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The Heath & Hampstead Society

NEWSLETTER

January 2026

Vol 57 No 1



'Dog walkers in the snow'

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Front cover: The Society runs a regular photographic competition. To enter your photographs, just post them using the hashtag #myhampsteadheath to Instagram or Facebook. Mark Stubbings' image is the Society's current winner. Professional photographer and author, Matt Maran, is the Society's judge for the competition: A fabulous photo capturing everything a strong photo needs. Careful composition, beautiful light and depth. Mist always adds atmosphere and the figures give sense of scale. It's also a reminder of the rewards on offer for photographers who make an early start. See the Society's website for competition rules.

Chair's Notes

by Marc Hutchinson

Your Chair

As noted in previous newsletters, we are still searching for my successor as Society Chair. I realise this may just be a question of timing, with a possible candidate approaching retirement or semi-retirement and so becoming available for the role. So, I repeat my request to members that anyone who is potentially interested in taking on the role should contact me in confidence as a first step. My mobile number is 0776 882 7405 and my email address is marchutch54@gmail.com.

Town Sub-Committee

Andrew Haslam-Jones stepped down as chair of this sub-committee at last year's Annual General Meeting and sub-committee member Peter Kohl has kindly agreed to be its acting chair until a permanent chair can be found. Again, anyone interested in joining the sub-committee and taking on this role should likewise contact me in confidence.

Annual General Meeting – subscription rates

The resolutions proposed at our Annual General Meeting on 25 June 2025 for increased subscription rates were all passed and I am pleased to report no lack of membership renewals at the new rates.

Administration

The transfer of our records, accounts and database to the new XERO system was completed last year but I realise that there was, from members' point of view, some delay and disruption during this process. If any member has not had a satisfactory reply to a query or instruction about membership, may I ask that they email us at info@HeathandHampstead.org.uk.

Chair's Notes (cont)

Heath cafés

The City of London Corporation announced in December 2025 its intention to terminate, on six weeks' notice, the 45-year old tenancy, held by local firm D'Auria Bros, of the Heath cafés at Parliament Hill Fields and Golders Hill Park (and the tenancy of the Parliament Hill Lido held by Patrick Matthews and Emma Fernandez), and to grant a new tenancy of those three cafés to the Australian-based firm Daisy Green: www.daisygreenfood.com. Members have contacted us to complain about the secrecy of the tendering process and, now, the outcome.

I have had to remind members that we are not a general amenity organisation for the Heath and its users. We are the registered conservation charity for the Heath, and our charitable remit is in these limited terms:

“to preserve those parts of Hampstead Heath which are subject to section 16 of The Hampstead Heath Act 1871 in their wild and natural state, and also to preserve the natural and characteristic features of the later additions to the Heath, so far as is consistent with their enjoyment by the public.”

It follows that it was beyond our lawful remit to seek to interfere in or influence the City's commercial choice of tenant, although we repeatedly warned the City, for its own reputational sake, to respect the strength of public feeling on this matter and to give due weight (as the tender terms purported to do) to the preference for a local non-chain firm. The City's decision does not reflect that, as you will have read in the local press.

Daisy Green has 21 outlets in London (the food menus are more or less the same across them,

though very different from the current menus at the Heath cafés) but no North London or local connection whatsoever, being an international firm with an English annual turnover of £22.69m and plans for continuing UK and global expansion.

We also reminded the City of the utter fiasco of the last tender in 2016 when Belugo was formally selected and then, following public outrage at the selection of a chain, withdrew, with the D'Auria Bros' tenancy then being extended at will.

One certain consequence for cafe customers will be material price increases: to take some basic items, here are the relative prices (£) advertised by the two firms, D'Auria Bros/Daisy Green: coffee 3.00/3.60; tea 2.50/4.00; chips 3.50/5.90; fresh orange juice 3.50/5.70.

Changes to Heath funding model

We now, at last, have clarity on the funding changes being introduced for this year, as to which see the Heath Report on page 12.

Utter destruction of iconic views from Parliament Hill

May I draw you attention to the special report by Gordon Curtis, Chair of the Planning Sub-Committee, on page 7, which describes the forthcoming threat to the Heath and its openness? I foresee this will be the biggest battle for the Society, and local amenity groups, in the coming decade. We are in touch with, amongst others, the UK film industry over these shocking proposals.

Pentameters/Circle & Star

Although, as we reported, Pentameters Theatre was evicted last year from its premises on the first

floor of The Horseshoe Pub in Heath Street, a new theatre – Circle & Star (www.circleandstar.com) – has taken its physical place, owned, promoted and managed by Steve Furst, whose stage name is Lenny Beige. The new owner agreed a lease with UPB of the first floor and completely refurbished it for its formal opening on 8 December. We wish the new theatre every possible success and are delighted that the space has been saved for public entertainment.

Christmas Party – 9 December 2025

Another brilliant Christmas party was held at Keats House. It was by far the largest yet, and a measure of its popularity was that the alcohol ran out at 8pm, whereupon Keats House let us purloin its own wine cellar. Who knew that Keats has its own classy wine cellar?

May I take this opportunity to wish all our members a very happy and prosperous New Year, and to thank them and our 42 hard-working committee members for their support during the last successful year.

Elections to General Committee

Officers

The existing President, Chair, Secretary and Treasurer propose to stand for re-election.

Other members of the General Committee

If the above Officers are elected, there will be seven vacancies on the General Committee.

Existing member Dr Vicki Harding completed her first three-year term as an elected member and therefore is eligible to stand for re-election. The General Committee may, after the Annual General Meeting, resolve to appoint Frank Harding for a further one-year term as an appointed member.

The maximum number of members of the General Committee is 20. There is no constitutional requirement that these vacancies be filled

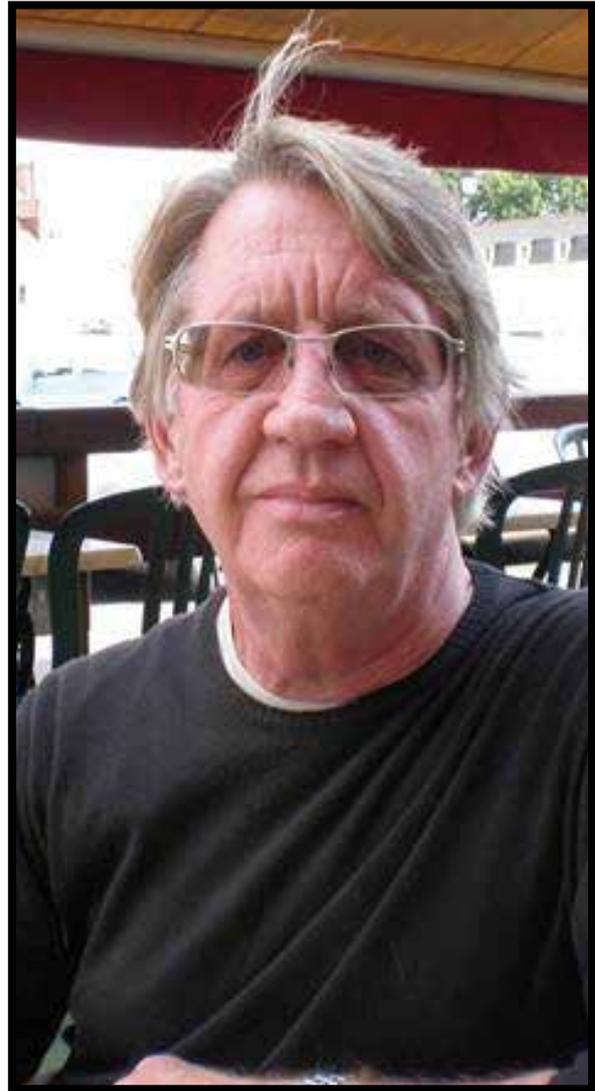
Any future resignations or changes to the above election proposals will be promptly announced on the Society's website.

Nominations for elections to the General

Committee must be received by the Society in writing **before 15 April 2026** in accordance with Rule 21(4) of the Society's constitution. The Society's constitution can be viewed on the Society's website.

