

Est. 1897

The Heath & Hampstead Society *NEWSLETTER*

October 2023

Vol 54 No 3



'Nuthatch photographed by Bird Bridge'

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Front cover: The only British bird able to climb down a tree as well as up, the nuthatch is not uncommon on the Heath. Their mud-plastered nest holes can be found not far above head-height on some of the Heath's busiest paths. Squeaks, trills, twitters, and a loud wolf-whistle might be the first you know of one. Then, look out for a busy bird prising away pieces of bark in search of insects or hammering open nuts and seeds from which they derive their old name: the 'nut-hack'.

Chair's Notes

by Marc Hutchinson

We have enjoyed an eventful Hampstead summer, including in terms of the weather, the Heath providing, as it never fails to do, a unique and peaceful retreat for so many Londoners.

Coronation party

On the May bank holiday Monday of the Coronation weekend, we hosted, with the City of London and the London Borough of Barnet, a Coronation party for the public in Golders Hill Park. The weather was kind to us, Paul Maskell and his Heath team did a marvellous job of laying on multiple musical and other entertainments which concluded in the evening with a light show, and a splendidly memorable day was had by all.



Councillor Alison Moore, Mayor of Barnet, with William Upton KC, Chairman of the City's Hampstead Heath Management Committee, at the Coronation party

On the Heath

In June, we were shocked to learn of the sudden and totally unexpected resignation of Stefania Horne, the Heath Superintendent. She was only appointed in January last year and was just settling into her role. She left in September to take a much more senior

position as Strategic Director of Dacorum Council at Hemel Hempstead.

The City has, fortunately and quickly, found a replacement, namely William (Bill) LoSasso who most recently worked at Crystal Palace Park Trust, serving as its inaugural Chief Executive and overseeing the Park's transfer to the charity. He was previously at the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation where he was Director of its ground-breaking GreenThumb Programme – the largest urban gardening programme in the USA, sustaining over 550 community gardens and supporting thousands of volunteer gardeners throughout NYC. William (Bill) holds a doctorate in law, a bachelor's degree in environmental biology and a master's degree in city and regional planning. He has nominally been in post since September, and we look forward to working with him as effectively as we did with Stefania, whom we farewelled at a lunch we hosted for her: see the Heath Report. In the brief interim, the Acting Heath Superintendent is Jonathan Meares, the Heath's trees and conservation manager, assisted by Paul Maskell on events management.

In a double blow to Heath management, in May the Heath's long-serving operations manager, Declan Gallagher, died of a blood clot on the brain caused by his enforced immobilisation with a badly broken leg, sustained while refereeing a rugby match. Declan was a wonderful manager who loved the Heath and who knew so many of its visitors and, it was said, knew its every blade of grass. The Society attended his funeral, and we print, by kind permission of the Ham & High, an obituary on page 24 of this Newsletter.

The collective effect of Stefania's departure and Declan's death, the only very recent appointment of a new head of the Heath Constabulary who is currently unwell, and the just completed wholesale

reorganisation of the Heath staff, does mean the process of full management recovery after the pandemic will be delayed for some time yet, and we should expect to see a pause in new initiatives or improvements.

As the Society, we have already formally met Bill LoSasso and the City's newly appointed Natural Environment Director, Emily Brennan.

Dog walking

The licensing scheme for commercial dog walking is up and running, and proving to be a success. You will have noted far fewer commercial dog walkers and their charges, which is consistent with the City's intelligence that unlicensed dog walkers have generally stopped using the Heath.

However, the Heath faces a newly identified dog-related problem. There has been a huge increase in dog ownership in London during the pandemic, coupled with a new fashion for regularly coating dogs with flea powder, regardless of whether the animal has fleas. Many of the flea powders used contain fipronil, a pesticide banned in agricultural use but permitted for veterinary use. We suspect this substance is doing great damage to the insect life of the Heath's ponds. Given the prevalence of dog swimming, both in the designated areas and also where it is prohibited, the chains of ponds are becoming polluted. The Society, the London Zoological Society and Imperial College, amongst other institutions, have together assembled the results of a questionnaire for dog owners aimed at establishing the levels of public awareness of the problem and patterns of dog swimming. At the same time, water-sampling has taken place at various points in the chains to gauge the extent of contamination. We will report the results to members in the next Newsletter.



The aerator. Photo courtesy: Ron Vester

Aerators

After the Dams Project, the City installed new aerators on the ponds as part of the plan to improve water quality. They are an unsightly bright blue, and unable to be painted in a less offensive colour. The welcome news is they are no longer regulation-compliant and will have to be replaced with underwater aerators, so restoring the ponds to their natural aspect recorded by Constable.

Off the Heath

In an important initiative, we are formally asking Camden Council to make what is known as an 'Article 4 Direction' – which the Council has power to do – which will disapply so-called permitted development rights over gardens abutting the Heath. Permitted development rights mean an owner can, without planning permission, construct a new building in a garden provided the new-build footprint is not more than 50% of the garden. Gardens abutting the Heath, some of which are very large, are an important aspect of the Heath's openness, are ecologically important, and should not be built over. Likewise, biodiversity corridors to the Heath must be protected. We are supported in this request by the Hampstead and Highgate Neighbourhood Forums and also the Highgate Society.



The aerator and guest. Photo courtesy: Ron Vester

I need to update you on two building projects affecting the fringes of, and the views from, the Heath.

The first is Murphy's Yard, the disused builder's site south of Gospel Oak Overground Station. No new planning application has been lodged. In the meantime, we have been working with local amenity groups to submit proposals and plans to the developer which remove the offensive high-rise buildings and put back the green corridor originally planned to run from Gospel Oak Overground Station to Kentish Town Station.

The second site is somewhat away from the Heath at Archway. There, it is proposed to build a huge residential and commercial tower block which will be 32 storeys high and be named the Archway Campus. This will be double the height of the tower block which is already there and will prove a terrible eyesore for visitors to the lower Heath. With the Highgate Society, the Islington Society and the City, we will be objecting to this proposal if and when it is formally made in a planning application. It is of course possible, given current economic conditions, this grandiose project, like the 100 Avenue Road tower at Swiss Cottage, is no longer financially viable.

Heath House

We continue to monitor Heath House, decaying and disfigured for more than a decade now by the scaffolding and plastic tarpaulins. The continuing scandal of this situation was covered in *Private Eye* in June. Camden Council has no power to compel the owner to restore this listed building, but we know the owner has submitted a new consolidated planning application for restoration of the house as a dwelling, and we will be monitoring that. We are concerned the residents who eventually live there should not park their cars directly behind the war memorial, disfiguring the house façade, and we are looking to sustain public and media disapproval of the present condition of the house.

Rubbish

As I mentioned in the last Newsletter, one very serious problem blighting Hampstead Village and South End Green is rubbish. Last year Camden Council offered us a 'question and answer session,' face-to-face with responsible officers, councillors and Veolia – something to be called a "Conversation" – about the rubbish problem, which includes domestic and commercial rubbish removal and generally keeping the streets clean. After months of chasing, we have now agreed a date of 16 October.

There are two particular trouble-spots at exits from the Heath at South End Green and at the car park at the Lido. Visitors leaving the Heath simply dump their rubbish near the nearest overflowing bin (or residents' garden) and the rubbish is then scattered over the area by foxes and vermin, and not cleared up for days. We continue to lobby the City to place and regularly empty bins in these areas but, so far, the City has said it does not want the responsibility of collecting the rubbish. We will be addressing the same issue with Camden when we have our Conversation. Since each

body wants the other to take responsibility, it is the local residents who suffer. The Society is acutely aware of the problem and is lobbying to try and reduce it.

Jenifer Ford Bequest

The Society has received a very generous bequest from the estate of the late Jenifer Ford. Jenifer was a professional painter who lived most of her life in Hampstead and who was an active supporter of the Society. When she died last year, her house was found to be full of paintings, many of them of Hampstead and its Heath. All of these have now been given to the Society to be sold – initially to Society members only – with the proceeds to be applied to its charitable purposes. We are currently advertising them for sale on the Society's website. We are deeply grateful to the estate trustees for this exceptional gift.

People

A long-serving committee member to whom we pay tribute is Janis Hardiman. Incredible as this may seem, Janis joined the Society as a trustee nearly 45 years ago and has served on its General Committee and then its Heath Sub-Committee since that time. She finally stepped down from the latter at our recent Annual General Meeting. We want to express our deep gratitude for all the work she has done over the decades. We gave a party in her honour but, most unfortunately, Janis was urgently admitted to hospital some two hours before the start of the party, and so missed it. I am glad to say she is now recovered and at home. Janis, as you know, is a painter, so we felt unable to offer her the customary Heath painting as a retirement present. Instead, she received a weeping cherry for her beautiful garden.

Committee members come and go, and this summer our sub-committees have recruited more new members.

The Town Sub-Committee has welcomed:

- Daniel Rodolfi, a Hampstead local entrepreneur, now involved with the Rebel Business School as their Business Development and Engagement Manager, and Diversity and Inclusion Champion, and
- Jenny White, a former barrister and commercial lawyer who now works as an adviser to a cross-bench peer on parliamentary matters. She currently chairs the neighbourhood association (the NNA) which covers Netherhall Gardens, Maresfield Gardens and Nutley Terrace. She has been a trustee of the Hampstead Arts Festival (music and literature) for some years, latterly as Chair.

