



The Heath & Hampstead Society

NEWSLETTER

February 2017

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Up to the highest height

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Chair’s Notes

by Marc Hutchinson

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Front cover: ‘Up to the highest height’ showing the summit of Parliament Hill was taken by Georgina Szenes and was the winning image of the Society’s #myhampsteadheath photo competition. □	

Christmas party

The Society’s Christmas party, held again at Burgh House on 8 December, was a great success and it was a pleasure to be able to welcome so many members to it. It was also an opportunity for me, only half-jokingly, to draw members’ attention, in the context of Christmas gifts, not only to Matt Maran’s wonderful photographic book “Hampstead Heath – London’s Countryside” but also to a newly published legal textbook by Matthew Hearsam entitled “The Law and Practice of Basement Extensions” (published by Morrisons Solicitors).

Ponds Project

In my last Chair’s Notes I mentioned that the City of London Corporation was holding a retrospective “seminar” for stakeholders in relation to the now completed Ponds Project. The seminar was well attended and these are the main points of the consensus which emerged.

The City was to be congratulated on bringing the Project in on budget (£23 million) and on time (October 2016). The decision to appoint the contractor BAM Nuttall was the result of a tender process in which the evaluation of tenders allocated a weighting of 70% to quality and (only) 30% to price. It was felt that this had resulted in the right choice of contractor and a better final result for the Heath landscape. It is significant that, in selecting BAM Nuttall, the City passed over several materially cheaper tenders. It was also noted that BAM Nuttall were described as being helpful, courteous and responsive to questions and complaints from Heath users.

The changes to the Heath’s historic landscape were not as visually drastic and unattractive as had been originally feared. The greatest

Chair's Notes (cont)

interventions are at the Catch Pit on the Hampstead chain of ponds and at the Model Boating Pond on the Highgate chain of ponds. Most people now think that the very substantial changes at these two sites have not, as such, “blighted” the landscape. It is of course still too early to reach a final view on the overall appearance of the works. When the grass has taken and the fencing has come down and the new path surfaces have been weather-beaten, it should be possible to reach a conclusive assessment by, say, the summer of 2017.

On the “lessons learned” side, the City was criticised for failing to explain, in the early stages, that it was compelled by law to carry out these works as specified by the statutory panel engineer. By failing to make that clear, the City failed to dispel the widespread but erroneous public belief that the Project was an extravagant and sinister exercise to put large amounts of quasi-public funds into the pockets of friendly consultants and contractors. It was also noted that, during the long consultation process, stakeholders had, through no fault of their own, sometimes struggled with technical and engineering details which had not always been explained as clearly and precisely as they should have been. The size and shape of the new or rebuilt “spillways” at each pond are an example.

Perhaps the main outstanding issue is the large green electrical cabinets dotted around the ponds, which generate the power to the unsightly bright blue aerators on the pond surface. Everyone agrees that these are an eyesore, and so the City is now working to soften their appearance or conceal them.

Stakeholders said that they were not specifically consulted on the detail or size of these items.

In conclusion, there was general relief that the Project was completed and the hope that, with the passage of years, people will accept the altered landscape as part of the ever-changing Heath.

Licensing

Several newsletters have passed without carrying news about licensing disputes. Fortunately, the Society has not had to mount any campaigns against inappropriate licence grants or extensions. However, the Society has been active over the last two years in holding the line at 11pm in Hampstead for the last sale of alcohol. The Society has been successful in private negotiation with a variety of outlets – from pubs and restaurants to takeaway shops and supermarkets – in preventing them becoming off-licences or extending their alcohol-sales hours. It is gratifying that the Society has been able in each case to achieve the right result by private negotiation (and occasional threat) without a public row, and for that reason I will refrain from mentioning the names of the outlets involved. But they will be known to, and used by, many of you.

Open Spaces Bill

It is intended that this Bill will receive the Royal Assent in the autumn of 2017, having proceeded smoothly through its parliamentary process. The Society is now



Electrical cabinet eyesore

Photo courtesy John Beyer

sitting down with the City to draft the various policies which will regulate such activities as the use of the fairground sites for fairs and exhibitions, and the licensing of businesses (e.g. dog walking and fitness) which exploit the Heath for private commercial gain. We are expecting that these policies will provide the necessary protection for the Heath on the basis that the City was previously very receptive to the restrictions which we sought to introduce into the Bill itself. Although this is a somewhat unrelated matter, in the course of our discussions we shall continue to urge the City to ban the use of drones on the Heath.

St Stephen's, Rosslyn Hill

In this newsletter you will find a full piece by Michael Taylor, who was principally responsible for rescuing St Stephen's Church in 1999 when it was passed to the St Stephen's Restoration and Preservation Trust. The Trust has worked tirelessly since then to restore and maintain St Stephen's and make a success of it for the community. If you go to its website, you will see a picture of Lord Lloyd Webber, on behalf of English Heritage, presenting trustees with an award for the saving of this very important Grade 1 Listed building.

It is very disappointing therefore that the church and adjoining school are now under serious structural threat from the excavation work planned at the Royal Free Hospital (RFH) in connection with the new immunology wing. Although that project has been in the design and planning stage for several years, the RFH advisers have still not produced a satisfactory construction plan to ensure that the church and school are protected. The site is particularly problematical because the church is built on the steep hill down Pond Street and, as with so

many sites in Hampstead, there is a documented stream which flows under it.

The Society played a financial and logistical part in helping save St Stephen's and intends to continue to support the Trust in ensuring that the building is protected. If a judicial review is necessary for that purpose, the Society will support it.

CS11

While I write these Notes, the revised plan for Cycle Superhighway 11 has just been confirmed following the consideration by Transport for London of the results of the consultation process which took place in 2016. It is nothing short of scandalous that the final plan disregards entirely the problems of pollution, noise and traffic which will be caused by the diversion of southbound Finchley Road traffic into the residential streets of Hampstead, something which was a feature of the original draft scheme and to which we, and many other groups and residents, objected. The Society therefore intends, with affected residents' associations, to lobby Camden Council and others to insist that this element of the scheme is altered. The position of the Society is not to oppose cycling or indeed the concept of this cycle superhighway. We suffer from terrible traffic-related pollution in London and this must be reduced. But we absolutely object to a scheme which attempts to promote cycling by materially worsening the traffic and pollution in the residential areas of Hampstead. It is quite wrong that the interests of cyclists should prevail over those of pedestrians and residents.

On behalf of the trustees, may I wish you all a very happy and prosperous New Year. □

Annual General Meeting: June 2017

Elections to General Committee

Officers

The existing President, Vice-President, Chair and Treasurer propose to stand for re-election. The Secretary, Nigel Steward, who will have served in that office for three years now wishes to stand down.

Any member of the Society who is prepared to consider standing for the position of Secretary should contact the Chair, Marc Hutchinson, in the first instance telephone: 07768 827 405.

Other members of the General Committee

Peter Noble, an elected member of the General Committee, completes his three year term and does not wish to stand for re-election.

If the above Officers, together with a new Secretary, are elected, there will be five vacancies on the General Committee.

Robert Linger (Membership Promotion Secretary and member of the Town Sub-Committee), currently an appointed member of the General Committee, wishes to stand for a first term of three years as an elected member of the General Committee.

John Weston (Website and Publicity), having completed his first term of three years as an elected member of the General Committee, wishes to stand for a second term of three years as an elected member of the General Committee.

The maximum number of members of the General Committee is 20. If the above persons proposing to stand and a new Secretary are all elected, there will be three vacancies on the General Committee. There is no constitutional requirement that these vacancies be filled.

Any future resignations or changes to the above election proposals will be promptly announced on the Society's website.

Nominations for elections to the General Committee must be received by the Society in writing before 15 April 2017 in accordance with Rule 21(4). The Society's constitution can be viewed on the Society's website. □



Heath Report

by John Beyer and Lynda Cook

The Society continues to work to ensure that our views are known whenever there is political discussion involving green spaces. The Society submitted written evidence to the Public Parks Inquiry of the House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee in September 2016, and made a similar submission to the Greater London Authority Investigation into Green Space in December 2016. As a formal record, we are publishing the evidence to Parliament below.

