



The Heath & Hampstead Society

NEWSLETTER

January 2012

Vol 43 No 1

The Heath & Hampstead Society is delighted to be sponsoring the Christmas tree at Whitestone Pond this year.

Since the conclusion of the restoration of the pond & its surroundings, we continue to receive praise and gratitude for a job well done.

The Christmas tree is the tangible expression of our on-going commitment to what has become the glorious pinnacle of London.

To join the Society contact: info@heathandhampstead.org.uk



The Heath & Hampstead Society

Whitestone Pond, Christmas 2011

photo: Andrew Morley

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The Ponds problem

Editorial

The Society faces one of the most difficult challenges in its history with the proposed works to strengthen the dams surrounding the ponds on the Heath. It takes us back to our very beginnings when the Society was formed to stop the then managers degrading the Heath landscape with unnecessary work.

The challenge now is possibly greater because the current works are claimed to be necessary to protect the public from risk of inundation, and have legal force behind them. The Society cannot simply ignore the advice of an expert on dam safety, or the possible risk to the lives of people who live below the ponds if nothing is done. We must be certain that we have strong technical and legal grounds for challenge.

Risk assessment criteria

There is nothing in the 1975 Act which defines safety or that says that the ponds need to be able to withstand a once-in-a-century, or once-in-ten-thousand-years years rainfall. These criteria have been invented by experts who base their risk assessment on the possibility of a 1 in 10,000 year flood at Hampstead which they claim could cause as many as 1,500 fatalities. One cannot forbear from pointing out that 10,000 years is longer than the span of recorded human history. In any case we understand that the problem lies not so much in the dam structures themselves but in the inadequate spillways.

Empirical evidence or computer modelling?

A Review of the August 1975 storm by Nick Haycock (1) (whose firm has been providing hydrological, design and project management to the City), issued in 2011, states that “The key headlines for the nature and impact of the 1975 storm event are:

The Ponds problem (cont)

- 1 man died due to drowning in his flat
- 2 members of the public were severely injured due to being struck by lightning whilst on Hampstead Heath

The lightning is irrelevant to any risk of flooding or overflow from the ponds, and the only record of a death associated with the 1975 storm is that of an elderly woman who, after being rescued from her home, died of other causes three weeks later (2). Yet in the comments by Dr. Andy Hughes, the Panel Engineer, (a statutory appointment under the 1975 Act), appended to the Haycock Review, it became “significant amounts of damage and *life loss* [my italic] as a result of run-off”; and from there we have arrived at a position – presumably via computer modelling - where it is now claimed that 1,500 deaths could occur.

It is difficult to reconcile these statements with that of the Environment Agency document, Lessons Learnt from Dam Incidents: “Fortunately, few catastrophic failures have occurred in Great Britain and, since 1925, there has been no loss of life due to dam disasters in the UK”.

Moreover the Haycock Review states, “It should be noted that there is no quantitative real data to assess the impact of the 1975 event on the Heath or dam structures, thus any quantitative calibration and validation of the 1975 rainfall/runoff model is not possible”. It admits that, although there was “a slip of the dam face embankment at Hampstead No.2 Pond. The damage on this dam affected an area approximately 30 m wide and 0.5 m deep”. Hardly an indication of life-threatening torrents.

When the case for safety is promoted on the basis of such misleading and contradictory statements it only serves to cast doubt on any other ‘evidence’ brought forward.

Who decides?

Experts may be able to tell you what kind of dam reinforcing you would need to make sure that if we had a once-in-ten-thousand-year rainfall, no one would be drowned, but they cannot tell you why that is the appropriate level of risk. That is because deciding upon the appropriate level of risk is not a matter for experts. It involves balancing the degree of safety you are buying against its cost. As with, say, road safety, or education or defence, it is not an expert decision, it is a political decision, usually with a small p, setting our priorities. Does “the public”, who are to have this protection forced upon them at the risk of degrading a much loved and cherished landscape, really want it? Or would they prefer to take the risk of the floods?

What cost the local environment?

The next question is: what counts as cost? In recent years, people have begun to realise that it is not just money; other things need to be put into the balance. It is absurd to have a rule that, with a Class A dam, “there is no prescribed consideration of local aspects” and that the environmental costs of making the dam safer should be ignored. And it is equally absurd to say that only money should count as a cost and we should ignore destruction of the environment. There is nothing in the Act which requires anyone to do this.

A different approach

Our problem is that the engineers appear to be treating our small Heath ponds in the same way as they would vast reservoirs: the proposed solutions are over-engineered.

The Interim Guide to Quantitative Risk Assessment for UK Reservoirs (3) (Brown and Gosden, 2004) deals with this question. It advises:

“The general approach to regulation is that a

goal-setting framework is preferable to defining prescriptive standards as it makes duty holders think for themselves. This flexibility leads to methods of risk control being tailored to particular circumstances". This is the approach the Society is advocating.

Potential conflict of interest

The Act requires the inspecting Panel Engineer to be independent. But because of the small number of dam experts, they are nearly all employed by the various firms who are involved in the work. It is apparently not unusual for the supervising and inspecting engineer to act also as the design and construction supervising engineer. There appears to be nothing in the legislation governing this, and no formal mechanism to resolve any conflict that might arise. Of course we do not suggest that the eminent engineers who have been exercising their statutory functions have been influenced by the prospect of their firms obtaining a contract for the work they recommend to be done. But the public perception of the potential conflict of interest is unfortunate and has the potential to undermine public confidence in the objectivity of the advice.

A complex and worrying situation

So members will see that the Society has a complex and worrying situation to contend with. As our chairman says, we need the support and advice of our members and all the expertise we can command.

This article has been compiled by the Editor in consultation with the Society's President, Lord Hoffmann, and other members of the Committee.

(1) *The Haycock Review: HiDEP WP 20 - Review of the August 1975 Storm relative to the 1: 10 000 year rainfall event*
(2) *Camden Council Report of the Floods Scrutiny Panel 2003,*
(3) *Brown and Gosden Interim Guide*
All these reports can be found on the Internet by googling their titles.

Notice of Members' meeting to discuss

***The Ponds problem
Tuesday 31 January 7pm
Rosslyn Hill Chapel***

***The meeting will be chaired by
Lord Hoffmann
President of the Society***

Those Members who have given us their email addresses will have already had advance notice of this meeting

It is vital for us to know your views; please try to be there.

Members' Email addresses

As members will see from the above notice, it becomes increasingly important, in an ever faster moving world, for the Society to be able to communicate with members at short notice. Email is the best way to do this. In addition postage costs are becoming prohibitive.