The Planning Sub-Committee has welcomed barrister and mediator Edward Cousins of Radcliffe Chambers. He was previously the Principal Judge of the Land Registration Division of the Property Chamber, and is a specialist property and planning lawyer.

Christmas Party

We have enjoyed many Christmas parties in the welcoming rooms of Burgh House. Alas, the costs of this commercially catered event have now risen above what we believe our members are willing to pay. Therefore, this year's Christmas party will be self-catered and held at Keats House. As we know from our new members' parties held there, Keats House is a very attractive venue, and I look forward to welcoming you there on 13 December.

2024 Heath Calendar

The 2024 calendar shows the very best of the Heath's diverse landscape and its wildlife throughout the seasons. The range of images reflects the work of City staff and Heath Hands volunteers who help protect the Heath for future generations. It is produced in partnership with the City, Heath Hands and Matthew Maran.

Available from matthewmaran.com, selected local shops and Amazon.



Royal Correspondence

The Prince of Wales, as he then was, wrote to congratulate the Society on the occasion of its Centenary in 1997. We have thought it appropriate to congratulate him on the occasion of his Coronation, and the correspondence is set out below.



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

31st May, 2023.

Dear Mr. Hutchinson,

The King has asked me to thank you for your kind letter of loyal greetings sent on behalf of the Patrons, Trustees and Members of The Heath and Hampsted Society, on the occasion of Their Majesties' Coronation on 6th May, 2023.

His Majesty appreciated your kind words and values your continued support. In return, The King has asked me to send his warm good wishes to you all.

*Yours sincerely,
Thomas Claridge*

Thomas Claridge
Head of Royal Correspondence

Mr. Marc Hutchinson.



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The Heath & Hampstead Society

President Lord Mance *Chair* Marc Hutchinson
Patrons Lord Bragg CH Lord Hoffmann Lady Hopkins Sir Simon Jenkins
Bill Oddie OBE Tom Oliver Sir John Tusa

His Majesty The King
Buckingham Palace
London
SW1A 1AA

3 May 2023

Sir

You were kind enough to write to us on the occasion of our centenary in 1997. Your encouragement on that occasion meant a great deal to the volunteers (we are all volunteers) who work so hard for the Society.

The Patrons, Trustees and members of the Society now send you, on the occasion of your coronation, our loyal greetings, we wish you a long reign, and we wish you and the Queen health and happiness throughout it.

I have the honour to be, Sir, Your Majesty's humble and obedient servant.

Marc Hutchinson

Marc Hutchinson
Chair



The Heath & Old Hampstead Society

NEWSLETTER

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ST. JAMES'S PALACE

The Heath and Old Hampstead Society has a proud record, as an entirely voluntary society, which has worked to defend and expand The Heath. Today it is a piece of open country in the heart of a great city. It has grown from the original 200 acres, granted under The Hampstead Heath Act in 1871, to today's 800 acres.

I send my warmest congratulations and best wishes for a successful Centenary celebration.

Charles

A message from His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales

Camden Art Centre
Arkwright Road
London NW3

6 Oct to 31 Dec 2023

Tamara Henderson

Camden Art Centre is pleased to present
Green in the Grooves, the first institutional
exhibition in the UK by Tamara Henderson
(b. 1982, New Brunswick, Canada)

The Canberran Characters, 2020-2021. Various
material, dimensions variable. Produced in
collaboration with Nell Pearson. Courtesy
the artist. Photo: Levi Fanan



Marina Xenofontos

Marina Xenofontos (b. 1988, Limassol, Cyprus)
is the 2022 recipient of Camden Art Centre's
Emerging Artist Prize at Frieze and will present
an ambitious new commission for her first
institutional solo exhibition in the UK

Twice upon a while, 2020, MDF, wood,
metal, mirror. Courtesy of the artist and
Hot Wheels Athens



New Contemporaries

19 Jan to 31 Mar 2024

New Contemporaries

New Contemporaries 2023 will tour to Camden
Art Centre for the first time in over 20 years.

Art Centre, Café & Garden: Tue-Sun 11am-6pm; Thu 11am-9pm
Camden Art Centre, Arkwright Road, NW3 6DG

Nearest Station: Finchley Road (Underground); Finchley Road and Frognal (Overground)
T +44(0)20 7472 5500 E info@camdenartscentre.org W www.camdenartscentre.org

Heath Report

by John Beyer

Stefania Horne leaves her post as Heath Superintendent

Society Chair, Marc Hutchinson, hosted a farewell lunch for Stefania and her husband Peter. Marc presented a painting of a tree on the Heath which had been donated to the Society by artist Jenifer Ford, with the dedication: “With the appreciation and gratitude of the trustees of the Heath & Hampstead Society”.

As a strong supporter of what the Society does, when Stefania knew she was leaving, she joined the Society as a regular member. We have since agreed to give her honorary membership in view of Stefania’s contribution to the Heath. Stefania left in mid-September to go on to a more senior position at Dacorum. We have appreciated her positive attitude, her frankness and her willingness to listen to the views of the Society on a whole range of issues.



Stefania with the Jenifer Ford painting and Society Chair, Marc Hutchinson



Stefania Horne and Bill LoSasso

New Heath Superintendent appointed

Jonathan Meares, Head of Conservation, was appointed Acting Superintendent from September to December, while the City searched for a successor. And the City quickly found someone for the position. In recognition of Jonathan’s dedication, he will retain the formal title of Acting Superintendent despite the appointment of a successor.

Bill LoSasso has been appointed Superintendent and Assistant Director Environment – North London Open Spaces. North London Open Spaces covers the Heath, Highgate Wood, Queen’s Park and West Ham Park. Bill will work in partnership with Jonathan until December. We look forward to a regular dialogue with Bill, who brings a range of experience and ideas from New York. We were pleased our first contact with Bill was to welcome sheep for the ecological grazing trial.

Staff changes also included the level above Superintendent. In August, Emily Brennan was appointed Director – Natural Environment. Emily, an ecologist by training, has worked for the London

Wildlife Trust, London Zoo and most recently for Forest Research at the Forestry Commission.

The long process of staff restructuring is due to be concluded by the end of October, with the appointment of team leaders and the recruitment of more officers for the Constabulary. We look forward to a period of reconsolidation after the uncertainty for the staff.

Declan Gallagher

We were greatly shocked and saddened to learn of the death of our colleague and friend Declan Gallagher on 30 April. He was a familiar figure to the Heath Sub-Committee and the other organisations which cherish the Heath. The turnout for his funeral, sensitively organised by his close friend Paul Maskell on 8 June, was a who's-who of the Heath community.

During his 17 years of service with the City, Declan earned the respect of local groups. Two of those who knew him longest, guitarist John Etheridge and Helen Payne of Friends of Kenwood, started an online appeal for funds in his memory. As Michael Hammerson, who had also known him for many years, commented, Declan “took community engagement really seriously, clearly valued what local groups had to offer, always tried to give us direct answers, and the loss of his knowledge and expertise to the Heath will be difficult to replace”.

At the funeral, I spoke to a childhood friend of his, who commented Declan was always a boy with determination to do well; while the friend was messing around with others, Declan was in the greenhouse focussed on his gardening.

Declan always seemed to come up with a practical solution on contentious issues. Discussing the issue of dog access to ponds, he brought a heated debate

to a conclusion with a confident and beguiling smile, “John, we’ll just get that fence moved over a bit and then everyone will be happy”.

Kites, kids and kinetics

On Sunday 2 July, we welcomed back the Kite Society of Great Britain to give a display with their huge and entertaining kites on Kite Hill (Parliament Hill). A capricious wind made it difficult for the large kites, but children had a wonderful time in an upper area as they frolicked with the kites on sale at the Society stall. We are grateful to the volunteer stewards from the Society and Heath Hands whose presence as “guards” and “guides” made the event such a success.

On 3 September, the Natural Aspect concert had a record turnout of over 1,500 people, with many parties picnicking and everyone dancing to the band's final number, a cover of *Dancing in the Street*.

Ecological grazing trial: sheep back on the Heath

From 11 to 18 September, the Society once again worked with the City, in partnership with Heath Hands and the Rare Breeds Survival Trust, to bring sheep back to the Heath for an ecological grazing trial. There was extensive coverage on the main television channels and online media.

The flock of five sheep, provided by Tom Davis from Mudchute Farm, and made up of two Oxford Downs and three Norfolk Horns, grazed in a fenced enclosure on the Heath Extension on the north of the Heath. The area has a number of anthills, which are overgrown by creeping cinquefoil and other plants. The aim is to see if the sheep can remove this growth so the hills are air-cooled and better for the yellow meadow ants which live in and under the mounds. Green woodpeckers are likely to benefit because ants

Heath Report (cont)

are one of their favoured foods. The rare breeds are best for grazing rough vegetation.

The London Natural History Society surveyed plant life in the area prior to grazing, and conducted another survey after the grazing trial to assess any changes. The assumption is grazing allows more delicate plants favouring acid soils to take root once the rougher grasses and thistles are grazed away. The Heath's ecologist monitored the site during grazing to assess plant and invertebrate changes.

If the pilot is successful, animal grazing could be expanded to other areas of the Heath. Grazing is known to play a major role in boosting species-rich wildlife habitats and reducing the use of machinery. Unlike mowing, grazing produces a mosaic of vegetation heights and types, improving ecological sites for species including amphibians, small mammals, invertebrates and wildflowers.

