



The Heath & Hampstead Society

NEWSLETTER

January 2008

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A new book about the Heath from Deborah Wolton

photo: Sandra Lousada

The Heath and Hampstead Society

Founded in 1897

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Chairman's Report

by *Tony Hillier*

Good Wishes

I should like to begin by once again wishing all members a happy, prosperous and peaceful New Year. This is also a good opportunity to say thank you on behalf of all members to our very hard working, expert and dedicated officers and committee members. We are lucky to have 40 local residents who devote so much of their time and energy to the Society. They really make a difference, helping Hampstead to remain such an exceptional place with its strong community, and the Heath such a wonderful place to visit.

Congratulations

Our Christmas party was held on 13 December and enjoyed by around 180 members. We returned to the Town Hall auditorium, which looked very festive and somehow seemed more inviting than in recent years. Once again the party was a great success and I should like to offer our congratulations and thanks to Janine Griffis, her family and team for making it so. I should also like to express our sincere gratitude to Benham & Reeves, both sales and residential letting, for their generous sponsorship of the party.

The redesigned front cover of our September edition trumpeted the launch of our new website www.heathandhampsteadsociety.org.uk.

I said our team was good. It took them only two months to win the prestigious Walter Bor Media award for the best website, given by the London Forum, the "mother" organisation for London's 130 or so local amenity societies like ours. Our congratulations go to Maureen Clark Darby, John Weston, Diana Cortes, Stephen Taylor and Ann Eastman for their professionalism and imagination, which make this site well worth a regular visit.

Chairman's report (cont)

Web editor John Weston gives us a taster of his recent blogs on page 16.

2008 "To Do" List

There are again some very familiar names on the list, and as always some pretty big battles ahead.

Fringes of the Heath

The Garden House

The owners of Garden House in the Vale of Health have been given leave to challenge in the Court of Appeal the favourable decision we obtained in the High Court. This clearly restated the statutory principle we feel so strongly needs upholding to protect both Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) and the Green Belt, that re-developments of existing buildings should not be "materially larger" than those they are replacing.

We have explored acceptable compromise with the owners, but have been unable to reach agreement. The case will be heard on 26 and 27 February. I am writing again to the many members who so generously pledged financial support for the first hearing, asking them to renew their pledges; and I ask all those who may still wish to pledge their support, but did not do so last time, to please contact Martin Humphery or myself. It is vital that we have your support for this nationally important case, which could cost us and the nation dear, if the earlier decision is reversed.

Athlone House

Athlone House stands on a huge site overlooking the Heath on the Highgate end of Hampstead Lane. As part of a team which was formed some 11 years ago, jointly representing this Society, the Highgate Society and the City, we obtained in 2005, after many years of negotiation with Camden, a Planning Brief,

setting out in considerable detail the planning and environmental conditions for the re-development of Kenwood Place, the modern hospital buildings as a block of flats, and the restoration of Athlone House and three other Victorian buildings on the site. Two of the buildings have now been sold to another developer, whose plans seem likely to conflict with the Planning Brief and the same principles for the protection of MOL that we are defending in the case of Garden House. The Athlone House Working Group will again fight hard to maintain the integrity of the land, the new buildings and their aspect from the Heath.

Heath House

After years of neglect Heath House, the listed Georgian house opposite Whitestone Pond on the corner of Spaniards Road, has changed hands and is likely to come up soon for re-development.

Cycling - a new cycle path and a report

A new cycle path for shared use with pedestrians between the War Memorial at Whitestone Pond, and Spaniards Inn has been proposed by Camden. We support this in principle, although the details to preserve the rural aspect need careful engineering. We would like more protection for cyclists on the roads around the Heath.

A report on cycling on the Heath commissioned by the City has come up for consultation; it is entitled Pedestrian & Cycle Observation Study, and was prepared by Intelligent Space and W. S. Atkins. We congratulate the City on this pioneering piece of work. It was triggered by our objections to a request from the cycling lobby for seven more shared use paths on the Heath. The fact that the study covers such a wide scope of how people use the Heath is in itself a feather in our cap and a big improvement on the 2002

report. We shall be commenting in detail through the Heath Consultative and Management Committees. Our main contributions will focus on the highly technical areas, where we feel that the standards for protecting pedestrian safety on shared paths in an environment like the Heath have not been adequately covered; also we believe forecast usage levels are underestimated. One myth the study has exploded is the PR about a large number of young children cycling to school on existing paths and needing a new route up Lime Avenue. There are virtually none. The Society will be kept busy on this important study until mid 2008.

Kenwood

IMG and English Heritage have submitted new applications for entertainment and planning licences (we are pleased to note that as a quango with statutory planning responsibilities, English Heritage recognises this time round that a planning application is needed) for 8 concerts with 8,000 audience capacity for the summer of 2008. The stage will be on the Pasture Ground instead of on the Thousand Pound Pond. In responding, our concern will be to persuade Camden to halt the concerts if approved noise levels are exceeded, and to impose on IMG a duty to care properly for growth on the Pasture Ground, when the stage has been removed after being on site for over nine weeks.

The school run

After a lot of sound and fury, Camden have reduced to 1000 for the current year the number of twice daily timed parking permits for parents of young school children driving to Camden (mainly Hampstead), which will reduce again to 500 for the next academic year. The Society is still not satisfied with the resulting traffic and parking congestion. We shall be exploring

further with the private sector schools how to make some tangible progress on bussing.