Nigel Steward *in memoriam*

It is with great sadness that we learned in December of the sudden death of Nigel Steward. Nigel served the Society over many years in several different roles. From 1998-2006 he was the Society's representative on the Hampstead Conservation Area Advisory Committee. He became a trustee of the Society in 2006 and served on the General Committee until his retirement in 2017. During that time, he also served as the Society's Secretary from 2013 to 2017. Nigel practised as a solicitor and partner with the leading City firm Travers Smith, and his legal knowledge was of great benefit to the Society in a myriad of contexts. His volunteering activities were by no means limited to the Society; he was instrumental in the establishment of Keats Community Library and served for years on Hampstead Neighbourhood Watch. Nigel took over from me as Society Secretary shortly before I was elected as Chair in 2014 and, as the new Chair, I was always supported in countless ways by him, often behind the scenes. He had been such a prominent part of the Hampstead community for so long that there was almost nothing local upon which he could not advise and inform, not least because, in relation to the Heath, he maintained certain discreet connections with the City of London Corporation.



He will be much missed by the Society and its members, we remember his years of service with gratitude, and we all send our deepest sympathy to his widow Mary.

Town Report

by Peter Kohl

The Town Sub-Committee has continued to focus on streetscape, public realm, and local amenities over the autumn, working closely with our local councillors, Camden Council officers, local groups, and partner organisations.

Historic Hampstead street benches

As noted in the October 2025 Newsletter, the Society surveyed all the historic cast iron benches in the village, proposing to Camden Council a much-needed restoration programme. We are pleased to report Camden Council now has repaired and repainted the benches, sprucing up these popular heritage assets. The last significant restoration of our benches was in 1996, in a major project which also was initiated by the Society. The benches principally are of four or five-seat configurations, with each seat separated by decorated cast iron dividers. They were manufactured by Walter Macfarlane & Co's Saracen Foundry in Glasgow. Macfarlane's was the most important manufacturer of ornamental ironworks in Scotland, operating principally

from 1850 to 1967, and which at the height of its operations in the late 19th century was one of Glasgow's largest employers. The firm specialized in all types of architectural ironworks, including bandstands, drinking fountains, lamp standards and building and street ornaments.

We believe the benches were acquired and installed by the old Borough of Hampstead (pre-1965), although detailed historic information is spotty. If anyone has any other information relating to the history of our benches, please get in touch.

We would like to say special thanks to the Camden Highways Department, led by David Wells, and to Ward Councillor Stephen Starks for carrying forward this project.

Below are before and after photographs of one of the five-seater benches on Hampstead High Street.

Other streetscape and heritage initiatives

- Camden Council's pavement-widening scheme for Hampstead High Street between Perrins Court and



Before



After

Town Report (cont)

Perrins Lane, as reported in prior newsletters, has now been taken forward within Camden's Transport Strategy Department.

- Camden Council has also agreed in principle to repair Hampstead's historic lamp posts and tiled street signs, in projects initiated by the Society. The Society has surveyed all the historic lamp posts in Hampstead, identifying over 100 needing repair or refurbishment.
- Discussions with Royal Mail on the restoration of Hampstead's post boxes are ongoing; the Society continues to press for sympathetic repairs to these much-used local fixtures.

Well Walk triangle

Work is hoped to begin over the winter on the Well Walk "triangle" to create a new public green space in front of Burgh House and The Well Walk Theatre, including changes to traffic routing and improved pedestrian priority. The Society is working with Burgh House, The Well Walk Theatre and Camden Council officers to finalise the details for this enhanced public realm.

National Trust properties

As noted in the last newsletter, the Society (joined by Burgh House, The Well Walk Theatre and the Isokon Gallery) urged the National Trust not to follow through with a proposal to reduce the public opening days of Fenton House and 2 Willow Road. We are happy to report that the National Trust has confirmed opening times will remain unchanged in 2026.

Development at South End Green

- The Arch Company has applied to demolish the long-vacant former Monica's shop on the railway bridge at South End Green and replace it with a new building constructed over the tracks, a technically complex project to complete.
- Representatives of the Town Sub-Committee and the Planning Sub-Committee have met with local partners, including the Hampstead Neighbourhood Forum and South End Greening Group, to understand the proposal and its potential impact on the character and streetscape of South End Green.

Flood resilience and transport

- We applaud the efforts of the South End Greening Group and Ward Councillor Linda Chung to initiate and organise substantial improvements which have been implemented to address serious water drainage issues in the South End Road area. They have worked with Camden Council officers, the City (relating to run-off from the Heath) and Thames Water to successfully resolve complicated issues stemming, among other things, from the steep slopes converging in this area. The Society's Planning Sub-Committee also has advised on these efforts.
- Although the Town Sub-Committee has not been directly involved in the South End Road project, we have been in regular communication with the South End Greening Group and our colleagues on the Planning Sub-Committee, to learn from their experience so we can assist residents in other areas to address similar issues. We expect flood resilience will be an area of emphasis for our Sub-Committee in 2026 and beyond, to bring together and share the knowledge and expertise of various groups in Hampstead.
- The Hampstead Transport Partnership has been continuing its work to address traffic congestion and pollution and improve safety and efficiency on local streets, with a consolidated report expected in 2026.



Developer's image of the proposed film studios building

Planning Report

by Gordon Curtis

In recent newsletters, the Society drew attention to emerging development of high-rise buildings in Camden. The Society has been very concerned about the impact on views looking towards London from the Heath, and to the long-term effects on the natural aspects of the Heath. These developments are advancing towards realisation and are worrying.

The Society is particularly concerned about the sites

within a swathe of land to the south of the Heath. They form a continuous line starting from Murphy's Yard to the east, to Bacton House Tower to the west. In between these are Regis Road, The West Kentish Town Estate and Wendling and St Stephens Close Estate. Of these five sites, Camden Council owns three outright and a substantial part of the fourth. It has identified all five as suitable for high rise development in their new Local

Planning Report (cont)

Plan, specifically for buildings up to 52 metres high which is equivalent to 15 or 16 stories. In contrast, all surrounding land is subject to a 30 metre height limit, equivalent to eight or nine stories.

What we know so far

The Regis Road zone is the current focus, and is perhaps the most controversial of the five. Its development has been facilitated by the sale of Camden Council-owned land, and the area has been master-planned into three portions for separate but co-ordinated development. In November last year, the first planning application was submitted for the Camden Film Quarter, a commercial zone which boasts a 'vertical' film studio as an anchor building. This building is the equivalent of 22 stories high, and the surrounding buildings and the other two zones will be mainly housing and are similar heights.

The studio hub is simply an enormous building, and it is very difficult to disguise itself here, or in any location. It is 77 metres high, which is actually 15 metres higher than the peak of Parliament Hill. Within the context of a predominantly 19th century low-rise urban setting it appears as quite surreal.

Film studios require large hangar-like spaces and are usually single storey and located in sparsely populated areas. Substantial engineering and construction are required to stack such spaces vertically, which in turn expands the volume out further. This building type has only been attempted once so far: in New York City, where a two-storey studio is nearing completion.

In the October 2025 Newsletter, the Society reported on the planning application for The West Kentish

Town Estate site. This has since been granted planning permission by Camden Council. This site, which if built will increase density by nearly 300%, is generally eight storeys high, but with some towers up to 16 storeys high.

The Bacton area, as far as the Society is aware, is still being progressed with three new towers, one of which will be taller than the present 22-storey Bacton House. The old flats were demolished in 2018 and the land has been empty and behind hoardings ever since. This site previously had 99 flats arranged in low-rise blocks. The present proposal is for 447 flats on the same land.

The Society does not have further news on Murphy's Yard. The 2022 development proposals were withdrawn following public backlash for multiple reasons, significantly the concern over the height and density of the tall buildings being proposed. A revised proposal is imminent and the Society assumes developers are tracking decisions and outcomes on similar local schemes.

Other factors, which are influential, lie in upcoming decisions from the London Mayor's office on developments it has 'called in'. Archway is a notable example, having been refused permission by Islington Council last year, this decision will be re-evaluated by the Mayor's office in the spring. The Mayor has also revised the mandatory requirements for affordable housing, significantly reducing them for future large-scale housing developments. This will be implemented this spring and, for most developers, this is a concession worth waiting for. Consequently, some projects are on hold until the requirement is effective.