Sheep were last seen pasturing on the Heath in the 1950s. In August 2019, the Society and partners organised a small trial at the Tumulus.

Society and Heath Hands volunteers were key to the operation of the project. They monitored the sheep and engaged visitors who wanted to know more about the pilot. Again, we thank them for their enthusiasm and commitment. The response from visitors was unambiguously positive, with strong interest in the biodiversity aims, and a sense of visual enjoyment at seeing sheep on the Heath.



Eden Beyer feeding sheep



Oxford Down sheep munching cinquefoil. Photo courtesy: Adrian Brooker, Heath Ecologist



Norwegian forest cat nosing sheep. Photo courtesy: Michael Hammerson

Town Report

by Andrew Haslam-Jones

Transport

Isabel Dedring, who joined the Town Sub-Committee last year, gave our last meeting a very illuminating presentation on how spending on transport is decided by Camden Council. Essentially, Transport for London provides the strategy and the money. Each borough then provides a three-year local implementation plan to fit in with the strategy which it provides to TfL. Isabel was previously a deputy mayor for transport at the Greater London Authority.

A better understanding of how this works might make it possible for the Society to engage with Camden Council to seek to understand what Camden's priorities are and how those might relate to Hampstead and its Heath. We may even be able to pass on some of the Society's concerns before the Council starts to put together its next local implementation plan. If those concerns are shared by other local organisations, that would only strengthen any approach.

Environment

Rubbish continues to be an issue, especially on Hampstead High Street, Rosslyn Hill and Heath Street, where commercial properties and flats have three collections per day and plastic bags, which often seem to leak, are used. That is before we get on to talking about the growing problem of foxes breaking into food caddies and spilling mess over pavements and gardens. You will have seen from our Chair's Notes, the Society will be hosting a face-to-face meeting with key stakeholders and service providers to seek to address this ongoing problem. Our aim is to help the service providers address these problems.



Pile it high and let it leak. Rubbish on Rosslyn Hill and Hampstead High Street

E-bikes and E-scooters

On a separate topic, readers of the Newsletter may have noticed a reduction in the number e-bikes left littering the streets and getting in people's way. This is because the e-bike hire companies changed their app from the beginning of June and now users of the bikes and scooters are meant only to be able to park them in designated parking bays. However, e-bikes and e-scooters are still being left on narrow pavements and are a hazard to people with mobility or sight problems, or with prams, and are a general nuisance.

Apparently, it is possible for people to trip the charging mechanism on the e-bikes and ride them without paying, or fear of being fined for bad parking. It is likely many of the badly parked e-bikes have been tampered with. If you hear an e-bike emitting a load clicking noise as it is ridden, it has had its charging mechanism tripped.

As for the e-scooters, you may be aware these are currently being trialled by several London boroughs, including Camden, but not, for example, Islington. Use of private e-scooters on public highways remains illegal. The trial is still running until next year and, in

Town Report (cont)

light of the recent vote by Parisians to ban e-scooters from their streets, the hire companies are likely to be sensitive to any complaints about the poor parking of e-scooters, at least. TfL's website contains a link to the hire companies' websites and encourages reporting of issues:

To help ensure the success of the trial, Londoners are encouraged to report any issues they experience, including poor rider behaviour, to the operators. Contact details for all operators are available on the TfL website at tfl.gov.uk/modes/driving/electric-scooter-rental-trial. If anyone, including private landowners, has suggestions for parking locations they can also get in touch using these contact details.

Post boxes and street name tiles

You may recall Alexandra Lavery's work from our last Newsletter. She has been busy cataloguing the terrible state of the post boxes in Hampstead and we are hoping to get the Royal Mail to refurbish them. Alexandra is also undertaking a review of our Hampstead street signs with their characteristic tiles. If you would like to help her in reviewing the signs in your local streets and identifying broken tiles that need replacing, please get in touch at info@heathandhampstead.org.uk.



What a delightful view! Seating on Hampstead High Street.

Seating on the High Street

Andrew and Alexandra Lavery have identified several benches on Hampstead High Street, namely the ones outside the Clarendon Gallery, The Coffee Cup and the one just north of Perrin's Lane, which are situated very close to the curb and often face directly into parked vehicles. We had originally suggested turning the benches round to face into the pavement. We were informed by Stephen Stark, one of our local councillors, the cost of rotating the benches would be very high. However, Camden has now agreed to review those benches with a view to building out the pavement to provide people sitting there with more space between them and the traffic and a more pleasant experience.

New Sub-Committee Members

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome two new members to the Sub-Committee.

Daniel Rodolfi is Hampstead born and bred. He has a passion for entrepreneurship and empowering young adults and has worked with the Rebel Business School as their Business Development and Engagement Manager, and

Diversity and Inclusion Champion.

Jenny White is chair of the neighbourhood association covering Netherhall Gardens, Maresfield Gardens and Nutley Terrace. After a long career as a commercial lawyer, Jenny now advises a cross-bench peer.

Welcome Daniel and Jenny!

Unforgotten Lives exhibition at Hampstead Heath

Sited on the Heath's South End Road entrance until 18 September, *Unforgotten Lives* was one part of the outdoor edition of London Metropolitan Archives' (LMA) presentation of stories of Londoners of African, Caribbean, Asian and Indigenous heritage who lived and worked in the city between 1560 and 1860. Exploring a range of experiences, these multi-layered stories spoke of love, enterprise, wealth and family life; discrimination, hardship, resilience and resistance.



Locations people of colour came from to London



An example of one of the many profiles featured

Informed by an ongoing research project aiming to reveal London's complex and long-standing diversity and developed in partnership with Northeastern University London, the exhibition (until 27 March 2024) presents evidence of presence and community in documents created nearly 500 years ago. It celebrates well known figures from London's past and introduces some of the thousands of names discovered in the archives. For more information about the exhibition at the LMA, please see <https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/events/unforgotten-lives-exhibition>

Planning Report

by David Castle and Dr Vicki Harding

Heath House and Archway

The Society receives many complaints about the scaffold covered Heath House near Jack Straw's Castle. A planning application has just been made to bring together all the previous approvals prior to, we hope, the start of enlarging and reinstating Heath House at long last.

There is no news yet about the proposed tower block at Archway. An application for planning approval has not yet been made to Islington Council. The reason for the delay might be the developer is finding it difficult to pack the site with dwellings to make it profitable and also find a solution likely to be acceptable.

Biodiversity Net Gain

An increase in biodiversity, termed *Biodiversity Net Gain* or BNG, will now be a mandatory part of planning law!! The Environment Act 2021 has amended the Town and Country Planning Acts to ensure biodiversity will be increased by at least 10% on development sites. The requirement for 10% BNG will apply to larger developments of 10 or more residential units from January 2024, and from April 2024 will also apply to small developments of one to nine units.

Unfortunately, this requirement does not apply to extensions, permitted development in gardens or the appalling biodiversity loss caused by plastic grass.

In some cases, developers will be able to compensate for a loss of biodiversity by providing off-site biodiversity enhancement. This enables developers to avoid the requirements and build over, for instance, one of Hampstead's wonderful gardens. This is going to be difficult to prevent.

The Act also establishes yet another watchdog: the Office for Environmental Protection. Let us hope it is not under-funded and as toothless and inactive as some similar agencies.

Permitted development

We were relieved when Camden Council agreed with us and refused a certificate of lawfulness application to build over a large part of an enormous garden. Refusal was on the grounds the proposed buildings are not incidental to the main house, and therefore not permitted development. The developer has since split the project into four applications for certificates of lawfulness. We continue to work closely with a neighbours' group to challenge several aspects of this and ensure Camden's good precedents remain.

This case has highlighted the problem of aspects of permitted development for rear gardens. The Planning Sub-Committee has teamed up with the Heath Sub-Committee to collect support from local neighbourhood forums and other amenity groups around the Heath to request an Article 4 Direction from Camden curtailing permitted development rights for building over a number of large gardens backing onto the Heath. Planning applications, along with their local oversight, would then be required for extensions or buildings in these rear gardens.

Trees

While planning applications have been much reduced since the pandemic and the economic downturn, notices of intent for tree work have increased considerably until a slight reduction began this summer. The Society continues to keep a close eye on these.

As part of our strategy to protect veteran trees at risk from development or from arboriculturalists without VetCert training, we are waiting for validation of a further number of veteran trees with the Ancient Tree Inventory. While veteran tree reduction can be necessary to help the tree, ill-informed tree surgeons can sometimes remove far too much of a veteran tree's deadwood. Such removal also removes important biodiversity habitat and the deadwood does not constitute a risk to those using the garden.

Autumn Musical Events

St John-at-Hampstead Parish Church, Church Row NW3

11 November: *Brahms Requiem*

Come and Sing. Scratch performance.

Conductor – Geoffrey Webber

Arrival 1.30 pm; rehearsal 2.00 pm;

informal performance 6.00 pm

19 November

Symphony Evensong for St. Cecelia

Choir of Hampstead Parish Church

with baroque strings.