If you have email and would like to be informed more quickly of important Society initiatives please email your name and street address to the Society at:

info@beathandhampstead.org.uk

This will enable us to update our Membership Records and let you know quickly about important events.

Thank you.

Chairman's report

by Tony Hillier

Christmas party

May I start by wishing all members a happy and prosperous New Year? It will certainly be an eventful one locally, nationally and globally.

We celebrated the holiday season in great style at St Stephens on 19 December with some 200 members attending. We congratulated Michael Taylor for his Angel Award, given by English Heritage and sponsored by Andrew Lloyd Webber, for the remarkable and sustained work he and his Trustees have done to restore and maintain this wonderful Victorian church building. We also expressed our thanks and appreciation to Simon Lee for completing 10 superb years as Heath Superintendent. Both of these awards were acknowledged with great enthusiasm by the party guests.

Our thanks to Helen Marcus and the army of Committee members and members who worked so hard to make the evening well-fed, well-lit and well supplied with drink; and to member Stephen Williams for taking the photos - right and on page 6.

As a first this year we sponsored a Christmas tree - shown on our cover - put up by the City next to the grass mound at Whitestone pond. A number of members have commented how much they liked to see it lit up as they drove past in the evening traffic.

Toll Gate

The Town Committee completed another successful project with the renovation of the Toll Gate by Camden Council with the support of Barnet: our thanks to Councillor Knight and the Officers who worked on this. The Society has a plaque marking the work our



*Members enjoying the Christmas party at St. Stephen's
photo: Stephen Williams*

predecessors did in 1967 to rescue this historic building. We have been trying for around 15 years to get our two local Councils to make repairs and protect it better from passing traffic. Another initiative is now under way with the Highgate Society to devise a community use for the building and any ideas would be welcome.

Heath library

Members were no doubt aware of the controversy attending Camden's decision taken last June to withdraw funding from three local public libraries in April 2012. In response, the Society joined forces with the Friends of Heath Library, South End Green Association and a new group of local enthusiasts called the Phoenix Group, led by Steve Bobasch, a resident of Keats Grove, to prepare and submit to Camden an Expression of Interest to take over the running of this library.

We faced two immediate tasks: to secure approval from Camden for transitional funding for the first year of operations and to achieve a smooth handover of the existing stock. Secondly, to obtain agreement in principle from the City of London, who own the building, to accepted us as licensee to run a community library from the space now used as a library, and to become a partner with the City Cultural Department to increase the amount of literary and literacy activity to be organized locally. It is expected that this will be further stimulated in association with the City's new proposals to expand the activity and profile of Keats House, for which they are also responsible.

I am pleased to report that we have achieved both goals and that the hard work will now begin. A new company limited by guarantee, Keats Community Library, has been formed and as soon as it receives the initial instalment of Camden funding, it will apply to the Charity Commission and HMRC for charitable status.

We have already received promises of patronage from several nationally recognised names. We have received 90 promises from friends and well-wishers to volunteer their time. We have made initial approaches to a few local charitable foundations which are very



supportive. Steve has prepared a convincing business plan showing how the necessary funding, systems and professional staffing can be put together. I would like to congratulate him and his team on getting this far.

However, we will need in the very near future concrete support and commitment from local residents to become members and donors. We will look to local business to help us increase local footfall. We intend to base the services to be offered by the new library on a market survey to all residents living within a one mile radius. We are conscious that new technologies and social patterns mean that the traditional service model offered by public libraries will need regular adaptation to remain relevant.

You will find a flyer included with this Newsletter inviting your support.

The Heath ponds

I mention this, the most important subject of all, last. My lengthy article on this complex topic, following this report, is written as a brief for the Members' only meeting, which will take place on 31 January at Rosslyn Hill Chapel, 7.00 for 7.30pm to which you are all cordially invited.

Chairman's report (cont)

The press will be invited, and a statement will be released to the press after the meeting.

It will be chaired by our President, Lord Hoffmann. Your Committee will report to members the latest position, as they see it. We need to hear members' views, whether they agree or disagree with the position taken by the Society's Officers. We particularly welcome any advice we can get from members with, or with access to, relevant expertise.

The purpose is to ensure that those of your officers and Committee members who will be meeting the City during the various detailed consultation stages over the next 12-18 months are fully aware of the range of opinions held by members. A flyer with more details will go out with this Newsletter.

Calling all flower arrangers!

Flower and Arts Festival: 21- 24 June 2012

St John's Parish Church, Church Row

To celebrate the bicentenary of the consecration of the Additional Burial Ground in Church Row, the Church is holding a Flower and Arts Festival on the weekend of 23/24 June 2012 . The theme will be people buried in the ABG (both famous and not so famous).

The Society has been invited to contribute a flower arrangement. If any members have flower arranging talents, and would like to be part of a small team to participate, please contact Helen Marcus on 020 8450 8864 or email helen@helenlawrence.co.uk

Review of Society's Constitution

As notified by the Chairman at the Society's 2011 Annual General Meeting, the Society's constitution is being reviewed and updated, with the intention that the new constitution should be presented to members for adoption at the 2012 Annual General Meeting.

Members who wish to make suggestions or be consulted on the preparation of the new constitution should contact the Secretary, Marc Hutchinson on 0207 090 3063, email: marc.hutchinson@slaughterandmay.com.

A copy of the current constitution of the Society can be found on the Society's website at www.heathandhampsteadsociety.org.uk

*HEHS
at St.
Stephens
Christ--
mas
2011*

*The view
from the
other
end*



Can we save the Pond landscapes?

By Tony Hillier

Where have we got to?

At the time of my last Report for September's Newsletter we were under the impression that the City had received the final technical risk assessments identifying structural weaknesses in the four biggest ponds, which could pose a danger to lives in the event of extreme flood conditions.

We also assumed that the published designs - as shown in the picture below - were an accurate representation of how the ponds would look after being rebuilt. Everyone who saw those computer generated monsters recognised that such massive civil engineering works would ruin large swathes of the Heath forever. We also believed that the City was close to letting contracts with its chosen team.

During the past three months the Society has sought help from a range of technical expertise and used every opportunity to influence the City and its engineers to reconsider and modify their proposals. We are fortunate to be able to rely on Jeremy Wright's hard work and expertise.

Jeremy is a retired civil engineer and a member of the British Dam Society (a specialist Section of the Institution of Civil Engineers) and has done an immense amount of research. We are

also fortunate in having a very strong in-house legal team and support from our Patron, Tom Oliver, a distinguished landscape architect; and from Jane Wernick, a distinguished structural engineer and regular pond swimmer.

