired professor of mathematics and computer science at London South Bank University and also an Honorary Research Fellow at University College London. He has been interested in the history of computing since arriving in London in 1970. He instigated the erection of the Blue Plaque to Ada Lovelace in St. James's Square and the Southwark plaque to Charles Babbage in Walworth Road.

We have the following walks this month

Sunday 6 May

The Trees of Clapham Common – their origins, uses and the future. A walk looking at the geographical origins of the trees on Clapham Common, how they came to be there and their past and present uses. What's the future for many of our commoner trees in the light of climate change or changes in water availability or pollution? Led by Iain Boulton, leaving from Clapham Common Bandstand at 2 pm.

Thursday 31 May

Clapham in World War Two. A walk along the south side of Clapham Common seeing how the war came to Clapham and the lasting effect it has had on our streets and the development of South London. Led by Derrick Johnson, leaving from Clapham Common Station at 6.30 pm. *This is part of London History Day and Wandsworth Heritage Festival.*

Omnibus

This month's highlights include the following events featuring local residents:

Sunday 13 May at 7.30 pm *Robert and Elizabeth Let me Count the Ways* – the story of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett, portrayed in words and music from their letters and poems. To be followed by a Q&A led by Dr Simon Avery.

Tuesday 15, Wednesday 16 and

Thursday 17 May at 7.30 *A Substitute for Life*, by Simon Brett, with Tim Hardy, directed by Alison Skilbeck, with post-show discussion.

Sunday 20 May at 5 pm. *The Power Behind The Crone*, written and performed by Alison Skilbeck, directed by Tim Hardy.

More details and tickets at omnibus-clapham.co.uk, as well as the full calendar for the month. Join the mailing list to receive regular updates on the programme.

Edward Bawden, Albert Bridge, 1966, Linocut on paper, Trustees of the Cecil Higgins Art Gallery (The Higgins Bedford)

© Estate of Edward Bawden

We need a Secretary!

The Clapham Society urgently needs a Secretary to join the Committee. Can you spare a couple of hours every two months to help deal with correspondence, agendas and minutes and also organise the AGM annually? If you can help, please contact Annabel Allott at annabel@allott.plus.com. Thank you.



The Herd by Rory Kinnear

Southside Theatre will stage *The Herd*, actor Rory Kinnear's first play, from **Wednesday 30 May to Saturday 2 June** at Chestnut Grove Theatre, Chestnut Grove School, Boundaries Road, SW12 8JZ. Tickets: £12, concessions £9.00 (Wednesday and Saturday). Performances: 7.45 pm Wednesday-Friday, Saturday at 5.00pm. Box office: 07914 657524 or book online, visit: southsideplayers.co.uk.

Edward Bawden

The British artist and designer Edward Bawden (1903–89) is today renowned for his monumental linocuts of Brighton Pier and other Victorian architecture, and for his witty designs for companies like Twinings and Fortnum & Mason. Opening at Dulwich Picture Gallery on **Wednesday 23 May** is the first major exhibition to look at every aspect of Bawden's career, championing him as a fine artist while also demonstrating the wit and versatility of his design work. For details go to dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk or call 020 8693 5254.

On the Common

Sports. Plans are afoot to renovate the sports changing facilities on the Common. There remains a long-term plan to redevelop the facilities completely. Lambeth is also in discussions with Sports England and the Football Association to redevelop the redgra pitch to replace it with astroturf.

Litter. Funds for replacement and additional bins have been found for Clapham Common, with a particular emphasis on the sports pitch area where teams leave behind a lot of litter. Seasonal weekend staff are now deployed from 7 am to 3 pm to deal mainly with litter. We hope this will alleviate much of the blight of litter which has afflicted the Common for as long as I can remember.

Events. The proposed Children's Festival for the months of July and August around the Paddling Pool has been withdrawn. We are pleased with this outcome. The Society's events strategy is clear: we support sensible use of the Common for planned activities, in particular family-friendly ones. However, there is a dedicated site for such events which event planners don't want to use because they think they can make more money from the areas closest to Clapham Common tube and Clapham Old Town. This will inevitably lead to even more parts of the Common subject to restricted use. In this particular instance it would have been at already one of the busiest times of the year and on one of the busiest parts of the Common. Sustainable Common usage requires spreading out activities by both time and location. Through our statutory membership of the Clapham Common Management Advisory Committee (CCMAC) we will participate in the post-Winterville event review. It is already clear that organisers and Lambeth will use the English weather as an excuse for the continued poor state of the Common where it was based. We are also pleased

that the CCMAC has formally objected to Lambeth's proposal to seek blanket planning approval for the vast majority of events on the Common this year. This was passed last year but the Clapham Society objects to this in the strongest terms. Whatever 'efficiency' savings Lambeth get are more than offset by the ill will that is generated amongst the community from a process which undeniably restricts the right of local residents to input into, and to object to where appropriate, events on the Common.