Including Purcell's *My heart is inditing*

Free admission

The Hampstead Collective

6 November 7pm

Schubert's Winterreise

Baritone: Malachy Frame | Piano: Freddie Brown

8 January 2024 7pm

Christmas Oratorio

(Parts 1, 3, 5 and 6)

by J.S. Bach

Directed by Geoffrey Webber

4 December 7pm: *Songs of the Elizabethans with Viol Consort*

Singers Christine Buras and Malachy Frame
with 5 part viol consort, music by William Byrd,
Thomas Weelkes and George Benjamin

Ticket information available at

www.thehampsteadcollective.com/concerts

Organ recitals

18 November, 4pm

15 December, 7pm

Community choir

8 December, 7.30pm

Christmas Lights

Autumn Musical

30 November to 2 December: *My Fair Lady*

The Hampstead Players with Orchestra. Performances at 7.30pm with additional matinee at 2.30pm on 2 December

All enquiries to Jenny Macdonald-Hay 0207 794 1193

Another exhilarating visit from the Kite Society of Great Britain

by Melissa Fairbanks

The Kite Society of Great Britain returned to Parliament Hill this summer and once again stunned and delighted all participants.



We love our Heath. Photo courtesy: Ron Vester

The morning of 2 July started with a fitting sentiment shared by us all: a huge and imposing banner declaring, WE ♥ OUR HEATH, fluttering high over Parliament Hill.

For the third consecutive year, the Society was delighted to team up with the City to invite the Kite Society of Great Britain to give a display of their amazing kite flying skills on the Heath. Because they travel all over the world participating in international kite festivals and displays, we ensured early last year it would be confirmed as a fixture in the Kite Society's busy schedule for 2023.

History

The Kite Society was founded in 1979. It is now the leading organisation for kite fliers with over 3,500 members worldwide. Kite Hill (aka Parliament Hill – or vice versa) earned its name by being the most

iconic and famous spot in London for flying kites even since last century. Many of the Kite Society members remember getting their first taste of the magic of kite flying coming here as children with their parents.

The set up

This year, the Society set aside two sections on Parliament Hill: one midway down the hill for the professional display, and the other at the top of the hill for children and the public to fly their own kites.

As skilful as professional flyers are, they are still at the mercy of wind and weather. This day, the weather gods and goddesses were not entirely kind. It was a peculiar mixture of strong blustery bursts of wind, followed by a complete stillness and absence of even the slightest breeze, which made many planned kite-flying manoeuvres difficult.

In spite of this, at every moment there were still gasp-inducing examples of skill and control as kites soared and swooped through the skies in displays of grace and beauty.



Kite festival 2023. Photo courtesy: Ron Vester

Another exhilarating visit from the Kite Society of Great Britain (cont)



*A dragon flying over the Heath.
Photo courtesy: Ron Vester*

The kites

Huge inflatables dominated the skyline. There was a fearsome dragon wending its way over the tree tops, seeming to peer down in a rather delightfully menacing way at us mere mortals and the tiny houses below.

And there was another huge inflatable figure in bathing costume, flippers and snorkel. It created a momentarily surreal fusion between sea and sky as it swam below the clouds.

We were delighted to welcome again one of the most popular teams of kite flyers, The Decorators, who specialise in multiple kites gently swirling or sharply rising and diving together in perfect synchronicity to accompanying music. As always, it was astonishing to see the skill with which these experts display their art, for art it most certainly is.

Participants

One veteran of the Kite Society told me he felt one of the benefits of kite flying was that, in reaching up with one's arm, and looking up to the sky, the whole of one's chest and breathing is freed and opened, which is not an often-recognised health benefit.



*Everyone enjoying kite flying
Photo courtesy: Ron Vester*



Davison family saluting the display

Every spare bit of hill was taken up with onlookers and picnickers, the latter of which could supplement their feast as necessary from the food trucks and ice cream van at the top of the hill.

At the top of the hill, the Society had a stall with many hard working volunteers. They enthusiastically answered any questions about the Society, its work in preserving the unique and wild state of the Heath, and being ever-watchful guardians of the surrounding streets and buildings. We were delighted with so many new members signing up and look forward to meeting them at future events. Volunteers from the Society also did a fantastic job by being on hand to help in keeping the two flying areas separate, thereby avoiding any tangled or damaged kites.

The Society was also selling a variety of brightly coloured and variously shaped kites, which was a huge success. Jeska Harrington-Gould and Pete Mantle made a great sales team and helped the young buyers assemble the kites before setting sail for the skies. As it turned out, we could have sold many more as the ones we had were snapped up within a couple of hours.

The special area we cordoned off for the public to try their hand at kite flying was a fantastic sight. Children and adults enjoyed the magic of this

Another exhilarating visit from the Kite Society of Great Britain (cont)



So many creative kites. Photo courtesy: Ron Vester

universal and ancient play between humans and the elements. Ron Vester, Society member and tireless champion of the swans and wildlife of the Heath, was there taking photographs of the event.

A word of thanks

The detailed organisation of the day would have been impossible without the support and tireless help of Paul Maskell from the City. Planning started months ahead as he, John Beyer, Jeska Harrington-Gould and myself, plus the terrific kite flyers Paul and Nathalie Reynolds, met up to discuss logistics.

One such meeting was in the freezing and pouring rain of early March, at the top of Kite Hill. We slithered and slipped through the deep mud taking blurry photos of potential sites. So much went into the planning and continued during the actual day. Paul's team worked non-stop to make it a wonderful and memorable occasion.

Thanks also, to Jon and Gill Bloom from the Kite Society of Great Britain for gathering the fliers together and all their organisation.

We are already planning on next year's kite display, so look out for announcements, and be sure to come!

Delivering the Newsletter by email

Would you prefer to receive your Newsletter by email in the form of an 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, this is now 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



Remember 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.



2023 Events in the Library Autumn 2023



Dame Janet Suzman & Lee Montague

Out of the Shadows: the Poetry of Christina Rossetti

Thursday 30th November 7.30pm

Lee Montague reveals the life of this celebrated 19th century poet, and Janet Suzman reads extracts from her work.
Early booking recommended. Tickets £10



The Return of KCL's Famous Seasonal Quiz

Thursday 14th December 7.30pm

After an absence of three years, we are delighted to bring back our popular and fun quiz. Book your team on a table for six, or just come along and meet some new friends. Seasonal refreshments available. Table for six £30, single ticket £5

Tickets can be bought in person in the library or online at www.wegottickets.com

All proceeds go to help the Library

The Library is open six days a week and is a warm safe space, offering not only books and DVDs to borrow, but study desks, free wi-fi, magazines and excellent coffee, tea and hot chocolate for only £1.

Children's activities too. Come and visit!

KCL Events are generously supported by





HAMPSTEAD SUMMER FESTIVAL

THE RETURN OF THE BIG FAIR

by Vicky Bobasch

Hampstead Summer Festival returned in full effect this year. The Festival is comprised of a number of events over a few weekends, culminating in the street fair on Heath Street. It is an important social and charity fundraising event. Vicky Bobasch is a Heath Summer Festival Committee member and reports on this year's events.

The Big Fair in Heath Street returned after an absence of three years. It was preceded by the Keats Grove Art Street exhibition, the Art Fair, three performances of *Macbeth* and the Family Garden Party all in the beautiful garden of Keats House.

On 18 June, Jama Elmi opened the Art Fair and Festival in great style. Jama is dubbed The Best Dressed Man in the Country and wore a lime green suit with orange accessories from his wardrobe of 100 suits. Local artists and students of Hampstead School of Art exhibited and

sold their work alongside entries to the Picture the Heath Competition and the Children Art Competition. Prizes were awarded at the end of the day and some visitors went home with beautiful works of art to adorn their homes and items from the craft stalls. Passers by greatly enjoyed the canvas murals painted by local artists and primary school classes, which were on display in Keats Grove for the whole of the Festival.

On 23 and 24 June in the garden, there were three performances of *Macbeth* by touring company Drama Impact. This was their fourth visit. This time, they performed in the round to great dramatic effect with witches appearing from behind the audience and a swashbuckling sword fight.

On 25 June, the Family Garden Party was delightfully chaotic, with a pirate and a fairy,



Hampstead's Art Street murals



Jama Elmi opening the Festival



The Big Fair on Heath Street



The family garden party

courtesy of Mystical Fairies, leading the little ones from face painting to rhyme-time; Tom Grubb, the magician; and the grand finale, a ballet performance by pupils of the Rona Hart School of Dance.

Finally on 2 July, the Big Fair returned to the delight of local businesses, stallholders and visitors. We had so missed the Circus School for Kids, UCS's Sportzone and – a highlight for everyone – the music stage with North Bridge House Choir, Babs Savage, Wasted Youth and the ever-rocking Mad Dogs Bites. We had fine weather and the Big Fair was a perfect summer day out.

An important aspect of the Festival is its raising £21,000 for two very popular local charities, Hampstead School of Art and Keats Community Library, both of whom, like many charities, are struggling with increased costs.

The Festival organisers deeply thank Keats House and Heath teams for allowing us to use the garden, lending us equipment, and, for caring so beautifully for the garden for everybody's enjoyment. Thanks too to Camden for their support. Lastly, we could not put on the Festival without the sponsors Osbornes Law and Stella Lange; we cannot thank you enough.

We need more volunteers to organise the Festival next year. It is a small but very friendly and efficient team. If you can help, please contact els@stellalange.co.uk

We look forward to seeing you all at the Fair in 2024!



The witches in Macbeth



Ballet performance by pupils of the Rona Hart School of Dance

Thanks to our sponsors

**Keats Community Library and Keats House,
Keats Grove, NW3 2RR**



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School of Art**



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Death of Hampstead Heath manager Declan Gallagher

by Nathalie Raffray

This is the article which appeared on 17 May 2023 in the Ham & High regarding the death of Declan Gallagher. The Ham & High has kindly permitted its reprinting in this Newsletter.