I am glad to report that it has now transpired that the City's design team has not yet been appointed and that neither the risk assessment nor the proposed designs have yet been finalised. Moreover, the City is now clearly committed to managing the tender and design process so that as far as possible, it will be "landscape led". We are still able therefore to do our best to ensure that the City complies to the fullest extent possible with the 1871 Hampstead Heath Act. There are a variety of options open to us, but it is crucial that we get our tactics right.

Where do we now stand?

Through our dialogue with the City and their advisers we have come to recognise a number of important facts.

First, the technical and legal position is less clear cut than we had at first appreciated. The choice of options is not quite as simple or clear-cut as either attacking the whole project, which I referred to

before as the "nuclear" option, or trying to make sure that specific designs chosen are the least harmful to the Heath.

Second, in the widest sense our objectives and those of the City are not far apart. The City wishes to comply with its legal obligations (both as owners of 3 and probably 4 designated Category A reservoirs i.e. those with more than 25,000 cubic meters of water in built up



What was proposed for the dam on the Boating Pond under the original plans

Can we save the Pond landscapes? (cont)

areas, and as guardians of the Heath under the 1871 Hampstead Heath Act) and to do so at reasonable cost. The Society's duty under its charitable Objects is to seek to minimise any necessary safety works, and the impact they will have on the landscape and biodiversity of the Heath and the public's enjoyment of it, in accordance with the 1871 Act.

The main questions for all of us are: "What is necessary?" and "Who decides?". The key further questions for the Society are: When is the best time and what is the best route for us to exercise any options open to us? It is here that our very different traditions, values and perspective from those of the City need to be kept firmly in sight, while we work with them at the technical level. To do so, the Society needs to take a reasoned view on a number of issues:

- the statutory position
- the timetable
- the intellectual basis of the risk assessment and the safety standards for dams

*Highbate Men's Bathing Pond showing the present dam.
photo: Andrew Morley*



- the City's choice of advisers and contractors
- the terms of these contracts, in particular how to ensure that landscaping has optimal influence over engineering
- the unique qualities and location of the Heath
- a range of legal precedent and principles that might apply.

As a practical matter therefore we need to have a close and continuous dialogue with the City, which allows us to exercise most effectively the influence which our Objects require us to exercise, whether through co-operation or challenge.

The Statutory position – the relevant technical reports and legislation

I would like at this point to spell out the position in some detail for members' better understanding. Although the 1975 Reservoirs Act simply requires owners of Category A reservoirs to "protect persons and property against the escape of water", current interpretation is to decide whether at least 10 people (probably to be reduced to 1 person) are predicted to lose their lives as a result of dam collapse. It is the possible collapse of one of the 4 pond structures which the 1975 Act is framed to prevent. A new Floods and Water Management Act, which would broaden the scope to cover all the ponds on the Heath, was introduced in 2010 but has not yet been implemented.

In 2007 the Category A dams on the Heath underwent a statutory inspection. This did not give rise to any "recommendations in the interest of safety", but expressed concern over the state of the spillways. A hydrology report was called for and Haycock and Associates was commissioned to provide it. It was published in December 2010. This was the document which included the designs based on the Report's risk assessment, which caused all of us such distress.

A specialist subcontractor, CARES, made predictions of high numbers of Likely Loss of Life, which were also included in the Report. This was based in part on Haycock's hydrology and his new assessment of the permanent compaction of the Heath surface giving it less absorption than the standard assumptions (due to so many visitors). In addition some extreme assumptions were made about the numbers of simultaneous failures of pond structures in an extreme storm, if the dam structures were left in their current configurations.

A peer review was also commissioned by the City by a specialist firm AECOM which concluded that some of the Haycock calculations and risk assessments were too high and some too low.

The City's Supervising Engineer considered the publication of the Haycock Report to be a statutorily significant trigger under the 1975 Act, which neither he nor the City is permitted to ignore. If the City does not take timely and appropriate action in response to this warning, the legislation requires the Supervising Engineer to call for for a new Inspection under Section 10 of the 1975 legislation.

A new Inspector would be obliged to state what in his professional opinion would be the appropriate "recommendations in the interests of safety". The City in this circumstance would have less control over the design process than they have at present.

There is also a risk that a new Inspecting Engineer might be unsympathetic to the 1871 Hampstead Heath Act; or might decide to interpret the 1975 Act very narrowly and concentrate new designs on the 3 or 4 designated Category A dams alone rather than spreading the visual impact. This too would be a disaster for the Heath.

Section 10 Inspection recommendations must be implemented "as soon as practicable" which for

a category A dam is within 3 years. If the owner fails to do this, the Environment Agency (EA) can step in and carry out the works at the owner's expense. Members may remember press reports that Chairman of the EA stated publicly that it does not have a role. This is correct, because at present no Section 10 Inspection has been called for and its recommendations have therefore not been reported to them.

The alternative course is the one actually being followed by the Supervising Engineer and the City. That is to allow the City, as owner, a reasonable amount of time to prepare designs which will remedy the risk; this has the advantage of allowing more time for the City to consult with the community. This alternative can be followed, provided the owner "does not falter".

The Society is pressing the City for an even longer delay to await the implementation of the 2010 Floods and Water Management Act, and the completion of a series of reviews of risk assessment methodology, currently under way by the engineering profession and DEFRA. We have suggested that we might together seek a QC's Opinion; we await their reply.

Risk assessment and the Society's options

There are three main areas where the Society has to be alert in our dealings with the City as we work together over the next few months.

First, we continue to have serious doubts about the reasonableness of the various calculations of the probable maximum flood and how they are used in estimating the probability of any dams collapsing, which is the central question under the 1975 Reservoirs Act. The concept of predicting the quantum, duration and position of a 1:10,000 year rain fall seems baffling and unreliable since records don't go back beyond

Can we save the Pond landscapes? (cont)

100 years. It seems mathematically very arbitrary. In fact the Haycock report (see the Editorial) appears to say that the amount of rain that fell in the 1975 storm was equivalent to a 1:10,000 year episode. But when this is pointed out, it is countered by saying the rain fell in the 'wrong' place and is therefore not comparable.

Another issue which troubles us in the "standard" approach is the absence of specific calculated evidence about the probabilities of what the breaking point of the Heath dams might be, based on empirical test data about their physical composition. It is acknowledged that the breaking point could not be tested directly.

