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The Heath & Hampstead Society **NEWSLETTER**

October 2017

Vol 48 No 3

'... my office'

by Marc Hutchinson

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Front cover: ‘... my office’ was taken by Becka Whelan, the latest winner of the Society’s #myhampsteadheath photo competition. □	

Website and publicity

This winter we hope to have up and running our new website, replacing our existing one which is over a decade old. We are also going to continue for another year with our poster in the lift at Hampstead Underground Station, which seeks to recruit new members for the Society and invites participation in our Heath photographic competition #myhampsteadheath. This competition has been extraordinarily successful with over 1,000 entries received in its first nine months. In 2018, in the context of the celebration of 50 years of the Hampstead Conservation Area, we are contemplating running a parallel competition for the village of Hampstead.

In the January 2018 Newsletter, I hope to report to you on our recruitment efforts via the new scheme with local estate agents and discounted offers of membership made to photographic competition entrants, all of which I outlined at this year’s annual general meeting.

South Fairground site – Vale of Health

In the May Newsletter I alerted members to the unlawful erection of permanent buildings, on this site of metropolitan open land, by its new owner. I am pleased to report that, following the furnishing, by us and the Vale of Health Society, to Camden Council of the necessary photographic and other evidence of the previous absence of any permanent building on the site, Camden are now initiating enforcement proceedings.

North Fairground site – Vale of Health

In the midst of dealing with the problems at the South Fairground site, we were assailed by an application to Camden Council by the intending developer of the North Fairground site which, like the South Fairground site, is metropolitan

Chair's Notes (cont)

open land and so cannot be built upon. The Abbott family, who have owned the site since the 1950s and who are connected with travelling fairs, have granted the developer Knightsbridge Parks LLP an option to buy the site which, it may be assumed, will be exercised if the application is successful. In essence the application, which is not a planning application and therefore is not procedurally governed by the planning law process (a point tauntingly noted in the application), seeks a “certificate of (proposed) permitted use” to allow the erection of up to 12 “static caravans” on the site. The

caravans in fact have the appearance of permanent bungalows. The City of London Corporation, the Vale of Health Society, the Highgate Society, the Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents' Association, the Hampstead Neighbourhood Forum, HCAAC and, of course, our Society have all lodged objections on the basis that the proposed change of use is “material” (and therefore not permitted); the existing use is “mixed”, comprising mobile caravans (which come and go) and seasonal storage of fairground and related equipment. With the Vale of Health Society, we took



Photograph courtesy: Ellen Solomons

North Fairground site

counsel's written advice which we have provided to Camden as part of our objection, and which you can read on the Camden planning website. I am very grateful to those of our members who wrote individual objections to the application.

The Globe Tennis Club

The Club is asking Camden Council to declare it an "asset of community value" ("ACV"). If the site, which is currently leased from Camden but which Camden have assessed for potential housing development, were to be sold, the Club and its supporters would, if the declaration of ACV is made, be entitled to bid for it. The Society has assisted the Club with its application and will write a formal letter of support for this long-established local facility which is, on any view, an important community asset and which does much valuable training with local schools.

Springett Lecture

Burgh House was full for the 2017 Springett Lecture on 21 September by award-winning wildlife photographer Matt Maran whose extraordinary record of wildlife on Hampstead Heath was published last year. A précis of Matt's lecture, on the wildlife photography he has done around the world's national parks and wildernesses, will appear in our next Newsletter. Matt is a good friend of the Society and has helped in several ways with our photographic competition. He has also produced for 2018 a beautiful calendar with pictures of the Heath: see page 13.

Annual general meeting and committees

The annual general meeting saw the election or re-election of the Society's officers and General Committee members, all as proposed. Members

also approved an amendment to our constitution to allow the General Committee to offer one-year free or discounted membership to potential new members. We welcome the appointment of Martin Thompson as a new Vice-Chair of the Society and the new Chair of the Town Sub-Committee.

Christmas party at Burgh House

With this Newsletter you should receive an invitation to our Christmas Party at 7:00pm on 7 December 2017, to be held again at Burgh House. We do hope to see you there. □

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.

by John Beyer

Groundwork welcomed a copy of the Society's own Heath Vision, which anticipated the results of the consultation. The City had decided on a new approach to their next ten-year plan. (The last plan, which was written with full input from the Society, covered 2008–2017 and was a more extensive document.) Richard Sumray from the City's Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee and I advised on the process.

The consultation had input from around 1,800 people altogether. The views expressed were not unexpected: most people wanted the Heath to remain “wild, free, natural and open”. A huge majority of respondents (88%) valued the Heath for its wildlife, nature and trees. Nearly two-thirds said they visited the Heath at least once a week. While 87% said they lived or worked near the Heath, there were also responses from further afield, including Germany, the US and Kenya.

The result is a one-page vision which aims to encapsulate what people want and to reflect the optimism of Heath users. The Vision, which is



Jigsaw word shape



outlined below, does not address the contradictions inherent in managing the Heath.

Once the Vision (which tried to look 50 years into the future) is agreed at the City's Heath Management Committee in November, work will begin on the Management Strategies 2018–2027 and Annual Work Plans, which will look at issues confronting the Heath in a concrete manner. These documents will address the most salient fears raised by respondents, which are by design not reflected in the Vision. If the City's Vision is poetry, the real hard work for the Heath Sub-Committee will come as we tackle the prose of documents which specify actions.

Among the issues raised, many commented on the need to reduce vehicle use on the Heath, and, where use was essential, to use electric vehicles. While some advocated an increase in cycling, it is at the same time recognised by the City that such a move would be in

contradiction with the desire of the majority of respondents for peace and tranquillity on the Heath. There was also worry about the number of events that might be held in future if there was pressure on the City to raise further revenue. It was recognised that ever-increasing footfall would militate against the aim of preserving the Heath's wild and tranquil nature. Noise and nuisance from drones were also worrying for many.

Many also wanted to increase the wildlife potential of the Heath, by improving and expanding green corridors emanating from the Heath.

"A Community Vision for Hampstead Heath Our Hampstead Heath

Our lives are enriched by this treasured and ancient landscape, a stretch of rolling countryside and wide vistas in this crowded city.

The Heath's varied landscape has been shaped by human hands over centuries and is carefully managed to conserve its unique mix of wild and natural spaces, rich mosaic of habitats, heritage gardens, sporting, play and visitor facilities.

Its magical ponds, trees and heathland that support diverse plants and wildlife thrive, flourish and remain resilient to changes over time.

The fringes of the Heath are protected from encroaching urbanisation with expanding green corridors linking to a wider network of green spaces to

enhance biodiversity and improve the air we breathe.

The Heath is valued as a relaxing respite from urban life, a peaceful and tranquil refuge for reflection and recharging, where we can connect to nature and feel refreshed.

Enhances Our Quality of Life

The Heath contributes immensely to our mental, emotional and physical health and wellbeing, providing free access to roam in the outdoors, to pause and observe, to play, to explore, discover and learn about the natural world.



Pop-up stall noting views of Heath users

Photograph courtesy: Groundwork/City of London

Heath Report (cont)

Connection with the Heath is life-enhancing and our lives are healthier and more active with opportunities for walking, informal recreation, active pursuits and sports.

