



The Heath & Hampstead Society

NEWSLETTER

October 2013

Vol 44 No.3

The threatened view from the cycle path on the Model Boating Pond

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Notice Of Special General Meeting

The Hampstead Heath Ponds Project

***Notice is given that a
Special General Meeting
of the Society
will be held on
Monday 25 November 2013
at 7.00 p.m. at
St. Stephen's
Pond Street***

***The business of the meeting will be for
the membership***

- (1) to receive a report from the Society's Trustees with respect to the City of London Corporation's proposals for the Hampstead Heath Ponds Project and the Trustees' planned response to those proposals and
- (2) to indicate its support, or otherwise, for that response.

At the conclusion of the Special General Meeting (estimated to be at around 7.45 p.m.) members of the public and the press will be admitted to the meeting which will then continue as a public meeting at 8.00pm.

The business of the public meeting will be a general public discussion of the Hampstead Heath Ponds Project.

Marc Hutchinson
Secretary

30 September 2013

Chair's Report

by Tony Hillier

The proposals for dams on the Heath Ponds

As members will see from the announcement of a Special General Meeting and a Public Meeting – to be held consecutively on the same evening – we are deeply concerned at the direction being taken by the City in the matter of the proposals for the dams at Hampstead Heath Ponds.

Our Society has for the past 116 years held to account the authorities managing Hampstead Heath. We do this to ensure that, in accordance with the Hampstead Heath Act 1871, they preserve its “wild and natural state” for the benefit of visitors, some 10 million of whom come annually to enjoy this London landmark.

We accept that the City of London Corporation has a duty to ensure the ponds are maintained in a safe condition. But the Society challenges the scale of the City's latest proposals in its ***Shortlist Options Report*** published on 2 August, for a series of building works, in particular the proposed additional three-metre high embankment between the boating and men's swimming ponds on the Highgate chain and the two-metre additional height to the causeway below the mixed swimming pond on the Hampstead Chain.

We believe these proposals are a much greater threat to the Heath landscape today than the works proposed by the LCC in 1895 that brought the Society into being. Those provoked a national outcry led by leading figures in the arts, sciences and conservation world. This time however, serious public safety issues are also at stake.

We urge the City and their advisers to stop ignoring a whole series of reasons why they can still soften the designs to make them appropriate for this very special landscape, and adopt more realistic assumptions and a more balanced interpretation of the law.

It is vital that as many of our members as possible come to this meeting so that we can canvass your opinions, and, if appropriate, submit a resolution for adoption by members that can then be put to the wider public (who will be asked to join the meeting after members have concluded their discussion).

The words of Geoffrey Hutchinson QC, distinguished past chairman of the Society – and, as Lord Ilford, the Society's President for many years – are as relevant in today's situation as when they were addressed to the LCC in the Society's Annual Report in 1950.

[They] should remember that the Heath and its various additions were not secured for the people of London by their initiative, or that of their predecessors, nor solely at their expense. [They] should therefore be scrupulously careful to observe the conditions upon which the Heath was vested in them and to avoid anything which may seem to infringe these conditions.

The effect on the Heath landscape

We considered that the ‘before’ and ‘after’ photographs in the Options Report do not give an adequate impression of the proposed changes, because they show the view from too far away, in particular, of the proposed three-metre embankment between the boating and men's swimming ponds.

We therefore asked that posts be placed *in situ* to give some idea of the impact on the landscape these new structures might have. The City erected two sets of posts for a short period at the Model Boating pond. They were removed after we showed them on a local TV news broadcast. But we show in photos of them here and on the front cover, taken from different directions, an approximation of what the visual implications of these new dams might be, as things currently stand.

Visual impact explained

The proposed new dam at the Model Boating pond will be built inside the Model Boating pond itself – as indicated by the marker posts in the two pictures on this page. The present cycle path, which is the existing crest level, will remain.

