

## Gene Meme and the population debate

The art installation and public debate devised and mounted by members Alex and Gregor Harvie in June succeeded admirably in focusing attention on an important and challenging topic in an innovative way. The well-attended debate in St Pancras Church was chaired by Geoff Watts, who observed that the history of life on the planet shows a sequence of population growth followed by collapse. Are we at the point where our own species has made itself unsustainable and faces a crash? If so, what can or should we do about it? Six eminent speakers offered a range of views. Some thought that the marked decline in the global fertility rate over the past 40 years – from 5.4 to 2.6 – was defusing the issue; others pointed out that even such a steep decline would slow overall growth only gradually, and suggested that action would be needed to bring about the stabilisation that most agreed was necessary, given the rate at which the human race was currently depleting the earth's resources. In the course of a lively debate, all agreed that we could not continue to live as we are doing, and that failure to address the issues could only mean that future generations would find themselves in an increasingly hostile environment of our own making.

The display in the crypt of Gregor Harvie's paintings and of Alex Harvie's brief, poignant elegies for lost societies provided a stimulating counterpoint to the debate, and ensured that the issues would stay in the minds of all who attended. In addition, the fact that some of the world's poorest children will benefit directly through donations to the Street Child Africa charity should ensure that this event will 'make a difference' to a much greater extent than most exhibitions can lay claim to.

*Jill Cramphorn*

## CS7

The first of London's Cycle Superhighways is due to be launched on 19 July. It is too early to assess what effect the Superhighway, which passes through Clapham on its way from Morden to the City, is going to have on road users. But one immediate effect on our environment is already all too obvious. While the lurid bright blue achieves its objective of making the lane very obvious, it is, in the opinion of many, a real, glaring eyesore.

Our street environment is becoming increasingly disfigured: sprayed coloured lines and signs indicating the location of underground services, while meant to be temporary, have become a permanent feature of many roads and footpaths. How can we condemn those whose graffiti multiplies on walls and buildings while we apparently condone official vandalism that is equally offensive?

## On the Bandstand

The following concerts are planned over the summer on Clapham Common Bandstand. **All concerts begin at 3 pm.** More events may be added as details are finalised, so check the Lambeth Council website, call 020 7926 1017 or email [bandstand@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:bandstand@lambeth.gov.uk).

|                           |                                |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Sunday 4 July</b>      | Merton Concert Band            |
| <b>Sunday 11 July</b>     | South London Concert Band      |
| <b>Sunday 1 August</b>    | Crystal Palace Brass Band      |
| <b>Sunday 8 August</b>    | South London Saxophone Quartet |
| <b>Sunday 15 August</b>   | Southwark Concert Band         |
| <b>Sunday 22 August</b>   | Lambeth Wind Orchestra         |
| <b>Sunday 5 September</b> | South London Jazz Orchestra    |

## Book launch

*The Ball That Got Stuck in the Tree* is the title of a children's book by local authors, Rebecca Hollweg and Jeb Loy Nichols, to be launched on **Saturday 10 July** at St Paul's Church Hall, Rectory Grove, SW4 0DX. Celebrations start at 11 am with free tea and fairy cakes, followed by children's leaf colouring and at 12 noon a mini-gig by Rebecca and Jeb who are also singer-songwriters. Bring a picnic lunch to have afterwards in the Eden Garden.

### Ticket application form

Visit to **Sambrook's Brewery on Wednesday 22 September**, to include tasting.

Please send me ..... tickets @ £7 each. Cheque, payable to The Clapham Society, for £..... with stamped addressed envelope to Bill Emmett, 13 Crescent Lane, London SW4 9PT

Name..... Telephone No.....

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](http://www.claphamsociety.com)

## Ben & Jerry's Sundae

Ben & Jerry's annual family fun weekend returns to Clapham Common this year on **Saturday 24 July** and **Sunday 25**

**July**. Bands include Doves, Billy Bragg, Frightened Rabbit and Exit Calm. There are lots of stalls and entertainment for all the family, including the popular Helter Skelter and Vauxhall City Farm, and of course, the ice-cream. The Clapham Society will have a stand too, at which we shall have publicity about the Society as well as our new free hand-out map of Clapham. So come along and see us there! Tickets can be bought now on line at [www.benjerry.co.uk/sundae/tickets.php](http://www.benjerry.co.uk/sundae/tickets.php).