Hampstead police station

The Camden Asset Management Plan, published by the Metropolitan Police in November 2007 and currently the subject of public consultation, appears to state as a fait accompli that the police facilities in Hampstead will be scrapped and replaced by an as yet unidentified shop. There are good arguments why Borough patrolling, as distinct from Safer Neighbourhood (SN) Teams, and custody should be centralised. No good argument has yet been given against the Society's proposal put some 18 months ago to Metropolitan Police Services. We suggested that the annex to the police station should be modernised to act as the local counter and to house all the teams that under the latest operational strategy are recognised as needing to be locally based. It is quite clear to us that there are sufficient numbers of these, when combined for example with office space and rooms for SN and other meetings, to fully justify the modernisation capital expenditure, which would represent only a small part of any proceeds of sale of the main building. The fact that some unidentified, expensive and no doubt insecure shop is preferred would appear to be evidence of high-level muddled consumerist thinking. The Society will be testing this hypothesis during the consultation process which ends at the beginning of March 2008. Janine Griffis gives more detail on page 8.

Other Successes

I should like to thank Christine Winterburgh and her team for organising Seen from the Street in 2007, as well as Capital Gardens for again generously sponsoring the prizes and Deborah Moggach for graciously handing them out. Christine reports on the next page.

Chairman's report (cont)

I should like to thank Frank Harding and Juliette Sonabend for completing phase one of the restoration of Hampstead Plaques. See Frank's report on page 10.

Hampstead Town Hall

Here too there is more good news. Following our campaign to get more local trustees on to the Board, the seven new local trustees have made their presence felt in a recent letter to the CNJ. They said that "the InterChange board has heeded the local community's concerns" and publicly committed themselves "to taking forward the original vision for Hampstead Town Hall in

an open and accountable way..... to ensure that in future the town hall becomes an accessible and welcoming resource for Hampstead residents". They also mentioned that two more of the long-standing trustees have gone.

There have been many comments, that since the changes of management last year, the atmosphere at the building has markedly improved. Restructuring of the Board continues and we hope that with new trustees who can work more harmoniously with all the groups representing local interests, recent problems will soon be a thing of the past.

Seen from the Street Award Winners 2007

Christine Winterburgh reports

The very wet weather in May and June posed many problems for gardeners in the area this year and also for the judges for the Seen from the Street Awards. However, we found some charming and attractive gardens and floral displays and it gave us all an opportunity to discover which plants stood up to the wind and rain best. We walked all over the area and the following are the award winners.

Garden Flat, 31 Lyndhurst Road – Andrea Taylor

27 Lindfield Gardens – Alan and Pamela Rodger

43 Heath Hurst Road – Eric Rayner and Dylis Dawes

2 Mansfield Place – Mat Townsend

4 Antrim Mansions, 1st floor balcony – Elaine Turner
63 Constantine Road

18 Buckland Crescent, Garden Flat

17 Belsize Park – Garden Flat

This year we would also like to mention two gardens which were almost prize winners:

50/52 Belsize Avenue, Ground Floor

24 Eton Avenue

We would also like to congratulate the Flask Pub, Flask Walk, for their most attractive hanging baskets and the Gayton Road Residents Association for the hanging baskets they provided along the street. Perhaps next year some other Hampstead streets will copy the idea.

The Awards Ceremony took place on Sunday, 14th October at Capital Gardens, Alexandra Palace as Capital Gardens once again generously donated eight £50 vouchers for the winners. Local author Deborah Moggach presented the prizes.



Heath Report

by Tony Ghilchik

As a new year takes over from the old, so a number of issues which I have mentioned in past Newsletters have moved into their next stage. Probably the most important of these for Heath-lovers is the City's new ten year Hampstead Heath Management Plan, Part 1 of which was agreed on 26 November by the Hampstead Heath Management Committee.

Hampstead Heath Management Plan

This overarching Vision for the Heath has been developed by the City over many months with input from us, from other local groups and from the public consultation. The many detailed submissions have been considered by a broad-based editorial panel to produce an excellent final document. Work has already begun on Part 2 - the Topic papers - which will set out in much greater detail the management techniques that need to be employed to implement the management plan. It will set a time frame over which new initiatives should be introduced, as well as detailing the essential routine tasks. It will be followed by Part 3, which will set out how the various techniques will be applied in the various areas of the Heath, with separate sections for each main area.

The way the City have approached Part 1 augurs well for the handling of these area sections, where there is much scope for disagreement on which of the techniques should be applied to specific small bits of Heath. For example, a study on the value of thick, as opposed to thin, scrub and bramble as a bird habitat was welcomed for highlighting the value of scrub and brambles but raised some disagreement on how much of it should be at the expense of poor secondary woodland, not grassland, and how much alongside hedges and thus into the grassland.

Cycling

The contentious issue of cycling is also moving into its next stage. As Tony Hillier mentioned in his report, the consultants have done a very thorough survey of pedestrian and cycle flows on the Heath. The pedestrian flows are, unsurprisingly, heaviest in the south east of the Heath around Parliament Hill and the Hampstead and Highgate Ponds, in Golders Hill Park, and on the main path heading north from Highgate Ponds to Kenwood, with weekends heavier than weekdays. From the counts it was estimated that there were 7.2 million visits to the Heath in 2007, despite the very wet summer. W S Atkins has assessed both the existing cycle routes and those suggested by the Camden Cycling Campaign against the London Cycling Design Standard to give each route a Design Assessment Score. Between them, Intelligent Space and Atkins have produced an excellent Executive Summary of their findings, which you can see on the City's website:

www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/Corporation/living_environment/open_spaces/hampstead_heath.htm) by following the link in Pedestrian & Cycle Observation Study.