Experiencing the Heath's rich natural, built and cultural heritage deepens our understanding of our connection with nature, place and the past.

The Heath remains constant through time, witnessing generations upon generations growing up and growing old, a place of cherished memories, rites of passage, the source of stories, the family friend.

The Heath is inclusive and welcoming

The Heath is an inclusive, open access space that brings people together and fosters social cohesion.

It is a safe space with freedom for all to play, socialise, relax and keep active with minimal restrictions.

Diverse communities are reflected in our visitors, staff and volunteers.

Engagement is ongoing and perspectives, both old and new, are welcomed, shared and respected.

A diversity of activities and interest groups is welcomed. A culture of mutual respect, individual responsibility and compromise is encouraged, to achieve and maintain a balance for all.

We care for the Heath

We are all custodians of the Heath and we strive to 'tread lightly', mindful of the potential impact of our activities.



Photograph courtesy: Groundwork/City of London

Roundtable on the future, Heath Sub-Committee member Thomas Radice on the right

We learn from each other and collaborate to find a balance, ensuring the needs of the Heath community are valued and reflected.

We entrust a skilled and committed City team to lead a collaborative partnership with dedicated and valued volunteers, working with an empowered and representative Heath community.

United in our passion and love for Hampstead Heath we work together to realise our shared aspirations.”

Open Spaces Bill

We have begun work with the City on new policies to implement the City’s Open Spaces Bill, for the passing of which the City hopes there will still be time in the current Parliament. Although the Bill would not come into force until 2019, the Sub-Committee agrees with the City that the policies to be developed under the legislation will take time to frame, and that work on them should begin now.

We have already assisted in the initial drafting of an overarching Events Policy covering all of the City’s Open Spaces. The main points were that events must have regard to the nature of the open space, that events should not impact on people’s enjoyment of the open space, and that no “unbuilt” space should be built on. The Sub-Committee has been developing its ideas on the number and nature of events on the Heath as the City develops the outline of an Events Policy for the Heath.

Drones

We have been continuing to work with the City to persuade it to adopt a total ban on drones. The City has decided to monitor

drone usage and problems over the next twelve months before reaching a firm position; it is expecting guidelines to be issued by the Civil Aviation Authority and does not wish to draft rules which are then in contradiction to the guidelines. In the meantime, the City has responded to our views by strengthening its Drone Guidance to include the sentence in bold type: “Therefore, the use of drones on Hampstead Heath is banned in most circumstances”.

London Natural History Society

The LNHS is planning to undertake survey work on Hampstead Heath with the support of the Heath Sub-Committee. Between 1997 and 2003, members of the London Natural History Society recorded the vascular plants (flowering plants and ferns) growing on Hampstead Heath, and the places where they were found.

For more information see the website:
<http://www.lnhs.org.uk/index.php/about-us/lnhs-sections/hampstead-heath-survey>.

Anyone interested in volunteering for survey work should contact Kat Duke:
KatDuke@rocketmail.com

London Assembly Report

The London Assembly Environment Committee has published the report, *‘Park life: ensuring green spaces remain a bit with Londoners’*, which looks at what measures should be taken to protect and improve the capital’s green spaces. The Society had made a submission underlining the importance of the Heath and other green spaces to Londoners and visitors.

The report calls for the Mayor to appoint a champion for green spaces to ensure attention is paid to their needs, at a time when some

Heath Report (cont)

boroughs are considering cutting or removing funding for green spaces. The report says that there should be more use of crowd-funding and philanthropic donations rather than Councils relying on commercial exploitation which may detract from the green feeling of open spaces. It also recommends more support for the volunteers who are likely to take on more custodial roles in London parks.

For the full report look at:

https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/environment_committee_-_park_life_report.pdf

Prehistoric Hampstead

by Michael Hammerson (member of the Heath Sub-Committee and a Vice-President of the Highgate Society)

When I heard that the City was proposing draining improvement works on the summit of Parliament Hill, I persuaded the City that it was an obvious location for archaeological remains. The City agreed to have it checked out, and commissioned Compass Archaeology to carry out a watching brief. A feature was

Photograph courtesy: City of London



The Heath Sub-Committee helps to shape City policy on Events, including sheepdog trials this summer

indeed found and investigated: it appears to be a pit or ditch, and the most exciting aspect was that it contained 72 sherds of Late Bronze Age / Early Iron Age pottery (c.800 BC) and two worked flints. The feature lies within a wider prehistoric landscape, only a short distance from the Scheduled Ancient Monument known as "The Tumulus" (or, more romantically, if less accurately, as "Boudica's Tomb").

Equally intriguingly, two fragments of Roman tiles were found. Closer to our own times, a surface immediately below the ground level, built of early 20th century bricks, may be a platform for a First World War anti-aircraft gun or arc light, or possibly the base of a beacon to commemorate the Queen's coronation in 1953.

The prehistoric find is of great significance in showing the potential of the whole area, both within and beyond the Heath, where so little archaeological work has been carried out until now, and Camden must ensure that there are archaeological conditions attached to future developments. □



Don't forget to use the
Hampstead Card

The current list of businesses taking part in the scheme can be found on the Society's website, and can be downloaded from there:
www.HeathandHampstead.org.uk

Benefits offered are granted at the traders' discretion. The Society is not responsible for changes in terms or availability of any discounts or offers.

Autumn Musical Events

St John-at-Hampstead Parish Church Church Row NW3



Saturday 11 November 2017

Come and Sing the Mozart Requiem

*with soloists from Hampstead Parish Church
Professional Choir*

Everyone welcome.

*Rehearsal from 2:00pm -
performance 6:00pm*

Directed by James Sherlock

*For details, please contact Handley Stevens -
email: handleystevens@yahoo.co.uk
telephone: 020 7794 0874*

*Also in the programme: a Mozart Piano
Concerto with James Sherlock as soloist.*



Sunday 19 November 2017

J.S. Bach – Mass in B Minor

*with Choir and Soloists of Hampstead
Parish Church with Baroque Orchestra
Ensemble Passio (Alison Bury, leader)*

Conducted by James Sherlock

*Proceeds to Marie Curie Hospice
Supported by The Friends of the Music
and in association with
The Hampstead Arts Festival*

*7:00 pm. Tickets from Hampstead Arts
Festival and at the door: Retiring collection.*

Planning Report

by David Castle

Recently I passed the hideously blackened Grenfell Tower looming alarmingly over West London and a reminder of the terrible loss of life and the cause of so much grief and pain – all totally avoidable and an indictment against both Local and Central Government for the way in which Building Regulations and their management have been ‘relaxed’ and ineffectively maintained over the last forty years. Also, for the way that the needs and concerns of those affected are frequently dismissed by an ignorant and/or uncaring bureaucracy, e.g. the lack of action on diesel pollution which is poisoning us all.

It is too much to hope that the Grenfell disaster will reverse the gradual centralised control that has occurred in both Local and Central Government; too much to hope that those people and groups affected and concerned will be both informed and included in the decision-making processes – including the planning process.

In the name of reducing unnecessary bureaucracy, recent Governments have changed planning restrictions without consultation and, in some cases, with disastrous effects. Of course, planning restrictions can be aggravating and limit the freedom of a property-owner – in order to protect others. Obviously, Planning Law needs to be updated to deal with new problems, but why was this not done when the problem of unlimited basement development became obvious?