View from Parliament Hill with simulated view of developments. Key from left to right: white outline is the 2022 Murphys Yard proposal, dark pink is Film Quarter, pale pink is Regis Road housing, orange is West Kentish Town estate, light blue is Bacton phase 2. . Courtesy: Matt Maran, photo; AAB Architects, rendering

The cumulative effect

The Society is seeing the proposals for these sites being presented one at a time and as self-contained projects. The Society has been wondering why this is the case and why their cumulative impact has not been, and is not being, explored. Camden Council has, by means of altering its own guidance in its new Local Plan, consciously master-planned a large swathe of land largely within its own control and yet has not produced anything visual or a clear illustration of what this may look like. This is unusual: normally masterplans are accompanied by anything ranging from visual mock-ups to clear realistic images of a pending scenario. But this situation is also unusual where a developer is also largely its own planning authority.

The Society has enquired about this and, in the absence of answers, has taken matters into its own hands by assisting in the production of the images provided in this report illustrating the combined effect of these buildings on the landscape. What is shocking is not so much what will be seen, but what will be lost.

The risks and how to prevent irreplaceable loss

The panoramic views from Parliament Hill offer one of the best places anywhere to understand and appreciate the topography of London. The views show how the city is contained within a gentle bowl of hills, falling to the Thames basin and marked by the taller buildings and landmarks of the centre. The height and distance of the hill from the centre allow London's overall arrangement to be seen at a glance and landmarks related to each other. All of this is free and unrestricted.

For this reason alone, the Society must demand any impact on the views requires a thorough and commensurate examination. There now seems no doubt that some of these developments will progress and aspects from the Heath will change: new housing is needed and old buildings do not last forever. Whether development can be achieved, and how, without damaging the famous and wonderful views from the Heath needs to be the subject of intense consideration, more so than is currently taking place.



View from path below Parliament Hill with simulated view of developments. Courtesy: Matt Maran, photo; AAB Architects, rendering

It is interesting to note just how well these aspects are protected. Current national planning policy states development should be “sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.”

The Mayor’s plan includes views from the Heath as protected assets. The plan states “Boroughs should include all designated views, including the protected vistas, in their Local Plans and work with relevant land owners to ensure there is inclusive public access to the viewing location, and that the view foreground, middle ground and background are effectively managed.”

Its own guidance – the London View Management Framework -- sets out a number of views across London, including the Heath, where protection must comply with government directions.

Specific to Parliament Hill, the London plan highlights:

- “there are a number of outlooks on the hill... some of the best panoramic views are from the summit, towards the City;”
- “the panorama is sensitive to large-scale development in the foreground;” and
- “[d]evelopment in the foreground and middle

ground that is overly intrusive, unsightly or prominent to the detriment of the view as a whole should be refused.”

Turning to Camden Council’s own guidance, the revised Camden Local Plan identifies these sites as suitable for building heights of up to 52 metres high, with additional height possible subject to testing of impacts on strategic and local views. But these proposals, as indicated, are 77 metres high.

The Kentish Town Planning Framework states “views from Hampstead Heath towards central London are sensitive and will be an important consideration in order to protect the openness, character and enjoyment of this significant piece of Metropolitan Open Land.”

In relation to the development of Regis Road, the more recent addendum states:

- “Heights and massing should be carefully located, shaped, and designed to create a varied skyline, providing a cohesive approach that integrates with existing skyline characteristics;”
- “Views should be thoroughly tested, such as: long views from Hampstead Heath;” and

- “should be carefully considered regarding the potential location of tall buildings within the area to avoid any adverse impacts.”

Seeing the simulations produced above, it is difficult to agree this guidance has been adequately observed.

Conclusions: is this too much?

The Society understands Camden Council has a multitude of housing and regeneration problems and that this is a highly complex situation. The Council is financially stretched and faces massive and increasing demands from central government and its own day to day activities. The lack of its own resources forces the Council into the free market to seek partners. Those partners have their own demands as well. In an ideal world, state finance would be provided to wash away this problem for everyone – much as it was attempted in the mid to late 20th century – but we know that this is not going to happen, at least not now.

But coming back to the point, the Society is concerned about what is best for the Heath. As things stand, the Society challenges whether Camden Council has given due diligence to national and London-wide guidance and policy, or indeed their own, in relation to the Camden Film Quarter masterplan or indeed the whole swathe of land to the south of the Heath. The Society remains deeply concerned about the permanent harm inflicted on the amenities of the Heath and the loss of enjoyment to those who use it.

The Society’s concern is the apparent urgency for change does not lead to panic and that decisions made in haste will leave lifetimes of regret. To this end, the Society, along with many others, is campaigning for the rejection of the Camden Film Quarter building and a

reconsideration of the height and density of the adjacent housing schemes.

The Society is very grateful to Matt Maran for providing the photographs for these renderings and to AAB Architects for creating the modelling and montages. Alice Brown runs AAB Architects and campaigns for community-led and genuinely sustainable development.

Solar panels update

In the October 2025 Newsletter, the Society reported Camden Council proposed to amend permitted development rights to the Hampstead conservation area, specifically allowing solar panels to be installed on street-facing roofs and gardens. The Society is disappointed to report Camden Council has since passed the proposal.

The change may seem to be minor, but it goes to the heart of what the conservation area sought to preserve. The variety and prominence of roofscapes and chimneys are intrinsic to the special character, and the topography of Hampstead makes these all the more visible. It is a shame some of these buildings are now allowed to be altered indefinitely for such a small gain in energy production. The Society is surprised the proposal was approved despite Camden Council drawing several critical responses, and as far as the Society is aware, none in support. It appeared to have been a case of a pre-determined decision and a cursory consultation process.

The Society should perhaps clarify the scope of the changes. Permitted development is only applicable to houses. It is not applicable to houses divided into flats, blocks of flats or any type of commercial building. There are also limitations on the installation of equipment and new guidance is available on Camden Council’s website.

Heath Report

by John Beyer

Charities Review and future budgets

The Heath Sub-Committee representatives on the City's Hampstead Heath Management Committee and the Consultative Committee have been actively lobbying the City to ensure, when the transition to a grant funding model takes effect in April 2026, the Heath will have a realistic operating budget. The Society has been arguing the Heath charity should receive not just funding equivalent to recent levels, but funding which will take into account the current and future stress factors on the Heath, including: increased visitor numbers, crime on the West Heath and elsewhere, overstretched staff, and climate change. At the Management Committee in December 2025, it was agreed to approach the City's Finance and Resources Committee to obtain funding to recognize and address these challenges. The Society is cautiously optimistic the Heath will receive some increase in funding, with a budget fixed for three years to ensure stability.

The Society anticipates the City will increase this funding each year based on inflation, and carefully manage the transfer of responsibility for capital projects. Clearly it would not be easy for the Heath charity to raise the £4 million for restoration of the Pergola without central help from the City. We hope fundraising expectations for the Heath charity will be realistic.

In that context, the Society is delighted to welcome Susannah Behr as Head of Development and Partnerships. Susannah has deep experience in this specialized field, not least in that she was previously Senior Head of Partnerships at the Mayor's Fund for London. The Society looks forward to working with her.

At the same time, the Society said a fond farewell at the end of January 2026 to Jonathan Meares, the Heath's Head of Conservation, who has for so long been a champion of ecology on the Heath and a friend to the Society. There will be more details in the next newsletter.

Sexual activities on the West Heath: what you witness

The Heath Sub-Committee is concerned by the increase in crime associated with male-on-male sexual activity on the West Heath. Formerly, activity was relatively discreet, taking place after dark. Now, it has spread to daylight hours and is affecting the enjoyment of the Heath by walkers. There is drug use, not only in relation to sexual activity, but of a more general kind; there is evidence of drug dealing in the adjoining roads. Apart from social issues, there is a litter problem, including needles.

We would like to hear about what you witness in the area. Email info@HeathandHampstead.org.uk.

The sheep are making progress

September 2025 saw the return of a small flock of rare breed sheep for conservation grazing on the Heath Extension. The Norfolk Horn and Oxford Down ewes nibbled away once again at the rough foliage, especially on the anthills, where new mosses have begun to take hold. Our thanks to the London Natural History Society for "before and after" plant surveys, to Heath Hands for their help in recruiting shepherds and shepherdesses, and to Tom Davis from Mudchute Farm.