Green Flag Awards

On a less controversial note, we are delighted that the City's management of its Open Spaces has once again been recognised with Green Flag Awards, including ones for the Heath and for Highgate Wood - the ninth consecutive year for the Heath - whilst Highgate Wood and Queens Park have received an award in every year since the scheme started. In addition, Highgate Wood was given a Green Heritage Award. The judges were impressed with the way the Management Plan was being developed and scored the Heath in their top category, but

Heath Report (cont)

they also noted that progress must be made in upgrading the public lavatories and in maintaining other buildings. Indeed, it is the state of these other buildings, such as the Hill Garden Shelter, Pitt's Arch and the Hill Garden Pergola, which are tarnishing the City's otherwise excellent record for husbandry.

Kenwood Concerts

The proposals aimed at bringing back the Kenwood Concerts are also moving onto their next stage after IMG and English Heritage undertook a thorough consultation process with local residents and organisations. As a result IMG has applied for an entertainment licence for 8 concerts on the Pasture Ground below the Henry Moore statue, with a mixed programme of classical, popular and international artists. There would be one concert-free weekend during the season, a maximum audience of 8,000 per concert and, to minimise the disturbance to bats and other wildlife, only one of the concerts will be with fireworks and no weekend will have two concerts.

Much as I loved to listen to the classical music drifting across the lake, those old concerts never made much money for English Heritage. With this new location it should be easier for them to keep the sound within the concert area and so remove what was our main complaint in the past few years. We have not yet seen the associated planning application for the new stage and its facilities; we hope that IMG will also be taking on board the need, expressed during the consultations, to ensure that the main speakers are lowered or retracted between concerts rather than left as a blot on the weekday scene.

Springett Lectures

Those of you who were at Burgh House on 25 October for the twelfth in our annual Springett Lectures heard Dave Leech of the British Trust for Ornithology talk about Climate Change. The talk led to some interesting questions, including one about the relationship between sea surface temperatures and bird productivity to which Dave could not give an immediate answer; having given it some thought, he has explained that the colder surface temperatures encourage more vertical mixing of the water column which leads to more nutrients being brought to the surface and on to greater primary production. As usual, things are not quite as simple as they might appear and, for those who did not manage to get to the lecture, we have included in this Newsletter an outline of Dave's enthralling talk on 'Climate Change and the UK's birds'.

Walks programme

You will also see details of our walk programme for 2008. The walks are on the 1st Sunday of each month (bar January) and start at 10:30am on the short winter days and 2:30pm when the days get longer. Most start from Burgh House. I hope we will see you there.

A new book about Hampstead Heath - a special offer for members

We are pleased to be able to give members a special offer on Deborah Wolton's fascinating new book about Hampstead Heath, courtesy of the publisher, Frances Lincoln. Details are on the Bulletin Board.



Town Report

by Gordon Maclean

The emphasis of our work continues to be in the area of Planning; there are big issues to be faced, which are demanding of the time and expertise of the Town Sub-Committee.

The Planning Bill

Issues don't come much bigger than this, where the very future of our Conservation Areas is at stake.

The White Paper "Planning for a Sustainable Future" which I referred to in the September Newsletter, has now been translated into the Planning Bill without any perceptible changes. In other words, none of the serious concerns expressed by us, the Civic Trust, and the other members of what is now known as the Planning Coalition, have been considered. The Government intends to steamroller the Bill through, disregarding all the views expressed by all the National bodies concerned with the heritage and environment of our country.

For the record, the Planning Coalition comprises the following organisations: the Civic Trust, the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, Friends of the Earth, the Grasslands Trust, the Council for National Parks, the National Trust, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the Ramblers Association, Enoughisenough, the Campaign for Better Transport, UKRIGS, the Wildlife Trust, the Woodland Trust.

No, I have no idea who Enoughisenough are!

The coalition is, as will easily be seen, well represented in the areas of rural Britain, but is also supported by many urban Conservation Societies like us. The huge breadth of the objectors to this Bill is significant.

As I have indicated previously, we have focussed our objections on the relatively narrow issues concerned with urban Conservation Areas.

There are many other parts of this huge and widely drawn Bill, concerned with major Planning processes and Appeals for airports, power stations and the like, with which we may or may not agree (there are many areas where a wide range of public opinions exists), but we, a small city conservation society, cannot hope to give informed views. The impact on our Conservation Areas is potentially enormous, perhaps catastrophic, and we must concentrate our efforts where our views are directly relevant.

It is a matter of amazement and real worry that something as apparently uncontroversial, attracting almost universal popular support, as the character of our towns and cities, should be attacked in the way set out in this seriously flawed Bill.

The Heath and Hampstead Society has always been a strictly non-party-political organisation, and we must try to keep it so. However, when a Bill is presented to Parliament which is so damaging to the Society's core objectives, we must enter this dirty world. We are advised that the only way to deflect the worst damage is by fighting it through the Committee stage of its progress.

We will be doing this as best we can, but we do need help. If there are members who can assist us to find our way through the parliamentary jungle, we want to hear from you!

Other Matters

The usual flood of Planning applications still keeps on coming, more and more involving basement excavations. We continue to oppose these where there are consequences on trees, subsoil water, or neighbour nuisance, and we are persisting with our proposals to Camden Council on strengthening their Planning policies on this contentious and damaging issue.

Town Report (cont)

We are considering Planning applications for the reconstruction of South Hampstead High School, and the restoration of Heath House on North End Way. These are both very important proposals, and we looking at them with special care; there are signs that there may be hopeful outcomes to each.

The future of our Police Station is once again under discussion; this is referred to elsewhere in this Newsletter.

Parking, traffic and the implications of the school run continue to concern us, and our plans for improvements in the Whitestone Pond area, and our Hampstead Plaques programme, are very much alive.