However, we must consider very carefully whether it would be timely, cost-effective or sensible at this stage to challenge the standards on which experts base their assessment of the statutory position, as we understand it to be and as described above. We need to bear in mind that these standards are accepted practice for the reservoir safety engineering establishment, as well as for the government departments which oversee them; that they have statutory backing and are recognised internationally. The Society remains committed to looking critically at a number of fundamental intellectual issues behind these accepted technical standards.

Secondly, we believe that we have the best chance of achieving the best outcome for the Heath by remaining closely involved, in response to the City's invitation to us to comment on the tendering and contract scope of service definitions to ensure, at each step in the design stage, that the process will be, as the City has stated, "landscape led". In fact of course safety and the practicalities of construction will play a considerable part. Given the difficulties we will inevitably face in achieving an outcome

which balances safety and the environment in an appropriate way, we shall urge the City to choose a Panel Engineer to participate in the design team, who is fully attuned and sensitive to the special needs of Hampstead Heath.

We also urge the City to make a separate appointment of a distinguished Landscape Architect who can exercise considerable influence over the final design outcomes.

Thirdly, in seeking to minimise the impact of any proposed designs on the wild and natural state of the Heath, we will use legal precedent as far as possible to make sure that the unique qualities of the Heath are given proper weight.

The Heath is different and that is what dictates our options

The location of the Heath and its unique contribution to the lives of its millions of visitors make the answer to the question we posed above - "What is necessary?" - very problematic. We live in a densely populated urban area, so lives could be at risk not only from possible dam collapse on the Heath, but also because the sewage and drainage systems, unlike the reservoirs, are built to a 1:100 year flood risk and not a 1:10,000 year estimate.

A quite different but crucial issue is that the majority of reservoirs to which the national safety standards apply are situated in isolated countryside, where the cost of destroying the surrounding environment is negligible compared to the cost of construction. The question of cost comes into the very grisly calculation that is made when applying a cost:benefit analysis i.e. measuring the cost level appropriate to saving an expected number of lost lives. The question may therefore arise, how do you estimate for this purpose the cost of harming the Heath?

I say “may”, because and provided the process will be successfully “landscape led”, this question will hopefully not arise.

Having said that, the Society’s position is that, if we do have to confront these issues, it would bring us to the second question above: “Who decides?”. The answer would be “the courts”. There is a principle established in legal precedent and followed by the Health and Safety Executive by the name of ALARP: that the costs of securing some safety goal should be “as low as reasonably practicable”, which would need to be carefully interpreted in this context, because of the unique qualities and position of the Heath. Matters could come to a head at the design stage or at the planning approval stage, when an Environment Impact Assessment must be presented. We recognise of course that the costs of any such challenges could be extremely high and we could only proceed if we were extremely confident of the outcome and supported financially by members, and even by the wider public who love the Heath.

Consultation with members

The Society will hold a Members’ Meeting at Rosslyn Hill Chapel, 7.00 for 7.30pm, on Tuesday 31 January, chaired by our President, Lord Hoffmann. Your Committee will report to members the latest position, as they see it. It is vital, in view of the seriousness of the situation, for us to know your views, in particular those of you who live in areas adjacent to the Heath subject to flooding risk. This will enable those of your Officers who will be meeting the City during the various detailed consultation stages over the next 12-18 months to be fully aware of the range of opinions held by members. All the above issues will be open for discussion and report. We welcome any advice we can get from members with, or with access to, relevant expertise.

The timetable

The City is expected to have let the full set of contracts with advisers and contractors by the end of March 2012.

From March to July 2012 the design team, when chosen, will undertake an extensive review of the earlier copious risk assessment and design options which the City has been given. We welcome the fact that the City will consult us and others as this process proceeds and that they are prepared to listen to responsible outside advice.

The works are due to begin in autumn 2013 and are likely to take at least 12 months to complete. We will press for care to be taken to select the timing of work in sensitive locations and the choice of physical access routes and work yards, so as to minimise the impact on wild life and visitors.

More information, including maps, and photographs can be found at:

www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/damsandponds

www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/thepittreview/interim_report.aspx

www.defra.gov.uk/environment/flooding/legislation/implementation-approach/



*Highgate Model Boating Pond showing the dam
photo: Andrew Morley*

Heath Report

by Tony Ghilchik

The Society sponsors a Christmas Tree

Those of you passing by Whitestone Pond in December and early January will have seen the tree beside the northern end of the pond, shown on the front cover. The banner contained our website address with an invitation to join the Society, and our proud declaration, together with the City, that:

The Heath & Hampstead Society is delighted to be sponsoring the Christmas tree at Whitestone Pond this year.

Since the conclusion of the restoration of the pond and its surroundings we continue to receive praise and gratitude for a job well done.

The Christmas tree is a tangible expression of our on-going commitment to what has become the glorious pinnacle of London.

This commitment is, of course, to the whole Heath and we continue to work with the managers of the Heath to maintain the wild and natural feel of the original Heath and to balance the needs of different users – our objectives were set out in the Heath Vision booklet produced in 2004, which is on our website.

Work on Pond safety

For much of this year our minds have been focused on the proposed work to be done over the next few years on the dams of the Heath ponds, as outlined in previous Newsletters. Our aim is to work with the City and their appointed team to make sure that the final design is not over-engineered and to ensure that the work finally agreed upon is the minimum needed and the least intrusive visually. To this end Jeremy Wright, a Civil Engineer and my predecessor as Chairman of the Heath Sub-Committee, has been immersing himself in the art, and the regulations, of building dams in order to get a firm grip on

the fundamental issues. We are immensely grateful for all his efforts, which have included leading us on a tour of the Highgate and Hampstead chains of ponds so that we can develop criteria for assessing the result of any raising of each dam, to satisfy safety requirements.

Some of the issues we addressed included: (i) views from a raised dam; (ii) visual impact of a raised dam; (iii) visual intrusion and impact of hard, as opposed to soft dam structure; (iv) the impact on trees growing on dam structures; (v) the impact on wildlife (other than during construction). We tried to assess the impact of any extra dam height on selected ponds, should that be needed for raising the water level to provide water for flushing through the chain to improve water quality, in terms of (vi) the lack of access to the water's edge; (vii) the impact on vegetation and trees on both the extra dam length and the waterside, and (viii) the impact on wildlife from a raised, variable, water level. The tour highlighted how much more sensitive some of the Highgate ponds are compared to some of those in the Hampstead chain.

The Design Team and the main Contractor, when appointed, will be undertaking a detailed review of all aspects of the scheme before starting the detailed design from scratch in conjunction with a stakeholder group from a wide representation of local interested groups. Our input will be based on our assessment of the sensitivity of work to each dam and our determination that the result will be the least intrusive visually.