The Heath & Hampstead Society was founded in 1897 to safeguard the Heath. The Society also seeks to preserve and enhance the old streets and historic buildings of Hampstead. The Society is non party-political, but participates in local democracy and seeks to improve its working. We would draw the Committee's attention to the range of information about the Society's activities, particularly with reference to the Heath and the Society's relations with the City of London, on our website (www.heathandhampstead.org.uk).

The Heath consists of approximately 317 hectares of land legally classified as Metropolitan Open Land (i.e. 'green belt'), a Public Open Space and (under the London Plan) a Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation. It contains ancient woodland, UK BAP (UK Biodiversity Action Plan) Habitats and three Sites of Special Scientific Interest. For over 200 years, the landscape of the Heath, including its ponds, has been painted by hundreds of British artists, the most famous of whom is probably Constable.

Hampstead Heath is special in that it offers an area of varied and historic countryside in one of the largest conurbations in the world. Parts of the Heath were originally taken into public ownership and vested in the Metropolitan Board of Works under the Hampstead Heath Act 1871. Other pieces were added later.

The 1871 Act is the foundational piece of legislation governing the Heath and its second recital declares:

And whereas it would be of great advantage to the inhabitants of the metropolis if the Heath were always kept uninclosed and unbuilt on, its natural aspect and state being as far as may be preserved...

Who uses the Heath?

It receives over seven million visits a year from those who come to enjoy its natural landscape, ponds, flora and birds, and tranquillity. Most come for the quiet enjoyment of the open space. A summer Sunday sees the Heath covered in picnics and strollers. What we believe the visitors appreciate is precisely the untamed aspect of the space.

The Society has a special aim of preserving the Heath's 'wild' and 'natural' state. This is important, especially because the main part of the Heath is not a 'park' in the normal sense, although it does contain within its boundaries several areas of formal garden, as well as the separately managed (English Heritage) Kenwood House and grounds.

Heath Report (cont)

The Heath's 'wild aspect' is all the more important for its rarity in London; walkers value the feel of the countryside and have to travel much further afield for a similar experience around the metropolis (e.g. Epping Forest, Wimbledon Common, Richmond and Bushy Parks).

The Heath also offers a kaleidoscope of other outdoor activities, including the formal gardens of Golders Hill Park, the historic pergola and Hill Garden developed by the 1st Viscount Leverhulme, two bandstands and a small zoo; there are also extensive sports facilities, e.g. three swimming ponds, the Lido and running track. The Heath hosts several cross-country events.

It is important that this variety is maintained, and in the Society's view this is best achieved under the unified management and highly skilled teams of staff that have evolved and proved their worth over the years under the London County Council and its successor the Greater London Council and since taken forward with unrivalled professionalism by the City of London's Open Spaces Department. We fully endorse what is said by the City of London in its evidence to the inquiry about the benefits, in terms of public satisfaction and value for money, of attracting and retaining in-house staff with the right skills and experience.

Health benefits

The Society believes – indeed considers it self-evident – that the Heath offers health benefits to its millions of users,

whether it is simply for an hour of fresh air or participation in organised sport.

Reductions in funding: risks for the future

Although the City of London faces budget pressures in administering the Heath, reductions in expenditure have not so far had an impact on the management of the Heath. However the Heath faces an unprecedented threat from natural problems, such as the spread of Oak Processionary Moth and other pests, as well as continuing pressure from urban development around the Heath. The costs of maintaining such a diverse area are bound to increase.

It is also important that there is no extension of the built environment both on and around the Heath.

Additional funding

The Society recognises the need for the City to raise funds through events such as weddings and the Affordable Art Fair, to contribute to the management costs of the Heath, which (as the City's evidence shows) are substantial. However there is a limit to the number of fixed facilities that can be created or used to raise revenue (e.g. cafés) without spoiling the very thing visitors seek, the 'wild' and 'natural' space.

The Society worked closely with the City to ensure the City's Open Spaces bill currently before Parliament did not encourage the City to extend fund-raising activities beyond existing built spaces.

Administrative status

The Society believes that on the whole the City is the right authority to manage the Heath, although at times the Society has had to oppose City plans. A notable example was the project, currently nearing completion, to undertake major and intrusive works to reconstruct dams on the Heath. The Society unsuccessfully took the City's decision to build the dams to Judicial Review. The home page of the Society's website (www.heathandhampstead.org.uk) has links (under 'Legal proceedings') to the text of the judgment and statements about it by the Society.

The Society makes an important input to the City's plans for the Heath through representation on the City's Heath Consultative Committee and its Heath Management Committee, as well as informally through walks, bilateral discussions and correspondence on particular issues.

The Heath faces a number of threats in the future. One of these is likely to be an increase in the number of visitors which, though desirable in terms of the visitors' recreation and health, may conflict with the aim of encouraging the wildlife which the public enjoy seeing.

There has been in recent years pressure from cyclists and their organisations to use more paths on the Heath alongside the walking public and this is likely to continue. The Society believes that walkers should have priority and that any increase in cycle traffic will detract

from other visitors' quiet enjoyment of the Heath as a place of relaxation, set apart from the distractions, tensions and heavy traffic of the surrounding areas.

Managing the conflicting demands on the Heath in itself requires adequate management and human resources to manage. The City provides such a constant and stable authority.

Other management models

The Society believes that the maintenance of the Heath requires long-term plans and a stable workforce who understand the nature of this valuable resource. It is important for example to maintain a dedicated group of ecologists and tree experts who can monitor and care for the many ancient trees on the Heath and its wider ecology: it is not a task suited to sub-contractors.

Parks not to be seen in isolation

Parks and open spaces need to be evaluated and managed with regard to their surroundings.

There have already been a number of houses adjoining the Heath which incoming owners have sought to overdevelop to such a level that views from the Heath would be marred. Thanks to campaigning by the Society, in conjunction with the Highgate Society, such an outcome was avoided in the case of Athlone House, a prominent Victorian landmark off Hampstead Lane.

Similarly there is always a threat from development to the 'green corridors' stretching out from the Heath, e.g. the

Heath Report (cont)

tree cover on Highgate Hill on the East side of the Heath. The view Eastwards from Parliament Hill remains one largely of woodland.

Conclusion

The only reason the Heath provides such a unique place of retreat for Londoners is that the City of London is willing and able to spend substantial funds on maintaining and protecting it. Visitors from the USA comment to us that they are unaware of an equivalent attractive urban public open space in the USA; in the USA, they say, any such open space would be litter-strewn, vandalised and dangerous, especially at night. That is because in the USA, as in many parts of the UK, there is, as a matter of government policy, insufficient public funding for such open spaces. Therefore it is imperative that the Westminster government, as a matter of policy, make available sufficient funds to local government to protect urban open spaces for the purpose for which they were originally intended, a purpose which is as important and valid today as when the spaces were created more than a century ago.

The Committee questioned Andrew Percy, the Minister for Parks in the Department for Communities and Local Government, on 5 December. He recognised that local authorities faced impossible decisions in choosing where to allocate funding and where to make cuts. In his view, the answer was to look for the sharing of best practice in the managing and preserving of open spaces; he said he was happy to promote a forum for such exchange,

pending the publication of the Committee's report early in 2017. Although we do not expect any recommendations which would directly impact on the Heath, we will look for issues raised in the report and the Minister's reply for any new thinking on green spaces.

Securing the future

We have been working with the City on ideas that will be important in managing the Heath in the decade to come. The City will develop a strategic plan for 2018–2027, which will link to a medium-term plan and the Annual Work Programme. Many of the issues raised by the Society so far are reflected in our submission to Parliament.

The Heath Sub-Committee meanwhile as usual scrutinised and commented in detail in December on the Annual Work Plan for 2017. We also shape the implementation of the plans through quarterly walks with Heath staff, when we have the opportunity to discuss issues in more detail than is possible at meetings of the Consultative Committee and Management Committee.

We have also been working with the City and others to make the work of these two Committees more effective. From 2017 the Consultative Committee will meet four times a year, as will the Management Committee. There will be a sufficient gap between meetings of the two bodies to allow the City to take into account comments at the Consultative Committee and so amend thinking and papers before formal decision at the Management Committee.