Policing in Hampstead

by Janine Griffis

Chair, Camden Community and Police Consultative Group (CPCG)

There has been much speculation about the future of the Hampstead Police Station for many years. The custody suites closed in 1999, 'beat' policing fell out of fashion and by the turn of the century, only a handful of police were left working out of a warren of musty offices. The outside of the building received a much-needed facelift while the inside continued to moulder.

Since then, the nature of policing has changed dramatically. On the London-wide level, policing has become increasingly complex, with huge resources dedicated to fighting terrorism, organised crime, trafficking and drugs. On the local level, policing teams have returned with a mandate to serve the needs of local communities while, at the same time, the information revolution has changed forever the way the police go about their daily business. A great deal of life has

returned to the Hampstead Police Station but it may not be for long.

The Metropolitan Police is currently reviewing all of its property and whether or not it suits the needs of modern policing. The Met has developed a strategy based around the major police tasks of custody, response, Safer



*Is there a future for Hampstead Police Station?
line drawing by Kassie Fass from the Society's archive*

Policing in Hampstead (cont)

Neighbourhoods (SN), front counters and offices. This strategy calls for building new response and custody bases in every borough, establishing bases in every ward for Safer Neighbourhood teams, developing more public-friendly front counters and assuring that offices are well equipped.

Currently operating out of the Hampstead Police Station are two SN teams and a front counter. There are also some non-response police based at Hampstead but the Met argues that they would operate more effectively from a purpose-built facility: one with plenty of parking, showers, lockers etc. and one that permits police to come and go 24 hours a day without disturbing their neighbours. In recent years other units and training courses have made use of the station as well, bringing welcome activity.

The Met says that the Hampstead Station, like many other pre-war police buildings, isn't 'fit for purpose' and that it would be too costly to renovate and maintain. The proposed strategy would shift away from all-purpose buildings containing everything from front counters to offices to custody suites, to newly built, single-purpose buildings. Remaining in Hampstead would be a front counter and a base for the two SN teams serving Hampstead and Frognal & Fitzjohns wards.

The Heath & Hampstead Society has taken the position, as outlined by Gordon Maclean in previous newsletters, that it would like to see the station retained for police purposes, if funding can be found to make the current building 'fit for purpose'. The overriding objective, however, must be to provide more effective policing leading to a reduction in local crime and in the fear of crime. If funding for improving the existing building is not available,

one alternative suggested by the H&HS to the Met is that the smaller 'cottage' abutting the station, No. 26, be converted to a small modern station to house SN teams and a front office. No. 26 is structurally unstable and would be no loss to the Conservation Area.

According to Gordon, in this way, the Met could realise the asset value of the existing building, which would remain architecturally as a Rosslyn Hill feature, and the Police would have a new, modern purpose-designed building to support some of their local functions and retain a visible police presence in the area.

The Camden Community and Police Consultative Group, which I chair, will be running a consultation on the new strategy through the beginning of March. We will be holding a series of public meetings and focus groups, organising visits to model facilities and soliciting responses to an independent questionnaire. In coordination with the Ham & High, Nigel Steward, chair of the Hampstead SN panel, and other SN panel chairs, we will hold a public meeting at the Hampstead Town Hall on 18 February at 7.30 pm. Copies of the Camden strategy, the Asset Management Plan, can be downloaded at either:
www.met.police.uk/camden or
www.camdencpcg.org.uk.

This strategy will provide the framework for how the police in Camden operate for many years to come so it is vitally important for local residents and businesses to make their views known. Camden Council is working closely with the Met Police to develop a new estate that meets the needs of local people and the police, so there may be some future yet for the old Hampstead Police Station.

Revival of the Hampstead plaque scheme

by Frank Harding

As readers may well have noticed or seen in the local press, the Society has embarked on a programme of restoration and further development of the Hampstead plaques. These are the black oval plaques commemorating famous people who lived in Hampstead and buildings in the “village” with a significant history. The first phase of the programme was completed in September and the second and third phases are now being pursued.

The purpose behind the Hampstead plaque scheme was and remains the opportunity to interest residents and visitors to Hampstead in aspects of local history and of those who live here.

Responsibility for running the plaque scheme was taken over by the Heath & Hampstead Society in 1994. Since then four new plaques



before....



.....after

have been erected and a limited amount of maintenance work has been undertaken. Hence the decision of the Main Committee of the Society in 2006 to authorise a review of the condition of the existing plaques, and subsequently to carry out the refurbishment or replacement of those in poor condition. It was also agreed that, once those phases of the work were completed, consideration would be given to selecting more buildings on which plaques might be placed, either in honour of those who had lived in them or in view of the importance of the buildings themselves or what might have taken place within them.

Until very recently there were 29 Hampstead plaques. One has recently been removed – that to Sir Nikolaus Pevsner - to be replaced by an English Heritage “blue plaque”. Of the 28 remaining plaques twelve are in good condition, ten were in need of refurbishment, two need to be replaced in the light of their condition and two will probably be removed; the remaining two will probably be replaced in due course. Those being removed will be placed in the Hampstead Museum in Burgh House.

The ten plaques in need of restoration have been removed, restored and, with one exception, refixed to the buildings whence they came - the last one will be put up once the major construction work on that site is completed. The residents of the houses where the plaques have been restored seem to be delighted with the work – comments include “It looks absolutely magnificent and we’ll try to keep it that way” and “it looks wonderful!” We were also pleased that, in relation to two of the plaques, the homeowners generously agreed to make significant contributions to the costs of restoration.

We are now beginning to think about what additional names and buildings might be selected for new plaques. The Society has agreed a limited budget for 2008 and the criteria to enable choices to be made for the creation and erection of some further plaques. In summary those criteria are that persons to be commemorated

- lived in the building in question
- will have been dead for at least 20 years, and
- will have been nationally or internationally well known and will have made a significant contribution to the country, to its culture or to society.