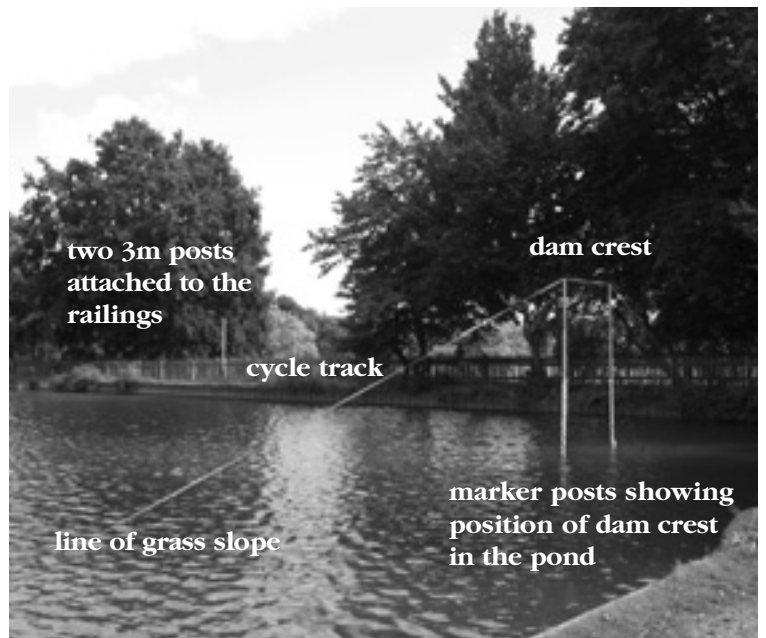
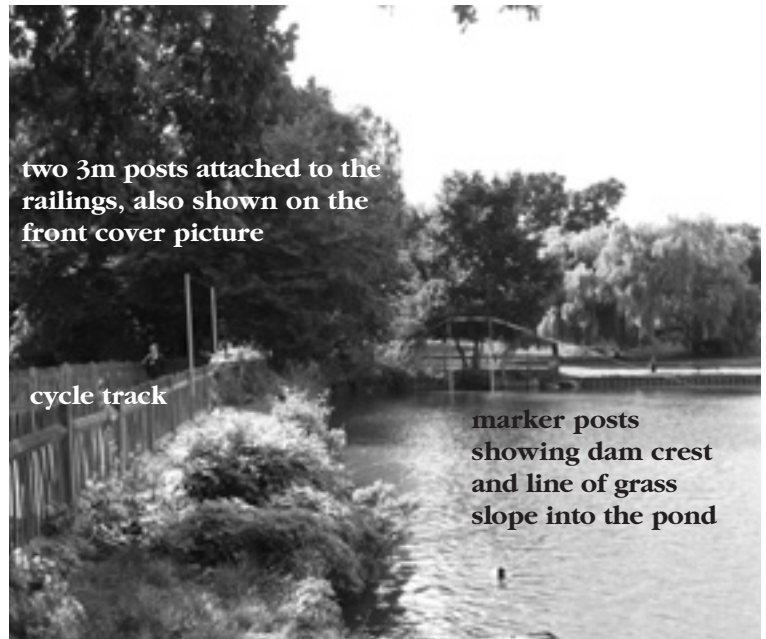
Standing on the cycle path, and looking north, upstream, there will be a grass slope starting at the current water's edge, and rising at 1 in 3 slope for 3m in height. There will then be a narrow level crest say 2-3m wide (on which there could be another footpath) and then there will be a grass slope at 1 in 3 descending from the crest down into the water.

The dam crest will be about 9metres north of the cycle track, well into the pond as shown by the marker posts in the picture. It will be laid back from the cycle track and hence will not be vertically above it. The two 3m posts attached to the railings in the picture on the front cover were put up to give an impression only of height. The dam crest will actually be 9m away in the pond and not right above people on the path.

This earth dam will run parallel to the cycle track and existing dam, and at the ends will curve slightly north on both sides to try to miss important trees, and then it will merge into the existing slopes that rise up from the pond.

A visual barrier

It will therefore form a visual barrier 3m high right across the valley, and when looking north from the cycle track, from which the Boating pond will be hidden. It will also form a visual barrier when walking south from the Bird pond dam, which may particularly affect the views from the west side, from where one currently gets a view of the Men's pond as you walk south. This may be part compensated by a proposed N-S path being built higher on the west slopes above the proposed excavation and widening of the pond on the Heath side. It may be possible to walk on top of the new dam, with better views from a higher position, and a third track may also be constructed at the water's edge on the north side of the dam, so that people can still get close to the water.



Chair's Report (cont)

The City Shortlist Options consultation

The City published its Shortlist Options Report paper on 2 August 2013, showing detailed plans of two main options for works to both the Hampstead and Highgate chains of ponds. It went for comment to the local Stakeholders Group, on which the Society is represented. The Society commented on the Options in considerable detail. But, while the latest sets of design options show a significant softening of the overall impact compared to those published originally, unfortunately all of the options currently on offer will, in our opinion, still permanently disfigure the Heath in a way which is not necessary.