Jonathan Meares looks for wildlife beneath the Viaduct Bridge



Oxford Down inspects shepherdess Tereza Pultarova



Julius the shepherd checks details of Norfolk Horn

“Nature North London”

Jeska Harrington-Gould and Bianca Swalem have been working on an initiative to bring together a “group of groups” who are working on greening in

their own open spaces in the areas around the Heath. The idea is participants can use the network to learn from each other about the issues they face as individual organisations, whether it be how to work with their local councils or how to set up a hedgehog highway. There will be an initial meeting in April. Jeska is the founder of Growing Green, which among other activities fosters wildlife gardens in a number of North London schools.

”Saving the South”

Prof. Jeff Waage and Pete Mantle have been working with Gordon Curtis (Chair, Planning Sub-Committee) on the overall impact of developments across Camden which would affect the Heath. Camden Council should have done a Cumulative Impact Assessment given there are six or so large projects in a small area. The Society fears the blight to views from the Heath comes both from individual developments but even more so from the cumulative effect.

Moving into SPRING

Hampstead Heath and Kenwood, managed by the City of London Corporation and English Heritage, provide a treasure trove of nature experiences. In these seasonal boards, we highlight their rich biodiversity and show how landscapes are managed to restore nature and adapt to a changing climate.

Over fifty species of bird nest on the Heath every Spring. Why not make an early morning visit to hear the dawn chorus? Or a walk to find patches of Spring wildflowers in the woods and meadows?



Birds are nesting everywhere
Buzzards have returned to nest in the Heath woodlands after over a century.



What we love! Seasonal Highlights



Swains tending a new brood



Orange Tips waiting Cuckoo Flower



Grass Snakes coming out of hibernation



Clare Mining bee
Mining bees making burrows on sandy paths

Leaky dams in wet woodlands
Intense weather events can damage natural habitats. Barriers of wood and debris are created in streams for natural flood management. They also create habitats for wildlife and plants.






We protect dense scrub beside meadows for rare nesters like Common Whitethroat.

Be a nature-friendly dog walker!

In Spring, keep your dogs away from dense vegetation and undergrowth to protect nesting birds and hedgehogs.



In collaboration with:



Scan to learn more about biodiversity conservation and how you can get involved.



Biodiversity boards promote awareness

Prof. Jeff Waage will once again coordinate a new set of biodiversity boards for the entrances to the Heath for 2026–7. The Society is funding the boards once again, in view of the educational value of the points they convey. We are grateful for the active support of the key organisations involved: Heath Hands, English Heritage, the City of London Corporation, London Natural Wildlife Trust and the Marylebone Birdwatching Society.

Kites and concerts this year: Note these dates!

The Society looks forward to welcoming the Kite Society of Great Britain for more fun with kites on Kite Hill (Parliament Hill) on Sunday 28 June 2026.

The summer “Natural Aspect” concert returns to the bandstand on Sunday 30 November 2026.

The Society expects sheep back on the Heath Extension from Friday 11 to Monday 21 September 2026, and perhaps in June as well.



KITE DISPLAY AT PARLIAMENT HILL

Come and see members of The Kite Society of Great Britain give a spectacular display of the art of kite flying, with tricks and intricate routines accompanied by music, in the beautiful surroundings of the Heath

Sunday 28 June
Noon - 4 PM
Parliament Hill Fields



Supported by The Heath & Hampstead Society, The Kite Society of Great Britain,
Heath Hands and The City of London Corporation

FREE!

THE HEATH & HAMPSTEAD SOCIETY WITH
CITY OF LONDON CORPORATION PRESENTS
NATURAL ASPECT

SAVE THE
DATE!

SUMMER CONCERT
SUN 30 AUG
PARLIAMENT HILL BANDSTAND 1 TIL 5

**LIVE BANDS - COCKTAIL BAR
- BARBECUE - ICE CREAM -
DANCING - BRING A PICNIC!**

FREE
CIRCUS
WORKSHOP

JOIN US FOR A LIVE CELEBRATION OF
LOCAL CULTURE AND NATURE TO FILL
YOUR SUMMER WITH JOY!





**HAMPSTEAD
SUMMER
FESTIVAL**

2026

Art Street in Keats Grove

Giant canvasses by local artists and schools will be displayed again this year along Keats Grove throughout June and July

21st June Art Fair 12-5pm

A surprise celebrity will open the Festival in Keats House Garden. Art works by local artists and students of Hampstead School of Art, Picture the Heath competition entries, craft stalls of pottery, jewellery and designer clothes will dazzle – and tempt – visitors, who can also sit and enjoy the lovely gardens with a glass of wine and food. *Free Entry*

25th & 26th June at 7pm, 4th July 2pm & 6pm Northanger Abbey

The delightful Moving Parts Theatre Company will visit Keats House Garden again, celebrating Jane Austen's 250th anniversary with a new open-air dramatisation of her novel. Suitable for all ages. Bring a picnic or buy some refreshments on arrival. Tickets from www.eventbrite.co.uk

28th June Family Garden Party 2-5pm

A great afternoon for all the family. Birds of prey, face-painting, music, art activities, a magician, and ballet on the lawn. Afternoon tea and cake in the lovely grounds of Keats House. *Free entry*

5th July Big Fair 12-5pm

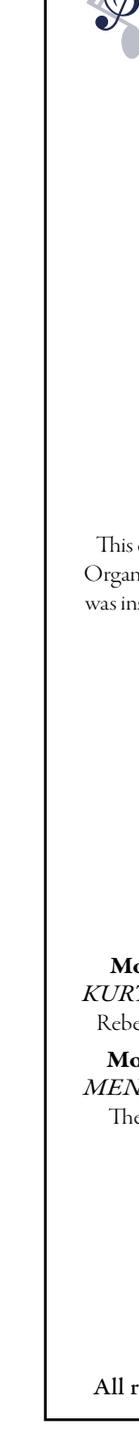
The Big Finale in Heath Street, over 100 stalls of “not-on-the-high-street” crafts, clothes, international food and drink, a kids’ circus school, funfair, and sport zone. The highlight of summer in Hampstead. Not to be missed. *Free!*

All the proceeds from the Festival are shared between Hampstead School of Art and Keats Community Library, two popular local charities

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU ALL!

www.hampsteadsummerfestival.com





Musical Events

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

Saturday 21st February 2026, 7.30 pm

MARTINDALE SIDWELL ANNIVERSARY CONCERT

Programme includes

BACH – BRANDENBURG CONCERTO NO. 5 IN D
PURCELL – ODE ‘COME YE SONS OF ART’
BRITTEN – FESTIVAL CANTATA ‘REJOICE IN THE LAMB’

Choir of Hampstead Parish Church / Orchestra of Period Instruments

Director – Geoffrey Webber

This concert marks the 80th anniversary of the appointment of the colourful and brilliant Martindale Sidwell as Organist and Director of Music. This is just a few days before what would have been his 110th birthday. Martindale was instrumental in reviving the standard of musical excellence at St. John-at-Hampstead that continues to this day

For further information visit: www.hampsteadparishchurch.org.uk/music/friends-of-the-music/



Sunday 22nd March 2026, 5.00pm

CHARLES WOOD – THE PASSION OF OUR LORD ACCORDING TO ST. MARK

Choir of Hampstead Parish Church / Director – Geoffrey Webber

A liturgical performance of the hour-long Passion by Charles Wood (marking the centenary of his death in 1926) (*Free admission*)

Ticket prices and names of soloists for the 21st February concert will be published on the website

THE HAMPSTEAD COLLECTIVE

Monday 12th January 2026, 7 pm
KURTAF 100 – KAFTA FRAGMENTS
Rebecca Hardwick: Tamsin Waley – Cohen

Monday 2nd February 2026, 7 pm
MENDELSSOHN – STRING OCTET
The Players of the Hampstead Collective

Monday 2nd March 2026, 7 pm
AGRIPPINA'S BETRAYAL
Rebecca Hardwick: Jacob Garside
The Players of The Hampstead Collective
Featuring music by Handel, Schutz and
Buxtehude

Monday 6th April 2026, 7 pm
PIANO RECITAL:
MATTHEW FLETCHER
Featuring Schumann's Fantasie in C
Monday 4th May 2026, 7 pm
PURCELL: DIDO AND AENEAS

Tickets and more info at www.thehampsteadcollective.com

ORGAN RECITALS

28th February: Andrew Dewar
21st March: George Inscoc

18th April, 23rd May, 20th June: TBA
18th July: Cristina Brancato

All recitals on Saturday at 4.00 pm. Further information www.hampsteadparishchurch.org.uk/music/friends-of-the-music/

The Heath & Hampstead Society presents

The Springett Lecture 2026

A Lecture by Liz Andrew

Thursday 22 October

7:30pm for 8:00pm | Rosslyn Hill Chapel, NW3

So close to central London, Hampstead Heath's biodiversity continues to amaze.