And of course, that the building is in Hampstead (within a defined area).

The criteria for significant buildings are that they should be

- historically or architecturally important, and
- those in which important historical national or international events have taken place or those particularly significant to the development of London or Hampstead.

The Society has established a selection panel which includes Carole Siegal and Christopher Wade, to choose the locations at which new plaques will be erected. There are plenty of people and buildings deserving of a plaque so the selection of just a few will give the panel a difficult task. Nominations of relevant people and buildings to commemorate are invited; they should be sent, with supporting information, to Frank Harding, 11 Pilgrim's Lane NW3 1SJ or by email to frankaharding@btinternet.com.



Fixing the restored Mark Gertler plaque in July this year. L. to r. Juliette Sonabend with builders Joseph Walthbe, Nonie Garde, and home-owner Dipak Patel



Bearing in mind the purpose of the plaque scheme, I am sure that the interest of those wandering through Hampstead can be maintained and extended. The addition of new plaques from time to time will further enhance their interest in the history of the area.

A competition

The Society will offer a first prize of dinner for two at Base Restaurant, and two second prizes of a bottle of champagne, to the first 3 people to email to Frank Harding at the above email address, listing the addresses of all of the 27 Hampstead plaques which are currently *in situ* and who or what they commemorate.

Climate change and the UK's birds

*This year's Springett Lecture was given by Dr Dave Leech
Head of the Nest Record Scheme, British Trust for Ornithology (www.bto.org)*

Writing in the highly respected journal *Science* in 2004, Sir David King, the UK Government's Chief Scientific advisor stated that, in his opinion, climate change posed a bigger threat to mankind than terrorism.

His concerns were mirrored by Sir Nicholas Stern, Head of the Government Economic Service, in his 2006 report entitled 'The Economics of Climate Change', in which he stated that a failure to address the global warming issue would have severe financial, as well as environmental, ramifications.

While there are a few vocal sceptics, the vast majority of the scientific community worldwide are convinced, in the face of almost overwhelming evidence, not only that the earth's climate is changing increasingly rapidly but also that human activity is to blame.



Blackcap



Swallow



Dipper

The atmospheric concentration of CO₂ is currently higher than at any point in the last 420,000 years, having increased by 50% since the start of the 1800s, and in the last 100 years, mean global

temperatures have increased by 0.6 C. But this is merely the start of the warming trend, with a further increase of between 1.4 C and 5.2 C predicted, depending on the climatic model employed. As temperature changes will not be uniform across the globe, the higher northern latitudes demonstrating the greatest increase, patterns of atmospheric and oceanic circulation will also be affected, leading to changes in precipitation regimes.

In the UK, both summers and winters are predicted to become warmer, with rainfall increasing slightly in the winter and falling by as much as 40% in the summer. While the prospects of milder winters and hot, dry summers may seem alluring to the general public, with the possible exception of a few tanning salon owners, such predictions may be greeted less favourably by those concerned with the welfare of the nation's avifauna.

Weather conditions can play an important role in determining bird numbers, either by influencing survival rates, or by affecting the ability of individuals to produce offspring, monitored by volunteer participants in the British Trust for Ornithology's (BTO's) Ringing Scheme and Nest Record Scheme (NRS) respectively. The survival rates of ground-feeding passerines, such as Song Thrushes and Robins, are reduced during periods of heavy snowfall as they struggle to access their prey, the subordinate and less experienced first year birds faring particularly badly.

Analysis of BTO Common Bird Census data has shown that Wren populations during the spring increase with temperatures during the previous winter, and it is perhaps unsurprising

that the populations of smaller species such as Goldcrest and Long-tailed Tit, which are likely to lose heat at the fastest rate in cold conditions due to their small surface area: volume ratios, appear to have increased over the past 40 years.

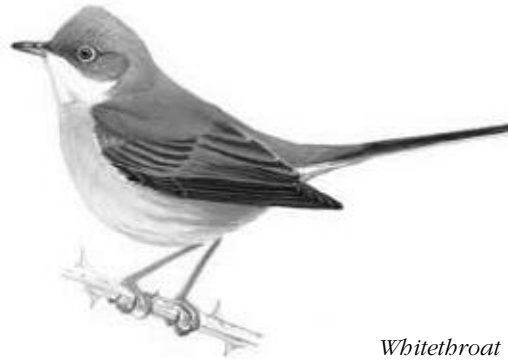
Impact on migrant species

However, while milder conditions in the UK may have some benefits for resident species, we also have to consider the climate on the sub-Saharan wintering grounds and the impact that this will have on migrant species. Previous research has demonstrated that the survival rates of species such as Sedge Warbler and Swallow, are lower during hot, dry African winters, which reduce the productivity of plant species such as *Salvadora persica* on which the birds rely for berries and invertebrate prey. The late 1960s Whitethroat population crash was the result of major droughts in its wintering quarters, and conditions such as these are almost certain to become more frequent over the next century.

Effects on breeding

Breeding success can also be influenced by weather conditions, which can affect both rates of heat loss of eggs and poorly-insulated chicks, and the availability of food. Unsurprisingly, NRS data show that the productivity of many passerine species, including Pied Flycatcher and Redstart, increases during warmer breeding seasons, while that of aerial predators such as Peregrine is reduced during wetter summers when they may struggle to hunt.

However, it is vital that we quantify these relationships if we are to be able to predict accurately the way in which bird populations will respond to future changes in climatic conditions.