Creation of more species-rich meadows

Less controversial is the plan to create more species-rich meadows similar to those at the 'Writer' and the 'Sparrows' sites at Parliament Hill. These have been successful both visually and in adding to the biodiversity of the Heath by

providing food plants for such as the common blue butterfly and nectar for invertebrates – the areas were buzzing with bees in the summer.

To be self-sustaining, the meadows need to be on infertile soils which do not contain, and which are not near areas of creeping thistle, and are away from places with pedestrian use if they are to remain unfenced to prevent being trampled on. Areas to be sown with annual wild flowers can be on fertile soils, although they too should be away from thistles. The meadow on the Heath Extension, planted on the silt removed from the ponds, looked particularly splendid this summer, but will need to be reseeded each year.

Of the few possible areas which have been identified as suitable for new sites, two small species-rich meadows are to be planted in 2012 (in the Upper part of Hockey Field by Springett's Wood, and at the north-west corner of Parliament Hill Fields) followed by another three small species-rich meadows in 2013 (near the eastern end of the lit path across the Extension, on Cohen's Fields and at the eastern end of the Tumulus Field). These will have to be fenced off whilst they get established but then left unfenced after their first year.

News from Kenwood

The shorter Kenwood concert season resulted, as expected, in less damage to the grass than last year, and the grass repair went well, though the biggest problem remains the look of the Pasture Ground for the 2-3 months until the turf is fully repaired. This was the last year under IMG's current contract and English Heritage will be putting the contract for the next few years out to tender.

The Heritage Lottery Fund has given Stage 1 approval for a £3.3m grant towards the Caring for Kenwood project and English Heritage will hear

the result of their Stage 2 application in March. The house will be closed from 31 March 2012 to complete the repairs to the roofs – a temporary roof will go over the building whilst the worn, cracked and slipping slates, the leadwork and gutters are stripped off and replaced, and the skylights repaired. Whilst the house is closed, 48 of the paintings will go on tour around the USA where they will help fundraising for the extra £1.2m still needed in addition to the HLF grant. If that HLF bid is successful, the work to the house will include restoring those internal parts of the house remodelled by Robert Adam to look as they did when originally built for the 1st Earl of Mansfield in the C18th. The house should then reopen at the end of October 2013.

An exciting part of this Caring for Kenwood project is restoration of the neglected Dairy above the eastern end of West Meadow. The buttery in the north wing, with its original marble sinks, marble and stone geometrical patterned floor and a black marble bowl in the centre, would be enhanced; Lady Mansfield's octagonal tea room and the ice house would both be conserved as historic entities, and the rest of the Dairy buildings would become a volunteer hub and education centre with the historic interiors able to be viewed by the public. Fundraising to help fill the funding gap has started and will be spread more widely over the next few months.

David Bevan gives the Springett Lecture

Those of you who were at Burgh House on 13th October for the fifteenth in our annual Springett Lectures heard David Bevan on Hampstead Heath and the Flora of London – his fascinating study of the changing flora of the Heath over the last 500 years. For those of you who could not make it, there is an outline of David's talk later in this Newsletter.

Burgh House - Use it or Lose it

by Martin Humphery

To those who know it well, Burgh House is one of Hampstead's most treasured gems.

Remarkably, I still come across people who have lived for some time in or near Hampstead, who have never visited this lovely house. So perhaps I can be forgiven for a brief potted history.

Burgh House was built in 1704 during the reign of Queen Anne. Soon after that, the Hampstead Spa began to flourish and in 1720 the Spa's physician, Dr William Gibbons, moved in. He greatly encouraged the drinking of the foul-tasting "chalybeate" waters, which were said to cure pretty well everything. He it was who added the lovely wrought iron gates, which bear his initials. In 1822 the house was sold to the Rev Allatson Burgh from whom it got its present name. He was the vicar of the Guildhall Church, St Lawrence Jewry, in the City. He paid £2546, a lot of money then, but if he bought it now it would have been a bargain at £106,000 (according to an on-line calculator).

Interestingly, Rudyard Kipling's daughter lived in the House in the thirties and his last outing was to visit her there.



Thereafter, the house was largely unoccupied and eventually passed into the ownership of Camden Council, who closed it in 1977, following the discovery of dry rot. Threatened with a sale for

commercial use, the horrified citizens of Hampstead launched an appeal and raised enough to refurbish Burgh House and to persuade Camden to grant a lease to the Burgh House Trust, who still run the house.

Since then, with the help of the Heritage Lottery Fund and many local benefactors, urgently needed facilities have been provided to make the house accessible to all and to provide an up-to-date Museum and additional gallery space.

Now we come to the present day. It will surprise no one that current financial conditions have borne very heavily on Burgh House.

We receive no public grants whatsoever and can only survive on the money we can make from events and hirings in the house plus whatever outside events we can arrange. Our largest source of income has always been from weddings, for which this lovely house provides an ideal setting. However, in these straitened times, bookings have fallen alarmingly, while the huge costs of maintaining and staffing such an old house go on unabated.

Burgh House offers a wonderful location for all sorts of celebrations, meetings and exhibitions with first class in-house catering in addition to an award-winning free local museum.

So it really is a case of **USE IT OR LOSE IT**.

Please visit www.burghhouse.org.uk to see full details of What's On at the House, to join the Friends of Burgh House and/or to make a generous donation.

We are pleased to give H&HS members advance notice of a wonderful opportunity to hear one of the world's most eminent cellists, Stephen Isserlis, who has most generously agreed to give a concert in aid of Burgh House.

Date for your Diary: Concert in aid of Burgh House

Stephen Isserlis

The world renowned cellist

Monday March 26th 7.30pm

at

St John's Parish Church

Church Row NW3

Photo Tom Miller



Tickets can be booked:

online at www.burghouse.org.uk (from Jan 15)

in person at the Burgh House office

by posting a cheque payable to the Burgh House Trust, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope to Burgh House, New End Square NW3 1LT

Watch the Burgh House website for more details

Burgh House & HAMPSTEAD
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(Saturdays by appointment)*

Support the Friends of Burgh House

Honorary President Piers Plowright

For more information or to join the Friends tel: Burgh House on 020 7431 0144
or contact Dawn Somper at dawn@somper.co.uk

Planning Report

by Douglas Maxwell

This is being written in Christmas week, and when I dipped into the planning Christmas hamper, there were an unusual number of tasty morsels; so much so that some had to be put in the freezer for next time. Here's a flavour of the rest ...