Each year, new records are added to a list that already has over 800 species of plants, similar numbers of fungi, and at least 1500 invertebrates.

Liz Andrew will take you on a journey through the habitats where some species have lived perhaps for centuries, others have more recently arrived, and tantalisingly more are yet to be discovered.

This event is free to Society members. | Tickets will be available for non members at £15



Brave and Bold in All Weathers: 100 years of the Ladies' Pond on Hampstead Heath (in all weathers)

by Nell Frizzell

Written with The Kenwood Ladies' Pond Association (and with a foreword by Esther Freud), author, and former Pond lifeguard, Nell Frizzell celebrates a century of this beloved Hampstead spot through the rhythm of a single swimming year and gives us insight into a century of women's lives.

As a former Kenwood Ladies' Pond lifeguard and a Heath swimmer of over 20 years, to be approached by the Kenwood Ladies Pond Association ("KLPA") to write a history of the last hundred years of the Pond was more than just an editorial commission; it was an honour. It was, in fact, probably the most exciting proposal I've had since one of the lifeguards leaned over the railing nearly a decade ago and asked me if I'd like to join their team. I answered immediately and with delight: yes, please.

Over the last year, I have had the most fabulous time diving into the KLPA archive, interviewing swimmers, walking the site with my notebook and dictaphone, trying to capture the magic of this world-famous secret idyll. I am not a historian and *Brave and Bold in All Weathers* is not a simple chronology of several thousand cubic feet of freshwater. The book leads the reader through the significant markers of a single swimming year: from the frozen origins of January, the relationships of Valentine's Day, the fertility of the Spring Equinox, the enlightenment of International Women's Day, the bacchanalia of Midsummer, the witchery of Halloween, the mellow fruitfulness of the Autumn Equinox, the fraternity of the Men's Breakfast, the bombshells of Bonfire Night and the sanctuary of the Winter Solstice. And in doing so, it tells the story of a century of women's lives, their politics, their work, their environment and their infatuation with this Heath institution.

From wars to washing machines, suffragettes to sexual liberation, from bequests to bobs, bicycles, bikinis and ticket booths, it's all in there. I have spoken to nine-year-olds and 90-year-olds, working women and retired ladies, lifeguards and sunbathers, and witches and opera singers. I have sat in Highgate gardens and held Zoom meetings to Berlin. I have spent hours poring through archives and chased celebrities up Millfield Lane. I have flicked through photographs and held hand-sewn badges and encountered a home recipe for cooked garden snails. I have even interviewed men. Hopefully, what comes out of it all isn't just a timeline, but a true picture of the Ladies' Pond, from its diving boards and dogs to its leather-clad lesbians and moorhen-nested life rings.

Like finding the source of a river, the actual origin of the Ladies' Pond is a little tricky to pin down. In 1925, Lord Iveagh purchased Kenwood and the surrounding estate from the 6th Earl of Mansfield, and bequeathed it to the public in perpetuity. This area of land included the Ladies' Pond, which at that point was just a small, murky pool, surrounded by reeds, visited by frogs, birds and – presumably – the odd adventurous swimmer.

During these early years, the term *Ladies' Pond* doesn't actually appear in the archive at all. Rather, the name seems to oscillate, like a leaf hanging by a single thread of spider silk, between the *No. 5 Pond*, the *Women's Pond* and, simply, the *Highgate Pond*. On 1st February 1927,

Brave and Bold in All Weathers: 100 years of the Ladies' Pond on Hampstead Heath (in all weathers) (cont)

the seemingly all-powerful Parks and Small Holdings and Allotments Committee of the London County Council arranged, “as an experiment, for the women’s bathing pond at Ken Wood to be opened at 7.30 a.m. on Wednesdays and Saturdays.” Judging by the hour and using what we know of later campaigns around the need for earlier openings, we can assume, even in 1926, these women swimmers were visiting the Pond before a day of paid work, or as an early weekend break from the trials and toddler tantrums of domestic life.

My first job in London was a receptionist at the Women’s Library in Whitechapel, which was in fact housed in a former washhouse, precisely the sort of place where urban, working and less-paid women like me would have swum and washed and chatted in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Before that, similar women were presumably washing and paddling and swimming in Britain’s many streams, rivers and ponds, many of which were as yet untouched by the modern contaminants of industrialisation.

There is an old joke I thought of often when writing *Brave and Bold*. Question: How many Kenwood Ladies’ Pond swimmers does it take to change a lightbulb? Answer: Change?!? While the Ladies’ Pond community is, in many important ways, a place of sanctuary, tolerance, sisterhood and positivity, it isn’t exactly renowned for its enthusiasm for change. And yet, the Ladies’ Pond has undoubtedly also been a hot bed of political, feminist, sexual and ecological progress. Here, women have discussed their role in the workplace, explored their sexuality, studied the effects of climate change, formed alliances against systematic injustice, been loaned life-changing books, met partners, found

liberation within disabilities, celebrated professional accomplishments, tried their first cigarette, discovered a love of nature and marked significant markers in a new life. This twin pressure – to improve, without losing the original essence – is everywhere across the Pond’s history. And, to be fair to my fellow swimmers, we have always found a way to adapt. During the interviews I undertook, I started to see that, whether it’s new lighting, new buildings, new rules or new swimmers, there always emerges what I’ve come to see as the Ladies’ Pond way.

As an intergenerational space, the Ladies’ Pond holds an institutional memory that gets passed down to each new visitor; the swimmers who first came in the 1970s remember those who swam here in the 1950s, who themselves were inducted by the women who founded the Pond in the 1920s. A golden thread pulls across the centenary, meaning that even the newest recruit



Brave and Bold in All Weathers: 100 years of the Ladies' Pond on Hampstead Heath (in all weathers) (cont)

might find herself getting changed beside an all-year swimmer who remembers life before hot water came to the Pond, or electricity, or charging. That is significant and, in a way, brings me hope. We can and should open our gate to the modern world, but we can also hold a collective experience dating back to the beginning of the 20th century. It's not always easy and there are always challenges – from outside and within – but I have faith that the Ladies' Pond survives because it is both resilient and versatile. Even just the act of swimming, in changing weather, surrounded by plants and animals and insects, reminds us that change is part of life; seasons come and go, wildlife cycles between activity and rest, trees sprout, bloom and eventually rot. You cannot hold it back but you can also find continuum in that change.

It is also true that the Ladies' Pond is porous. While stepping onto the meadow or bobbing down towards the rope may feel like entry into a place entirely out of time, out of the city and outside of convention, the events of the outside world will always find their way inside.

Looking back over the Pond's history, it is possible to chart some of the most seismic moments from recent history right here, on this soft, leaf-shrouded patch of water; women getting the vote, the Second World War, the Equal Pay Act, the turning of the Millennium, and, more recently, the internet, Brexit and the Equality Act. Reading through the meeting notes from the KLPA, through the press cuttings and Pond newsletters and emails, you will find hints of wider forces at play; changes in government, in monarchy, in the economy and technology. Which is why, in telling the story of this centenary, I have sometimes lifted my gaze to a slightly

wider horizon to talk of politics and philosophy and art, or mythology, money and men.

This book not only tells the story of the Ladies' Pond but also situates the Pond in the wider world. I laughed out loud the first time I found a note about the 'problem of skateboards' on the Heath; I was surprised to read accounts of suffragettes being squirted with proto water pistols labelled 'ladies tormentors'; I was moved to hear how the Pond became a meeting place for refugees; and I was intrigued to find articles on the Pond sitting beside columns on the Iraq War, or the last woman to be hanged by the state.

This is a book about women and how we have lived. While exploring the relationships that have formed at the Pond, I heard 80-year-olds discovering their sexuality. When writing about Halloween, I discovered the 18th-century Witchcraft Act was last used to arrest a woman in 1944. When researching the Spring Solstice, I traced the natural history of the egg, and for the chapter on the Winter Solstice, I learned of another spring, appearing beside the baby Ishmael in the desert of Mecca.