Whitethroat



Salvadora persica

Climate change and the UK's birds (cont)

Ambient temperatures can influence when birds do things, as well as what they do. Tim Sparks at the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH) has used bird observatory data to show that warmer springs have resulted in short-distance migrants arriving to breed progressively earlier, and warmer autumns have led to the delayed departure of species such as Tree Pipit. In fact, conditions in the UK have become so amenable that now it is used as a wintering ground for species such as Blackcap and Chiffchaff in



Chiffchaff



Greenfinch

preference to the Mediterranean Basin. Analysis of the NRS dataset proved that birds are advancing their laying dates too, with a wide range of birds, including Oystercatcher, Dipper, Willow Warbler, Magpie and Greenfinch breeding on average nine days earlier than they

were 25 years ago in response to increasing spring temperatures.

On the face of it, breeding earlier appears to be beneficial – fledglings have more chance to fatten up before the harsh winter conditions set in, and parents may be able to rear a second brood. However, work on the Great Tit has shown that increasing temperatures can speed up the rate of development of caterpillars, leading to a lack of synchrony between caterpillar availability and chick production and a subsequent reduction in the number of fledged chicks. The situation is potentially even more serious for migrants, such as Pied Flycatcher, which start breeding later in the season than the resident birds, and it is interesting to note that the BTO/RSPB Repeat Woodland Bird Survey identified long-distance migrants as the group of woodland birds that are declining most rapidly.

Changing weather conditions will also affect the distribution of many species. For us birders, the sole enjoyable aspect of the whole climate change issue is the opportunity to predict what will succeed the Little Egret as the latest UK colonist – will it be the Cattle Egret or Black Kite moving up from the south, or the Greenish Warbler spreading west? By modelling current

distributions of species, we are able to predict where they are likely to be found on the basis of climatic predictions over the next century.

Unsurprisingly, many species appear to be



Pied Flycatcher

moving northwards, but climatic change is occurring at an unprecedented rate, and while birds may be able to move rapidly, their habitats may not – it takes time for a mature forest to develop, and what will the birds do in the meantime? Those species likely to be worst affected, at least from a UK perspective, are montane breeders such as Ptarmigan and Dotterel and those restricted in range to the high latitudes of Scotland, including Red-necked Phalarope, which will be unable to move upslope/northwards respectively as there is no habitat there to move into.

Even without considering the response of the human population, which could far outweigh any other factors in terms of its potential impact, it seems extremely likely that some very hard times lie ahead. The Stern Report referred to at the beginning of this article predicts that between 15% and 40% of the earth's species are likely to become extinct if the temperature increases by a further 2 C, a figure towards the bottom end of the current spectrum of predictions. However, rather than throwing our hands up in despair or burying our heads in the sand, we should make it our duty to try and reduce this figure by as much as we are able. So, keep taking part in environmental surveys that provide such vital data on the impacts of climate change, and next time you get in your car for a short drive, or go to switch your computer to standby, think carefully – maybe it's not time for a change in the weather just yet.



Dotterel



Tree Pipit



Redstarts

The Society Website 'a winner'

by John Weston *The Society's website editor*



Of the 300 voluntary and amenity organisations represented by the London Forum, which one do you think has the best website?

The Highgate Society? Bedford Park Society? The Dulwich Society?

No, the winner of the bi-annual Walter Bor Media Award for best web site went to The Heath and Hampstead Society. And we're not yet six months old! My congratulations go to Diana Cortes, Maureen Clark Darby, Stephen Taylor, Ann Eastman and Tony Hillier.

So if you haven't been to visit us yet, let me tempt you from the breakfast table, the loo, or wherever else you may choose to read the newsletter, with just a few extracts from one bit of the website - the weekly Blog:

Why do we bother?

3rd December

'You know your trouble, you'd preserve a turd if someone told you it was old enough.' So concluded an acquaintance of mine after he'd heard me banging on about what a total disaster the proposed new planning laws would be for the country's conservation areas. 'And besides' he added, 'it's all totally irrelevant compared to global warming.'

There are two issues here, and both deserve a response.

The accusation that societies like ours want to preserve the world in aspic is simply untrue.

In fact the Society has a history of supporting good modern architecture, and continues to do

so. After all, one of Hampstead's greatest glories is its concentration of fine architecture from all periods – Queen Anne, Georgian, Regency, Victorian, Edwardian, inter-war and post-war: from seventeenth century Fenton House to late twentieth century Michael Hopkins' Downshire Hill and Rick Mather's Upper Terrace.

So what about the second accusation? That in a world facing the catastrophe of global warming, our efforts are futile. I don't know whether this will prove to be the case or not. I guess only time will tell. But I think it is unfair.

In my experience people who are bothered to get involved at a local level are very often bothered about what goes on at all levels. And certainly many of our members are active promoters of the benefits of walking: the ultimate green way to travel.

I also think the accusation is defeatist.

Things have looked bleak for Hampstead and the Heath before. We have seen off plans to build on the Heath, to 'parkify' the Heath, and to build trunk roads through the heart of the village. We have to believe that a way can be found.

Not all is gloom and doom. The Heath under the care of the present Superintendent has never been in better hands; the recently founded Hampstead Auctions are growing in popularity; and there's a rumour going round that, though we may be about to lose Steele's the Butchers, the Ginger Pig may soon be coming to Hampstead bringing the finest meats to be had outside of France.

There's always hope. It's worth fighting on.

RED ALERT!

12th November

Did you notice that two faces of the Watch Tower Clock opposite the tube were glowing



*Line drawing by Kassie Fass
from the Society's archive*

red for ten days after Halloween?

Has Hampstead gone nuclear? Are personal services being offered in the Building Society downstairs? Thinking you might like to know - I sought an answer.

Going round to the Watch Tower Flats, tucked away

at the bottom of Holly Hill, seemed like a good place to start. And so it proved to be.