The Localism Act

Following Royal Assent on 15 November the long-awaited Localism Act has now passed into law. In planning terms the most important change is the provision for local communities to come together to produce a neighbourhood plan. If the plan meets certain criteria and is supported in a referendum, the local planning authority (LPA) will adopt it. Sounds easy doesn't it ... provided of course there is consensus within the community over what sort of plan to produce, and the wider community support it!

In the coming months the Society will be looking at the opportunities presented by the act, and what might be covered in a neighbourhood plan. One point that has come across in discussions with the LPA is that the underlying aim of the Localism Act is to stimulate development. Not an issue in Hampstead, where we are more concerned with holding back the adverse consequences of a booming market.

The National Planning Policy Framework The Localism Act has been accompanied by a succession of new initiatives and reviews including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which was summarised in the last Newsletter. These initiatives have one thing in common, in that they attempt to simplify the development control system in the name of promoting economic growth, and in doing so leave large loopholes and areas of uncertainty which are likely to provide an opening for inappropriate development. The Society has made a detailed objection to the NPPF, as have many other local

and national groups; and there are signs that the government may review the proposal in the light of this widespread opposition.

The Portas Review

This is a review undertaken for the government by retail expert Mary Portas and published in December 2011. It considers the future of high street retail, and how it can survive in an age of large multiples and internet shopping, especially at a time of recession and reduced consumer spending.

We will be working with our colleagues on the Town Committee to develop a response for this appropriate to Hampstead and other centres, and to consider the recommendations of the review as they relate to planning.

Local Planning Policy

Nearer home, the Stage 2 Camden Planning Guidance has now been adopted by the Council, and we were pleased to see that the Society's comments have influenced its final form.

A somewhat similar exercise was undertaken in relation to the Local Area Requirements, which is a list of information required for planning applications. The Society made representations via the deputation process to align these more closely with the adopted CPG and to give greater prominence to the need for Construction Management Plans in appropriate cases.

The Society received a letter of thanks from the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment (Councillor Sue Vincent) for our voluntary work commenting in detail on the proposals.

Applications

Despite the large number of these, we continue to review every application made within the Society's area; and great credit is due to Gordon

Maclean who continues to lead on this difficult and demanding task for the Society. The Planning Committee does review all objections and, where necessary, a vote is taken; very occasionally the General Committee is asked for its view as well.

We are tending to see an increase in new basement applications, and in applications for the renewal of permissions which were granted in the early days of basement fever, and have since lapsed. Gordon is also continuing work on a Local List proposal for Camden as previously reported.

Athlone House

A meeting took place in October between the Council, the property owner's representatives, and the Athlone House Working Group (AHWG). New designs were presented which contained most of the features to which AHWG had already objected, albeit on a slightly reduced scale.

The question which remains unanswered is the size of the building in comparison with the existing building, which will show whether or not the new proposal satisfies the requirements governing development on Metropolitan Open Land. This is a key issue since it was the principal ground upon which the inspector dismissed the recent appeal.

29 New End

An application was made for new housing for sale on the site of the former nurses' hostel, which attracted widespread opposition from local groups and individuals, as well as the Society. The application has now been withdrawn to allow time for discussion, though it is clear a new application will follow.

The Garden House, Vale of Health

An application for a Lawful Development Certificate for above-ground extensions has been granted in the face of opposition from the Society

and the Vale of Health Society. The Council held that irrespective of the merits of the application, it had no alternative but to grant the certificate, because permitted development rights applied.

Basements go viral

After several years campaigning against inappropriate basement extensions to existing properties, the issue seems – quite suddenly – to have attracted widespread attention nationally, including:-

- A series of letters published in The Times during November. One of these was from the owner of the house next to 9 Downshire Hill which highlighted the disgrace of 'acceptable' damage to adjoining properties – in this case a listed building.
- Former Mayor of London Ken Livingstone described basement extensions as expensive and environmentally damaging, and pledged to curb them if he is elected again (Ham & High 1 Dec 2011).
- A debate in the House of Commons on 8 November 2011 included the following extracts, recorded in Hansard, which will undoubtedly ring a few bells amongst our readers:-

Ms Karen Buck (Westminster North) (Lab):

“We know that, for the most part, basement developments are not opposed in principle, but their scale and the speed with which such major developments are now spreading over large parts of inner London is a major concern for neighbourhoods

“The damage to neighbours, streets and pavements is uncompensated. It can become a burden on the local authority that has responsibility for mending pavements, or it can fall on residents in the case of some of the unadopted roads and mewses

“The sheer scale and number of basement

Planning Report (cont)

developments means that the noise is incessant ... because the works are so substantial and prolonged
“.....many of the properties are terraced... so there is no buffer zone between the residential properties affected”.

And finally ...

A big thank you to my colleagues on the Planning Committee and the General Committee, our local councillors, and all our members and others who support the Society in its campaign against inappropriate development in Hampstead.

The Garden House – what is Camden up to?

A view from the Vale of Health by Alice Adams

A widely anticipated new planning application for the contentious Garden House site in the Vale of Health has been submitted, following the granting of two Certificates of Lawfulness of Permitted Development (PD) over the last year, which allowed a substantial basement excavation and extensions to the property. Despite many extensive objections from local residents and societies, the most recent PD application was granted apparently on the advice of legal counsel.

Camden Planning has refused to make this advice available to the consultees despite repeated requests, claiming it is subject to legal privilege. The Development Committee which approved the request was told that the Camden Planning report that recommended the PD be granted ‘reflected the advice of leading Counsel’, whereas a Camden employee implied in a separate communication that the legal advice received was in fact only approval of the wording. The battle to make public the advice, paid for by Camden council taxpayers, is ongoing.

Camden has also failed to clarify whether successive PD applications are considered in isolation or in conjunction with previous applications. The issue arose in the case of The Garden House because successive applications

were made separately that would likely not have been granted had they been made together. This could have significant implications for development on other Metropolitan Open Land sites, where developers could seek to ‘bank’ permissions and continue to make further applications piecemeal to build up to a larger amount of development permission than they would have obtained in any single application.

For the most recent Garden House planning application, which amongst other things proposes to extend the roof into dormer spaces and excavate a significant amount of earth to create a terrace, Camden Planning department sent out the consultation letters on 22nd December and then promptly went on leave en masse until 3rd January, leaving the letters to be delivered a week into the consultation period while many residents are away for Christmas and New Year. Attempts to clarify mistakes and points of uncertainty in the application have been met with a deluge of ‘Out of Office’ responses. Local residents have requested an extension to the consultation period. A cynic may question whether the timing could have been more perfectly chosen to make objections difficult.....?.