Declan Gallagher. Photo courtesy: City of London Corporation

Declan Gallagher's death at the age of 56 on 30 April, shocked both those who worked with him and the public. He was operations manager for City of London Corporation (CoLC), which runs Hampstead Heath, where he was described as a "fixture".

Chair of the CoLC's Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee, William Upton KC, said:

I can't quite believe that Declan is no longer with us. His positive attitude, quiet humour, wise words, and long, invaluable experience will be greatly missed. He put his heart and soul into his job and we have all benefited from his many years with the City Corporation. Declan's legacy lives on in the exceptional open spaces he was so dedicated to maintaining, and in the fond memories of his colleagues and of all those involved with looking after the Heath, who so valued his friendship and support.

In a joint statement, his colleagues at the corporation said:

We are still in shock after the sudden passing of our dear friend and colleague, Declan. He was passionate about Hampstead Heath and was one of the most kind, generous, funny, and genuine people we have had the pleasure of working with. In the 17 years he worked and lived on Hampstead Heath as operations manager, he was dedicated to ensuring it was safe, clean, and welcoming for millions of people to enjoy. He was an exemplary manager to his team and led with compassion,



understanding, and humour. And he was highly respected in the green spaces sector, becoming a judge in the national Green Flag Award scheme. Our thoughts are with his family and in particular his three lovely sons, who he was so proud of, at this difficult time.

In his spare time, Mr Gallagher enjoyed refereeing rugby matches, and he died after breaking his leg in a sporting accident.

Michael Hammerson, vice president of the Highgate Society, described him as a “great guy” and said his death was a “dreadful shock”, adding, “We are all very sad about it.”

Friends John Etheridge and Helen Payne have set up an informal crowdfunding page to support Mr Gallagher’s grieving family.

Helen, secretary of Friends of Kenwood, said: “Declan was such a lovely person and so well known. He so much had the interest of the whole of Hampstead Heath at heart and worked so hard to make it such a great place.”

Musician John, who worked with him on the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee, added:



I’ve known Declan on the Heath for years and he was always very friendly. He was one of the fixtures and one of the people I really related to as he cared about the Heath and was involved in issues and doing his best for the Heath, which is quite a struggle in modern times. We very much appreciated him and it was an incredible shock he went like that. He’ll be really missed on the Heath as he was one of the people we used to see around and was very involved.

Declan Gallagher leaves three sons.



Declan Gallagher remembered by his colleague and friend

by Paul Maskell

Declan's colleague and friend, Paul Maskell, the Heath's Leisure Events and Communications Manager, remembers a truly special person.



Colin Gregory, Richard Gentry, Paul Maskell and Declan Gallagher

Declan had 17 years of service with the City. In all this time, he dedicated himself to the Heath and North London Open Spaces. Indeed, he put his heart and soul into his work. For him, it was a genuine calling to represent and serve his user groups. This included the Society and his many varied and interesting customers and stakeholders he would invariably come across on his travels across the Heath.

When he first came to North London Open Spaces, he faced several difficult problems. With his positive attitude and extensive experience, he was instrumental in maintaining the highest of standards in North London Open Spaces.

Declan was deeply passionate about his work and immensely proud of the Heath and all the other open spaces he managed, including Queen's Park, Golders Hill Park and West Ham Park.

Many improvements over the years were delivered because of Declan's hard work and determination, starting from the stumpery in Golders Hill Park at the beginning of his career, to the more recent projects such as the renovations of the playgrounds at the Heath Extension. He

was also involved in the transformation of the sport facilities, including the cricket pitches at Parliament Hill and West Ham Park, and the Athletic Track at Parliament Hill.

We often worked together on many projects. He was always a joy to work with. Declan was a great listener, a critical friend, and someone who thought out a problem scientifically weighing up the challenge and methodically coming to a solution: a clever guy!

Declan was also a judge for the Green Flag award. He was very experienced in horticulture and grounds maintenance. He was extremely knowledgeable in all the operations needed to maintain our wonderful green spaces to the highest standards. Declan managed a wider team of dedicated staff. Under his leadership and for every year he was here, the Heath, Queen's Park, and West Ham Park received the Green Flag and London in Bloom awards. He was an exemplary manager and a fabulous leader.

Born in Belfast, Declan came from a challenging background. Life was not easy for him as a boy. Later, he put in a huge effort to do good. He was a

man of faith and a supporter of lost causes, which he always went the extra mile to support. There are many stories of the help he gave to staff, friends and complete strangers giving up his time to mentor troubled souls and being there to provide help with a difficult problem.

Declan, *my friend*, was a lovely man who touched the heart of so many. He had a twinkle in his eyes, a reflective soft Irish brogue automatically endearing him to friends and foes alike. He had charm, warmth and a loving, caring nature.

His funeral was testament to the number of people who loved and respected him. I was fortunate and honoured to be asked to say a few words. How lucky was I to say a prayer for such a man?

He was highly thought of by staff and stakeholders, including the Society, local Friends groups such as QPARA (Queen's Park Area Residents Association) and Friends of West Ham Park, Friends of Kenwood, the Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust, Heath Hands, and many other local groups. He was also respected by the Members

of both the Consultative and Management Committees, local councillors from Camden, Haringey, Barnet, Brent, and Newham, alongside many other local sport clubs and organisations.

He had a great love of rugby, particularly any game being played by Ireland. He ended up being a lauded and much thought of referee, respected by players and officials alike.

His early passing was a shock for all: staff, friends, his lovely three children and his extended family.

Recently, with the new structure and new appointments to North London Open Spaces, I have thought a lot about him and his loss. I hear his wise words counselling me to enjoy every minute we work in such a green and pleasant land.

I was indeed fortunate to have the friendship of a man such as he. So kind, generous and with a great sense of humour. I miss him terribly. I will cherish his memory and our times together, probably over a beer and occasionally a large glass of Jameson Irish Whiskey.

Go well Declan.

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.



St John's Downshire Hill today

Celebrating 200 years at St John's Downshire Hill

by the Reverend Tom Watts, Senior Minister

St John's Downshire Hill celebrates its bicentenary this year and the Reverend Tom Watts provides a very interesting overview of the church's history.

The year 1823 witnessed a number of remarkable creations. Among them, an iconic moment in sports history unfolded as William Webb Ellis, "took the ball in his arms and ran with it," marking the birth of rugby football. Ludvig van Beethoven spent most of the year hard at work on the composition of his illustrious ninth symphony, which would be published the following year. Meanwhile in Hampstead, at that time

a developing settlement on a hill overlooking London from the north, the inaugural services were held at the recently constructed St John's Downshire Hill.

Having begun as a small Saxon village, Hampstead grew as people left the City following the Great Fire in 1666. During the 18th century, the village became a spa town for people to visit and to take the waters on and around what is now Well Walk. By the 19th century, Hampstead was an increasingly popular place for wealthy Londoners to move to, and developers took the opportunity to plan new houses and streets.

At that point, the area around what is now Downshire Hill was known as Red Lion Hill and was largely farmland associated with a nearby farm.

As today, with plans for new houses came consideration of essential amenities, including churches. Until 1823, the only church in the area was the Parish Church of St John-at-Hampstead, now referred to as Hampstead Parish Church. In those days, when new churches were built, they often began life as proprietary chapels or chapels of ease. These were paid, and subsequently owned, by a private individual instead of the Church of England. Pew rent funded their day-to-day ministry.

In 1812, William Coleman bought the site of St John's Downshire Hill from Lady Maryon-Wilson of the Manor of Hampstead. In 1817, the Reverend James Curry, who was the primary provider of the funds; Edward Carlisle, a lawyer; and William Woods, the builder, collectively purchased the site.

As a builder, Woods was already interested in developing the Downshire Hill area and his task was made easier with a quantity of bricks available from both old brickfields in the area and from a local farmhouse with its dependent cottages and farm buildings. The name St John's Downshire Hill derives from the parish church, St John-at-Hampstead. Today this often causes confusion with visitors to Hampstead looking for either church and finding the wrong St John's. It was common to name a new chapel of ease in an existing parish.

On 26 October 1823, the first service took place in the newly built church. By this time, James Curry had died. The Reverend Dr Henry Worsley became the owner of the building and, as such, he had the right to nominate new ministers. The Reverend William Harness, who had become a lifelong friend

of Lord Byron while at Harrow School, was licensed as the first minister.

As an aside, Worsley's name became significant locally: the bottom half of nearby Pilgrim's Lane was called Worsley Road until the second half of the 20th century when local resident Michael Foot worked with others to unite the whole road under one name with a consistent numbering system for its houses.

The ministry at St John's Downshire Hill has always been evangelical, focusing on preaching the message of Jesus Christ's life and death from the Bible. Before the church was built, the 18th century evangelist, George Whitefield, had preached at Hampstead on what is now Preacher's Hill, facing the bottom of Pilgrim's Lane. Whitefield's ministry had an influence on ministers at St John's, including the Reverend John Wilcox who purchased the chapel in 1832, and built a school on Downshire Hill, now numbers 14a and 14b.