Hampstead Heath Ponds Swans update

Further to our description of the swans' predicament in the last issue of the Newsletter,

we are sad to report further swan deaths on the Model Boating Pond. A cygnet was trapped in the new fencing erected to protect newly planted reed beds around the edges of the Model Boating Pond and, unable to escape, was caught by a fox. After the male swan was tragically killed when he flew into a wall at the end of Highgate No. 1, the female swan was left alone with her four cygnets. On the day before the new island on the Model Boating Pond was inaugurated, two of these cygnets were found on the bank – headless. It is assumed that a fox killed the cygnets, although there have been a variety of reports, not verified, of Rottweilers on the Heath at 3 a.m.

Even more troubling was the discovery of a noose around a cygnet's neck which was removed by two Heath users. Nooses have also been found tied to the fencing. These matters were reported to the Heath Constabulary.

Subsequent to these events, we have had further meetings with the Heath staff and a variety of solutions have been suggested to protect the swans. These include discouraging dogs from entering Hampstead No. 2 by restoring and replanting the bank,

creating “beaches” that will provide rest and protection for the swans, and placing a raft on the ponds so that the swans will have a safe retreat. These measures should all be in place by next spring when, we hope, we will have swans nesting again on our ponds. We only have one pair at this time, as well as the lone female (with her two cygnets) who has lost her mate and is thus unprotected by a male swan.

Ron Vester, a Heath Sub-Committee member, monitors the swans on a daily basis and liaises with Lynda Cook, as well as with the Swan Sanctuary and City of London rangers. □



Photograph Courtesy Ron Vester

One of the 2016 cygnets

Planning Report

by David Castle

Housing

The 'Housing Problem' is now generally accepted as urgently in need of massive governmental action or support. Solving the problem, of course, would need continued expenditure over many years – at a time when many other issues need to be solved. Until that occurs there will be continued pressure to build high and at a high density – by

developers on every patch of green space and on existing low-density houses – using the excuse that they are helping to solve the housing crisis – they are not. Hampstead will not be immune.

There has recently been a proposal – obviously designed to shock – to build over Hyde Park with dwellings for those that work in London but cannot afford the high rents. The Times (5 December) produced an editorial saying that it was acceptable for '*a skyscraper to encroach on an ancient view*' even though the skyscraper in question was providing flats for the affluent. The same article went on to state: '*Before long, the capital will face a choice between building upwards or outwards.*' Not so – those who cannot afford the high price of rents in London do not need high expensive blocks that were shown to be a failure in the sixties. It is generally accepted that new housing intended to solve the crisis should be mainly for rent and built firstly on



"Smash the next lamp on the left, flatten the pavement by the pub, nudge the sweet shop, scrap the Market Cross, then just follow the skid marks to London"

Acknowledgements to Punch, 1979

'brownfield' sites, not on the outskirts of towns and cities which includes Green Belt land.

Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) policies are similar and aimed at stopping encroachment on the countryside and open spaces within urban areas. MOL policies are extremely important to Hampstead – the

Heath and many fringe areas have long been designated MOL. We believe and hope that it will remain sacrosanct – but recently we have had to fight (unsuccessfully) a developer from obtaining a change to the designation to allow him to build and there is another potential application to build on MOL in the pipeline. We will of course oppose such applications. The fear is that the currently very strong MOL policy will be reduced in effectiveness if the Government 'waters down' Green Belt policy.

Governmental (DCLG) Consultation on Basements

The Department of Communities and Local Government recently called for observations about how they could 'improve' the way local authorities deal with planning applications involving basements. We expect that they were inundated with suggestions since this issue causes so much worry, pollution, damage and inconvenience for those affected. We, of course, on behalf of Hampstead and of our

members, sent the following long list of issues which need to be addressed.

They are repeated here because they illustrate the current difficulties objectors experience when dealing with rich developers and also what could be done. It is a puzzle why this issue was not addressed ten years ago.

From: **The Heath & Hampstead Society**

To: **The Department Of Communities
And Local Government**

Introduction

The Society examines all Planning Applications relating to Hampstead and assesses them for their impact on conservation and on the local environment – and has done so for many years.

Over the past years we have objected to many of the applications for basements under houses and gardens in Hampstead. We have also recommended changes to Camden's policies on basements, some of which have been included in the Local Plan now being considered by the Inspector. Some six years ago we requested that Camden issue an Article 4 Direction restricting PD for basements which we are pleased to say is now being implemented.

We also were involved in persuading Camden to introduce its Basement Impact Assessment (BIA) following the application for a three-level basement up to the party wall of a neighbour's house in Hampstead. Unfortunately, this deep basement was approved, constructed – and is now causing serious structural problems to the adjacent house – three years after construction.

Our Comments And Observations

To help objectors, applicants and Councils deal with applications for basements, it would be extremely helpful if the DCLG could:

a. clarify the extent of Permitted

Development and also limit the extent of basement size, depth, etc. for:

i. basements under buildings

(maximum depth, restrictions on basements next to older buildings eg. terraces, semi-detached, etc.)

and separately for:

ii. building 'under' gardens* –

definition and extent, when not permitted, etc. For unclear reasons 50% of garden area has been adopted but this has serious effects in some areas of ecological importance and the many areas with large gardens, etc. (Such 'basements*' could be described as rear or side extensions built in an excavated area of a garden. As such they could be controlled similarly to extensions at ground level.) We would suggest that 'basements' should only be permitted 'under' gardens, in exceptional circumstances, up to 50% of the garden or 50% of the original ground floor area – whichever is the less.

b. clarify the limit to construction of basements under Listed Buildings (and their context).

c. make it obligatory for neighbours to be consulted – before an application is made.

Planning Report (cont)

- d. make it obligatory for the applicant to pay neighbours reasonable costs of professional advice, reports etc.
- e. make it obligatory for Councils to delay issuing planning permission until Party Wall Agreements, BIAs and Construction Management Plans (CMPs) are agreed.

This will make it necessary for Developers to quickly and thoroughly carry out the necessary calculations and reports during the consideration of the application – any delay is then their fault.

We have had several examples of inaccurate/optimistic BIAs, CMPs etc. misleading the Council into Approval – subsequently discovered in the S106 agreement or after work starts.

- f. making it obligatory for Councils to consult Councillors and their Conservation Area Consultative Committee's (CAACs) when a Pre-Application involving a basement is made.
- g. in the many areas with special geological condition involving potential ground movement and slippage and/or sub-soil water movement difficult or impossible to predict (e.g. Hampstead) Councils should be enabled to refuse a basement application on those grounds alone.

Temporary Disturbance

We understand that pollution, noise and disturbance caused temporarily by construction cannot be a reason for refusal of an application in planning law.

We have had cases where an application could have been amended in order to reduce the temporary pollution/disturbance – but the applicant refused to do so. We suggest, therefore, that Councils should be able to refuse an application on the grounds that an amended design, that reduces pollution, etc., is required before permission can be considered. We also suggest that guidelines, specifying when constructional disturbance, etc., are unacceptable and are grounds for refusal, would be extremely helpful.

We would be pleased to be able to expand or give extra information on any of the above.

The Heath & Hampstead Society

Heath House (by the War Memorial)

This application to overdevelop a Grade 2* Listed building as six flats (some of which are cramped and badly planned) may have been decided on 12 January 2017. If approved, the honorific entrance courtyard intended to improve the setting of the House (visible behind the War Memorial) is likely to become a car and white van park! Not exactly improving the setting of the House – and another case of greedy development.

Camden's new draft Local Plan

The revision and updating of the previous Camden Plan has now been considered at a Hearing convened at Camden's Town Hall. Members of our Society's Planning Sub-Committee addressed the Hearing about basements, trees and ecology. The Inspector will make amendments and come to a decision in Spring 2017.

Objecting to and campaigning against planning applications

We are frequently asked about how to object to, campaign against, and influence the decisions that Camden make about the many planning applications received each month. It is certainly worth doing but takes a lot of time and effort. We have now updated the **help and advice** on the Planning page of the Society's website and are now in the process of producing further detailed notes and tips on how to organise an **effective campaign** aimed at obtaining a refusal from Camden – and then, subsequently, from the Appeal Inspector.