Town Report

by Frank Harding

Several Town Committee projects that have been in preparation are now bearing fruit.

The Toll Gate House

The Society has been lobbying Camden, and before that its predecessors, for many years to save the Toll Gate House opposite the Spaniards Inn. Our most recent efforts, as many will have noted, have resulted in Camden carrying out major restructuring and refurbishment work both to the inside and external walls and roof of the building. The line of approach on the road from Highgate has also been slightly changed in order to protect the overhanging roof and gutter from damage by buses and high-sided vehicles.

There remains the issue of trying to find a tenant who can use the building and thus ensure that future maintenance work is carried out whenever necessary.

We are particularly grateful to Terry Gallagher and his colleagues at Camden who were responsible for ensuring that the project was undertaken and for overseeing it, and to Councillor Chris Knight for his support.

Hampstead Rediscovered: The Heath

Our exhibition at Burgh House of a selection of the paintings, watercolours, prints and old photographs of Hampstead and the Heath which Camden has in its archives, was a great success. This first show, "Hampstead rediscovered – the Heath", covered pictures of the Heath and also included some contemporary photographs of the current view of the same aspects.

It is intended to hold a follow-up show, this time of pictures of the village, in the summer.

Art Exhibition on the Heath

Some progress has been made in relation to holding an art show at the top of Heath Street

on summer weekends. More news on this will be reported in the next issue of the Newsletter.

Fleet River walks

In the light of the success of last year's two walks along the course of the River Fleet - from the top of the Heath to the River Thames at Blackfriars Bridge, the Committee is arranging a repeat programme. The walks, which will again be led by City Guide Robin Michaelson, will take place in May. However we do not yet have the dates because the high and low tides at Blackfriars Bridge for May have not yet been published – and that is relevant to seeing the Fleet leaving its culvert and entering the Thames. Those wishing to participate should therefore contact me on 020 7435 3728 or, preferably, by email: frankaharding@btinternet.com so that I can let members know as soon as dates are finalised. Numbers for each walk will be limited to 25; the cost will be £5 per head.

North London Trails

Richard Webber of the Highgate Society has been developing a series of walks in and around Highgate and the Heath. He has asked the Heath & Hampstead Society to join this venture and we are in the course of extending the area covered to include Hampstead, the rest of the Heath and the Heath Extension. Booklets will be published showing the routes and places of interest along them.

Lifts at Hampstead Heath station

Jonathan Bergman has been leading a lengthy campaign for the installation of lifts at Hampstead Heath station to assist those who are old, disabled or have other needs. The Committee has been supportive of his efforts and was delighted when it was recently announced that lifts would be installed.

Hampstead Heath and the Flora of London

by David Bevan, who gave this year's Springett Lecture

A recollection of Kate Springett

I introduced my talk on the flora of the Heath, with a brief account of my first and only meeting with Kate Springett in the early 1990s. I was in the Bird Sanctuary pond enclosure helping a colleague, Edward Milner (spider expert), examine the contents of his pitfall traps, when an imposing figure swept down the hill from Ken Wood wanting to know, in no uncertain terms, what we thought we were doing. Our explanation was eventually judged satisfactory and we parted on good terms.

The common spotted orchid



The incident demonstrated Kate's determination to protect the Heath from all perceived dangers. Although primarily an ornithologist, she was also an excellent botanist, recording, for example, the common spotted orchid on East Heath in 1963, not far from where John Gerarde had seen it at the end of the sixteenth century.

The long history of botanical recording

Gerarde was one of the first of a long line of London apothecaries to have visited the Heath in search of medically efficacious plants or "simples". Their written accounts of some of the plants they found (as for example in Gerarde's famous 1597 Herball or General History of Plants) have enabled us to piece together a good idea of what grew on the Heath more than four hundred years ago. Many subsequent botanists have left detailed information about their own visits, so that we now know a great deal about the changing flora of Hampstead Heath over a long time period. This longevity of botanical recording is unique to the Heath and sets it apart from any other comparable site in Britain.

After giving a brief account of the Heath's underlying geology and its influence on the vegetation, I attempted to follow in the footsteps of the seventeenth century apothecary Thomas Johnson who has left us a vivid account of one of his "herborising excursions" to the Heath on August 1st 1629.

The work of Thomas Johnson

Having sheltered from a sudden downpour of rain in Highgate, Johnson and his six fellow apothecaries headed for a nearby wood (now thought to be Ken Wood). They listed the trees and other woodland plants present and many of these, including mountain ash, wild service,

hornbeam and foxglove are still thriving there today. Leaving the Wood and "coming out onto the Heath proper", they continued their botanical recording and it is here that differences start to appear between the seventeenth century flora and that of today. Characteristic heathland plants like bell heather and cross-leaved heath, noted by Johnson, are now no longer present. They lingered on (to the west of the Spaniard's Road) until around 1912 and have resisted all attempts at reintroduction.

The disappearance of heathland plants

Heather itself, abundant in Johnson's time, survived a little longer, finally succumbing in 1927. It has recently been reintroduced above the Vale of Health. Many other heathland plants seen by Johnson have also gone (e.g. saw-wort, petty whin, lesser skullcap, heath speedwell and others).

What has brought about this widespread loss? The clear answer is that the habitat has changed; Hampstead Heath is no longer a heath. Those plants once thrived in the open ground and on the impoverished soils that then dominated the area. Such places were maintained by grazing animals that effectively removed any incoming shrub and tree seedlings that might have threatened to shade out the heathland. Grazing gradually declined towards the end of the nineteenth century, as the Heath became a public open space.

*Right: the leaves of
the Wild Service tree
Below Bell heather*



Hampstead Heath and the Flora of London (cont)



The royal fern

As a result, the heathland was slowly lost as coarse grasses, shrubs and young trees became established and added nutrients to the soil. Today the Heath has become a mosaic of acid grassland, ponds, scrub and secondary woodland and its flora reflects these changes.

The first Local Flora published in Britain.

Thomas Johnson's account of his visit to the Heath in 1629 has a strong claim to be considered the first local flora published in Britain. It was the first of many attempts to catalogue the changing flora of the Heath, culminating recently in a detailed study by the London Natural History Society, which plots the distribution of more than 600 flowering plants and ferns.

Here you can discover, for example, where the royal fern has recently been reintroduced. Gerard knew this impressive plant and remarked in his Herball that it grew: "in the midst of a bog at the further end of Hampsted heath from London, at the bottome of a hill adjoining to a small cottage" (probably the well documented botanically rich sphagnum bog behind Jack Straw's Castle which was drained at the end of the nineteenth century).