I have read about peacocks and terrapins, giant cobras and booming widgeons; I have heard about celebrity sightings and al fresco lovemaking and digestive biscuits. These things make up the history of the Ladies' Pond but they also give us an insight into 100 years of women's lives. From code breakers to cake bakers, I have learned there is no such thing as a 'normal woman'; and over the last 100 years the Pond has played host to thousands of remarkable ones.

The book is published by Harper Collins, is available for pre-order wherever you buy books, and will be released in May 2026.

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Join as a Friend to make sure you never miss a show and support the future of Hampstead.

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- 10% discount at Hampstead Theatre Café and more.

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or visit us on Eton Avenue, NW3



WE LOOK FORWARD TO WELCOMING YOU SOON!



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:

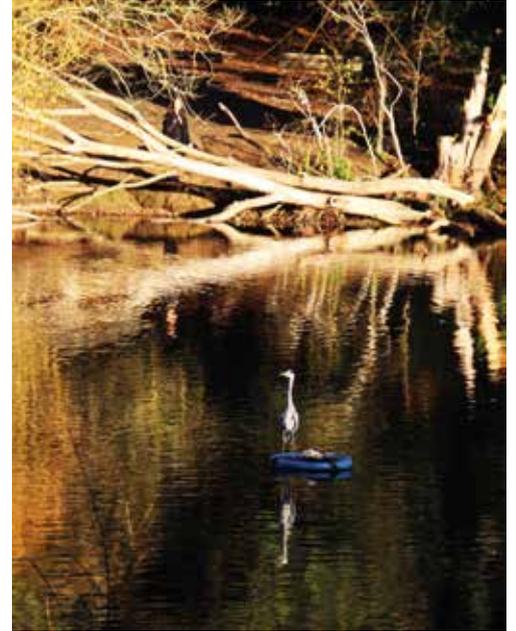
info@HeathandHampstead.org.uk

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

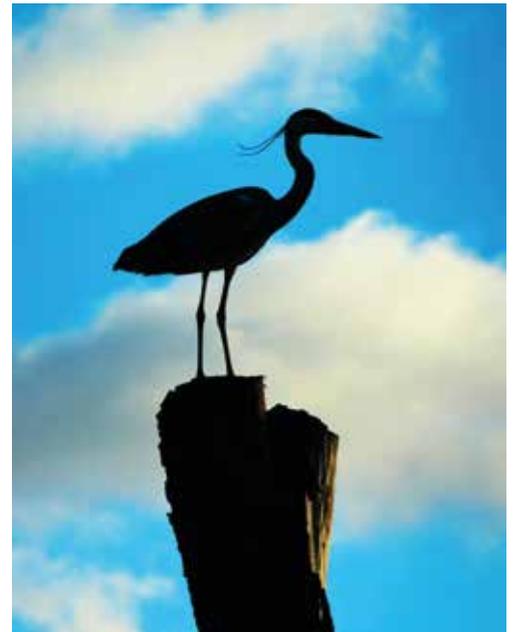
This will also enable us to update our membership records and simplify our communications with you.

Seen on the Heath

Photos by Ron Vester, Heath Sub-Committee member



Ron Vester and some of the friends he's made on the Heath



Seen on the Heath (cont)



The Story Behind Circle & Star: A 30-Year Exodus

CIRCLE&STAR
T H E A T R E



by Steve Furst

Steve Furst is the founder and Artistic Director of Hampstead's Circle & Star Theatre. In this piece, he recounts the origins of, and vision for, the village's newest theatre on the site of one of the village's oldest one, the Pentameters.

I have spent the best part of 30 years dreaming about running my own theatre.

As a long-time Hampstead regular (my mother worked at Hampstead Bazaar in the 70s), I have watched our local stages, from the Hampstead Theatre to the New End, JW3 and beyond, form a rich creative landscape for artists and audiences alike. For all its cultural energy, I always felt there was room for something different, smaller, more immediate. A space where proximity itself could become part of the performance.

That changed in July 2025. I passed by a familiar building and saw an eviction notice in the window. Curiosity turned to determination. I reached out to the landlords, Urban Pubs & Bars, who told me they were considering converting the space for other uses.

I asked them to pause. I believed the space was more than viable as a stage. I had a plan.

And a team. We shook on it.

A 30-year dream became a home.

Restoration and rebirth

The passage of time had not been kind. The place, once a

vibrant theatre space, was now full of detritus. A once-vibrant hub, now faded from its former glories.

Together with Urban, we brought the building back to life. We rebuilt walls, renewed the floors, created an entirely new backstage area, and installed four brand new public toilets, all while preserving the beauty and spirit of the room.

Our backstage area is also fully restored. It is rare for any venue to invest in preparation areas and facilities at this level, but we believe artists deserve the same care behind the curtain as they do under the lights.

Urban's faith has been total. With their partnership and a remarkable team around me, we have rebuilt a theatre for the next generation.

Continuity with purpose

Thirty years in the arts has taught us one thing. Care and craft must go hand in hand. What we are building here is not nostalgia. It is continuity with purpose.

There has been plenty of chatter online about what is happening at this address.

To be clear: Circle & Star is a new venture with a new team, a new vision, and a renewed sense of what small, independent theatre can be today.

We are proud to join Hampstead's broader creative community, from established institutions to emerging

collectives, each contributing to the area's vibrant cultural life.

We also want to acknowledge the extraordinary Pentameters Theatre, a venue with over 50 years of remarkable history and a loyal audience keeping Hampstead's artistic flame burning bright.

It has been inspiring to see that legacy continue, with more than 80 productions in 2025 and new work already announced for next year. We wish them every success. The more theatre this community has, the better for everyone who loves the arts.

After all, great theatres are not built by bricks. They are built by people

From years spent within the artistic community, one thing we know is actors, writers, and creatives are constantly searching for new spaces to tell their stories. Hampstead has always been a natural home for that. Since the early 20th century, it has been a refuge and a spark for creative expression, and we believe it still is. Circle & Star is simply now part of that ongoing story.

We are a group of people who live and breathe the arts. Producers, performers, writers, and musicians, all with over three decades of experience and a shared commitment to responsible stewardship. That means creative ambition matched by financial care, transparency, and genuine community engagement. Every decision, every pound, and every show is guided by the same principle: to make something sustainable, inclusive, and alive.

And at the heart of it all, something simple: Curated great stories, told with craft and care, and always, making people smile.

This is not what came before. This is what comes next.

The people behind the work: a peek behind the curtain

Circle & Star Theatre is a registered charitable trust, guided by a board of trustees who oversee every decision and ensure full transparency and fiscal accountability. Every penny received and every pound spent is accounted for, justified, and reinvested back into the theatre and its people.

We are funded through private patronage, by individuals who believe in Hampstead's creative heart, and by fundraising performances from artists including David Walliams, Matt Lucas, Doon Mackichan and Matt Berry, whose generosity supports the theatre's rebirth and ensures we operate with fairness and accountability.

The leadership team combines creative drive with practical rigour: Steve Furst – Artistic Director (founder); Carri Hecks – General Manager; Justin Bovington – Creative Director and Producer; The Trustees – Governance, accountability, and long-term sustainability

This blend of creativity, management and oversight ensures the theatre is built not just to open, but to last.

Our ethos

The theatre's motto is: New Stage · New Voices · New Stories

Our values are:

- *Hampstead Heart* – Rooted in local history, curiosity, and character.
- *People First* – Connection matters more than spectacle.
- *Courage in Craft* – Bold ideas and brave choices. Better brave than boring.

The Story Behind Circle & Star: A 30-Year Exodus (cont)

- *Shared Light* – Old hands and new voices in the same glow.
- *Living Theatre* – Stories that begin in the room and travel outward through community and digital space. The name says it all. The Circle is the audience; the Star is the performer. Each in orbit around the other, presence meeting projection. That is theatre at its purest. We are Circle & Star.
- *Proximity*: The Circle & Star Principle. We are all the bright light on a small stage.

Proximity defines everything we do. It is not just about location, it is about closing the gap between performer and audience, community and creativity, the room and the wider world.

- *Physical proximity*: A walkable, local alternative to the West End, with £10–£30 tickets instead of £50–£150 ones.
- *Artistic proximity*: Shared air, shared laughter, shared humanity.
- *Digital proximity*: Cameras and streaming extend our reach without losing intimacy.
- *Community proximity*: A meeting place as much as a performance space.
- *Philosophical proximity*: Theatre built on connection, not scale.