Royal Free Hospital and St. Stephen's Church

As noted by Michael Taylor elsewhere in this Newsletter, there is a very real possibility that the vibrations and the disturbance caused by the removal of the existing concrete car park and retaining walls prior to the construction of the Immunology Unit will cause serious damage to the impressive Church (Listed Grade 1 – Architect: S.Teulon). We understand that the engineers for the proposed work are finding it difficult to justify, bearing in mind Hampstead's difficult ground conditions, the slope up to the Church, and the sub-surface flow of water. All of these are likely to increase the chance that the massive weight of the Church may slip down the slope causing possibly irreparable structural damage. The Ground Condition and Bore-hole Surveys and the engineers' structural proposals have yet to be produced. We await them with much concern. □



Acknowledgement - Photo from Architecture in Hampstead

Heath House seen across Whitestone Pond in the 1950s

Town Report

by Frank Harding

I am writing this report immediately before Christmas, well in advance of your reading it. I nevertheless think it appropriate to wish you a very happy and healthy New Year on the basis that there are likely still to be about eleven months of 2017 ahead of you at the time of your reading this.

Abacus School

At the time of writing there is still no further news of what alternative arrangements are being considered by the governors of Abacus School nor of whether they are looking for an alternative site to the former police station on Rosslyn Hill.

HS2

On 15 December, the House of Lords Select Committee reported on the HS2 Bill, and the Bill now goes back to the Lords for final scrutiny. Royal Assent is expected early in 2017 and work is likely to start on the project later in the year. The Committee made a few recommendations relevant to Camden: fairer compensation for residents directly affected by compulsory purchase powers and disruption, points on the design and funding of a new Euston Station, and the removal of such wide compulsory purchase powers as are intended by the Bill. If acted on, however, these recommendations will benefit only areas more directly affected by the project than us – near Euston, of course, and wards where tunnelling will take place, the nearest to Hampstead being Belsize.

The main effect of the project on Hampstead will, of course, be traffic, and the Committee said “We are very strongly of the opinion that as much material as possible should be moved by rail so as to reduce road traffic congestion

and air pollution”, but it stopped short of proposing that HS2 should be compelled to meet any fixed target for this. Nothing directly seems to have been said about the effect of the number of heavy vehicles on the wider area, about which our concerns must remain, even though Haverstock Hill, England’s Lane, Prince of Wales Road and Primrose Hill Road will not now be designated routes for transportation (as was initially planned) – so reducing, one would hope, the risk of lorries diverting up through Hampstead. However, this is still a possibility, as is the effect of local traffic avoiding delays on designated routes, the nearest being Adelaide Road and Finchley Road, by re-routing through Hampstead. We seem to be dependent on HS2’s assurances that construction traffic will be kept off roads as far as possible, waiting in designated compounds until needed, and measures taken to prevent contractors deviating from the designated routes by means of GPS vehicle tracking and fines for non-compliance. However, the effectiveness of these measures is likely only to be proved or disproved when put into action, and Camden has limited powers to ensure that works are carried out legally and safely. In the end, we may have to rely on local vigilance and residents immediately reporting any issues to their councillors and to Camden.

The Hampstead Neighbourhood Forum

The draft Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan has been submitted to and reviewed by Camden which has provided its comments and proposals for amendment. The Forum is currently considering what changes should be made to the draft which will then be published for consultation by residents early in

2017. Thereafter, after the views of those consulted have been reviewed, a referendum of local residents will be held seeking support for the Plan.

Plaque walks

Julia Male, an authorised London guide, will be leading walks pointing out the English Heritage blue plaques, the Society's black plaques and the other plaques on buildings in Hampstead, and commenting on the lives of those commemorated. Julia led similar, much appreciated, walks a couple of years ago, and has agreed to repeat the opportunity for those who did not then participate. The walks are scheduled for Saturday 13 and/or 20 May. Make a diary note to keep the dates clear and email me on frankaharding@btinternet.com if you would like to make a preliminary reservation for the walks.

Old Hampstead Rediscovered VI

A sixth, and probably final, exhibition of a sample of Hampstead paintings held in Camden's collection will take place from 14 June to 3 September 2017 at Burgh House. □

Plaque Walks in Hampstead

Julia Male, an authorised London guide, will be leading two walks pointing out the English Heritage blue plaques, the Society's black plaques and the other plaques on buildings in Hampstead on Saturday 13 and/or 20 May. Please email Frank Harding on frankaharding@btinternet.com if you would like to make a preliminary reservation for the walks.



Spring 2017 Events in the Library

9 February 7:30pm

***Lee Montague and Octave Quartet: Schubert**

A celebration of the great composer with chamber music, and readings by actor Lee Montague.

9 March 7:30pm

***Benet Brandreth: The Spy of Venice**

Benet makes a welcome return to KCL to talk about his entertaining and suspenseful debut novel about Shakespeare in Venice.

**Tickets £8 from the library on 020 7431 1266 or online at www.wegotickets.com*

April 22nd 10-4pm

Spring Book Sale

Thousands of high quality books – fiction, nonfiction and children's books – at bargain prices. (Please bring donations before 13 April. Thank you). Free entry.

Library News:

DVDs rental now free in 2017

KCL is delighted to announce that, thanks to a new partnership with U3A in London, borrowing of DVDs for one week will be free of charge to library cardholders. Thanks to a Grant in 2016 from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), we have added many Large Print Books and Audio CDs for our community.

More information is available at www.keatscommunitylibrary.org.uk

Tickets will go on sale about one month in advance.

**Keats Community Library
10 Keats Grove NW3 2RR
Tel: 020 7431 1266**

The Threat to St. Stephen's

Michael Taylor of the St. Stephen's Restoration and Preservation Trust summarises the history of St. Stephen's and describes the threat to the building posed by proposed construction at the adjacent Royal Free Hospital

St. Stephen's, Rosslyn Hill was built 1869–71 as a result of the rapid expansion of London caused by the advent of the railways in the 1830's. These brought many more people to London and the city thrived. By 1862 development had reached Swiss Cottage, Buckland Crescent, Adelaide Rd, Haverstock Hill, Lawn Rd. and Mansfield Rd. This was a huge expansion of the city in only 20 years and it was nearing the southern parts of Hampstead.

St. John's, Downshire Hill, was a Georgian Chapel of Ease built c.1820 to serve lower Hampstead. By the mid-1860's the congregation was irritated by the invasion of newcomers from the new streets to the south. They petitioned the Bishop of London who gave permission for them to build another church and Sir Thomas Maryon Wilson, the Lord of the Manor, gave the land on which St. Stephen's and the Church Hall now stand. A committee started fundraising and St. Stephen's was completed within three years at a cost of £21,000.

The architect, Samuel Teulon, was well known in his time, working for Queen Victoria, the Archbishop of Canterbury and many of the aristocracy. He was both an eccentric and an eclectic. He did not follow the strict rules of Gothic architecture and freely experimented, tending to collect details here and there, putting them together as he saw fit. Therefore St. Stephen's, 'my mighty church' as he called it, is not typical Victorian Gothic Revival! The exterior is markedly French Gothic with steep roofs and a massive tower. He built it of purple brick with decorative Kentish ragstone bands. The interior has spectacular ornamental brickwork in varied lighter colours. The most impressive is under the tower, in the transepts and the nave arches.

The two-tone brickwork of the arches is an Islamic feature and can be seen in the Moorish cities of Southern Spain. Another oddity is the massive arches at the 'crossing' which go outwards from the springing point before coming in to meet at the top. This is an Islamic arch shape which can be seen across the Middle East to the Mughal buildings of northern India!

The variety of internal decorative design may be explained by Catholic Emancipation which came to the fore in the early 19th century. Attitudes were changing in the Anglican Church. The 'High Church' group lent towards



St. Stephen's before restoration

Photo Courtesy St. Stephen's Restoration and Preservation Trust

the ritual of the Catholics but the 'Low Church' group were more Puritanical and simplistic. Teulon was of Huguenot descent and therefore 'Low Church' but he may have attempted to show both views in the internal decoration. The spandrels between the arches have roundels showing martyrs of the Protestant Reformation cause. In contrast, the sanctuary has a half-dome ceiling of gold-leaf tesserae, splendid stained glass windows and a glorious mosaic frieze by Salviati of Venice, the great 19th century European Master. The first vicar later said "St. Stephen's has always accommodated a broad church". One supposes that the Low Church party could gaze at the Protestant heroes above while the High Church party could admire the decoration in the sanctuary and imagine they were in Florence!

