

Pond House Lives Again!

Pond House, overlooking Clapton Pond, dates from the early 1800's and is Grade 2* listed. For a full history of its journey, from family home, via girls' school & clothing factory to social club for the Hackney Volunteers take a look at our web-site: <http://claptonpond.org/about/about-clapton-pond/history-of-pond-house/>.

In 2008, it was bought by developers and there the next phase of drama started. The original planning application, to create 10 flats from the house & stable block, and build a block of 14 flats along the southern edge of its garden, on Mildenhall Road, was considered, by CPNAG, much too high a density for such a magnificent building and we supported challenges, resulting in the application being turned down. After changes of owner, the application for 5 flats in the house and stable block, along with 6 family houses on Mildenhall Road, was approved.



Whilst we only realised too late that some changes to the design and positioning of the houses, that we felt were inappropriate, were being approved, the final version is a vast improvement on the original block of flats proposed, and Pond House has come back to life to greatly enhance the environment around the Pond.

On May 1st, 2014, One Housing Group, the eventual developer, invited reps from local heritage groups - CPNAG, the Hackney Society and the local Conservation Advisory Committee - to a viewing of the work carried out on Pond House. See <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.751044054926495.1073741828.207670989263807&type=1> for a gallery of photos from the day.

The homes are in the process of being sold and moved into, and we welcome our new neighbours, hope you will enjoy living here as much as we all do and bring your own unique contribution to the area.

Plaque Unveiled to mark birthplace of Harold Pinter

On 26 Sept 2012, CPNAG were pleased to welcome Lady Antonia Fraser Pinter to unveil a plaque, that they had sponsored, marking the house in Thistlewaite Road, where her husband, the poet and playwright, Harold Pinter, was born and grew up. The event was well attended by locals and friends of Pinter's, from the theatrical world and beyond. For the full story, see <http://claptonpond.org/plaque-unveiled-to-harold-pinter/2012/09/26/>



Welcome!

Welcome to Pondlife, the newsletter of The Clapton Pond Neighbourhood Action Group (CPNAG).

Since the end of 2010, when our website - www.claptonpond.org - went live, our communication with the neighbourhood has been mainly on-line (web-site, Facebook, e-mail and Twitter) apart from some poster advertising for events, and notices in local papers. Whilst this is, and will almost certainly continue to be, the digital age - see all the links in this newsletter - we decided it's about time we connected with all of you again, certainly for one issue of this, and we'll see where we go from there. This is also an opportunity to let those of you who don't know about us, know about us. Hello!

CPNAG was originally set up by local residents, in an attempt to improve Clapton Pond & its gardens, and the surrounding area. It is also known as the Clapton Pond User Group. Today, over 10 years later, the group continues its work, via campaigning, via building partnerships with the council (Sometimes known as harassing!) and locally in the community, and also via practical work at The Pond, its gardens and in the surrounding neighbourhood.

Yes, as we said, this is the digital age, & for more information, including our constitution, see: <http://claptonpond.org/about/>

To subscribe for e-mail updates from the website, go to: <http://claptonpond.org/about/subscribe-for-updates/>

Follow us on Facebook on: <https://www.facebook.com/claptonpond5>

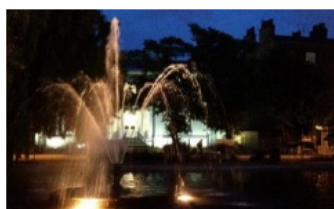
Follow us on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/ClaptonPondE5>

Clapton Pond & Gardens – Recent History

Over the last 10-12 years our fund raising and campaigning efforts have led to various improvements to the Pond and its gardens, including replacement of the bridge and noticeboard (content to be updated shortly), relining of the pond (it sat empty for some time), refurbishment of the paths & flower beds and addition of play area.

We have built a partnership with the Council to enable all of this and to restore the site to some of its former glory. The Pond and gardens won a silver medal in the London in Bloom awards in 2010 and since 2010, have held the Green Flag Award – see link for info <http://www.greenflagaward.org/park-summary/?ParkID=847>

More recently, our main focus has been ensuring upkeep of the area is maintained. This year, after pressure from the group, Hackney Council organised the company that installed the fountain to fix the lights. Although the fountain is now awaiting maintenance, when it has been working, the lights have been back - what a difference it makes to the Pond by night. We also work with the Council to find solutions to issues such as littering, bread dumping, pigeons, and rodents on the island and edges of the Pond.