We are still pressing the City to change their minds further but so far, their legal and technical advisers have not accepted our position and we now have reason to question how far our recent submissions have been taken into account.

Our position remains that, while the City of London Corporation has a duty to ensure the ponds are maintained in a safe condition with regard to those living and working downstream, but because the unique wild and natural qualities of the Heath also have statutory protection, the works must be the minimum legally necessary. We believe that the City could meet its obligations with a reduced programme of works.

Risk control considerations

The City's engineering advisors appear to take the opposite view, invariably presenting an extreme worst-case scenario. Mechanistic, generalised industry standard methods, constructed on the basis of computer-generated modelling, isolated from any other consideration, are being used to justify gross and possibly

unnecessary over-engineering that will destroy the landscape. Unfortunately they appear to be ignoring a number of important local mitigating considerations, despite the guidance advocated by the Interim Guide to Quantitative Risk Assessment for UK Reservoirs (Brown and Gosden, 2004):

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.

The case for these enormous dam structures to be built has been promoted by some extraordinary assumptions in computer-modelled predictions of total collapse of all dams and massive loss of life. One of the earlier City reports even referred to one inaccurate mention in a local newspaper in 1975, of an alleged death which, it turned out, had nothing whatsoever to do with the Heath Ponds and did not even take place in this area. No factual record or further mention of it can be found in any of the Camden or GLC Reports of the time, or any other press reports.

No escape of water and no deaths

The fact is that there has been no breach of any of the dams, no uncontrolled escape of water and no deaths, and never has been in the 300-year history of the ponds.

Such floods as have occurred have been caused by torrential rainstorms. It could reasonably be suggested that, as no amount of dam building will stop torrential rainfall from occurring again in Camden's streets in the future, and again causing flooding, the City is misleading residents into a false sense of security.

Furthermore in the wider context, the Environment Agency document, *Lessons Learnt from Dam Incidents* states categorically that: “Fortunately..... since 1925, there has been no loss of life due to dam disasters in the UK”.

Increasing concern at the City’s actions

Having taken legal advice from a leading QC in the field of reservoir safety, the Society requested a without prejudice meeting with the City to discuss the legal requirements which should underpin the proposed works. This had been set for early September but was then postponed by the City until mid-September.

But before that meeting could even take place the City published a Press Release, on September 6, re-stating yet again warnings of highly exaggerated potential loss of life downstream from the ponds if the embankments were to collapse in an extremely severe rain storm. The timing of this announcement, ahead of our long-requested exchange of views by our and the City’s QCs on the legal issues, and the City’s apparent determination to press ahead with their plans as quickly as possible before the consultation period has even begun, leaves the Society sceptical about the whole process.

A Change to the legal approach

Our suggestions, which would require two significant changes in their current legal approach, have already been outlined to the City. We ask them:

- to recognise the unique legal, environmental and public benefit characteristics of the Heath, which existing reservoir safety regulations are not drafted to address;
- to also recognise that their analysis of the risks wrongly ignores a number of strong local mitigating considerations, which should legally be taken into account.

We believe the engineers are ignoring a whole series of reasons why they can still soften the designs to make them safe, and fit for this very special landscape.

The designs could also be modified to take account of a properly coordinated warning system, which the City is preparing and is required by statute to co-ordinate with Camden and the police, which would reduce the risk of fatalities from flooding by dam overtopping or collapse by ensuring timely evacuation of those most at risk downstream.

The without prejudice legal meeting has now taken place and the City have refused to change, in any respect, their current legal approach.

The City timetable and public consultation

The City is sticking to a rigid timetable. The Hampstead Heath Management Committee will select a final set of two alternative designs for each chain of ponds on 25 November 2013. A public consultation is due to start on 26 November 2013 and continue to 17 February 2014. So there is still time to persuade the City to come up with acceptable proposals. We strongly urge members to participate in the public consultation. It can be found on the City’s website, details of which are given in our Heath Report on page 10.

The final design proposals will be submitted as a planning application to Camden in May 2014. We have reserved our position on the broad legal issues, and, if at that final stage, the plans are still unacceptable and the combination of legal and technical argument and public reaction has not persuaded the City to modify their plans, which we strongly hope it will, the Society may consider mounting a formal challenge.

Chair's Report (cont)

H&HS Public meeting 25 November

We need your support in attending the Special General and Public Meetings on 25 November.