This was a very popular and physically sound church until, following commencement of the new Royal Free Hospital six-year period of building works in 1968, only a few metres away and resulting in excavations to a much lower level, severe cracks started to appear from 1970 in the fabric of the church. By 1974 English Heritage designated St. Stephen's as a Grade I Listed Building (i.e. in the top 3% of English architectural monuments), as recognition of its significance as well, perhaps, as an attempt to make the Royal Free, the

Diocese, and the local community, take the cracking problems seriously. Nevertheless, the damage increased and St. Stephen's was closed for worship in 1976 and remained closed while the Diocese sought a solution.

None appeared until October 1998 when Andrea Taylor, owner of the school which her family had established in the adjacent Church Hall in 1949, and, Michael Taylor, ex-architect, were invited to look at it. They devised a scheme which included creating lettable space at lower ground floor level. The Diocese then offered them a lease; and they immediately established a charitable trust, St. Stephen's Restoration and Preservation Trust, to raise money. This was a popular cause and within a year £250,000 had been raised. Further funding came from English Heritage and work commenced on Phase 1 Major Works Contract in September 2002. Further grants of £2.452m from the Heritage Lottery Fund and £400,000 from the Wolfson



St. Stephen's today

Photo Courtesy St. Stephen's Restoration and Preservation Trust

The Threat to St. Stephen's (cont)

Foundation appeared and fundraising continued to a total of over £5m. Phases 2 and 3 Major Works Contracts commenced in May 2007 and completed in August 2009.

St. Stephen's had been deconsecrated in 2002. It re-opened for business in September 2009 with Hampstead Hill School moving in some of its pupils to occupy the lower ground floor during school hours, for which it pays the Trust a commercial rent. The Trust is then able to let the building as a venue every evening, every weekend and all day, every day for sixteen weeks of the School's holidays. The principal use is for private social events such as anniversary parties and civil wedding ceremonies followed by the reception in the same venue. The Trust also hosts a wide range of other activities ranging from public meetings, a range of markets and fairs, cultural events both musical and theatrical, and even a commercial event, a two-day computer games event! The Trust has given St. Stephen's back to the community.

However, all this hard work and success is now under serious threat due to the Royal Free Hospital's latest project for its new Pears Building.

The RFH Charity Trust proposes to construct this new Building even closer to St. Stephen's and the Church Hall, and, very much lower than the previous scheme. The Trust and the School have already been forced to spend a great deal of money on some of the best geotechnical, structural and civil engineers in the country. All agree that this proposal, as currently promoted, is highly likely to cause both buildings to move substantially

and, possibly, to finally collapse. They have thoroughly studied the past and can show that in the last 120 years every time that building work has taken place lower down the hill our two buildings have moved dramatically. Regrettably, so far, the RFHCT staff and their technical consultants have made little real effort to engage and respond to these identified dangers and refuse to accept the magnitude of the problem; and while Camden Council has put in place a legal planning obligation requiring the buildability of this project without physical harm to be established their expectation is that a proper and technically informed dialogue will take place between the affected parties to achieve the necessary solution. Otherwise, the continuing protection of St. Stephen's will have to be dealt with through the High Court which will be both costly and time consuming as well as perpetuating uncertainty for all concerned. Accordingly, if St. Stephen's is to remain both as a heritage landmark and practical community asset then common sense and constructive solutions needs to prevail swiftly. □



The Heath Extension Ponds

by Lynda Cook

If you step onto the Heath Extension at Ikin's Corner at the corner of Wildwood Road near Hampstead Way, and walk down the slopes, presently covered in fallen leaves, you will come across a chain of small ponds, known as the Seven Sisters Ponds. There is one woman to thank for these secluded watery magnets of peace: Henrietta Barnett, who when she learned in 1902 of plans to extend the Northern Underground from Hampstead Tube Station to Golders Green wrote "it required no imagination to see the rows of ugly villas in the foreground of that far-reaching and far-famed view." Her solution was to enlarge the Heath. Mrs Barnett subsequently founded the Hampstead Heath Extension Council which eventually had a



Committee of 21 and a Council of 179, including women such as Octavia Hill (a long-time heroine to Mrs. Barnett) and Emily Field, who gave the Extension the drinking fountain on the west side of the Seven Sisters Ponds.

The southernmost pond was originally part of Wylde's Farm and is thought to be over 250 years old. Today, this pond is heavily polluted as a result of an electrical failure that occurred during building renovations at one of the houses on Wildwood Road and which discharged large quantities of oil into the pond. The remaining ponds on the chain were dug out in 1907 by unemployed labourers.

You can walk along the narrow and often muddy path bordering these ponds which are

The Heath Extension Ponds (cont)

not accessible to bathers, anglers or dogs, thus granting necessary and important protection to a variety of ducks, frogs, newts and other wildlife. A bench at the second pond is often used by those who wish to observe moorhens, a lone grey heron and, on warm summer days, iridescent dragonflies. Even during the winter months, you may see the moorhens who make their nest here every year, usually on the banks of the third pond. Both common and non-native marsh frogs can be heard in early spring. However, these frogs (increasingly rare in the UK) are victim to many predators including the watchful heron who stands alert for any food.

At various times throughout the year, it is possible to see large groups of male Chinese Mandarin ducks who create their own tableau



of sculpted feathers and glimmering hues. They usually are accompanied by one or two females who have softer colours.

Squirrels, robins, blackbirds, nuthatches, carrion crows, coots, feral and wood pigeons and, increasingly, green parakeets, make their homes in the ancient hawthorn hedgerows and trees which border the ponds.

Most visitors treat this area with great respect and, if there are some who misuse the area, another will try to remedy matters; an elderly gentleman walks along the path daily, picking up dog poop and carrying it to the appropriate bin; another walker once put himself to considerable effort and risk, using a long branch to hook and fish out a large and full bin bag that someone had dumped into the second pond. Usually when walkers encounter each other, they smile in silent acknowledgment of the shared beauty and tranquillity. □

The Company of Trees

Thomas Pakenham, the well-known historian and tree enthusiast, was the Society's 2016 Springett lecturer. In the context of the recent publication of his fifth book on trees, The Company of Trees, he spoke about how he developed his lifelong passion for them and the increasing global threats to our ancient trees, with particular reference to his family estate, Tullynally, in Ireland.

I have been remarkably fortunate. I developed a passion for trees and the trees responded. At any rate, most of my trees seem happy where I planted them. Many will, I fondly believe, outlive the youngest of my grandchildren. And, unless they fall victim to global warming (which, sad to say, is quite possible), these trees will give comfort and pleasure to children yet unborn.

Why did I develop this passion for trees? Like most sensible people, I find them irresistible. And in my case, I believe that the roots of my passion for trees lie deep in my childhood. My sister Antonia and I were 'Irish twins': we were born within eleven and a half months of each other. In 1936, when I was three, the centre of our world was a large, airy nursery on the upper floor of a large, plain house at Rose Hill, in the unfashionable suburbs of south Oxford. Our garden was somewhat bleak. The house, appropriately, was called Singletree.

For most of the day, our lives were ruled by Jean, our young and energetic nurse. But at six o'clock, if we were lucky, we would be brought down, in pyjamas and dressing gowns, to meet our mother in the drawing room. Here she would be seated, shining like a goddess, ready to read us a book of our choice. And we would sit, dazzled by this privilege, snuggling up on either side of her on the green sofa. My favourite book was called *The Wood That Came Back*.

When my younger daughter Eliza was three, she explained what made a good children's story: 'Make it horrible, Daddy, with a happy

ending.' I suppose most of the stories our mother read to Antonia and me followed the same formula – especially *The Wood That Came Back* by Claire Leighton. The theme would be topical today but, I now realise, had a special resonance at Singletree.

A married couple buy a site to build a house. But the site is already occupied by a clump of beech trees, and a community of squirrels, rabbits, foxes, jackdaws and other birds. The husband, in plus fours, cuts down the trees with an axe, one by one. The animals and birds are driven away, and a new house is built where the trees once stood. But the foolish couple have left the stumps intact.

Imperceptibly the trees re-grow from the stumps, eager to get their revenge. Meanwhile the birds and animals have joined forces to drive out the newcomers. The story ends with nature and the trees triumphant, as the foolish couple run screaming down the hill, desperate to escape their tormentors.