Recent years have seen broods of ducks flourishing. Sadly this has been restricted this year by the presence of a Heron in April & May, which decimated two broods. A decoy heron appeared on the island, courtesy of a concerned local resident. This was quickly removed by the Council, with an accompanying explanation of

the need to allow the wildlife to work it out for themselves. Whilst, since then, there have been only three or four adults nesting on the island, a new brood of four, either Tufted Ducks, or Scaups (We are not duck experts here) appeared in early August and the brood have successfully grown up on the Pond.



Further projects will happen as people step forward with new energy, or those of us involved manage to make more time – we are volunteers. Amongst ones we are keen to see is the creation of a Biodiversity Plan. In the meantime, we love to see people enjoying the Pond & Gardens.

Diary Time - Christmas Carols

In partnership with St James Church, Christmas Carols at Clapton Pond, North Gardens - Sat, Dec 13th, at 4pm.

Followed by mulled wine and mince pies back at St James' Church.



Ongoing Matters, very 'In Brief'

Bishop Woods Almshouses:

Further to efforts to get the Trust to restore the Grade 2 listed Almshouses (behind the Pond, & with one of the smallest chapels in UK), the site has now been sold. We watch with interest as to how the building will be used.

Millfields Road Toilet Block:

Whilst previous planning applications had been rejected, planning has been granted for a four storey block of 8 flats, with retail space on the ground floor (almost identical to the previous designs). Building has not started and a date for this is not, so far, forthcoming.

Upper Clapton Tram Depot:

Planning was granted for the site to be cleared and a large block of flats to replace it. However, new owners have been running a consultation, supposedly with the intention of retaining some of the original fabric of the building. The community is awaiting the outcome of the consultation.

Chatsworth Road

Neighbourhood Plan:

After a few years of hard work, and collaboration, by the many and diverse members of the community making up the Chatsworth Rd Neighbourhood Forum, a Neighbourhood Plan, which will cover the Clapton Pond Area, is slowly being brought forward in line with the requirements of the Localism Bill. For more information, see <http://www.chatsworthroade5.co.uk/planning/the-neighbourhood-forum/>

The Clapton Festival

Since Pondlife last came through your door, or was available from the local shops, The Clapton Festival was created, and very successfully held, in 2011, '12 & '13. The '11 & '12 Festivals were put on by a large group of volunteers, brilliantly facilitated by Louise Goodison.



The team for the 2013 Festival was led by Barney Thomas, who stepped into the fray to ensure the great work from the previous years continued. Whilst this was a smaller affair than the previous years, focused mainly on St John's Church Garden, it was a great success.

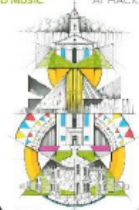
Two films were made, also by the talented hands of volunteers, of the first year's Festival, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DDmua01bcoY> is 20 min, whilst http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwCP0co_UCY is 5 mins.

Also, a video of the third year's festival can be found at <http://www.claptonfestival.com/>, whilst a gallery of photos, of the market and performance stage can be seen at <http://claptonpond.org/the-clapton-festival-2013-some-memories-of-a-great-day/2013/10/08/>



CLAPTON
FESTIVAL
A DAY OF FOOD
AND MUSIC

SAT 28TH
SEPTEMBER
ST JOHN
AT HACKNEY



We hope to see the Festival happening again in 2015 and beyond.

Community First – How CPNAG has supported a Funding Initiative

Community First has been an £80m government-funded initiative that has run for four years, administered by the Community Development Foundation (CDF), until March 2015. The programme has been to enable communities to come together to identify their strengths and local priorities in order to plan for their future and become more resilient.

Money has been made available to fund community projects, based on people being encouraged to give time, expertise and resources towards the projects they identify in their areas. The government has been matching these pound for pound, the idea being to help to stimulate local action towards meeting community needs.

Around £30,000 was made available to be awarded in Leabridge Ward over the period in small grants. This has been administered by the Community Development Foundation (CDF) and Clapton Pond Neighbourhood Action Group (CPNAG) has acted as, what has been known as, the Panel Partner for the Leabridge Ward Community First Panel. In this role, we have supported the local Panel. These are a group of volunteers who have put in hard work over these four years, advertising the funding opportunities, considering applications and recommending projects for the award of a grant.

In Memoriam

Two good friends of CPNAG & the Community have sadly left us in 2013, and each will be missed:

Stan Ansell – Interviewed for the 2008 edition of Pondlife, Stan passed away in his early '90's having, for decades, run a successful furniture business from the front of his home in Millfields Road. He was a familiar site around Clapton Pond, always looking dapper and often on his way to a tea dance.