It is essential to impress on the City that the local community recognises that the Heath is too important to be disfigured by the unnecessarily narrow application of highly improbable engineering calculations, when the interests of safety do not necessarily require this approach.

Other matters

AGM

This year's AGM was held in St Stephen's, Rosslyn Hill, on June 20. It was a pleasure once again to see so many members present, and I should like to thank you on behalf of your Officers and General Committee for your continuing confidence in the way we have dealt with so many local challenges on behalf of members. Six members of the General Committee who put their names forward were re-elected. It was also stated that David Castle, who had agreed to become the Chair of the Planning Sub-Committee in succession to Douglas Maxwell, would be appointed a Vice-Chair of the Society and a member of the General Committee with effect from 20 June 2013.

Members voted to leave subscriptions at the same level and to renew the appointment of Fisher Phillips, Chartered Accountants, the Honorary Independent Examiner of our accounts. I should like again to express our thanks to this local firm for their excellent service to the Society.

Professor Philippe Sands QC, a local resident and member of the Society, is a distinguished academic and practising lawyer in the fields of international public and environmental law. He

gave us a fascinating and entertaining account of how Hampstead and Hampstead residents have played a role in some very well known international disputes.

Neighbourhood Forum Initiative

The Localism Bill of 2011 gives local communities the power to form a neighbourhood forum to set out their vision for the development and use of land in a selected local area for a medium-term time horizon. New planning policies are written by the community – businesses, residents, schools, and churches - anyone who lives or works in an area. The new local policies will shape and direct development in their neighbourhood. However, they must have regard to national planning policy and, in our case, conform to Camden's Local Development framework, respecting for example local conservation areas.

Already in Camden, forums have been established in Highgate, Somers Town, Fortune Green & West Hampstead and Kentish Town and more are in the pipeline. Communities across the country are doing the same.

Janine Griffiths and Helen Marcus organised a well-attended meeting in Burgh House on September 3 to bring together as many local groups as possible, together with our local Councillors, to consider how and whether a forum should be set up, what a plan for Hampstead might look like, and how we might go about it. A representative from the Department for Communities and Local Government National Neighbourhood Planning team, and an officer from Camden's Strategic Planning Department, gave us a presentation to guide us on government thinking and answer questions.

Much interest was shown in the proposal and a small working group under the direction of Janine has been formed. The practical approach is to identify specific areas or buildings, such as the Police station, or specific planning issues, such as basements, where local risks and sensitivities are particularly high. The working group can then draft supplements to the various Camden Development policies, which meet our concerns. Officials will then review the proposals to make sure they work legally. They can then become binding on all relevant future planning decisions.

Annual Christmas Party

Your invitation to the Society's annual Christmas Party is enclosed with this newsletter. Our party has become one of the highlights of the year; we return to the magical surroundings of St. Stephen's and look forward to meeting many of you there.

Hampstead Heath Ponds

25 November 2013

Members' Meeting

7.00 p.m

followed by

Public Meeting

8.00pm

St. Stephen's

Pond Street

Sub-Committee Bye-laws

The General Committee has recently approved bye-laws for the three permanent Sub-Committees of the Society. A copy of these bye-laws is enclosed with this Newsletter in accordance with Rule 35(3) of the Society's constitution and they may also be found on the Society's website.

Correction and apology

In our Annual Report in the May 2013 Newsletter (p. 5) we recorded our appreciation of the generous funding for the project for a mosaic reproduction of the social realist painting "Work" by Ford Madox Brown destined for the Mount, as being given from the Lund legacy.

It should have read the Walmsley legacy and we apologise for the error.

Heath Report

by Tony Ghilchik

The Caring for Kenwood project

Those who went to Kenwood during the first weekend in August would have been delighted by the sight of longhorn cattle grazing once more in the West Meadow, separated only by the restored ha-ha from the newly restored dairy buildings, and could have seen a demonstration of butter-making in the marble-clad dairy itself. On the southern side of the building you can now look through the windows, restored with our contribution to the project, to Lady Mansfield's small octagonal tea room and see once more its delightful interior where she used to entertain her guests, including the Duke of Wellington.

Removal of scaffolding

Over that weekend of August 2nd and 3rd English Heritage celebrated the removal of scaffolding – all that around the dairy buildings and much of that around the House –with the only too brief return of longhorn cattle and a Summer Garden Fete on the flower garden lawn the. The Caring for Kenwood project is now in its final stage with the House on schedule to re-open in November. The shop has been refurbished and has a new range of site-specific plants for sale.