Bureaucracies tend to avoid involvement with those affected because it makes decision-making much more time-consuming and difficult to control. In addition, withholding information gives power and inhibits those attempting to influence decisions. We frequently see both these tendencies when attempting to deal with Camden Planning Department. Vicki Harding recently sent me the following conversation endured by Arthur

Dent, the long-suffering hero of Douglas Adams’ “A Hitch-Hiker’s Guide to the Galaxy”:

“But the plans were on display...”

“On display? I eventually had to go down to the cellar to find them”

“That is the Display Department”

“With a flashlight”

“Ah, well, the lights had probably gone”

“So had the stairs”

“But you found the notice, didn’t you?”

“Yes”, said Arthur, “yes, I did. It was on display in the bottom of a locked filing cabinet stuck in a disused lavatory with a sign on the door saying ‘BEWARE OF THE LEOPARD’”.

Hampstead Green – the busy pedestrian way between St Stephen’s and the Royal Free Hospital

This is an example of Camden not bothering to consult or inform those affected. For some unaccountable reason, the Royal Free Hospital decided to attempt to take over public land and restrict the width of this very busy footpath. Camden Planning Department became aware of this when the application to build the Immunology Unit (the Pears Building) was made but, typically, decided that such narrowing would be acceptable – keeping the issue in-house and not bothering to consult.

When we and other local groups discovered this unacceptable proposal, we were both astounded and horrified. Everyone objected and we are pleased to be able to report we have been informed that the Royal Free Hospital has decided to change its plans and maintain the existing width of the footpath. Good news – but a problem that should never have occurred.

Conservation Areas – their Half Centenary

The introduction of Conservation Areas as an important part of planning policy in 1967 was one of the crucial initiatives that has helped protect Hampstead from poor development: all new building must “enhance” the area (not necessarily “replicate”). The “Hampstead Village Conservation Area” covered most of the older parts of Hampstead, Downshire Hill and Keats Grove, and was confirmed in 1968. It was gradually extended to include later 19th century streets and areas – and ‘Village’ was dropped from the title.

It was suggested at the Society’s recent Annual General Meeting that, as the Conservation Area is so important to Hampstead, a celebratory photo competition should be held in 2018 with the aim of capturing the special qualities of the people of Hampstead and of its buildings, trees and urban form – concluding with an exhibition of winners and chosen entrants.

Camden’s new policy – no parking allowed in new developments

Developers usually aim to maximise their profits by attempting to demolish a perfectly sound and well-designed building. They do this in order to be able easily to construct large basements full of cars or poor quality habitable space. By demolishing and re-building, they also avoid VAT at 20% – an absurd anomaly when repair and improvements are charged at the full rate.

We recently sent an objection to an appeal about a proposed new block of flats with basement car-parking, at 28 Redington Road, based on Camden’s new policy that no car-parking on sites of new residential blocks will be approved. If successful, this will be an important event in our history of fighting for satisfactory developments in Hampstead.

Objection to the development is being organised by a local group with Society help – and of course there are other important reasons why the appeal should be dismissed.

Bicycle hangers

These are the small structures, rather like small ‘Nissen’ huts, that are permanently parked at the road side for the safe covered storage of bicycles. Two have now been placed in South Hill Park, near to number 2, and apparently are totally full, the rental cost per year being quite expensive. The Planning Sub-Committee discussed these recently and were divided in its opinions. We considered the ‘Hangers’ crudely-designed and certainly not welcome in the more historic parts of Hampstead but, on the other hand, any initiative which helps to encourage cycling ought to be welcomed. Your opinions would be welcomed. □

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

Town Report

by Martin Thompson

Welcome to my first Town Report. I hope I can do as much justice to this report and to the position of Chair of the Town Sub-Committee as my predecessor Frank Harding has done over so many years.

A police presence in Hampstead

At the time of writing there has been no progress in submitting a revised application for planning for the Abacus School. The former police station therefore remains empty whilst various suggestions have been made regarding a police presence in Hampstead including that of a small “office” in the Royal Free Hospital. In the meantime, there has been much concern at the rise in moped crime and the lack of policing on the streets. The Sub-Committee acknowledged that the reduction in funding had led to the reduced police presence which was unsatisfactory. A meeting with the Deputy Mayor of London responsible for Policing, a representative of the local MP Tulip Siddiq and our local councillor Stephen Stark was held on 18th August with a view to improving the utilisation of police resources in the area.

Traffic

The flow of heavy traffic through Hampstead remains of grave concern. As previously recorded, Royal Assent was given to legislation for the building of Phase 1 of HS2 between London and Birmingham. This and the effects of CS11 will undoubtedly affect congestion and an increase in traffic through residential streets and through Hampstead Village. This could be made even worse when, as seems increasingly likely, the demolition of 100 Avenue Road and the erection of a new building takes place there. Whilst there has been no further progress on this matter since

the previous report, we will continue to canvass residents’ associations in the area and monitor any progress.

Environment

Two success stories, largely due to the efforts of Town Sub-Committee member Robert Linger:

The Camden exercise to identify possible locations for the planting of new trees in the High Street should be completed by September 2017.

Replacement finger posts identifying places of interest in Hampstead have been erected following the disappearance and damage to previous indicators.

The redevelopment of Oriel Place is now in the hands of the architects who are working *pro bono* on the project based on proposals submitted by the Sub-Committee. These proposals have been seen and approved by the local traders. Once the scheme is ready and agreed, it will be costed and quotes sought for the work. Camden is supportive of the redevelopment, and the necessary funds, both from the developer of Oriel Place and the Council, are available.

General dissatisfaction with the new arrangements for the use and collection of bins continues. There is particular concern at the number of wheelie bins in front gardens, driveways and the number left on pavements in the Conservation Areas. Councillor Stephen Stark has raised this matter with the Council and welcomes the support of the local community on this matter. A letter from the Society has been submitted to the Council regarding refuse collection but at the time of writing we are unable to report any response.

Plaque Walks

Julia Male, an authorised London Guide, conducted very successful historical walks in May and again in October along some Hampstead streets pointing out both English Heritage and Heath & Hampstead Society Plaques whilst commenting on the lives of those commemorated.

Membership

The Society stall at the summer festival in Heath Street was very successful in signing up 27 new members and in the sale of Northern Heights booklets. It is intended that a membership promotion stall be established at the Saturday

Hampstead Food Market from time to time in order to promote our Society and to obtain further new members.

Business Improvement District

Members of the Business Improvement District are considering the possibility of holding a Winter Fair in Hampstead. 26 November is a proposed date. This would be scaled down from the last one held in 2015. It is hoped that our Society would promote the event and that members would assist the BID on the day. □

Hampstead Heath Calendar

A brand new calendar for 2018 featuring the best images throughout the seasons from Matthew Maran's hardback book "Hampstead Heath, London's Countryside"

Available from: www.matthewmaranshop.com



Hampstead Theatre

Eton Avenue NW3 3EU

Support your local theatre

Become a Friend of Hampstead Theatre

Avoid disappointment by becoming a Friend and taking advantage of our priority booking period. For just £40 per annum Friends receive the following benefits:

- Priority Booking
- Advance notice of forthcoming productions
- Quarterly e-newsletter
- Invitations to exclusive events at the Theatre
- 10% discount at Hampstead Theatre bar

For more details see:

www.hampsteadtheatre.com/support-us

Tel: 020 7449 4155

We look forward to welcoming you soon

www.hampsteadtheatre.com

Ecological Gains and the Ponds Project

Jonathan Meares (Conservation and Trees Manager) and Meg Game (Senior Heath Ecologist) of the City of London Corporation summarise the presentation they gave at the Society's AGM on the gains (and a few losses) to Hampstead Heath's ecology arising from the Hampstead Heath Ponds Project

Ecological improvements were a critical part of the design and, with the exception of trees, resulting gains to the Heath's flora and fauna far outweighed losses.