David White – Having lived all over the world, David was a passionate activist and brought his energies to numerous projects & campaigns, having settled in Clapton. These included The Clapton Arts Trust, The Beechholme Tenants & Residents Association, and the campaign to save The Tram Depot.

Projects that have received funding include: Access to Sports Project; Bruno Glinz Gallery; Clapton Improvement Society; Lea Valley FC; Voice of Youth; NANA; Photography in the Community; The Tree Circle Cinema; E5 Roots;

STOP PRESS - Leabridge Ward councillors have started a new surgery (advice session) at St John Ambulance Hall, Mildenhall Road every first Thursday of the month from 6.30 to 7.30pm. They also run two other surgeries on the second and fourth Saturdays elsewhere in Leabridge ward. Phone 07890 654 068 for more information or email ian.rathbone@tiscali.co.uk

Clapton Salvation Army; Art in the Community; The Friends of Clapton Cinematograph; Hackney Society; Clapton Arts Trust; Chatsworth Road Traders and Residents Association (CRTRA). Finally, we at CPNAG bid for some money, which has allowed us to produce this newsletter.

Local Education - BSix College and BCitizens

In Clapton, we are blessed with some excellent educational establishments. One in particular, across the road from Clapton Pond, has been gaining quite a reputation, collecting a host of awards, including *2011 winner of the Outstanding Provider of the Year*, more recently *TES FE Awards Outstanding Innovation in Teaching & Learning citation*, and also being acknowledged as



a university for teachers, for innovative, & high quality catering, as well as for enabling its students to aspire to high goals in their lives. Adult education is now also available here. This is BSix Sixth form College and Principal Ken Warman, his staff and students have become good friends of CPNAG.

One initiative the college runs is called BSeven. This is an extended college where students are encouraged to engage in a wide variety of activities to further their education, beyond the curriculum that they are following. Part of this, which was set up last year, is the BCitizen Programme, in partnership with London Citizens, and it is from this that a City Safe Campaign <http://www.citizensuk.org/campaigns/citysafe-campaign/> has been developed. This is an initiative to develop a City Safe zone in Lower Clapton. Also, students take part in a litter clean up in the Pond area each year during the Clean-Up Clapton campaign.

For the past year, CPNAG have been fortunate to have on our committee a young man, Rhasan Brunner, a student at BSix. During his time at BSix, Rhasan has been very involved in BSeven, particularly championing the BCitizens initiative and along with other students, he set up the City Safe Campaign. The following is a video of Rhasan talking about the initiative, and says more, more effectively, than can be written here (<http://bsix.ac.uk/bseven/volunteering.htm>).

In leaving the committee, and moving on from BSix, he has replaced himself with another, equally passionate, student. We look forward to continuing to build our partnership with the College in the future.

50 Years of Local Service – A Quick Interview

In 1960 a young woman arrived in Hackney, from Tunisia. Provi had a cousin, a nun at a convent in Stoke Newington & started volunteering at the home there, in 1964. She has been with the St John Ambulance Brigade in Clapton for 49 years & has become a good friend to us - we use the St John's Hall for meetings.

Why did you start volunteering? Ever since I was 12 years old, we used to take food to the destitute people on the edge of our town. It was just the natural thing to do.

How did you become involved with the convent? When I came to Hackney I was a bit lonely and I asked if I could help there. They thought I wanted paying first of all, and were concerned because they couldn't afford to pay me. Once they realised I was offering to volunteer, they welcomed me.

So, how did 49 years with St John start? Volunteering at the home, I started helping in the infirmary. One day someone had a fall. When I was speaking about it to a neighbour of mine, he said I shouldn't be doing that without knowing first aid. So, he took me along to St John. That's where I got trained.

What was that like? Well, I was the first woman member in the Hackney Division, and the first woman to drive an ambulance. The others had to get used to that, and to my English, which wasn't very good then, and it was a bit hard. We all get on very well now.

Any highlights of your time? I went to Rome on duty with the St John Ambulance Brigade, and received a medal from the Vatican. Also, the Hackney Division was part of the private ambulance for the Pope's visit to the UK in the early 1980's and I was involved in that.

Getting Involved with CPNAG

Have some skills, some energy or a perspective to contribute? Contact us, via our web-site – www.claptonpond.org, or e-mail: Ian Rathbone – ian.rathbone@tiscali.co.uk Or: Dave Rindl – dave@rindl.co.uk