Kenwood Concerts: a mess

As I write, we are halfway through this year's concert season. Rouge Events have taken over managing the concerts and there were to be six concerts over the two weeks of the August Bank Holiday/early September weekends, on the Friday, Saturday and Sunday, with a wide mix of concerts including classical and family events.

We thought that compressing the concerts into a ten day period would minimise disruption but some problems have arisen with the arrangements.

Most serious is the new sound system being used which seems unable to contain the sound within the grounds of Kenwood. Parts of the first few concerts, and their earlier rehearsals, could be heard in houses as far away as Golders Green Station.

Within Kenwood itself, the concert area has been extended to cover the whole of the Pasture Ground between the terrace and Wood Pond and the areas remained closed on non-concert days between the two weekends, so the very many visitors coming to picnic on the Pasture Ground on the sunny Bank Holiday Monday had to squeeze into the remaining third of the Pasture Ground and look on food stalls, then unused, lining the bottom of the terrace thus destroying the view from the house down to the pond which is one of its beauties.

The Ham & High interviewed people who were trying to enjoy the grounds at Kenwood. There was annoyance about fencing “which takes up most of Kenwood's grounds” and kept the public out of the concert site until the season was over. “Previously people had access to the site. Now nobody is allowed on that site”. One described the whole set up as a “mess” and anti-social. Another had prepared a picnic for the event – in the time-honoured fashion - but was not allowed to bring her food and drink into the concert enclosure.

Nathan Homan, creative director at Rouge Events, organisers of the concerts, was quoted as saying “picnics are allowed for classical events but pop gigs have to be very carefully controlled in case the “fans get carried away””.

That in itself is extremely concerning: what does he mean? Is it possible that the conduct of the “fans” might actually pose a danger to the safety of the House?



*Photos of the scenes at Kenwood:
above right: by Lynda Cook;
left: by Tomas Radice*

Heath sub-committee members examined the terms of the licence and will be querying whether there was any breach, in particular the management of sound, the placing of bars and food outlets in front of the house which is contrary to the licence, and the use of on-site parking.

While one may sympathise with English Heritage's need to maximise their income from

commercial activities such as the concerts as their funding has been relentlessly cut by successive Governments over the past 15 years and their grants today are now considerably less than they were in 1997; but they also have a duty to ensure the magnificent house and grounds can be enjoyed by all their visitors, even those not coming for the concerts, and I hope we can work with them, through the

Kenwood Landscape Forum, to prevent these problems again arising in future years.

The Heath Ponds engineering work

The proposed work to make the dams of the Heath Ponds safe in the event of a catastrophic storm continues to be the most important topic on the Heath as outlined in the opening pages of this newsletter. We continue to endeavour to work with the City and their appointed team to make sure that the final design is not over-engineered and that the work finally agreed upon is, indeed, the minimum needed and the least intrusive visually. But we also continue to query aspects of the City's understanding of the legal obligations associated with this need.

The Ponds Project Stakeholder Group, of which we are a member, has met formally each month since the end of last year, and there have also been additional workshops and special meetings with the design team to address some of the technical issues.

Under pressure from the Stakeholder Group the consultation process has been slightly extended to allow a five stage analysis of the options. In stage 1 all possibilities were reviewed, pond by pond, for the Stakeholders each to say which they considered acceptable and which unacceptable, leading to the 'Constrained Options Report' in mid-May. In stage 2 the design team undertook concept engineering, hydrology and hydraulic modelling and environment design to produce the 'Shortlist Options Report' at the beginning of August – this is available on the City's website which has links to the various pond reports. Go to:

www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/green-spaces/hampstead-heath/ponds-project/Pages/Reports.aspx

To see illustrations and details of the options open up the first group, containing the Shortlist Options Report, and click on the link to the Shortlist Options Report – part 2 for the Highgate Chain and part 3 for the Hampstead chain).

In stage 3 a reduced number of options will be discussed in detail with the Stakeholders to arrive at a set of Preferred Options (two each for the Highgate and the Hampstead chain of ponds) by the beginning of October. In stage 4 these will be submitted for comment by the Consultative Committee on 28th October and approval by the Management Committee on 25th November. Stage 5 will be a Public Consultation from 26th November to 17th February.