There's a later, more prosaic explanation for my passion for trees. In the first week of February 1961, I was twenty-seven and had just got a job as a cub reporter in London on the diary of the new-born *Sunday Telegraph*. That week, as the new paper rolled from the presses, I heard news that was to change the direction of my life. My father's elder brother Edward, the 6th Earl of Longford, who owned our 1,500-acre family estate in Westmeath died suddenly of a stroke. My father Frank inherited the Longford title. But under a family settlement, originating before my uncle was born, the bulk of his fortune passed directly to me. I felt like

The Company of Trees (cont)

someone who has won a prize in the lottery, and in a sense I had: the anachronistic lottery of birth. Antonia was the eldest child, but the nineteenth-century settlement had no time for girls. All that mattered to the lawyers was that I was the eldest son.

The family estate at Pakenham Hall (a name I quickly abolished by restoring the original Irish name, Tullynally) seemed to me magnificent, perhaps because I knew nothing about farming. There were 1,000 acres of boggy farmland, grazed by half-bred heifers and bullocks, two small Ferguson tractors and 500 acres of gardens and woods. The house was a crumbling neo-Gothic castle. But there was a snag. In those days, death duties in Ireland seemed to be designed to crush the life out of an old estate. In my case, they would run to 62 per cent. So I would start my new career as a farmer up to my ears in debt. But how could I resist those boggy acres, the crumbling castle – and those noble beech trees and oak trees that studded the demesne?

It was the ancient trees in the parkland that, from the beginning, grabbed my imagination and excited my senses. This was my treasure trove. Most of my eighteenth- and nineteenth-century predecessors made their careers serving (and sometimes dying) as generals in the army or as captains in the navy. Men like that would have felt no need, even if they could afford it, to impress their neighbours by buying Chippendale sideboards or landscapes by Richard Wilson and Claude Lorrain. But they loved the family estate and planted many parkland trees to make it beautiful. Now these were in my care: individual oak and beech and sweet chestnut as fine as you could observe in any great park in

Britain or Ireland. These were the treasures I had inherited – living landscapes by Wilson and Claude. And with the joy of possession went the duty of looking after them.

I say, looking after them. In practice, like most ancient trees, my towering beech and oak asked for little more than benign neglect. My job was to protect them from timber dealers and other threats. In this negative role I was encouraged by our forestry adviser, Professor Clear of University College, Dublin. Planting rows of Sitka spruce in the commercial woodland was his professional responsibility. Those bread-and-butter trees would be harvested one day without mercy. But Professor Clear had a romantic soul, and solemnly warned me not to touch any of the great trees in the parkland, if I wanted him to continue as my adviser.

Having finally broken free of my debts, by 1990 I could at last indulge my passion for trees. That year, I founded the Irish Tree Society, with the help of some friends, and began the research for my first tree book, *Meetings with Remarkable Trees*. It's a personal selection of monumental trees. I chose, whimsically enough, sixty individual trees in Britain and Ireland and portrayed them with pen and camera. Many were very large and some were very ancient. What they all shared was a photogenic face or figure, and a strong personality.

What was the main theme? Writing history books had brought me face to face with great trees in many remote regions, especially the wilder parts of South Africa. I began to realise that our own great trees in Britain and Ireland were exceptional by the standards of the world. In fact, they were the biggest living things in these islands: heavier than any land animal, taller than most buildings, older than many

ancient monuments. And yet they could only too easily be taken for granted. This was the inspiration for that first tree book.

For my second tree book, *Remarkable Trees of the World* (2002), I chose another sixty monumental trees with strong personalities. This time the portraits were culled from many parts of the globe. And by now I was becoming aware of the alarming number of threats that face the world's population of trees. I listed some of them in the section called 'Trees in Peril': predatory loggers and complacent governments in Australia and western North America, impoverished farmers all over the world.

In 2007, I completed the third book in my trilogy (dare I say *treeology*?), *In Search of Remarkable Trees: On Safari in Southern Africa* (2007). By then it was obvious that threats of all kinds were intensifying. Global warming and climate change, ideas considered alarmist in the 1980s and 1990s, were now part of the conventional wisdom. Yet how many governments were listening to the climate scientists?

In my latest volume, *The Company of Trees*, I have tried to focus on some of the alarming new threats. As forecast by scientists, our weather seems to be becoming more

extreme. Storms from the Atlantic appear to be more frequent, and our long-suffering trees pay the price. In the last two years, we have lost about a quarter of our oldest and tallest beech which once screened the house.

At the same time, Europe's common trees – sweet chestnut, ash and horse chestnut – are being assailed by a cohort of new diseases. Perhaps these, too, are a product of rising temperatures. They are certainly lethal to more than a dozen specific trees. The most damaging of these invaders would seem to be four new diseases which I shall call the Four Horsemen: Acute Oak Death, Sudden Oak Death (lethal to American oaks and many other plants including Japanese larch), *Chalara fraxinea* (ash die-back) and *Pseudomonas syringae* (lethal canker of horse chestnuts).

At Tullynally, this fourth horseman has already taken five of our largest and oldest horse



Winter trees on Hampstead Heath

Photograph Courtesy Matt Maran

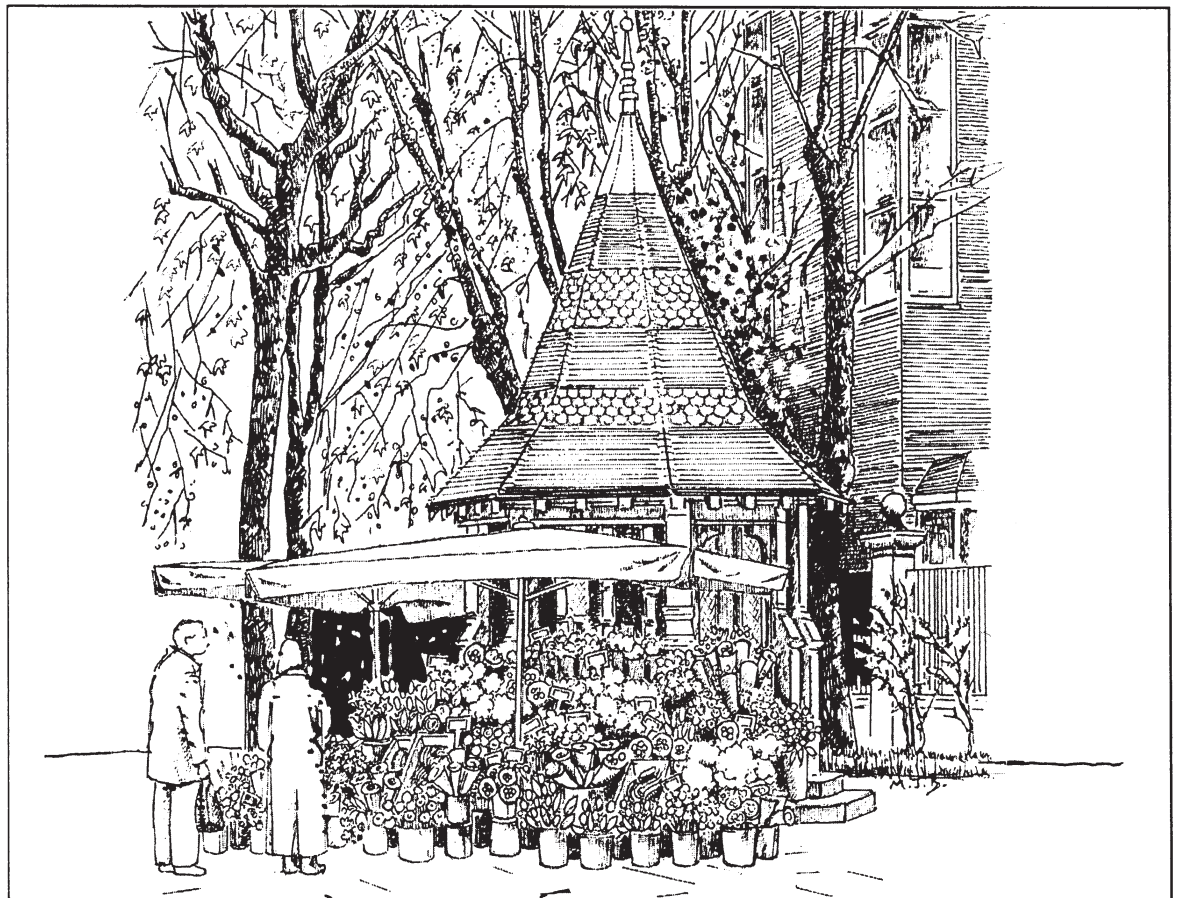
The Company of Trees (cont)

chestnuts. A recent survey reported that 49 per cent of all horse chestnuts in England showed signs of the lethal infection. It seems to have been inadvertently introduced from the East more than a decade ago. Like the elms in the 1960s, our European horse chestnuts may now be facing extinction. And we are, once again, helpless to save them.