The Reverend Dr Samuel White, who was the perpetual curate or vicar of the parish church, opposed Wilcox's appointment as minister. In 1819, John Keats wrote about White in a letter. Keats described him as, "the parson at Hampstead quarreling [sic] with all the world".

The opposition seems to have been a mixture of disapproval of Mr Wilcox's evangelical ministry and social snobbery. Despite having been a scholar at Oxford, Mr Wilcox was the son of an innkeeper from Gloucester, while Dr White was a public-school gentleman who had been nominated to the living of Hampstead Parish by his father, the patron of the benefice.

St John's Downshire Hill was on the verge of leaving the Church of England altogether after the Bishop of London's Consistory Court of Arches upheld the

Celebrating 200 years at St John's Downshire Hill (cont)

right of Dr White to oppose the appointment. For a short period, public worship ceased. A petition calling for the court to overturn its decision was hastily put together and signed by influential neighbours such as Lord Galloway, Lord of the Manor of Belsize, and Sara Coleridge, daughter of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who lived on Downshire Hill at the time. It was not successful. Shortly after that, however, Mr Wilcox died. A different minister was proposed by the church's trustees, the stand-off ended, and authorised Church of England ministry continued at the church.

In the second half of the 19th century, the surrounding area continued to see significant development and growth in population. As before, new churches were needed and parish boundaries were redrawn. It was

common for churches which began as proprietary chapels to be upgraded to full parish church status to meet the needs of the local area. St John's Downshire Hill, however, was considered too small, seating only a few hundred people compared to the many hundreds who could fit into the larger parish churches being built in the area.

Throughout its history, the members of St John's Downshire Hill's congregation have been keen to maintain its distinctive evangelical identity and at that time they were concerned conversion to full parish status could be a threat. As a result, the parish boundaries were redrawn and St John's found itself within the parish of St Stephen's Hampstead. St Stephen's is the building still



The interior of St John's Downshire Hill before restoration



The interior of St John's Downshire Hill after restoration

standing at the top of Pond Street. Public worship ceased at St Stephen's in 1977.

The parish in which St John's Downshire Hill now stands is formally known as *St Stephen's with All Hallows' Hampstead*, and the parish church is All Hallows' in Gospel Oak. To this day, St John's Downshire Hill remains a proprietary chapel. It is the last one left in the Diocese of London, from which it is still entirely financially independent.

The 20th century saw a series of ministers who successfully upheld the church's distinctive identity. Of particular note were the Reverend Dr Jakob Jocz (1947-1956), later Professor of Systematic Theology at Wycliffe College, Toronto, and the Right Reverend Kenneth Howell (1972-1979), previously the first Bishop of the Diocese of Chile, Bolivia and Peru.

Significant work on the building took place at various points. There was a major crisis in 1896 when the main chapel was declared dangerous after part of the ceiling had fallen down and the south wall was found to be leaning perilously. Services in the building ceased. For a short time, the church was offered for sale by the trustees at a figure of £2,280. Mercifully, no offers were received and restoration work took place costing £1,759. Further renovations were necessary in the late 1960s, this time costing £20,000 to redecorate the interior which had been neglected and to deal with dry rot in the roof trusses which was spreading to timber and brickwork.

More recently, in 2003-2004, the church underwent a major £2.5 million building project. The building needed underpinning because, once again, the walls had begun to separate themselves from the roof and the entire building was gradually sliding down the hill. This major work, taking careful account of the building's Grade I listed status, and funded by generous donations from within the church and

the local community, enabled the construction of a modern undercroft for use by children's and youth groups and other local community activities. The original box pews were restored and moved to the sides, leaving a flexible central space where chairs can be arranged as needed for different services, concerts and events.

In 2023, St John's Downshire Hill looks back with thankfulness on 200 years of God's faithfulness in this community. We give thanks for the vision of our founders for a distinctive Christian witness in Hampstead, and thank God He has enabled that vision to be realised for two centuries. Hampstead is now a thriving and diverse area reflecting the global city into which it has been absorbed. We seek to take every opportunity we are given to serve our community, looking forward with hope to the future as we strive to be "living for Jesus, sharing His good news".

Services at St John's Downshire Hill take place every Sunday at 10:30am and 6:00pm. In celebration of the 200th anniversary, there are several events planned in the autumn to which all in the local community and beyond are invited:

Sunday 5th November 10:30am: Anniversary Service followed by lunch. All welcome – please pre-book for the lunch via website below

Saturday 18th November: An exhibition featuring the work of local artists who are part of St John's Downshire Hill. Selected works of art and refreshments on sale. Entry free. Exact timings will be on the website nearer the time

For the latest information about these and other events please visit www.sjdh.org/sjdh200



New Buildings (now Court), Flask Walk

Working-class Hampstead: Philanthropic housing 1854 to 1914

by David Castle

David Castle, Chair of the Planning Sub-Committee, provides another very interesting overview of how Hampstead's architecture changed in terms of cultural habits and responses to real human need.

Many liberal Victorians were concerned with, and attempted to improve, the appalling housing conditions of Londoners. Living conditions had been worsened by the rapid increase in population and there were many people living in absolute poverty with little hope of permanent work. Until 1889 when local authorities were given the power to build dwellings for the poor to rent, i.e. council housing, only individuals or philanthropic companies were providing dwellings, mainly flats, at a reasonable rent.

While it is true many companies aimed to give a 4% to 5% return on these types of buildings, many later found repairs and improvements made them unprofitable. Thomas Barratt in the *Annals of Hampstead*, published in 1912, comments in Appendix 2, that in Hampstead charitable giving by individuals was “not generous”. Surprisingly, in a very thorough list of all charitable giving, he does not include the considerable gift by Hugh Jackson in 1854 and 1871 of 40 flats and possibly also a reading room.

Hampstead village had areas of insanitary slums and, to the credit of a few philanthropists, blocks of flats were built in the village between 1854 to 1914 specifically for “artisans” and the “labouring poor”. The number of flats provided charitably in Hampstead up to 1914 was the not inconsiderable total of 162.

Most of the flats were four to five stories high with communal stairs open to allow “clean” air to circulate in the access areas for reasons of hygiene. Each flat

had only one, two or, occasionally, three rooms of a reasonable size with large windows. The main room would be equipped with a cooking range, a cupboard and a coal store, the other(s) with a fireplace.

Coal was the only source of energy for heating and cooking. A shared water closet and a scullery were provided on each floor. From the beginning, the sharing layout was always disliked by residents. Usually, there was a separate wash-house and drying area.

The rent for a one room dwelling was about three shillings (around 15 pence) per week, with immediate eviction if unpaid. Only those in regular employment or with a steady income could afford the rent. As a result, many people were condemned to the crowded, insanitary, dangerous conditions of a slum or a rookery or, even worse, the mean, prison-like workhouse.

New Buildings (now Court), Flask Walk

These buildings are one of the first philanthropic blocks of flats in London and the first in Hampstead. They are comprised of 30 flats built in 1854. A further 10 were built in 1871, provided by Hugh Jackson, solicitor. This remarkable building has lasted 169 years and is the only philanthropic block in Hampstead still in the same use. The dwellings are listed as Grade II by Historic England with a full description plus additional comments and photographs.

When New Buildings were built, Downshire Hill had been completed. The rest of Hampstead village was still surrounded by the Heath and fields and was still separated from London.

The 1871 census shows all flats were occupied by artisans and their frequently large families.

Working-class Hampstead: Philanthropic housing 1854 to 1914 (cont)



Wells Buildings, Oriel Place

Gardeners, labourers, plumbers, builders, coachmen and police sergeants are typical heads of household. The occupancy rate varied from one to eight people. For instance, Flat no. 18 was occupied by James Diamond, age 30, and a gardener. Also living there were his wife, three sons and three daughters, with ages from six months to seven years! It is not clear if this large family existed in two or three rooms and, irrespective, it was clearly overcrowded. It is noticeable many of the older children were working to support the family.