The Clock Tower belongs to the owner of the top flat, so a friend of his told me. And for Halloween he decided to fit red bulbs to mark the occasion. Now seeing as the owner also seems to have taken responsibility for ensuring the clock runs on time – it seems churlish to complain if he wants to have a little fun with his bulbs every now and again.

But it does raise an important question about the 'public' appearance of private properties. A question which the government have decided to answer in a way that I think will horrify people. For under the new permitted development rules, slated to become law next year, the public's right

to have a say over what the area they live in looks like will be removed.

***'Scuse me Sir, is that your condom?
6th October***

Not for the first time there have been calls for the Police to get tough with West Heath Cruisers. But did you know that, under the 2003 Sexual Offences Act, sex in public is not illegal?

What is likely to make sex in public a crime is where sexual behaviour is unwillingly viewed by a member of the public. So providing it's dark, and West Heath at night is indeed dark – what's the problem?

The problem is the 'sex litter' left behind: used condoms, wrappers, tube packs and tissues. Even if no one sees what you're up to at night, lots of disused condoms left behind to be found in the morning is not pleasant. It's expensive for the City (who manage the Heath) to clean up. And it's dangerous for wildlife – yes animals and birds can choke on them.

However, marching the City's hard-pressed Constabulary onto West Heath after dark, armed with torches and fixed penalty notices for littering is just not going to work. Who exactly dropped what, where and when is going to be impossible to verify in court.

Far better that the Heath Constabulary, in conjunction with the Met., continues its on-going dialogue with representatives from the Gay Community which is working to educate West Heath Cruisers about their responsibilities. To that end, advertising organised by the Camden LGBT Forum is being run on radio and in the press. And postcard size leaflets are being distributed in pub and clubs encouraging people to put litter in the bins provided, or take it home.

The Society Website 'a winner' (cont)

The City and the Met face a tricky task trying to strike the right balance between the rights of the public to enjoy the Heath without tripping over offensive 'sex litter', and the long-standing and enormous popularity of West Heath for cruising. Personally I think they do a very good job.

Should my arguments fail to convince you however, please come along to one of the Joint Metropolitan Police / Hampstead Constabulary bi-monthly meetings at Hampstead Police Station, Rosslyn Hill. Details of the next meeting will be posted under Events and Activities on the Society's website in due course.

New plaques for local residents: Asquith, Constable, Orwell, Rotten ***21st September***

Heath and Hampstead Society Plaques on the former homes of seven famous residents, the Parish Lock-up and the Watch House, were restored to their rightful places this week as part of an ongoing plan to refurbish all of the Society's commemorative plaques.

Whose homes are they, and where can you find them? *[I'm not giving too much away here because as Frank has mentioned on page 11, there will be a prize for the first person to send an email to him listing the addresses of each of the 27 Hampstead plaques which is currently in situ and who or what it commemorates. So I've edited out this bit of the blog. However if you visit our website..... Ed.]*

And all very worthy they are too!

But let me put a marker down now for a new plaque celebrating a far more recent residence: that of the Sex Pistols who lived in New Court (off Flask Walk) at the height of their fame and there composed their version of *God Save The Queen*. The first and greatest of the UK punk

bands whose influence on music, fashion and design is still felt today.

We rightly remember the mutinous Sir Harry Vane, whose plaque you can see on Rosslyn Hill opposite Willoughy Road, who was executed for treason in 1662. Why not celebrate the composers of the alternative *God Save the Queen*? A record thought to be so seditious in 1977 that the Charts were rigged to ensure it wouldn't reach Number 1.

For more of this, and a great deal more besides: events, walks, competitions, campaign updates, specials on the Hampstead Card, and Society history, come and visit heathandhampsteadsociety.org.uk



Letter from a member - a warning!

From John Foley

Thank you for an excellent and very informative magazine in September.

A propos the very interesting item about basements, I would like to draw members attention to an extremely worrying change to the regulations with regard to Local Authorities Building Inspection duties. We discovered this because of dreadful building works going on in Sandy Road, a small and charming cul-de-sac of 11 houses on the Heath at North End. A few years ago Camden authorised the splitting of a small house beside Heath Passage into two dwellings. This seemed to set off a never-ending catalogue of building alterations which has included permission for excavation of basements and backland development in gardens, all of which one would have thought, was in contravention of the time-honoured Fringes of the Heath Policy.


When we complained to Camden (and whenever we were informed of plans by Camden we opposed them as much as we were permitted to), the Council have been either curiously silent or very unsympathetic. One of their arguments is that they have been ordered by the Government to allow the destruction of gardens for the purposes of building houses. But since when has Labour been in the business of making money for opportunistic developers? Certainly they are the only people who will benefit from this blatant vandalism.

To our consternation we have also discovered a change to the law, slipped in by Government without anyone apparently knowing about it, which has effectively "privatised" the building regulations service. Local Authority Building Control departments must now operate in open competition with private sector building control bodies called "approved inspectors".

The approval of construction details and supervision of site work has apparently been 'competitive' for some time. Camden Building Control now only hold 80% of the 'market' in Camden plus a portfolio of major projects outside the borough.

This means that if a developer employs these private sector "approved" building control inspectors, Local Authority building control officers have no statutory control on the site and are effectively prohibited from inspecting the site under building regulations. Furthermore on sites controlled by these private firms of inspectors, Camden Building Control have no relationship with the builder and are not in a position to use their influence (as they often do) in brokering issues relating to neighbour complaints and environmental impacts. We understand that this has been the situation at Sandy Road.

I realise that you are hardly in a position to do anything about this sorry situation, but perhaps you will add it to your list of such tales. Maybe in the future, someone will be able to make developers and members of the Council accountable for their actions. I do hope it won't be too late for the rest of Hampstead.