Of course, science may come to the rescue. But I doubt it. So far, no treatments for the new diseases have proved effective. All we can do is

to keep planting the trees that seem relatively safe from disease. Here, at Tullynally, I have done what I could, but of course it was not enough. I have replanted parts of the demesne with beech and oak, filled the pleasure ground with exotics like maples and magnolias, stocked the Forest Walk with plants I had brought as seed from the Himalayas and created a new arboretum.

I felt I owed it to my grandchildren. And I owed it to the trees. □



The Heath & Hampstead Society
invites you to an illustrated lecture by

Tom Oliver

*Landscape architect, Patron of the Society and
Fellow of the Royal Society for the
encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and
Commerce (RSA) and the Green Alliance*

Capability Brown: making his design fit for the 21st century

The restoration of an extensive 18th century
landscape under present day conditions
Croome Park in Worcestershire was Capability
Brown's first complete design and one of his
favourites. It was brought back from oblivion
by the National Trust between 1996 and 2006
and ten years on, receives 150,000 visitors
each year. What were the primary challenges
in achieving this transformation and how
successful has the restoration been? Tom
Oliver, who planned and managed the project
between 1997 and 2002, explains.

**Thursday 2 March 2017 at 7.30pm
at Burgh House**

Refreshments will be provided
Admission is £15 by ticket only. Space may be
limited so, if you plan to attend this event,
please let the Society know in advance by
email on info@HeathandHampstead.org.uk
or by telephoning **07768 827 405**



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Forthcoming Concerts

St John-at-Hampstead

Parish Church

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The Professional Choir and Soloists

perform

Bach's St. Matthew Passion

Tickets available at the door or telephone

☎ *020 7794 1193*

Organs in Hampstead – I

An occasional series of articles about organs that are or once were in the Hampstead area, not all of them in churches, by Martin Renshaw and Vicki Harding

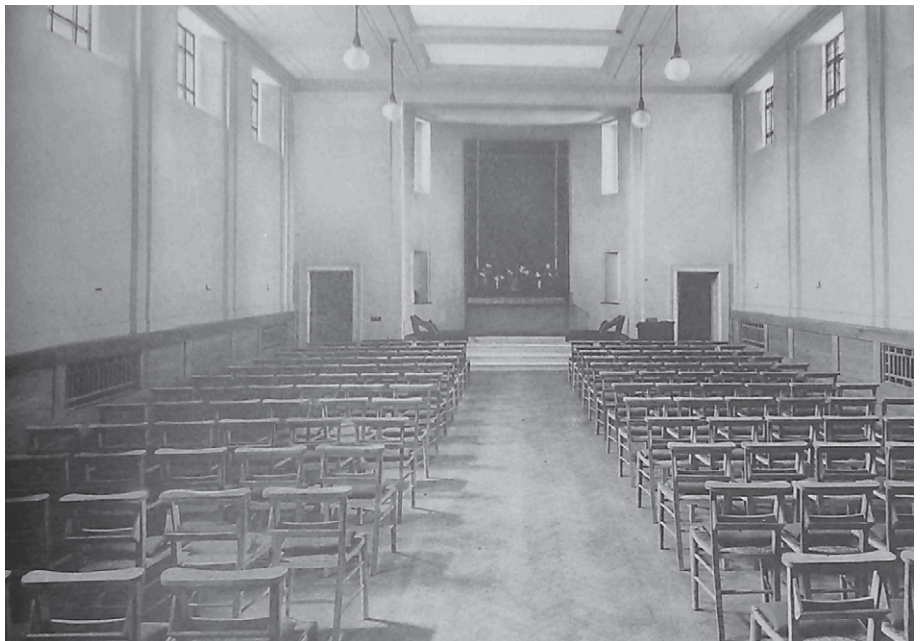
England has had a long love affair with organs but, as in life, such matters have not always run smoothly. Organs were abundant in medieval churches, but had completely disappeared from churches by the later 1640s, only to reappear very slowly in churches after 1660. But they were found increasingly in houses throughout the 18th and early 19th century. Suddenly every church wanted an organ in the late 19th century, so much so that there are now many more organs in England than, for instance, in France, a country more than four times the size.

Organs, though sometimes large, can be moved. Those made for private houses move with their owners and so are a sort of floating population. We will be looking at some of these, even if they are not still in Hampstead, because they tell us a good deal about contemporary attitudes to music at home.

Similarly, church buildings that housed organs, which are part of the public history of Hampstead, also come and go – to an extent that we probably don't realise. Organs are beginning to be classified like buildings, and some have earned Historic Organ Certificates (HOCs) in recognition of their cultural value. Hampstead currently has four listed organs: St. John's

Parish church and St John's Downshire Hill have Certificates of Recognition for their organ cases, The Heath Street Baptist church's 1870 Willis organ is Grade II listed, and St Luke's church Kidderpore Avenue's 1900 Willis organ is Grade I listed.

From 1853, the organist of Hampstead parish church (St John's) was also arguably the most extraordinary of all Victorian organ builders: Henry Willis (1821 – 1901) maker of many cathedral organs, including St Paul's, and naturally of many organs in and around Hampstead as well. His biography, if it is ever published, ought to set him amongst many other great artists of the time, with whom he shared many characteristics: a wide range of contacts, love of sailing which, as with Augustus Pugin, nearly cost him his life, and sheer dedication to hard work, among them.



The Westfield chapel interior looking east (the organ stood at the west end)

Photo Courtesy Queen Mary and Westfield College Archive

His organ at St Dominic's Priory, Southampton Road, is a supreme example of his work in a wonderful building (which he loved) and has fortunately resisted all attempts to alter it. It has a Grade I HOC but is outside the scope of the present survey which is concerned with the Conservation Areas of Hampstead and Frognal & Fitzjohn's.

There are nine private residence organs which are known about, including the c.1790 organ at Kenwood House, although the exact whereabouts of some of these remains to be researched during the course of publication of these articles. At present, only one school has an organ, though once there were other such institutions with organs, as we will see.

Westfield College chapel

Today we highlight an organ that is one of the last representatives of the very English cult of the house organ. It was made in London by Canterbury-born William Pilcher for Eleanora Grant Macdowall, installed in 1851 in her home in Baker Street London, and subsequently moved to Hanover Lodge, a large villa near Kensington Gardens. In 1946 the organ was given by her descendants to Westfield College, one of the earliest colleges dedicated to the education of women, and at the centre of the cultural life of this part of the Redington Frognal area. Programmes from the 1970s show the Westfield Summer Festival to be a 10-day long event packed with music, art, drama and poetry. The organ would have also supported the services held in the chapel.

Put up for sale in 1980, the organ was bought by Gerard Verloop, made playable and moved to Holland. It now stands in the Koogerkerk in Zuidcharwoude as the chancel organ. One of

the writers saw this organ not long before it was moved to Holland, as part of a wave of redundant English organs taken there in the 1980s.¹

In 2014/2015 the organ returned briefly to England to the workshops of Gwynn and Goetze for a full restoration almost back to its original form.² It would thus, if it were still in Britain, be listed, possibly Grade I, as of historical importance. There are several other organs in Hampstead that also warrant listing, and by the time you read about them in a future Newsletter, they may be.