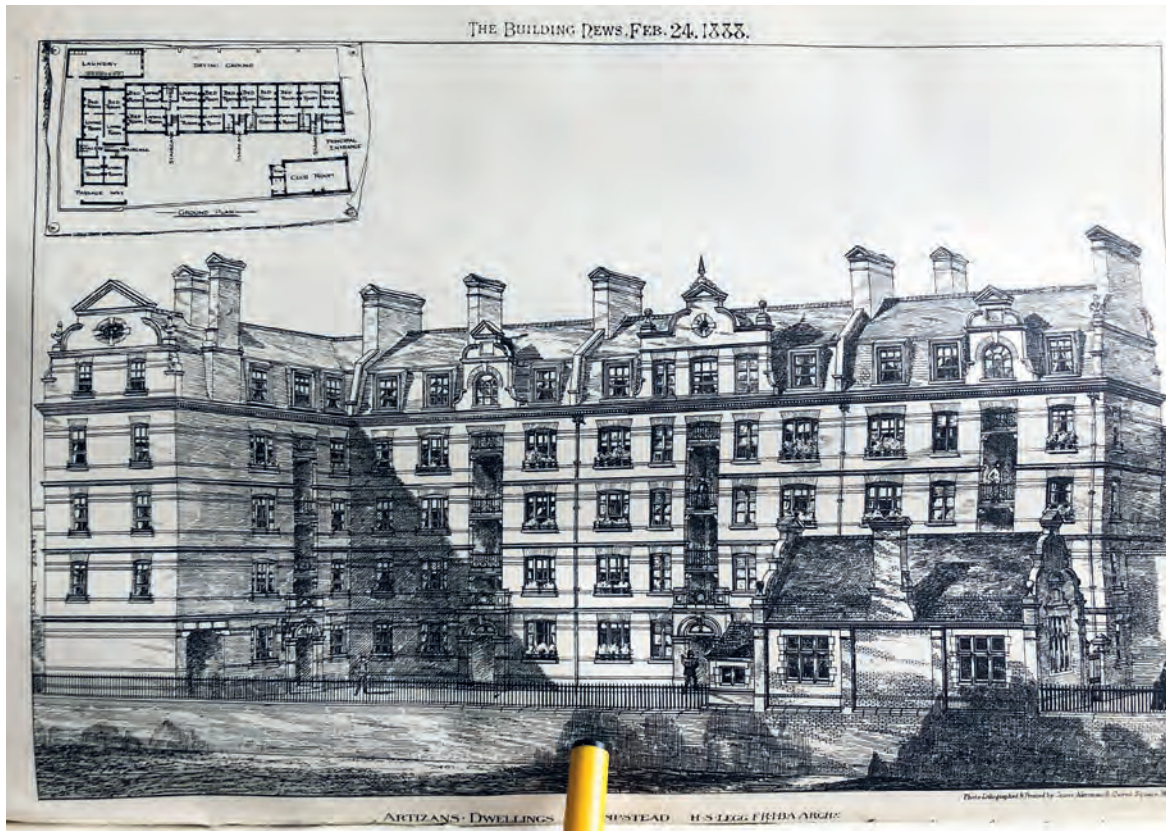
This recent photo shows how well these flats have

lasted. The stairs, which are still open to the air, give access to two flats on each landing. The large, pleasant, landscaped entrance court was paved, presumably, and sized very generously compared with the other early philanthropic flats of the 1850s. The facades too have been carefully detailed.

Wells Buildings, Oriel Place

The Wells Building contains 32 flats built in 1876 by the Wells Charity Trust. The design is plain and functional, unlike the Campden Buildings of 12 years later. The whole building was taken over by

Working-class Hampstead: Philanthropic housing 1854 to 1914 (cont)



Campden Buildings

Camden in 1968 and modernised with a lift and the enclosure of the stairs. In 2020, the flats were sold, extended and modernised. The flats are no longer in public ownership.

Five stories high with one open stair and, unusually, short internal corridors leading to the 32 flats. There were 14 with only one room at 3/6p rent per week, 14 with two rooms at 5/6p per week and only four with three rooms at 7 shillings/week. An open space was provided at ground level, together with a wash-house and large accessible drying area at roof level. The open space is now a public open space.

Campden Buildings

Campden Buildings was comprised of 62 flats and built in 1888 by the Wells and Campden Trust. Unlike the Wells Buildings, the design was carefully composed and was published in the Building News of February 1888. Today, it is very probable such a building would have been carefully modernised, not demolished as it was in 1968.

Built when the Hampstead Town Improvements were carried out and Heath Street was driven through the narrow alleys and courts, the building was taken over

Working-class Hampstead: Philanthropic housing 1854 to 1914 (cont)

by Camden Council in 1968 and demolished. Council flats were built on the site in 1971.

The buildings were five stories high, in five blocks each, with a separate open stair. There were 18 flats with one room, 31 with two rooms and 13 with three rooms. All flats shared toilets and sculleries. A separate wash-house was also provided at the rear.

Grove Place flats

Grove Place flats are comprised of 28 flats built in 1914, provided by Herbert Marnham. They were built 24 years later than the first council flats. They were sold to private owners in the 1960s. Times changed and the access stairs were enclosed.



Sold: Grove Place Flats, New End

Herbert Marnham was a noted philanthropist, President of the Baptist Union and Mayor of Hampstead in 1925-26. He is also reputed to have provided four flats in Streatley Flats, a small two-storey building in Streatley Place.

Summary

From 1889 to 1914, the London County Council started a large building programme providing subsidised rental flats and cottages in inner London intending to reduce the many large areas of slums. During that same period and specifically in 1905, Hampstead Borough Council provided only 42 flats at a subsidised rent. These were located at Park Dwellings, Lower Cross Road, which is now Garnett Road.

From 1854 to 1914, a total of 162 flats were built charitably for the working class of Hampstead. Of these, 94 were provided by the Wells and Campden Trust. Originally, the trust began with a donation of six acres of Heath in 1698 by the Hon Susanna Noel.

During the last 20 years of the 19th century, the central government gradually began to address the needs of the working class. For instance, in 1880, the government legislated for compulsory education for children ages five to 10. Then in 1889, for subsidised rental housing. And the first government pension for the over 70s came into force in 1908. Surprisingly, the workhouse system for the old and infirm continued until 1930.

For further information and reading, the "Five Per Cent Philanthropy" in *Camden History Review*, No. 9, contains a summary of philanthropic dwellings in Camden and a history of the movement.

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Walking and image-making at Hampstead's Pergola

by Tim Edensor

Tim Edensor is Professor of Social and Cultural Geography at Manchester Metropolitan University. He is also a Hampstead resident. His original piece on the Pergola was published in an academic journal. We believe the story deserves a wider audience. This adaptation allows all of us to look at the history, social value and use of the Hampstead Pergola.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many Londoners sought a temporary escape from lockdown by walking around their neighbourhoods. In so doing, they perhaps became newly acquainted with their

surroundings, attending to formerly unnoticed features and wandering down hitherto unexplored byways. These widely shared experiences have renewed incentives to produce environments specifically designed for walking that draw pedestrians along lightly regulated, interesting, aesthetic and socially inclusive routes.

Walking elicits well-being, is beneficial to mental and physical health, constitutes a practical means of travelling, fosters acquaintance with place, offers an occasion for rumination and companionship, and





opens the body up to sensation. Walking is integral to everyday life; accordingly, it seems critical that urban designers and planners should develop more sensorially stimulating walking spaces that encourage sociability, conviviality and encounters with different folk, as they once did. Londoners are magnificently bestowed with numerous parks and canalside walks but specific forms of architecture solely designed for walking are uncommon, such as the piers and promenades that became popular as holidaymakers flocked to Britain's seaside resorts in the late 19th century. In recent times, older urban features have been repurposed for pedestrian use. The medieval city walls of Chester and York offer enticing circular walks, while New York's High Line, Chicago's

Bloomingdale Trail and the Paris Promenade Plantée are innovatively designed walkways created on disused elevated railways. In exploring how landscape architecture might rekindle enthusiasm for creating inventive pedestrian structures, I focus on the glorious Hampstead Pergola, an exemplary design that contemporary landscape architects might emulate.

Translated as 'a close walk of boughs,' a pergola is formed by a linear walkway in which pillars support crossbeams and latticework covered in climbing plants that shade pedestrians. Pergolas were adopted by Greeks and Romans as structures in which to rest and entertain, and during the Italian Renaissance, they served desires for imposing orderly geometric

Walking and image-making at Hampstead's Pergola (cont)



subdivisions and enclosed spaces. The golden age of the British pergola was the Edwardian era in which wealthy industrialists and landed aristocrats funded creations to provide spaces for leisure, sociability, sensuality and to display affluence, as epitomised by the Hampstead Pergola.

In 1904, William Lever, Lord Leverhulme, doyen of the Lever Brothers soap company, purchased the Hill, a large Edwardian mansion on Hampstead Heath as a London base for his political activities. The hugely wealthy, energetic Lever, champion of free trade, trade unionism, universal suffrage and the British Empire, became a Liberal Member of Parliament for Wirral between 1906 and 1909, and in 1911 was made a baronet. It also offered opportunities to satisfy another of his passions, garden design, and he recruited the eminent Thomas Mawson to create a 245-metre-long pergola.

Leverhulme created luxuriant estates for himself, his workers and the public. At Rivington near Bolton, Lever's hometown, Mawson created a vast landscape of moorland, woodland, lakes, terraced gardens, shelters and pavilions, criss-crossed with extensive paths and steps. Retaining 45 acres for his own use, Lever donated 345 acres to the people of Bolton. His best-known project, Port Sunlight on the Wirral, housed workers at his adjacent soap factory. Inspired by arts and crafts designs and garden city principles, the village included an art gallery and library but no pub. In contrast to these paternalistic endeavours, the Hill Gardens and Pergola, surrounded on all sides by the public land of Hampstead Heath, were intended solely for Lever's use, to serve as a private venue at which to stage meetings with politicians, business associates, investors and employees, as a setting for popular garden parties and as a pleasing walkway along which he could undertake exercise.

Located on a high, sandy rise, The Hill overlooks a thickly wooded area of the Heath to the south that conceals the city beyond. Lever cannily organised to be paid for the soil from the excavations from the construction of the new Northern Line underground railway that passed through Hampstead to fashion level lawns and produce a panoramic view that would stand above the public land below. The Pergola was constructed in three distinct phases. Between 1905 and 1906, the long section from south to north encloses the Hill House and gardens and changes direction twice. Along its length, evenly spaced timbers occasionally swell upwards to form domed latticed ceilings, supported by stone columns bounded by lateral trellised walls on the north side. On the southern side, the stone pathway is bordered by balustrades overlooking the sharp drop to well-stocked gardens. The second phase was initiated between 1911 and 1914, a short section consisting of a flight of steps up to a small domed temple built on a bridge underneath a public path, the purchase of which was denied to Lever. Third stage, between 1917 and 1920, continued westwards from the bridge for a further 100 metres. Possessing a double Doric colonnade sculpted from Portland stone, the path is now typified by the climbing plants that thickly colonise the columns and the original, decaying timbers, and deceptively appears to be the most venerable part of the Pergola. The colonnade leads to a summerhouse and terminates at a belvedere that offers a scenic view of Harrow-on-the-Hill, six miles away.