Sadly, quite a few trees had to be felled or reduced, most of them because they were on dams or spillways. About 50 trees and over 100 shrubs were planted in mitigation.

There was a focus on protecting the veteran trees that were within the construction compounds or close to the various access roads,

and this was largely successful. The site where the greatest number of veterans were directly impacted was the Model Boating Pond and the surrounding 8.5-hectare compound extending up to the Tumulus site. The eight trees, all oaks, were fenced off to protect both their crowns and root systems.

A number of the same trees required sensitive pruning to avoid damage from the machinery working nearby. The fine veteran oak growing in the south west corner of the Tumulus Field



Photograph courtesy: Meg Game

Wild flowers on the Catchpit dam

was given additional protection using a 'no dig' engineering specification, to minimise damage to its root system caused by the construction of a new section of pathway.

Further protection was provided to one of the old field boundary oaks growing at the back of the Men's Bathing Pond on one of the main access routes. The Tree Management Team worked with the Ponds Project Contractor to divert the main pathway around the tree and relieve local compaction within the root zone. We are hoping that this work will trigger regeneration in the crown and improve the tree's life chances in the long term.

Very significant ecological gains were obtained through enhancements to wetland habitats, especially the beds of marginal plants which were installed at each of the affected ponds. These totalled about 1,800m² in area and greatly increased the extent on the Heath of this important habitat, which has multiple benefits to wildlife and water quality. Improvements are already evident: for example, this spring frog spawn was found on the Model Boating Pond for the first time since amphibian populations were monitored, and dragonflies were seen among the vegetation later in the season. Much of the waterside fencing will be removed next year, so that birds, such as coots and swans, can gain access and perhaps breed in the reedbeds.

Some of the improvements were less obvious. A new channel from the Bird Sanctuary Pond was excavated to try and re-wet the reedbed on this pond, which has been drying out for a long time. New pools and scrapes were dug between the Ladies' and Stock Ponds and in the Bird Sanctuary Pond; one was an immediate success, with a water rail trying it out within days.

Terrestrial habitats also benefitted. Turf containing native wild flowers was laid on the new dams and spillways, producing a wonderful display of blooms this summer. It is encouraging that visitors generally respected these areas: desire-line paths were worn through the sward but elsewhere it has survived well. Unfortunately, the grass and wild flower seed mixes sown on affected parts of Tumulus and Pryor's Fields were much less successful, with few wild flowers germinating. This may have been due to the seeds having to be sown so late, the dry early spring, or perhaps the abundance of Yorkshire fog seeds surviving in the replaced topsoil: this is a coarse grass which smothers smaller plants.

Reshaping the Model Boating Pond resulted in the creation of an island. It is currently out of bounds to the public, and it is proposed to manage it as a wildlife sanctuary. It is already popular with roosting birds, and perhaps swans will nest on it in future years. Elsewhere on the Heath, 20 new bat boxes were installed, and numerous brash and log piles and two new amphibian and grass snake hibernacula constructed. Aerators which were installed in each of the ponds help oxygenate the water and improve water quality by preventing nutrient release from the sediment.



Photograph courtesy: Meg Game

New channel in the Bird Sanctuary Pond

Ecological Gains and the Ponds Project (cont)

Last but not least, substantial amounts of silt were removed from Stock, Ladies', Men's, Mixed and Viaduct Ponds. Over time, silt naturally builds up in ponds, making them gradually shallower, and in the long run, without management, they turn into dry land. Silt is also a store of nutrients and can result in suspended particles which can affect water quality. De-silting a pond on the Heath is usually very disruptive and expensive, as the silt normally has to be carted off-site to a waste tip. The Ponds Project provided a convenient way

around this problem, with the silt dug out of the five ponds being used to refill the large pits where the clay was extracted to build the Model Boating Pond and Catchpit dams. De-silting these ponds was a major ecological benefit of the Ponds Project. This was notably so at the Viaduct Pond which was getting very shallow and in urgent need of de-silting, having not been done for decades due to the difficulty of access for machinery. Indeed, this is one of the greatest ecological achievements of the Ponds Project. □



Photograph courtesy: Meg Game

Veteran tree near the south-west corner of Tumulus Field

Burgh House & Hampstead Museum this Autumn

'Appy 'Ampstead: Celebrating London's Playground

Wed 1 November – Sun 17 December

Curated by Burgh House intern and Museum Studies student Emily Spary, this exhibition will focus on Hampstead Heath 120 years on from the creation of the Hampstead Heath Protection Society (now the Heath and Hampstead Society), who aimed to preserve the natural beauty and social spaces of the Heath. Thanks to efforts to keep it “open, unenclosed and unbuilt on”, the Heath has become central to recreation and relaxation in Hampstead. The development of the railways in the 1860s transformed Hampstead into a destination for holidaymakers, who flocked here in their growing numbers. From fairgrounds and donkey rides to ski jumps and skating, the charming pastimes of Hampstead's residents and visitors will be explored through objects and artworks from our collection.

Christmas Art & Craft Fair

Sunday 3 December, 11am–4pm

Get into the festive spirit with our annual Christmas Fair. There'll be fantastic arts and crafts stalls from London makers and designers, mulled wine, mince pies, carols and more. The perfect way to kick-start the festive season – and pick up some unique Christmas gifts! Our café will be open all day and will serving traditional Sunday roasts. **FREE ENTRY**

St. Genesius Choir: An Evening of Carols and Christmas Cheer

Friday 8 December, 7pm

Joining us once again this year will be the incredible St. Genesius Choir for an evening of fun, festivities and fantastic singing. All proceeds are in aid of Burgh House & Hampstead Museum. Tickets £12 (£10 FoBH), including a glass of mulled wine and a mince pie.

House & Museum

open 12–5pm Wed, Thu, Fri & Sun

Café

open 10am–5pm Wed, Thu & Fri,
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Putting Context into the Artist's Studio

Marilyn Mountford, former resident of the house built in Hampstead by the prolific 18th century portrait painter George Romney, co-curator of the recent Burgh House exhibition, Behind Closed Doors: A Biography of Romney's House and author of the supporting book 'Behind Closed Doors', writes about the histories of artists' studios and how they evolved.

Say the word 'Studio', what do you think of? Perhaps a room haphazardly filled with artist's materials or the traditional ethos of the struggling painter working away in a turret in unhealthy conditions and starving.

Throughout the centuries, Hampstead has always attracted artists of great repute – George Romney, John Constable, Richard Carline and Roland Penrose – to name but a few. My personal interest in these workplaces was sparked from the research I undertook for my book ("Behind Closed Doors" – www.behindcloseddoors.co) about the Hampstead house and studio built by George Romney in 1798 known as Romney's House.