By the time Johnson came to revise the Herball in 1633, he remarked: "It did grow plentifully...

but of late it is all destroyed". This was perhaps not so surprising as it was much sought after by apothecaries for treating "those that are wounded, dry-beaten, and bruised; that have fallen from some high place", though I suspect the advice that it should be "taken with some kind of liquor" might better explain its efficacy!

Recent exotic additions

I concluded the talk by describing some recent exotic additions to the flora of the Heath and how some of these were becoming widespread in London as a whole.

The tree-of-heaven *Ailanthus altissima* was one such arrival that has recently become established. Although still "well behaved" on the Heath, this Chinese tree has become a menace in parts of central London where its vigorous self-sown saplings have knocked down walls and caused considerable structural damage to buildings. Seedlings were first recorded on bombsites in the City in 1944 and it has probably benefited from the "heat island" that effects central London.

An even more recent newcomer is the Himalayan honeysuckle *Leycesteria formosa*, which is widely grown as an ornamental shrub. Birds eat the numerous purple berries and transport the seeds into the wild. Although only recorded so far from a few sites on the edge of the Heath, this is likely to spread in the future as it has done in other parts of London.

A new Flora of London

The London Natural History Society is now carrying out fieldwork for a new Flora of London and we would welcome records from the Heath or from elsewhere in London.

London Natural History Society study

The detailed study by the London Natural History Society, plotting the distribution of more than 600 flowering plants and ferns is called: Flora of the Heath Checklist, 2001 - 2003, and is available as a CD from the Society, price £2-50p.

David Bevan is one of London's recognised conservation experts particularly in relation to the flora of the British Isles. He was for many years Haringey's Conservation Officer, managing some two hundred acres of land which included Coldfall ancient woodland, the Parkland Walk, Railway Fields urban nature reserve and a variety of smaller sites. He has been President of the London Natural History Society and is currently an Honorary Vice-President and their Conservation Officer.

*Leycesteria formosa or
Himalayan honeysuckle*



Bulletin Board

Monica's Caterers

would like to thank you for giving us the opportunity to provide the canapes for the

Society's Christmas Party
at St.Stephen's.

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The Keats Foundation

Following the recent refurbishment of Keats House, the Keats Foundation was established as a Trust last year, chaired by Professor Nicholas Roe, to support educational activities associated with John Keats, Keats House and Romantic poetry.

The Foundation's remit is the advancement of arts, culture and heritage for public benefit, through education and community projects for Keats House. We support three exciting initiatives based at Keats House – a Young Poets' Forum, a Schools Programme, and a stimulating Public Lecture Programme and related events, with distinguished speakers and experts including scholars and poets.

The annual subscription is £25

Members are entitled to:

- Free admission to Keats House;
- The Wentworth Place newsletter
- Priority booking for a new Keats Festival
- Keats House annual garden party

For more information contact:

email:

keatsfoundation@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Tel: Keats House on 020 7332 3868

cityoflondon.gov.uk/keatshousehampstead



The Heath & Hampstead Society

**Don't forget
to use the**

Hampstead Card

The current list of businesses taking part in the scheme is enclosed with this Newsletter and can also be found on the Society's website

www.heathandhampsteadsociety.org.uk

Benefits offered are granted at the traders' discretion.

The Society cannot be held responsible for changes in terms or availability of any discounts or offers

Hampstead Film Society

Hampstead Town Hall,

Tuesday evenings at 7pm:

Regular screenings of a wide range of world cinema, documentaries and classic movies.

Coming up:

Tuesday, 31st January

Rocco and his brothers

Luchino Visconti, Italy, 1960

Tuesday, 14th February

Chinatown

Roman Polanski, USA, 1974

All films are presented on a new
15 foot screen.

Membership fee: £15.00 Adults
£10.00 Concessions; Day Membership £6.00

Admission fee: Members £4.00 per film;
£5.00 for their guests.
Cash bar.

For more information and how to join:

Tel: 020 7692 5811

Email for membership details:

hfs@interchange.org.uk

www.interchange.org.uk/movies

Interchange Trust,

Hampstead Town Hall Centre

213 Haverstock Hill, London, NW3 4QP

A not for profit group: all profit goes to
charity.



The Friends of Hampstead Town Hall

AGM

Thursday 16 February 2012

7.30

Hampstead Town Hall

213 Haverstock Hill, London, NW3 4QP

The Friends' long-standing committee are proposing changes to reflect a new and improved situation at Interchange, and want to consult as widely as possible.

We do hope that many of you will take this opportunity to share your views and discuss ways to increase support and resources; offer a more attractive and interesting package to the members; widen the Friends' reach in the local community thus raising the profile of the Town Hall and all its activities.

The support of the local community continues to be vital to future success.

Wine and refreshments will be provided

We look forward to seeing as many of you there as possible.

All welcome

Heath Walks 2012

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.burghouse.org.uk)

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

Starting times are either 2.30pm or 10.30 am (9.30 for birds), depending on season and subject matter.

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

You will be invited to make a minimum donation of £3.00 per adult, to be collected at the beginning of each walk, to help support future development of the walks programme and to promote the Society's activities generally.

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

Please note starting times and meeting points

Further information from walks organiser, Thomas Radice,
Tel: 020 8455 1025;
mobile: 07941 528 034 or
email: thomas@theradices.co.uk



No walk in January

5 February 10.30am (meet at Burgh House)
Ponds of the Heath led by Marc Hutchinson, Secretary, Hampstead Heath Winter Swimming Club; member of the H&HS Committee and Heath Sub-Committee

4 March 10.30am (meet at Burgh House)
Trees of the Heath led by Lynne Leveson, official volunteer guide, Kew Gardens

1 April 9.30am (meet at Burgh House)
Birds of the Heath in Spring led jointly by John Hunt, former Chairman of the Marylebone Birdwatching Society and Sash Tusa, members of the H&HS Heath Sub-Committee

6 May 2.30pm (meet at Burgh House)
Volunteer conservation: the work of Heath Hands, led by Cindy Galvin, volunteer and member of the Society.

3 June 2.30pm (meet at flowerstall / cattle trough Spaniards Road, near the Spaniards Inn) The Heath Extension, led by Tony Ghilchik, Chairman of the Heath Sub-Committee

1 July 2.30pm (meet at the Gazebo between Kenwood old Kitchen Garden and Brew House Cafe). Wildlife and management of Hampstead Heath, led by City of London ecologists.