Following Lever's death in 1925, the Hill and gardens were purchased by Andrew Weir, Baron Inverforth, ship owner and president of Marconi companies. After Weir's death in 1955, the house served as a convalescent home. In 1989, the Corporation of London claimed ownership of the property. Much of the stonework, pillars and wood had disappeared

or collapsed, with many timbers twisted and rotted beyond repair. In 1992, renovation began. The lower floor was solidified with concrete, drainage improved, damaged brickwork refaced, ornamental arches replaced and balustrades rebuilt. A steel trellis was crafted to separate the now public Pergola from the still private Hill House and its lawns. 2,200 cubic feet of French oak – equivalent to 300 trees – was imported to reconstruct the overhead beams and a planting scheme followed details from a 1912 issue of the *Gardeners Chronicle*, installing climbing plants including *pyrus japonica*, jasmines, clematis, crimson rambler, wisteria, rambling roses, honeysuckle, magnolia and flowering almond.

The Pergola has been admirably restored as a form of landscape architecture devised for walking, designed to arouse particular ways of walking through and sensing surrounding space, although much contemporary strolling is informed by different cultural practices to those performed in Lever's era. In Victorian times, many bourgeois public parades were undertaken to exhibit gentility through the display of fashionable dress, comportment and gait, performing perambulatory conduct that the lower classes might emulate. However, a more culturally heterogeneous working class took over many public processional spaces, generating a democratic, convivial and expressive approach to urban walking. In seeking to reinstate bourgeois distinctions, more private institutional settings for pedestrianism were devised. The Pergola constituted one such exclusive realm. Imperial decline, political struggles for class and gender equality, and the looming shadow of the First World War threatened to shatter the romance of such idealised landscapes. Yet refined visions of afternoon tea on lawns and croquet continue to pervade contemporary cultural imaginaries as exemplified by a 1996 City of London Corporation pamphlet about

the Pergola that advises 'it is best not to hurry your stroll along its length – instead, imagine yourself into the role of a well-to-do Edwardian, with all the time in the world to saunter and savour its delights before returning to a Leverhulme garden party'. The author counsels that 'the return to twentieth century reality is something you may not want to rush'.

In the 21st century, despite the many joggers that run across the Heath, nobody runs here. Indeed, most pedestrians amble, sometimes stopping to smell the flowers or gaze at the vistas afforded by its multiple vantage points. The Pergola's recurrent pillars and covering beams provide a rhythmic consistency for walkers while exits and entrances, steps and bridges act to slow linear movement, producing a walking experience that combines repetition, surprise and variety. Family groups, couples and friends slowly wander, chatting, gazing and photographing each other. This is a venue for amiable, relaxed social interaction. Many visitors rest awhile, leaning on the balustrade or on one of the memorial benches that line the walkway, drinking coffee, reading, writing, sketching or daydreaming.

The skilfully created architectural and landscaped realm of the Pergola repudiates the imperative for instrumental transit and encourages multiple movements and stoppages, enhancing the sensory material and tactile pleasures of plants, stone and metal. The solid Portland stone balustrades are pleasing to lean upon, the even paving underfoot offers a generous bounce to the walking feet and iron gates and trellises provide an unyielding strength. There is a productive tension between architectural geometries and the cascades of unruly plants that grow, bloom and wither throughout the year. Rich botanical and floral aromas are pervasive, especially during spring and summer flowering, and autumnal decay. Sounds emanate from subdued

Walking and image-making at Hampstead's Pergola (cont)

conversations, rustling trees and mellifluous birdsong, besides the rasping corvids and mewing buzzards. The transformation of fresh spring and summer greenery into the browns and yellows of autumn and then to the skeletal arboreal forms of winter conveys the transitoriness of the year. Regular visitors become attuned to shifting intensities of rain, light, shadow, smell, wind, air, sound, and colour that play across the structure.

Thomas Mawson skilfully manipulated these elements to create a complex, theatrical and visually arresting experience of landscape, devised to produce a wealth of visual pleasures, a plethora of shifting views close at hand, in the middle distance, and towards the horizon. Views outwards are framed by pillars,

balustrades and overarching timbers, often fringed with branches and leaves. In the foreground, climbers weave through the trellises and beams, and where climbing plants are scanty the geometric patterns of the temples frame the sky; in bright sunlight they generate extraordinary patterns of shadow and light across surfaces. The view ahead reveals a succession of twists and turns, steps, cupolas and arches. A pause on the bridge or balustrade affords scrutiny of the gardens, the thick woodland and the Pergola's rectilinear zigzag, while the belvedere offers a dramatic, long-distance vista. Rather than soliciting a detached gaze or singular hierarchical viewpoint, vision is directed towards a proliferation of objects near and far, soliciting an intensified,



immersive engagement with landscape, as Mawson intended. Yet these pleasures stimulate contemporary modes of visual consumption and production that neither Lever and Mawson could have envisaged, for the Pergola's plethora of alluring sites and verdant backdrop profoundly inspires the composition contemporary photographic and filmic images.

At the Pergola, a wealth of amateur selfies, individual and group photographs, are taken, many doubtless thereafter posted on social media platforms. Others are more 'professional' photographs of musical performers, fashion models and actors. Most significantly, this is a stage for pre and post wedding pictures, predominantly of South Asian couples, who finely dressed and coiffed, adopt diverse poses to create idealised romantic images supercharged by their evocative location. The Pergola is also a well-used location for diverse video and cinematic projects. I have witnessed music videos being filmed of rock band, The Gulp, a rap artist and a female Asian pop star. In addition, the site has served as a setting for episode 3 of 'Joystick Generation,' a 2009 Channel 4 documentary series, Games Britannia, that features the presenter, Benjamin Woolley, wandering down the Pergola, its long series of frames acting as an unspoken metaphor for the sequential pathways down which Lara Croft, heroine of the *Tomb Raider* video game travels. It also features in two major feature films. In *The Danish Girl* (2015), at one point the camera pans out to reveal a digitally altered riverine landscape that supplants the trees that clothe Hampstead Heath. *Judy* (2019), starring

Rene Zellweger as ageing American movie icon Judy Garland, includes a brief autumnal scene.

Since its reopening as a public amenity, the Hampstead Pergola has attracted many thousands of visitors. First time visitors are often amazed, with many referring to the structure as one of London's hidden gems. The increased walking practices inspired during the lockdowns of the COVID-19 pandemic have promoted a new awareness about the values of walking that city managers, landscape architects, and urban planners must address. I have argued that the Pergola exemplifies how enticing, enduring and innovative designs for walking can be devised that foster urban sociability, enhance sensory experience and advance the imageability of the city through skilful framing. This Edwardian structure is an inclusive realm in which people may relax, socialise, rest, work, converse and dream throughout the year. Equally, the skilful design of the Pergola affords multiple visual delights that have made the site very popular amongst photographers and filmmakers of all levels of skill. In an era of social media in which the dissemination of memorable images can broadcast powerful place-images, such visual qualities seem especially valuable.

The academic article from which this adaptation is derived is Tim Edensor (2023) "Learning from Hampstead's Pergola: walking and image-making at a spectacular Edwardian structure". *Landscape Research*, 48(1), pp.120-133, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/01426397.2022.2141700>

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Heath Walks: 2023 – 2024

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 10.30am or 2.30pm (earlier 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.

At the beginning of each walk, you will be invited to make a donation (£5 is currently recommended) to help support future walks programmes and to promote the Society's activities generally. You will also be encouraged to become a member of the Society – one of England's oldest and most respected conservation societies – if you are not one already.

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 the walks organiser, Thomas Radice

mobile: 07941 528 034 or

email: hhs.walks@gmail.com

Further walks will be announced in the next Newsletter. Details of walk programmes will be available on the Society's website:

www.HeathandHampstead.org.uk

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

2023

5 November 10.30am (meet at **The Old Bull & Bush** in North End Way, NW3 7HE) *Laughter in the Landscape: comedy, humour in science, films, music, local links to actors, writers, theatre and the landscape*, led by Lester Hillman, academic adviser, writer, accredited tour guide and lecturer.

3 December 9.00am [NB EARLY START] (meet at **Burgh House**) *Birds of the Heath in Winter*, led by Pete Mantle, Member of the Society's Heath Sub-Committee.

2024

No walk in January

3 February 10.30am (meet at **Burgh House**) *The History of the Heath Ponds*, led by Marc Hutchinson, Chair of the Society and Secretary of the Hampstead Heath Winter Swimming Club.

3 March 10.30am (meet at **Kenwood West Lodge**, Hampstead Lane, at the entrance to the English Heritage car park) *The Final Piece of the Jigsaw: Kenwood House and its grounds saved from developers* – Arthur Crosfield and the First Earl of Iveagh, led by Thomas Radice, Trustee of the Society, member of the Heath Sub-Committee and Kenwood volunteer.

7 April 9.30am (meet at **Burgh House**) *Birds of the Heath in Spring*, led by Pete Mantle (see December).