I was lucky enough to visit the studio of Susan Williams-Ellis, the founder and creator of Portmeirion china. She had lived at Romney's House when it was owned by her father, Clough Williams-Ellis – who designed and built the tourist village of Portmeirion in Wales. I found her studio totally embodied the whole concept of a living and working creative space. It was a vibrant room filled with such light and colour and I loved the energy that abounded both from her and also her studio.

In the past, however, painters traditionally worked in communes. In Italy for example, artists of many genres – sculptors, metal smiths, painters and decorators – would all

work together in one building. Sculptors would be found on the ground floor and artists on the first. It was only recently, in the last few centuries, that it has become fashionable for an artist to work by himself. This independent initiative meant that the artist would take the huge financial risk of working without any pre-arranged contract, ergo guaranteed income.

Latterly, studios were usually to be found



Photograph courtesy: Marilyn Mountford

Susan Williams-Ellis' Studio at Portmeirion

next door to the home of the artist. This worked to the painter's advantage as he could paint when feeling the most inspired with the minimum of fuss and inconvenience. For Michelangelo, this was a vital consideration as he was often to be found in his studio in the middle of the night. He would make a cap out of pasteboard with a candle in the middle so that he could work hands free. But of course, for most artists, it is the daylight hours when the majority of their work is achieved.

Socially, a painter was placed between a craftsman and a slave. Many artists had a patron or, as Dr. Samuel Johnson writing to the Earl of Chesterfield in 1775 described them, 'the wretch who supports with insolence and is paid with flattery.' The role of the patron definitely demanded commitment – continually trying to obtain work for the artist and then ensuring that these commissions were actually completed. It was by its very nature not always an easy relationship. It is interesting to note that very few of the Impressionist painters were lucky enough to enjoy the benefits of a patron.

Obviously, the correct social connections were vital to the success of any artist. Above all, the studio facilitated the process of earning a living. In order to do this, it became necessary for the artist to adopt manners and attitudes befitting a gentleman of rank and so attract the right sort of client. For many, the wife was considered the painter's greatest asset as her belief in him would keep him going through the hard times.

Pamela Todd, in her book 'The Impressionists at Home', perceives the studio to be a place for the artist to self-promote and also a status symbol, which also makes a lot of sense. But

to achieve this professional approach, tidiness and presentation were important marketing tools for any artist. He most definitely would not have wanted to lose clients because they were uncomfortable in their surroundings. It was reported that the miniature portrait artist, Ozias Humphrey, actually had to decline commissions owing to his inadequate work space. To counteract this, he did what all well-to-do painters would love to do and took the risk of investing in his future by completely redecorating his studio for the sum of £257.12s.6d including furnishings – 90 yards of blue carpets, 10 French chairs, and 6 matching stools. Humphrey was one of the lucky ones as in the first three years of business alone he made approximately £850 profit per annum. As you can imagine, a fortune indeed at that time!

Light was obviously one of the most important considerations when choosing a room to be a studio. The goal was, and still remains, to have a space where the easel can be placed and the light is evenly and consistently distributed. The preferred choice for a studio was north-facing, as was Romney's studio at Hampstead.

The artist's possessions or props displayed in the studio became 'old friends' with an important role to play too. Seen again and again in the artist's pictures, they not only personalized his work space but also provided a stimulating and familiar environment where he could work most comfortably. In these early days, what would you expect to see? A vital necessity of course would be a stove providing heat. Obvious tools of their trade – charcoal made from dried, oven-cooked willow branches, pastels

Putting Context into the Artist's Studio (cont)

and crayons. Other familiar objects employed by artists include quills and silver-tipped pens. These were commonplace from Roman times onwards. They were used to great effect to create outlines, as graphite was not used until well into the 18th century. Paper was to be found in different sizes, both loose and in sketchbooks. Canvasses, finished and unfinished, would be stacked against the walls. There would be different-sized easels waiting to be used. Ultimately, it was what these artists did to personalize their workspace after the initial setting-up that made all the difference.

Rembrandt took this to a whole new level. He adored beautiful things – antiques and costumes, in particular. Even though they were often seen in his portraits, purchasing them in the first place was most definitely not congruent with his true financial state, and led to his ultimate ruin.

To my mind, Leonardo da Vinci sums up very neatly his views on the subject and shows how he clearly saw the role and importance of a studio. *'An artist's studio should be a small space between small rooms because small rooms discipline the mind and large ones distract it.'*

For any artist, the process of using a studio was a very individual one. What worked for one obviously might not for another. It is fascinating to see how individual artists lived in their creative space, strongly illustrating their many likes and dislikes. For Cézanne, it was vital to work uninterrupted by people, and he would only permit the occasional 'odd devotee' to visit. We find his studio described as a room of anguish and torment, with nothing comfortable to be seen. He did not include anything personal so as to be able to focus completely

on the work in hand without any distractions. The ceiling of his studio was white and the walls slate-grey, and the floor was a natural unvarnished wood. The only adornments were cheap reproductions of works by El Greco or Titian hanging on the walls. Renoir, on the other hand was a great believer in a studio buzzing with activity. In the evenings friends gathered; not surprisingly, one of the main attractions was the beautifully-proportioned girls who modelled for him. He placed cane chairs and two lovely faded floral arm chairs ready for his visitors to relax in.

The expectation of a studio, prior to the 19th century, was that of a formal, disciplined workspace. However, this did not work for everyone. Degas in particular thrived in a messy environment, surrounded by rolls of canvas and paper all cluttered up in the corners. Cupboards and easels were just jumbled together, surrounded by tables, chairs and sculpture stands. He took it to a whole new level as he dressed as a pauper and was reportedly covered in pastel dust. For Picasso, his love of chaos meant that people had to go through wastepaper baskets to ensure nothing of vital importance was left behind. Rodin's studio fell into this messy category too but for a totally different reason – the walls were inevitably splashed with plaster!

Apparently towards the end of the 19th century, it became fashionable for another room to be used for the messy work, thus keeping the main studio clean and tidy as a showplace for the completed pieces. Henry Moore for example had nine different studios for the separate stages of his work. Monet had three studios at Giverny; the third studio was created just to accommodate his famous and


very beautiful water-lily panels. Toulouse-Lautrec was famous for his wonderfully messy fourth studio where, every Friday, he would open up the doors for people to come and socialise whilst watching him at work.

This social angle was important to the Impressionists as the studio was seen as ‘the’ place to meet and discuss art. One can only imagine the fascinating and really stimulating debates that must have gone on. William Merriot Chase, an established American Impressionist, had four studios at the height of his fame and took this concept of socialising one step further by holding dinners with musical recitals in his studio. Another Impressionist, Arthur Hoeber, recalls ‘glorious nights’ discussing art at Chase’s studio.