Proximity is the bridge between the room and the world, the spark of energy.

Programming and inclusion

Our regular nights feature David Arnold, Guy Chambers, Debra Tammer, Lenny Beige, Alex Zane, and many others, big names curating new voices.

We proudly champion all marginalised and under-represented communities, including LGBTQIA+ artists, younger Jewish voices, and anyone whose story deserves to be heard. We reject censorship and division.

The arts exist to challenge, to move, to unite, and to give people the courage to speak.

Our space will also host podcasts, rehearsals, R&D projects, film screenings and workshops. Music will be a heartbeat of the theatre, led by our new Yamaha upright piano and a regular roster of world-class musicians.

Building fiscal sustainability

Circle & Star operates on a hybrid model of private patronage, ticket sales, and venue hire. Our pricing (£10–£30) keeps theatre accessible, while special events help fund ongoing operations and fair pay.

Viability context: A night out in the West End, with tickets, taxis, drinks and dinner, costs around £280 per couple. A full evening in Hampstead, walkable, drink and meal and a theatre experience, costs about £80. (includes £15 to £30 for a ticket). It is culture without the commute, and community without compromise.

A new chapter in Hampstead

We believe a theatre can be both bold and responsible, inclusive and sustainable, local and far-reaching.

Circle & Star Theatre – where people, presence and artistry shine.

28 Heath Street, Hampstead, NW3 6TE

www.circleandstar.com

Rosslyn Hill Chapel: 'A spiritual home for open minds' *Hampstead NW3 1NG – 2026 Highlights*

Sunday afternoon workshops and events at 2pm:

1st February
Winter Micro Retreat

15th February, 15th March, 19th April
Eco book club

8th March
An Enlightened History of the Earth

12th April
Poetic Empowerment

3rd May
Creative Spirituality networking

17th May
Tree Connections workshop and walk

Regular Programme: We offer a stay and play for children under-5 called Saturday Club during term-time. The Chapel is open all day on Sundays with morning service at 11am, a short mindfulness meditation at 6pm and informal meditation-based evening gatherings at 7pm. Our friendly choir meets on Wednesdays at 7.30pm and performs each month.

Visit www.rosslynhillchapel.org.uk/whats-on
or scan the QR code for more information





New and refurbished historical plaques for Hampstead: Sir Cecil Beaton, Margaret Llewelyn Davies and Gerald Swyer

by Juliette Sonabend

The Society's historical plaque committee has been busy for the last two decades curating the black oval plaques dedicated to commemorating Hampstead's remarkable residents.

When Frank Harding approached me in 2006 suggesting I join him in resurrecting the Society's historical plaque committee, I prevaricated only a few moments as Frank's encouraging words, "Whatever we do – it will be fun!", sealed the deal.

We hit the ground running, but I don't think I had any idea what I was truly undertaking. We commenced by thoroughly surveying every single plaque, noting its location, condition and the quality of the information

provided. We then collated and assessed the data, identifying those needing replacement, removal and substantial refurbishment.

When our housekeeping was completed and the ten plaques destined for restoration were successfully restored and reinstated, we turned our attention to new nominees. Twenty years later, very little has changed, except there are now 40 Society black oval plaques.

New and refurbished historical plaques for Hampstead: Sir Cecil Beaton, Margaret Llewelyn Davies and Gerald Swyer (cont)

Sir Cecil Beaton

Last year commenced with the installation of a restored plaque in Langland Gardens, on the house where Sir Cecil Beaton was born and spent his earliest years. The plaque was in very poor condition. As the work progressed, the extent of the deterioration became more apparent. Happily, we were able to widen the scope of the restoration and the restored plaque now looks magnificent.

Margaret Llewelyn Davies

On a glorious afternoon in June 2025, a plaque was unveiled in Well Walk for Margaret Llewelyn Davies. She was a pioneering feminist, one of Britain's most influential advocates for women's rights, and a great friend of Virginia Woolf.

The event was more of a 'non-veiling' as the awkward configuration of the front garden precluded the possibility of the plaque being installed with a ladder. So having erected the plaque a few days earlier with scaffolding, we celebrated the 'non-veiling' by blowing Margaret's famous whistle. It was something she always carried with her and it was used during her later years to attract her attention when her hearing was failing.

Sadly, I was unable to attend, but I am extremely grateful to Belinda Harding who stepped in for me, assisting Frank who gave his usual warm words of welcome to the assembled group, which included members of the Virginia Woolf Society, who generously supported the plaque. The event was then followed by a delightful tea in the Sullivan Garden in Burgh House.

Gerald Swyer

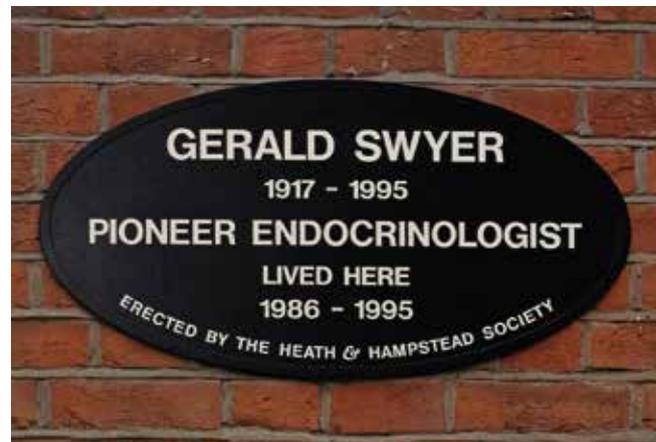
A few months later on a wet afternoon in October 2025, a plaque for Gerald Swyer, the groundbreaking

endocrinologist, was unveiled in Fitzjohn's Avenue by his daughter Alexandra Lavery.

Gerald Swyer pioneered many advances in reproductive medicine including the development of the contraceptive pill in the 1950s. Later, many women who would have remained childless, were able to conceive thanks to his extraordinary work on fertility. The development of hormone replacement therapy, and the identification of a rare genetic condition which became known as Swyer Syndrome, are all a critical part of his enduring legacy.

After the unveiling, the assembled group were then treated to a delicious tea at the new home of the Laverys. Lord Winston, who participated in the unveiling, stayed for tea and spent the afternoon passing on some of his wisdom on to the next generation. Needless to say, nobody was in a hurry to leave!

Looking ahead, we have already received a few fascinating nominations for consideration, including the anaesthetist who pioneered epidural anaesthesia and Sir Edward Elgar's plaque is in desperate need of attention – watch this space!



Keats House Winter-Spring Events

“A Little Book, – and then a Joy Awakes” : Papercraft Workshop

Saturday 21 February, 2–4pm / £25

“A little book, – and then a joy awakes” ...wrote John Keats in his poem *To My Brother George*. Join poets and friends Julia Bird and Mike Sims for an afternoon of Keats-themed papercraft to make a personal ‘little book.’ Turn your favourite Keats poem (or possibly a piece of writing of your own) into a simple concertina book for yourself, or to swap or give as a present. We’ll be cutting, tearing, pasting, inscribing and embellishing but no special expertise will be required

Keats Encounters the Shakespeare Folio

Thursday 12 March, 6.30–8pm / £7

Join Associate Professor Emily Rohrbach as she explores John Keats’s creative encounter with his predecessor Shakespeare, specifically the young poet’s engagement with his 1808 facsimile copy of the 1623 Shakespeare folio. In that book, Keats inscribed an original poem in the space left by the printer between the end of *Hamlet* and the beginning of *King Lear*, explaining that it demanded a prologue. This talk will explore the significance of Keats’s inscription by hand in the Shakespeare volume, as the young poet sought to imagine his place among the English poets

Refugee and Migrant Writers Respond to Keats’s Poetry, Life and Times

Thursday 19 March, 6.30–8.30pm / £7 (£5 for Exiled Writers Ink members)

Exiled Writers Ink brings together established and developing writers from repressive regimes and war-torn situations to develop and promote the creative literary expression of refugees, migrants and exiles. Join us at Keats House to hear poetry that has been specially created for this event with a range of displaced poets who settled in the UK, drawing on their own diverse narratives and cultures to write back to Keats’s poems

Under-5s Day at Keats House

Saturday 18 April, 11am–3pm / £3 for adults, free for children

Join us as we open our doors to babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers – and their adults! We know it can sometimes be difficult to keep under-5s entertained when visiting a historic house, so we have designed this day to make visiting that little bit easier. The house will be open to look round as usual, where you can discover the story of Keats and his poetry, with a few extras to keep the little ones busy, including toys, crafts, refreshments and space to relax!