In many ways, this organ by Pilcher is typical of the English house organ: its case is of mahogany with some carving and its front pipes are false 'flat-backs' made of wood coated with gesso and gilded with gold leaf. In other ways, it is less typical, being quite large (it is 3.33m tall) and having two keyboards of wide



Courtesy Goetze & Gwynn

The organ in the Koogerkerk at Zuidcharwoude



Photo Courtesy Koogerkerk, Zuidcharwoude

The organ after restoration

Organs in Hampstead – I (cont)

compass (probably to allow for playing duets) and a pedalboard which has some pipes of its own. It is thus more like a small church organ, the wheel having almost turned full circle away from the purely secular instrument whose great players (notably Handel, but also John Stanley and William Russell) were so admired by previous generations. It is therefore appropriate that it is again in a church, where its restrained domestic sounds are very suitable for accompanying singers and for playing with other instruments.³

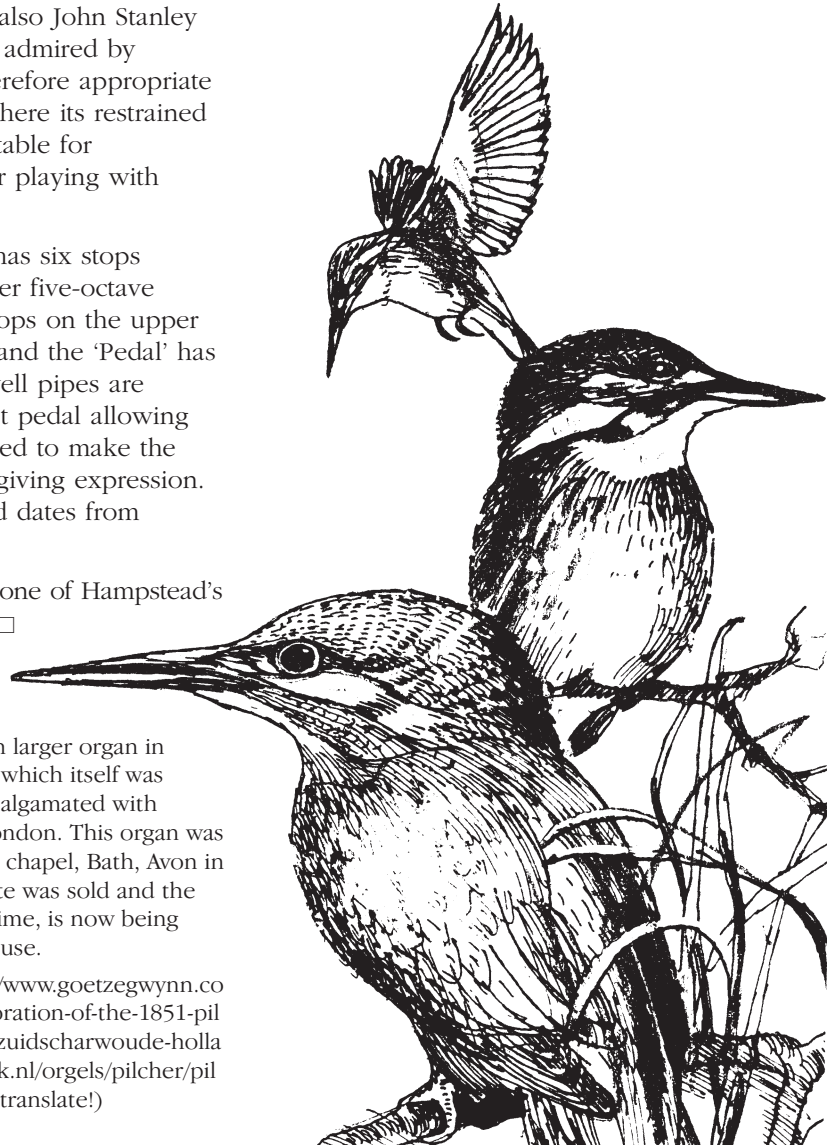
Technical details: The organ has six stops (about 470 pipes) on the lower five-octave 'Great' keyboard and three stops on the upper 'Swell' keyboard (147 pipes) and the 'Pedal' has one stop of 18 pipes. The Swell pipes are enclosed in a box, with a foot pedal allowing shutters to be opened or closed to make the sound louder or quieter and giving expression. (This was an English idea and dates from around 1712).

Our next article will be about one of Hampstead's existing larger church organs. □

3. William Pilcher's younger brother Henry emigrated first to New England in 1832 and founded a very successful firm of organ builders there which built thousands of organs until 1944.

Notes

1. It was replaced by a new much larger organ in 1984 built by Matthew Copley which itself was removed when the college amalgamated with Queen Mary's College, East London. This organ was removed to Prior Park College chapel, Bath, Avon in 1996. The Westfield College site was sold and the chapel, abandoned for some time, is now being modified into a 4-bedroom house.
2. Details can be found at: <http://www.goetzegwynn.co.uk/organ/gerard-verloop-restoration-of-the-1851-pilcher-organ-at-the-koogerkerk-zuidscharwoude-holland/> and <http://www.koogerkerk.nl/orgels/pilcher/pilcher-orgel.htm> (using Google translate!)



Society Notices

Appointment/Assistance

Secretary

The position of Secretary of the Society will become vacant in June 2017. The trustees would be very grateful to hear from any member of the Society who is prepared to stand for election to the position. If you are interested and would like discuss what the position involves in practice, please speak to our Chair, Marc Hutchinson, in the first instance on 07768 827 405.

Traffic management

The Society is increasingly called upon to assess the impact and management of traffic in Hampstead, and not only in the context of development. The Society would therefore be very grateful to hear from any member of the Society who has expertise in this area and would be prepared to assist the Society on an occasional basis with technical aspects. If you think you can help, please contact the Chair of the Planning Sub-Committee, David Castle, on 020 7794 7647 or at info@HeathandHampstead.org.uk.



Members' email addresses – Are you missing out?

Keeping you informed of the latest news and events.

The Society is increasingly using email, to let members know of vital issues that crop up between Newsletters.

It is also an invaluable way to bring you other useful information, such as walks, talks and events that do not fit in with the Newsletter timetable.

If we do not have your email address you may be missing out on important local and Society news and initiatives.

So, if you have not already done so, please do send your email address to the Society at:

info@heathandhampstead.org.uk

Make sure that you include your name and street address so that we can identify you.

This will also enable us to update our Membership Records and simplify our communications with you.

Delivering the Newsletter by email

Would you prefer to receive your Newsletter by email in the form of a Acrobat PDF file so that you can read it on screen?

It is environmentally more friendly, saving paper, unnecessary waste and cost.

With postage charges increasing enormously this is now becoming a major consideration.

The occasional extra flyers could also be sent via email, if wished.

PDFs of the Newsletter can be seen on the website. If you would like to try this please let us know at:

info@heathandhampstead.org.uk

Heath Walks: 2017

Walks are normally held on the first Sunday of every month except January. Most start from Burgh House, New End Square. London NW3 1LT – 10 minutes walk from Hampstead Tube Station (for map see www.burghhouse.org.uk).

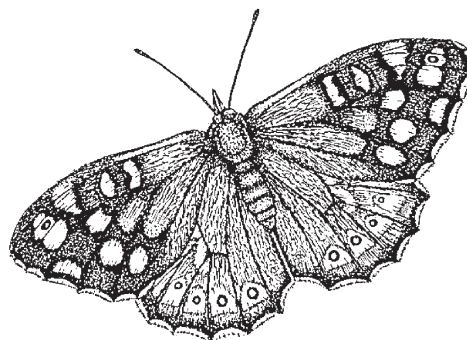
NB: *parking is extremely difficult locally, especially in spring and summer; the West Heath car park (behind Jack Straw's Castle) is more likely to have spaces than the East Heath car park.*

Starting times are either 2:30pm or 10:30am (9:30am for birds), depending on season and subject matter.

Walks last approximately two hours. They do not necessarily follow made-up paths; you are recommended to wear suitable footwear as conditions may be rough or muddy.

You will be invited to make a minimum donation of £5, to be collected at the beginning of each walk, to help support future walks programmes and to promote the Society's activities generally.

Children are always welcome so long as they are suitably shod, can walk reasonable distances and are accompanied by an adult taking full responsibility for them.



Further information from walks organiser, Thomas Radice,
mobile: 07941 528 034 or
email: hhs.walks@gmail.com

5 February 10:30am (meet at Burgh House)
The history and topography of the Hampstead Heath ponds led by Marc Hutchinson, Chair of the Society and Secretary of the Hampstead Heath Winter Swimming Club

5 March 10:30am (meet in North End Way, on Hampstead side of Inverforth House)
The Pergola, the Hill Garden and Golders Hill Park led by Peter Tausig, Trustee of the Society and member of the Heath Sub-Committee

2 April 9:30am (meet at Burgh House)
Birds of the Heath led by John Hunt, former Chairman of the Marylebone Birdwatching Society and member of the Heath Sub-Committee

Details of the remainder of the 2017–2018 walks programme will be available on the Society's website in the near future:

www.HeathandHampstead.org.uk
@HandHSocHeath