It is obvious that this workspace is of vital importance to the artist. I wonder in truth how much a modern studio has really evolved from those early days? The function of the studio was and is still today to house all the necessary implements plus provide the artist with a stimulating environment in which to work. Henry Ward Beecher concludes that ‘Every artist dips his brush into his own soul and paints his own nature into his picture.’ We can only imagine, for any artist working without a studio, how their creative process would be seriously challenged. □

Information for this article has been sourced from Pamela Todd’s book ‘The Impressionists at Home’ published in 2005 by Thames & Hudson and Francis Kelly’s ‘The Studio and The Artist’ published in 1975 by St Martin’s Press. Marilyn Mountford’s book ‘Behind Closed Doors’ was published in June 2017 by The Cloister House Press.


BELSIZE Remembered



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Visit to Wimbledon Common

by John Beyer and Lynda Cook

On a lovely fairly warm morning in early May, members of the Heath Sub-Committee, John Beyer, Michael Hammerson, Janis Hardiman, John Hunt, Marc Hutchinson, Peter Tausig and Lynda Cook, met at Hampstead Overground Station to go on a much-anticipated visit to Wimbledon Common.

We were going to meet Simon Lee, formerly Superintendent of Hampstead Heath and now the Chief Executive of Wimbledon and Putney Commons, and fulfil our desire to find out

more about this very large area of open and wooded land. The combined Wimbledon Common and Putney Heath is 1,140 acres (460 hectares), 250 acres larger than Hampstead Heath (320 hectares). We found Simon waiting for us with his great smile and open arms (for the ladies) and some very welcome tea, coffee and biscuits.

Although we were most eager to walk around on the fabled green meadowland, we needed to learn a little more about our surroundings



Photograph courtesy: John Beyer

Heath Sub-Committee with Keepers and Percy

so we eagerly took notes as Simon, using slides and photos, described the early history of Wimbledon Common and also revealed some of the management challenges that he has had to cope with.

The Common is preserved by the Wimbledon and Putney Commons Act 1871, passed in response to a private bill by Earl Spencer who wanted to enclose a large area of common land and sell the rest for building. He argued that the land was “boggy” and permeated with “noxious mists and fogs”. A committee, led by Sir Henry Peek (MP for Mid-Surrey), was set up to save the open space. The Act mirrors the 1871 Hampstead Heath Act; it was probably prepared by the same draftsman. The late 19th century produced some of our great environmentalists and activists (such as Octavia Hill, one of the founders of the National Trust) who fiercely fought for the protection of open spaces that would be accessible to all.

Wimbledon is managed by a Board of eight Conservators (with many of the same functions as the City of London’s Management Committee) given its powers under the 1871 Act; five are elected by the 60,000 electors living within a quarter-mile of the Commons (every three years) and three are government appointees (Ministry of Defence, Defra, Home Office). The Malvern Hills Trust, established as the Malvern Hills Conservators in 1884, has a similar set-up.

Following a governance review, a stakeholder group was established to bring in the views of users (e.g. horse-riders, runners), volunteers and local residents’ groups. (This parallels the City’s Heath Consultative Committee.)

The management budget is around £1.5 million per annum. This is mostly derived

from a levy added to the council tax on residents within a quarter-mile. Given the restricted budget, and a staff of only 21, much of the land is by default left untouched. The rangers logged 320 oak processionary moth nests in 2016, but there is only funding for removal if the infestation is near a school or other sensitive area; nests in nearby Richmond Park are said to be in the tens of thousands.

After our information meeting and a question-and-answer period, we went outside



Photograph courtesy: John Beyer

Rescued tawny owl

Visit to Wimbledon Common (cont)

to meet the very special people who take care of the Common. To our delight, in one corner of the stable yard we were able to come face to face with a beautiful barn owl. We were introduced to the magnificent horses which the Keepers use to patrol and protect the Common and those who use it, seven days a week from dawn to dusk. The majority of the Keepers are former military personnel and are used to spending long hours in the saddle. Our one regret was that we had not brought carrots with us to feed the 17-hand Percy and the other horses!

Perhaps one day we will see Hampstead Heath Constabulary and rangers patrol on horseback: less pollution, more visibility and, according to the Keepers, an excellent rapport with visitors who both like and respect the horses.

One of the tasks that the Keepers are faced with is preventing small encampments and fires built by those who for a variety of reasons are sleeping rough. When these tents and fires are found, the Keepers warn those responsible that they must leave. They do not arrest or charge them, but can confiscate any camping equipment. Other problems include an increase in dog use of the Commons and council pressure to extend bicycle paths.

We left the stables to embark on a tour of Wimbledon Common itself. We were struck by the flatness of the meadowland and also by the peace and quiet; we encountered very few other people, and those we did see seemed to be walking their dogs.

One very striking and disturbing sight was a large area that had been blackened by a significant fire that had occurred only a month ago. Neither Simon nor his staff knew how the

fire had started but it had taken several hours to extinguish the blaze and fire engines had to be brought in. A large oak had been destroyed as well as lots of small trees. The smell of charred embers was still strong; however, we were impressed to see that small amounts of new growth and greenery were visible.

We did not see ponds similar to those we have on Hampstead Heath; however we viewed the Seven Post Pond at the edge of the Common which was smothered in Swamp Stonecrop (*Crassula helmsii*). We were impressed that there were notices warning the public not to feed the waterfowl and also urging the public not to allow their dogs in the water during the spring and summer (nesting season).

We also saw a very large grassy area (The Plain), which is set aside for ground-nesting birds (such as larks) and wildfowl. The Keepers were very concerned by recent dog attacks on the birds and cited an incident where a dog had killed a swan. Therefore they have placed notices around these areas and also on their website urging dog-walkers to make sure that their dogs do not harm or disturb wildlife and waterfowl. Notices tell dog-walkers they must keep their dogs on a leash when they are being walked in such areas and during the nesting season.

Simon had prepared sandwiches and more coffee and biscuits for us in his office area and we enjoyed a chance to look at photographs, both historical and current, and to learn more about the variety of projects that Wimbledon Common inspires. After lunch, we visited the famed Wimbledon Windmill which is now 200 years old and were able to learn about its fascinating history. One of the Keepers who

accompanied us was born in this Windmill; until 1976 the ground floor was used as accommodation for Wimbledon Keepers.

Inside the Windmill, on the ground floor, there were exquisitely constructed models of the earliest types of windmills until the present day. On the next floor up, we could try out for ourselves the amazing range of ancient machinery and tools dating back to the 15th century that were used to grind and mill wheat into flour. It was then possible to climb a

ladder and see the Victorian Room which showed how former windmill operators lived in the windmill. John Hunt was very brave and climbed a staircase into the topmost parts of the interior where he was able to have a magnificent view.

We reluctantly said goodbye to Simon and his welcoming staff. We all agreed that we must make more expeditions such as this to learn more about the open spaces in and around London. □



Photograph courtesy: John Beyer

Marc Hutchinson surveying fire damage

Organs in Hampstead – III

The third of an occasional series about organs that are or once were in the Hampstead area, not all of them in churches, by Martin Renshaw and Vicki Harding. This article tells the story of English composer and musician John Marsh and the Well Walk chapel in Hampstead.

The English love writing and reading diaries, and have been doing this since the Anglo-Saxon chronicles. They offer us glimpses of personal and social life that we cannot enjoy in normal historical writing. Among diarists of the 18th century, the six million words of John Marsh's condensed 'History of My Private Life' is unparalleled; Hampstead features in it quite strongly for reasons that will become clear.