All taking place at Keats House,
10 Keats Grove, London, NW3 2RR

Booking essential for all events at
keatsevents.eventbrite.co.uk



**JOURNEY 100 YEARS
BACK IN TIME**

to experience Keats House when it first opened in 1925





A Date for Your Diary

Spring Book Sale

Saturday 2nd May

10-5pm

FREE ENTRY

To learn more about our evening events and children's activities see our website:

www.keatscommunitylibrary.org.uk

To join our mailing list, email:

keatscommunitylibrary@gmail.com



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Over 2000 quality books to choose from: fiction, crime, history, biography, cookery, poetry, nature, beautiful art books, lots of children's books.

All at bargain prices.

Donations gratefully received

Keats Community Library, 10A Keats Grove, NW3 2RR ☎ 0207 431 1266

KCL is a Charity Reg no 1146702

Proceeds of the book sale help keep the library open

Burgh House: Hampstead Vanished and Imagined

by Amy Miller

Burgh House & Hampstead Museum's curator details intimate new exhibitions for 2026 delving into Hampstead's past, both pictorial and historical. The new exhibitions run from 5 March to 13 December 2026.

In March, Burgh House will open its new exhibitions to the public. On the ground floor, in the Marie-Louise von Motesiczky gallery, will be *Amongst the Trees and Terraces: Donald Chisholm Towner (1903 – 1985)*.



The Garden, Church Row, Donald Chisholm Towner, 1975, lent by G. Barrass and K. Lippincott

Donald Towner was a painter whose work captured the gentle beauty of the British landscape. Although in thrall to the natural world, his cityscapes captured a thrumming 1930s Britain and the destruction later wrought in the Second World War. In the 1920s, he moved to Hampstead, eventually settling on Church Row, where he would live for the next 50 years. He was part of a convivial group including Randolph Schwabe (1885 – 1948), Towner's drawing teacher at the Royal College of Art, the architects Maxwell Ayrton (1874 – 1960), and HV Ashley (1872 – 1945). In addition to his artistic career, Towner developed an expertise in British ceramics, specialising in the creamware produced in the 18th century. His paintings and collections are housed in museums and galleries across the UK, including the V&A Museum in London and Temple Newsam House in Leeds.

On the first floor in the Wade Room, Burgh House will have a display that both compliments Towner and showcases its own rich collections. "Hampstead Vanished and Imagined" considers changes to the local area over time: of landscapes and buildings no longer present. Architects' models and city plans show us a transformation that never came to be or was significantly altered. In some cases, the agents of change were technological drivers, such as the railways which connected Hampstead, a former spa town on the edge of the Heath, with the City. This ease of access meant an increase in day-trippers in the good weather, but it also meant an overall population increase.

Whilst Hampstead expanded with the growth of the railways, the damage of the Second World War irrevocably altered streets and local landmarks. One



Weatherall House Being Demolished, Malvina Cheek, 1948, Burgh House Collection

of the stories explored in "Hampstead Vanished and Imagined" is the fate of Weatherall House. It was originally built as the second Long Room for the Hampstead Wells in the 1730s and was a popular Assembly Room for gaming and music as well as taking the waters. The building sat adjacent to Burgh House on Well Walk and had been earmarked for demolition in the late 1930s. It was the subject of a residents' campaign to save it that involved the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB), founded by William Morris in 1877, and the National Trust. A

1938 letter from SPAB noted that the case was already before its committee and it was planning a formal protest. The advent of the Second World War meant that Weatherall House remained, but it was relatively short-lived. Bomb damage to New End Square, which Burgh House survived relatively unscathed, caused foundational issues for Weatherall House. Despite a renewed campaign to save it, demolition went ahead and it was replaced with the flats that are Wells House. A painting by the artist Malvina Cheek (1915 – 2016) captured the moment of demolition.

Burgh House: Hampstead Vanished and Imagined (cont)

We will also showcase paintings and photographs provide glimpses of the past, for example a watercolour, *Streatley Place* by Fred Cook (active 1878 – 1891) shows a view familiar to many, conveys a sense of unchanging Hampstead, a unique corner of London. Burgh House is the recipient of a Reimagine Grant from the Art Fund. The focus of this grant is about making our collections more accessible to the community, and one project to come out of this is working in partnership with New End Primary School on *Your Place in History*. This responds to the themes and objects in "*Hampstead Vanished and Imagined*", the history of the New End School site itself, and the involvement of members of the Heath & Hampstead Society. Burgh House will devote a showcase to New End Primary School and the proposed development of the New End Hospital site in the 1990s. Residents opposed it, but worked closely with architects and developers to create a third way, retaining iconic landmarks, such as part of a 19th century laundry now in the school grounds, whilst still creating much-needed modern housing. Year 6 students will work with those who were involved in the campaign to understand the role of change in place-making. This project emphasises the intergenerational transfer of knowledge and how we contribute to the creation of space and place. Their conversations and collection object selections will form part of our exhibition, with texts highlighting this intergenerational discussion.



Streatley Place, Fred Cook, circa 1880, Burgh House Collection

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Art. Events. History

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Sunday Sounds returns to Burgh House

The much-loved Sunday Sounds concert series at Burgh House returns on Sunday 1 February at 1pm, opening with a beautiful cello and piano recital in the historic setting of the Music Room. The series will then continue roughly every other

Sunday, offering an ongoing programme of intimate classical performances by outstanding young musicians.

Tickets are £7, or £5 for Burgh House Members and under 25s, and can be booked via www.burghouse.org.uk



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.

Heath Walks: 2026

Walks are normally held on the first Sunday of every month except January. Some 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 difficult locally, especially on fine weekends; the West Heath car park (behind Jack Straw's Castle) is more likely to have spaces than the East Heath car park.

Advance booking not required except where indicated; simply turn up at meeting place 5–10 minutes before the start times. Walks last approximately two hours. They do not necessarily follow made-up paths, so you are recommended to wear suitable footwear as conditions may be rough or muddy

The walks are now **FREE** but you will be encouraged to become a member of the Society – one of England's oldest and most respected conservation charities – 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, Tereza Pultarova

mobile: 0777 6649163 or email: hhs.walks@gmail.com

Sunday 1 February 10am (meet at the entrance to the **Kenwood Walled Garden** opposite the Stable Block). *The Hidden History of Hampstead Heath* with local historian and archaeologist Michael Hammerson

Sunday 1 March 9.30am (meet by the **Magdala pub** opposite the Hampstead Heath Overground Station). *Past and Present Developments Encroaching on Hampstead Heath* with Heath Sub-Committee member Zander Goss

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

Sunday 5 April 9am (meet at **Burgh House**). *Birds of Hampstead Heath in the Spring* with bird expert and Heath Sub-Committee member Pete Mantle. Bring binoculars and good shoes

Sunday 3 May 10am (meet at **Golders Hill Park** orchard). *Trees of the Heath and Climate, which trees will struggle amid climate change*, with David Humphries, the Heath's tree inspector and arboricultural manager

Sunday 7 June – TBD

Sunday 5 July 10am (meet at the **Flagpole by Whitestone Pond**). *The Unique Geology of the Heath* with Diana Clements, a Natural History Museum's associate geologist

Sunday 2 August 2.30pm (meet at **Spaniard's End** by the flower stall near the Spaniards Inn). *The Story of Philanthropist Henrietta Barnett and the Salvation of the Heath Extension from Urban Development* with Heath Sub-Committee member Lynda Cook

Sunday 6 September 9am (meet at **Burgh House**). *Birds of Hampstead Heath in the Autumn* with bird expert Heath Sub-Committee member Pete Mantle. Bring binoculars and good shoes

Sunday 4 October 10am (meet at **Parliament Hill Bandstand**) *Hampstead Heath amid the Progressing Climate Change – adaptation and protection* with Professor Jeff Waage OBE, Society Trustee.

Sunday 1 November – TBD

Sunday 6 December 10am (meet at **Burgh House**) *The History of Hampstead Heath Ponds* with Marc Hutchinson, Society Chair