Quietways. We outlined the current state of this project and the Society's concerns in the March Newsletter. Since then we have sought to better understand the rationale for this (seriously flawed) route as opposed to other (to us) seemingly better options. It is our understanding that the main rationale for the need for the proposed new route is: (1) to support family friendly cycling on the Common requires a new, second, separate cycle path in addition to the current one that runs north-south from Cedars Road; (2) the fact that this goes through a busy part of the Common is not a negative (as is our view) but rather a positive as it puts a cycling route in an area where it is needed; (3) indeed much illegal cycling occurs along this route already thereby demonstrating the need for a formal cycle route. Whatever your view on the merits of these arguments, it is clear to us that the Quietways route is a done deal and the majority of the CCMAC was against reconsidering its support for it. The Society's efforts will now shift to ensuring Quietways does indeed deliver the sort of cycling that we all want to see on the Common. This will involve a focus on the technical aspects of its implementation with a particular emphasis on safety for cyclists and pedestrians alike.

We have recently learned, however, that work on the part across the Common will not proceed for at least a year. We are seeking to understand the implications of this latest twist.

Andrew Summers

Victorian Lambeth

For our March meeting, one of our most popular and regular speakers, Edmund Bird returned to tell us about the fifth book in his series about Lambeth architecture. Having covered the 20th century in four volumes, Edmund has gone back to the 19th century – a time of prodigious building in the area.

The organisation of this huge amount of information is clear and concise. The book is divided into chapters according to type of building – public buildings, health, education, shops, banks, industry, housing, churches and so on...concluding with an interesting section on Lost Victorian buildings of Lambeth, and a very useful comprehensive index.

Edmund could only speak about and show a selection of buildings from the 400 odd featured in the book, but he tailored his talk to show many we would know in Clapham. He first showed maps which indicated how Clapham spread from the original village around St Paul's Church and Rectory Grove to Old Town, to the Common, and Clapham Park, then the advent of transport and the 1890s grids of terraced housing. The great variety of housing, from detached villas to modest terraces was a feature of the area.

Many public libraries were built during the 19th century, including Clapham Library, now Omnibus Theatre, in which we were sitting. Schools and hospitals, churches, theatres and commercial buildings are all in the book, and one special interest is those which have outlived their original purpose and now been converted for new uses.

Edmund stayed on to talk to members and answer their questions, When asked if he would be going further back to write about 18th century architecture in Lambeth, he replied that it would be a slim book! *Victorian Architecture in Lambeth* is large, (218 pages) packed full of encyclopaedic information both in the text by Edmund Bird with the assistance of Fiona Price, and in the archive pictures from Lambeth Archives and new ones by Harry Oseni. At only £10 it is an unmissable bargain. Available from Clapham Books, 26 The Pavement and Clapham Library, 91 Clapham High Street.

Clapham Book Festival

Clapham's very own book festival takes place this year on **Saturday 12 May** with an expanded programme that ranges from internationally renowned authors Dame Margaret Drabble and Deborah Moggach to crime, non-fiction, poetry and even advice on how to get your own work published. There is also a meet-and-greet session with local authors to round off the day, surrounded by the exhibition *Memories of Fiction*.

Paula Johnson from the Society of Authors has pulled the programme together: We start at 10 am with Patrice Lawrence talking about her young adult novels *Orangeboy* and *Indigo Donut* in a session in Clapham Library.

In Omnibus Theatre, at 11 am you can meet leading publishing experts Philip Gwyn Jones and Lucy Luck and discuss how to get yourself published in *The Writing Game*.

At 12.15 pm local writer Michael Glover introduces two celebrated poets, Daljit Nagra and Cecilia Knapp talking about writing and performing poetry in *Word Force*.

At 2 pm, join Mark Lawson and Vaseem Khan dissecting dark deeds from England to India in *Crimeland*.

At 3.30 pm, Natasha Cooper talks to Dame Margaret Drabble about her writing life and the highly relevant and topical themes and issues of her latest work *The Dark Flood Rises*.

At 5 pm, local author Simon Berthon discusses the defence of the realm around World War II with award-winning author Henry Hemming and notable war biographer Clare Mulley.

And in our 7 pm showstopper, local bestselling novelist Elizabeth Buchan introduces award-winning writer Deborah Moggach OBE, as she takes us behind the scenes of an extensive and hugely successful writing career in films and screenwriting.

Clapham Writers, This is Clapham, Clapham Books and Omnibus Theatre are all partners in the *Clapham Book Festival*. The Festival forms part of the *Whispers from the Walls* season at Omnibus Theatre, a programme of work celebrating storytelling, theatre and the power of words from 9 May – 24 June. Info and tickets available from omnibus-clapham.org/clapham-book-festival.

Clarinet Recital

On **Saturday 19 May** at 7.30 pm Emma Johnson returns to St Luke's Church, Thurleigh Road, SW12 8RQ for a lovely season-ending programme of music by Brahms, Rossini and Ravel, closing with her own arrangement of Bernstein's *West Side Story*. There will be a pre-concert talk for ticket holders at 6.30 pm. For tickets go to slns.org.uk.

Would you be interested in a Clapham Common Film Club?

Chris Morgan-Locke and I are thinking of launching a not-for-profit film club using the Omnibus Theatre on Clapham Common North Side, and we wish to judge the potential interest. The vision is to present a programme of 12 films a year (monthly on Monday evenings) in a community setting. Films would be of international acclaim, previous festival winners, and 'classics' which do not replicate current releases or appearance on TV schedules and most would be sub-titled.