***St Stephen's
still needs your
help***

***Please give
generously***

see enclosed leaflet

Bulletin Board

Lectures of interest



*Free Public
Lecture Series
Autumn 2008*

*Birkbeck, University of London,
43 Gordon Square, WC1H 0PD*

*in conjunction with the
Ecology and Conservation Studies
Society*

Global Impacts of Climate Change - the human dimension

This series will examine some of the extreme problems caused world wide by global warming: human interactions on the biosphere; polar ice melt; water stress, drought and starvation; the role of aid to relieve these national disasters; and climate impacts on tropical forest ecology.

on the following Friday evenings

8 February 15 February 22 February
29 February 7 March 14 March

Lectures are from 6.30pm to 8.30 pm.
Doors open at 6.00pm.

*Space limited so booking essential
For free tickets and venue details
contact tel: 020 7679 1069, or e-mail:
environment@fce.bbk.ac.uk*

For queries on lecture content,

tel: 020 8546 7986,
or e-mail: una.sutcliffe@btinternet.com;

Full details will be on the Society's website:
<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/ce/environment/>

Join the debate

All welcome

The Friends Of The Iveagh Bequest Kenwood



Lectures January to May 2008

The Friends of Kenwood arrange a series of fascinating lectures every season.

Lectures begin at 11 a.m. and are free to members

Non-members are welcome
There is a charge of £10 for non-members

Sunday February 17th

Masters Of Their Craft:

Miniature Painters of the 16th Century
Angela Cox

Sunday March 16th

'Genius And Love':

The Photographs of Julia Margaret Cameron
Colin Ford

Sunday 13 April

'What Time Was It?'

Dr Kristen Lippincott

Sunday May 18th

William Holman Hunt

Dr Judith Bronkhurst

For more information and booking:

visit the Friends website:
friendsofkenwood.org.uk
or email: events@friendsofkenwood.org.uk

A special offer for members

Hampstead Heath

A superb new history and illustrated guide of Hampstead Heath

**By Deborah Wolton
and David McDowall**

**Photographs by Sandra Lousada
Published by Frances Lincoln Ltd**

ISBN: 9780711226531

This richly illustrated book tells of the battles to save the Heath by our determined, cunning and generous forebears, who outwitted the landowners to secure the landscape for us all.

It guides anyone strolling on London's favourite open space through its unique geological structure and very particular flora; veteran trees; the 'ghosts' of ancient woodland and hedgerows dating back to the Middle Ages and beyond; Anglo-Saxon estate boundaries; traces of the great estates of the 18th century, of which Kenwood is the sole survivor.

***A special offer to H&HS members:
exclusive discount of 35%***

visit the publisher's website
www.franceslincoln.com

and when prompted enter the code
HHSPROMO at the checkout
Offer lasts until April 4th

Deborah Wolton is a landscape historian, who has extensively researched the history of Hampstead Heath. A member of the Society, she is a regular volunteer with Heath Hands, most recently as a member of the team surveying the veteran trees.

David McDowall has written widely on Middle Eastern and British history. He now writes and publishes walkers' guides to publicly-accessible landscapes

Don't forget to use



The Hampstead Card

The current list of businesses taking part in the scheme is enclosed, or see

www.heathandhampsteadsociety.org.uk

*Benefits they offer are granted at their discretion.
The Society cannot be held responsible for changes in terms or availability of any discounts or offers*

Hampstead & Highgate Festival

May 7 - 17 2008

For your free copy of the guide please
contact Helen Marcus

(see contact details on inside cover)



Burgh House

Museum, Buttery, Bookstall

*Open Wed - Fri, & Sun, 12 - 5.00pm
(Saturdays by appointment)*

Support the Friends of Burgh House

For more information about the Friends
please contact the Chair of the Friends on
7435 8460, or phone Burgh House

Information about

Burgh House and Friends of Burgh House,
can be obtained from

Burgh House, New End Square NW3

Tel: 7431 0144

Heath Walks 2008

Walks are held on the first Sunday of every month except January. Most start from Burgh House, New End Square, Hampstead Village. Starting times are either 10.30 am or 2.30pm, 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 £2 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.

The Society does not organise walks specifically for children but they 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.

For further information contact the walks organiser, Thomas Radice, on 020 8455 1025 (mobile: 07941 528 034) or email: thomas@radice.clara.co.uk.

3 February 2008 10.30am (depart Burgh House) Ecology of the Heath led by Dr Meg Game, Ecologist for Hampstead Heath

2 March 10.30am (note change of start time) (meet at the entrance to the Kitchen Garden, Kenwood, Hampstead Lane N6) Hidden Heath: historical and archaeological features of the Heath, led by Michael Hammerson

6 April 10.30am (depart Burgh House) Birds of the Heath in Spring, led by Alix Mullineaux *NOTE: this is the last walk which Alix will be leading for the Society.*

4 May 2.30pm (depart Burgh House) Flora of the Heath led by Sir Charles Willink

1 June 2.30pm (depart Burgh House) A Spider Foray led by Edward Milner

6 July 2.30pm (depart Burgh House) Ponds of the Heath led by Marc Hutchinson

3 August 2.30pm (meet at the cattle trough in Spaniards Road, near the Spaniards Inn) The Heath Extension led by Tony Ghilchik

7 September 10.30am (depart Burgh House) Birds of the Heath in Autumn led by John Hunt

5 October 2.30pm (meet in North End Way, at approach to Pergola entrance) The Pergola and the Hill Garden led by Peter Tausig

2 November 10.30am (depart Burgh House) A Fungus Foray led by Jo Weightman

7 December 10.30am (depart Burgh House) Trees of the Heath led by Jeremy Wright