John Marsh was born in 1752 to a naval captain and his non-conformist wife. Educated

at Greenwich and in Hampshire, he embarked on a profession as an attorney, but playing and writing orchestral music were his chief interests. Unexpectedly, he received a bequest which allowed him to abandon the law. He spent the rest of his life as a musician, writing more symphonies than any other Englishman, visiting every part of England, and playing organs in major churches and cathedrals and hearing his choral music performed in them. He had a hand in the ordering of organs of all



Photograph courtesy: Andrew Morley

Site of the Long Room in Well Walk, 1879, from a watercolour by J.P. Emslie

sizes in these places too, and had a unique house organ made for himself in 1783 when he lived near Canterbury. He moved to Chichester in 1787 for the rest of his life, dying in 1828.

His first known contact with Hampstead was on behalf of his oldest son, Edward, who was a Church of England clergyman of preaching proclivities and in need of a proprietary chapel¹ to make the most of these. Edward had written to tell his father that an opportunity had arisen to obtain a 30-year lease on the proprietary chapel in Hampstead's Well Walk from the current owner (Dr Edward John Burrow, minister from 1816 to 1823). He had been offered financial support for this project by a consortium including 'a Mr. Peyton' and Samuel Hoare, probably a son of Sir Samuel Hoare of the famous banking family who lived at Heath House in Hampstead and one of the twelve founding members of the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade.² John Marsh visited the chapel in October 1820 reporting that:

On the following morning (Sunday 29th) we all went to Hampstead to see & attend the service at the chapel, which had originally been the Well pump room, when it was usual for visitors to resort there to drink the waters. It was an old building & one of its side walls was bulged out & supported by buttresses, but as Mr. Peyton & the other gent'n had agreed to take all risques upon themselves, this was of no particular concern to us.

John Marsh himself agreed to contribute £1,000 to the purchase and, despite an alternative bid, the lease was purchased for

£2,900. This compares to the sum of £2,546 for what we now know as Burgh House which was sold in 1822 to the Rev. Allatson Burgh (1769–1856). The composer and organist Samuel Wesley was a frequent visitor to Burgh House at this time.

William Hoare and Joseph Rous had converted the combined Pump and Assembly Rooms of Hampstead's Spa, together known as the Long Room, into a proprietary chapel in 1725. It is known that a bell was placed in a tiny belfry newly erected on the roof, while pews, an altar with valuable altar-plate and an organ (built in 1725 by John Knoppel) were added within. The building measured ninety feet in length and in 1810 the ground floor seating was about 370. Although proprietary, it was described as a chapel of ease and was hired when the parish church was being rebuilt (1745–1747) or repaired (1755 and 1843).

John Marsh checked over the existing organ (by then built or re-built in 1758 by John Byfield) in the chapel the next year, ordered repairs and 'improvements' to be made to it from a leading London organ maker, Henry Cephas Lincoln, whose father, John, he had known for many years. In November, he writes that new galleries were being constructed in the chapel and that he hoped that the work on the organ would be finished. But it turned out that they were prevented by Lincoln's finishing first a large new organ for another proprietary chapel, St John in Bedford Row, which was opened soon after. In fact, his account of this Bedford Row organ gives us (as often) the only exact dating for its inauguration. This organ is now better known as the one in Thaxted church in Essex; the organ played by Holst among others in the

Organs in Hampstead – III (cont)

famous inter-war music festivals there, and recently restored to its original condition.

Anyway, his son's chapel organ was soon put to rights. It is known that the Well Walk chapel offered seats for a thousand people in all, and his son and Lydia, his wife, and their children settled in for the preaching season. John Marsh visited Hampstead regularly from Chichester, played the organ from time to time, sometimes giving the resident organist John Francis Prina (a pupil of Samuel Wesley and Vincent Novello and previously organist of Hampstead parish church) a 'holiday' by playing there in his stead. Mr. Prina's table organ was seen in Hampstead by Marsh in April 1826. It contained his invention of a 'flageolet' (treble flute, 25 notes up from middle C on its own keyboard), which 'might be attached to any piano-forte, & used as an accompaniment, or variation'.

In 1824, John Marsh had time to check out his son's opposition at the other 'new' chapel of St John, Downshire Hill. (This had been built in 1818 and replaced Well Walk chapel as the chapel of ease to the Parish church). The organ, he wrote :

"I thought a very poor one and out of order, though much larger & handsomer looking one than that at my Son's chapel ..."

He later (September 1824) wrote a long critique of this organ and the incompetence of its human blower, while visiting it when Edward was using it while his own chapel was being painted. He was more pleased with the organ in the parish church, however, writing after playing it at the 6 o'clock evening service that

"though that Organ (made by Longman & Broderip in 1786) was no capital



1866 Ordnance Survey map

instrument, the only inconvenience I found in it being the short compass of the Swell [the upper keyboard], which though it had separate keys, went only down to middle C & the want of a pedal to take off the Open Diapason and Principal, in addition to the usual chorus stops, so that I could not make the variety I did when playing the organ at St John's Chichester [made to Marsh's specification in 1813, and which he played very frequently] ... It being quite a new thing to have the church service by candlelight, the congregation this evening was uncommonly large."

In April 1825, he played again at his son's chapel, remarking that, as his nephew William said the prayers, Edward preached and he played at both morning



Recently restored two-manual house organ, probably made by George England c.1770

Photograph courtesy: Vicki Harding

Organs in Hampstead – III (cont)



Photograph courtesy: Vicki Harding

John Marsh's own house organ built in 1783, now in Bleasby, Nottinghamshire

and evening services, 'the whole of the desk, pulpit and organ duty was done by our family'.

He had previously (19 October 1822) also played a 'very fine organ at Mr. Holford's house in Hampstead'. Charles Holford (d. 1838) lived at Upper Terrace House from 1799 to 1830. In 1826 John 'called with my Son at Mr. Longman's, where I touched his organ and took a list of the stops', this list alas not surviving. There were two Longmans in Marsh's *History*: one, the publisher Thomas Norton Longman, lived at that time in a large house called 'The Rookery' on the corner of what is now the High Street and Prince Arthur Road, clearly large enough to house a large and very fine organ. This house was demolished along with its neighbour, and with their extensive gardens was used to form Prince Arthur Road. Longman's house was replaced in turn by a Wesleyan chapel and in the 1930s by the Greenhill flats. Interestingly, Thomas Norton Longman previously lived from 1804

to 1817 in the 'Manor House', a house on the site of what is now 59A & 59B Frognal on the corner of Frognal Lane, which in 1802 was occupied by the Rev. Charles Grant, one of Edward Marsh's predecessors at the Well Walk chapel for 30 years. The other Longman was the organ builder in Ludgate Hill, and maker of the parish church organ. However, it was a Mr. Mayor who made some repairs and improvements to Edward's chapel organ, which one suspects John paid for, and where:

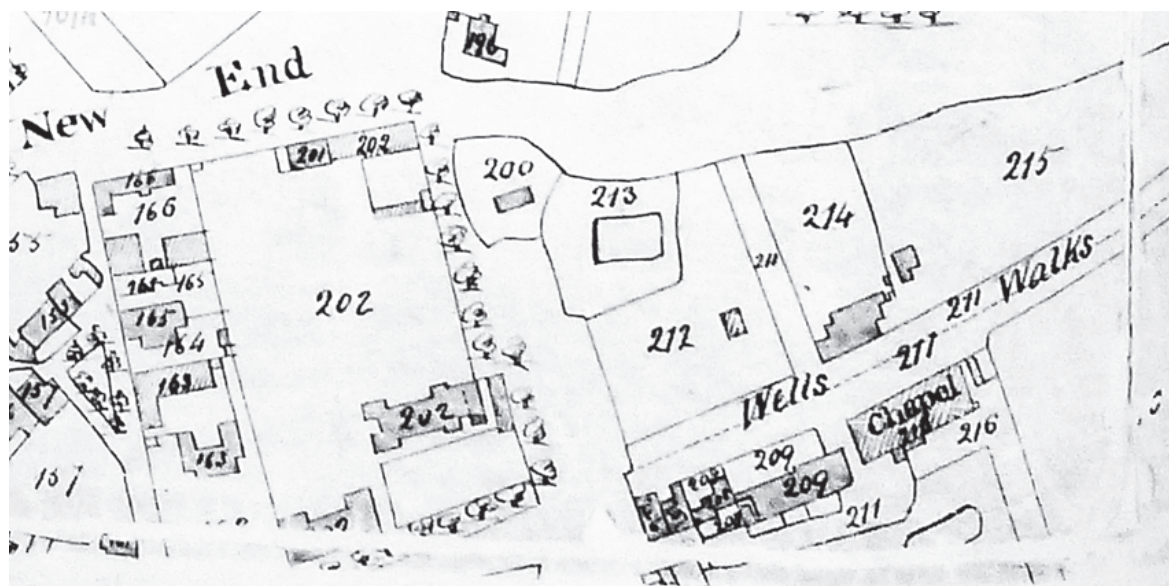
"on the next morning (Wednesday the 10th [May 1826]), we went to see how he went on, when I agreed with him to carry the Open diapason down the gamut in metal & thence to GG in wood, & to put the Trumpet treble in a swell box."

On 9 October he found the organ 'much improved' by these alterations, which he further detailed by writing that the Trumpet

treble had been extended '*down to fiddle G & put into a swell box from middle C upward*'.

When in Hampstead, Edward Marsh lived at 5 Elm Row until 1834 when he was succeeded by the Rev. E Hankinson who took over both the chapel and the house. Next door to him at number 3 was the organist of the parish church Mr. Firth, who presumably succeeded Mr. Prima there.

There are two other house organs that we know were in place during this later Georgian period. One was at Kenwood, where the organ, a near-identical twin of one now in Canada dated 1792, was made by John Marsh's favourite contemporary organ builder, George Pyke England, a person whose competence he recommended to many of his contacts. Musician-friends of his all over the country ordered a number of smaller organs from him. GP England organs are often still



Part of Hampstead Manorial map 1762 showing the Well Walk chapel, bottom right

Organs in Hampstead – III (cont)

around, in altered form, in small country chapels and churches.

The other Hampstead house organ was a much larger organ made by the oldest of the England family, George England. This was described at its sale in 1910 as a three-manual (keyboard) organ dated 1776 with 26 stops, belonging to Archdeacon Philip Jennings (c.1783–1849) when he lived at St. Stephen's Lodge in Pond Street. He was said to have been a fine musician who had built a large room in his garden to house his organ.

This archdeacon's organ is very much larger than the normal house organ. John Marsh's own house organ 'disappeared' at his death in 1828 and its present whereabouts became known to historians only last year.³ This is, in a way, not surprising because like many small organs, which were indeed made to be easily transported and quickly installed, this organ was moved to at least three country vicarages by Edward Marsh and then to more by his clergyman son, John William Marsh. It was moved in 1863 to the vicarage of Bleasby in Nottinghamshire, just north of the Trent and near Newark, and then presented to the church by him and rebuilt in its present form in 1869.

Finally, there is one other Hampstead connection that drew Marsh back there several times in his later years. He had always subscribed to the work of the Anti-Slavery Society and wrote accounts of its sometimes turbulent meetings. Wilberforce, who had strong connections to the Marsh family, is known to have met regularly with the Abolitionists at Heath House in Hampstead, the residence of Samuel Hoare, the strong supporter of Edward Marsh's move to Well Walk chapel.

What happened to the organ and to Well Walk chapel? We know little of what happened to the organ after John Marsh's diary entries ended at his death in 1828. In 1853, after the congregation moved to their newly built Christ Church, the chapel in Well Walk became the property of the Presbyterians; an improvement on the little place in Perrin's Court where they had previously assembled. In 1862, it was forsaken by them in favour of the church which they built in the High Street; and the old Long Room, sanctified by a hundred and thirty-five years of divine worship, reverted again to a secular life. The pulpit, pews, organ and altar all being cleared away, it was now found useful as the Drill Hall and Head Quarters of the Hampstead Volunteers (3rd Middlesex) up to 1882, when this historic hall was pulled down. □

Notes

1. A proprietary chapel was a church purchased by a private person or consortium but open to the public. Generally, however, some of the seating would be reserved for subscribers. Such chapels were often built to cope with increasing urbanisation.
2. William Wilberforce, MP (1759–1833), the politician, slavery abolitionist and philanthropist. Edward Marsh tutored two of Wilberforce's sons: Robert Isaac and (from 1818) Samuel. Wilberforce later offered to be godfather to Edward's son John William.
3. The book *'John Marsh and The Organ: A most elegant & beautiful instrument'* by Martin Renshaw was recently published (2017) and gives more detail about this organ as well as music and organ references in John Marsh's *'History of my private life'*.



Autumn 2017 Events in the Library

Thursday 30 November at 7:30pm

**Sumatra Quartet and Lee Montague:
Shostakovich**

Following the success of the wonderful recital in the Spring,
the Sumatra Quartet will return with a programme of Shostakovich,
with readings by Lee Montague from Julian Barnes' *The Noise of Time*.

£10



Tuesday 12 December at 7:30pm

**Simon Russell Beale
— in conversation**

Simon is an actor, author and music historian and has been described
by *The Independent* as "*the greatest stage actor of his generation*".

We plan an informal evening hosted by Piers Plowright
with an opportunity to ask questions.

NB This event will take place in the Peter Samuel Hall, Royal Free Hospital

£12



Thursday 14 December at 7:30pm

KCL's Annual Quiz

Great fun for all.
Bring a team or join a table and make new friends.
Refreshments available.

£10

Tickets from the library ☎ 020 7431 1266 or online at www.wegottickets.com

KCL events are supported by U3A in London



Heath Walks: 2017–2018

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 November 10:30am (meet at Burgh House)
How the Heath was saved as public space and later expanded led by Thomas Radice, Trustee of the Society and member of the Heath Sub-Committee.

3 December 10:30am (meet in Hampstead Lane by 210 bus stop opposite Stormont Road) **The Hidden Heath: signs of the Heath's past** A walk from Athlone House to Springett's Wood led by Michael Hammerson, a Vice-President of the Highgate Society and member of the Heath Sub-Committee.

2018

No walk in January

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

4 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.

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

Details of further walk programmes will be available on the Society's website:

www.HeathandHampstead.org.uk

[@HandHSocHeath](https://twitter.com/HandHSocHeath)