Anticipated annual membership would be approximately £50 with free entry to all 12 films. Members will be able to invite guests, for an additional fee payable on the day, space permitting. The club would have a maximum membership limit determined by the Omnibus capacity. The intention would be to respond to members' preferences and suggestions for future films. If you might be interested in joining such a club please email us your thoughts to ccfilm2018@gmail.com and we will email you more details if the interest is strong enough.

Note: email addresses will only be used for this research and will not be passed on to any third parties and for those who subsequently do not join they will be deleted.

Roger Booker

North Street Potters Open Day

Saturday 5 May. Don't miss this celebration of 40 years of making pots in Clapham, with a Lucky Dip chance to win a special anniversary piece. Full details at northstreetpotters.com.

Clapham Bridge

This refers to bridge the game, not a structure in Clapham! A pair of Clapham Society members is looking for another local pair to make up a four to play bridge on a regular basis. Intermediate standard. If interested, please email mark.mclaren65@gmail.com.

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rolling stock due to procurement contracts already in place. And yet the pressures on the daily commute for Clapham residents seem bound to increase. Cycling is not a mass transportation solution, despite some of the rhetoric to the contrary, and large new developments (at Clapham Park and 44 Clapham Common South Side) will result in increased pressures. Currently there are no plans to fill the gap.

The argument a number of those involved in CTUG and the Clapham Society have been making is that with relatively modest development and some joined up planning, Clapham High Street Station, which is currently only used by TfL's Overground, could make an important contribution to filling the gap.

Prior to December 2012, the South London Line (SLL) suburban service provided a rapid service for Clapham residents to Victoria and London Bridge stations. With the introduction of TfL's Overground service the SLL line was discontinued and replaced by an orbital service terminating at Clapham Junction, and linking up with the East London Line to Highbury & Islington via Surrey Quays. Four trains an hour in each direction now serve Clapham High Street and Wandsworth Road stations, which carry increasing numbers of passengers, but do not significantly relieve congestion on the Northern Line. Many Clapham residents who currently scramble to get to Stockwell, would benefit from a direct link to Victoria at peak times.

Duo Folclore

On **Friday 18 May** Clapham Chamber Concerts welcomes folk-classical violin duo Alice Barron and Fuensanta Zambrana Ruiz – Duo Folcore, who will play a collection of traditional music, folk-inspired classical duets and improvisations. They present their own arrangements of music from their British and Spanish roots, as well as delving into the compositional minds of Béla Bartók, Luciano Berio and Astor Piazzolla, who themselves were so driven by folk music. The concert will start at 7.30 pm. St. Paul's Church, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DX. Tickets at the door £12 for adults, £10 for CCC friends and concessions, £5 for children. For further information, see claphamchamberconcerts.org.uk.



A slew of Southeastern Victoria-bound trains pass through Clapham High Street. Various bodies, including CTUG, pressed Department for Transport (DfT) for the new Southeastern franchise to include provision for trains to stop at Clapham High Street, but so far to no avail. Bizarrely, DfT's franchise documentation suggests Southeastern passengers could access the Northern Line at Clapham by transferring onto the Overground at Peckham Rye.

Various options would enable Southeastern Victoria trains to stop at Clapham. If the Victoria – Dartford services operated with Selective Door Opening (SDO) they would be able to use the existing platforms, alternatively the platforms could be extended at relatively

modest cost to accommodate the longer trains. If a third platform were built then it would enable Victoria – Orpington trains, which currently stop at Herne Hill and Brixton, to interchange with the London Overground.

Given the chronic congestion on our roads and on the Northern Line, linking the Overground service at Clapham High Street with Southeastern's services to Victoria would give a welcome lift to Clapham North, and surely go quite a long way towards plugging the gap!

Mark Leffler

We need your help

The Clapham Society will have a stand at the following events this summer and urgently needs volunteers to help. If you have an hour or two to spare on any of these dates please contact the organiser shown below for details.

Saturday 9 June St Paul's Fair, 12 noon to 4 pm, Bill Emmett (bill-sue@perlem.demon.co.uk)

Saturday 30 June Abbeville Fete, 12 noon to 5 pm, Christine Armstrong (christinearms52@hotmail.com)

Saturday 1 September Lambeth Archives Open Day at Omnibus Theatre, 10 am to 4 pm, Alyson Wilson (alysonwilson.sw4@gmail.com)

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

Chairman

Email: annabel@allott.plus.com

Secretary

Treasurer

Tel: 020 7720 7536 Email: david.sbrown@btoopenworld.com

Membership Secretary

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

Common and Open Spaces

Tel: 07977 454229 Email: andrew_summers_london@yahoo.co.uk

Annabel Allott

Vacant

David Brown

Jennifer Everett

Andrew Summers

Meetings and Events

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

Planning Matters

Tel: 07855 458647 Email: sarahbridger1066@gmail.com

Roads and Transport

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

Newsletter and Publications

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

Christine Armstrong

Sarah Bridger

Mark Leffler

Alyson Wilson