The Springett Lecture

Finally, this year's Springett Lecture will be on Wednesday 23rd October at Burgh House when Edward Milner will talk about 'Native trees of the London area in an era of Climate Change'. Edward knows the Heath well. He has led our spider walks for many years, and is an award winning TV producer on environmental issues. He is the author of 'Trees of Britain & Ireland', a book celebrating native trees including their history, ecology, management, products, folklore and their place in the ecosystem, and which brings together research by tree scientists and historians to build a present-day account of tree knowledge and understanding. Doors will open at 7:30 for a glass of wine with the talk starting at 8pm. Please join us in Burgh House for what is expected to be another most interesting and enjoyable evening. I hope to see you there.



Millfield Lane - a cause for concern

by Thomas Radice

Lovers of Hampstead Heath, particularly those who are familiar with the Highgate side, may already be aware of a handful of spectacular development proposals stretching along Millfield Lane. These are causing deep disquiet and fears that the country feel of the lane will be spoiled.

A disturbing feature, as Sir Simon Jenkins has highlighted in these pages before, is the ability to circumvent planning laws by those who are wealthy enough. Millions are now being spent on buying up old and unpretentious properties only to knock them down, thus changing the character of the area. At least five homes in the Fitzroy Park area have major planning applications before the council. Several appear to be seeking to squeeze more square footage out of their existing plot of land, either by demolishing the existing building or excavating. This raises fears about the impact on the water table.

One such development is the so-called Water House in the unmade-up part of Millfield Lane, opposite the front entrance to the Ladies' Pond. A revised planning application for extensive works was submitted to Camden Council in September with a Construction Management Plan describing how the work will be carried out. It has major implications for Millfield Lane.

The Ladies' Pond Association wrote to Camden in 2011 explaining that the Lane could not cope with the heavy lorries needed to move thousands of tonnes of soil. It said the Lane was "one of the very few remaining country lanes, possibly in the whole London area, untarred and unlit, and we do not want to see it changed".

Karen Beare of Fitzroy Park RA, and acting Chair of the Hampstead Heath Ponds Project Stakeholder Group, placed a video on YouTube showing a construction vehicle trying to

negotiate its way along Millfield Lane (see: www.youtube.com/watch?v=zzy-UKFOomw)

If you wish to find out more about the scheme the application can be found at:

<http://planningrecords.camden.gov.uk/Northgate/PlanningExplorer17/GeneralSearch.aspx>

The application number is: 2011/4390/P.



Millfield Lane about 1950

18th Annual Springett Lecture

Wednesday 23 October 8.00pm

Burgh House

Edward Milner

***Native trees of the London area in an
era of Climate Change***

Edward Milner is an award winning TV producer on environmental issues and author of 'Trees of Britain & Ireland' celebrating native trees including their history, ecology, management, products, folklore, and their place in the ecosystem. It brings together research by tree scientists and historians to build a present-day account of tree knowledge and understanding.

Doors open at 7.30 for a glass of wine

Non-members welcome Admission free

Planning Report

by David Castle

It is a rare street in Hampstead that does not have a proliferation of skips, scaffolding, building work, extensions, and a constant stream of lorries and white vans delivering, unloading or collecting from the many building sites. In addition to this, each building site attracts a cluster of parked vans and cars of those working at or visiting the site. Even in roads of reasonable width, which usually have cars parked on both sides, all this activity causes traffic congestion, danger to children, not forgetting pollution, noise, and considerable carbon emission. However, many of the streets in Hampstead are very narrow with restricted junctions making even minor building works and repairs difficult to carry out without causing obstruction and damage to adjacent buildings and cellars. There are many houses in Hampstead which can only be approached through narrow entrances or alleys, but this does not seem to concern the developers or owners of such buildings from applying for planning permission for the most extraordinarily large basements or extensions causing considerable aggravation and concern to the neighbours.

Over-development at 29 New End

An example of over-development in a very narrow road is the recent planning application for permission to demolish the existing unused nurses' home at 29 New End. The developers are proposing to knock down the existing soundly-constructed building, excavate a massive basement for car-park and flats(!), with a far too large building above. Of course, the Heath and Hampstead Planning Sub-Committee have objected very strongly to Camden, followed up by lobbying councillors and Camden's Planning Department.

This application should not be approved for so many reasons, but we await the decision of the Council with some trepidation.

Basement excavation in Hampstead

This 'Glass-in-Hand' Lecture given by Michael de Freitas, an eminent expert on the subject, was very well attended. He explained in detail how all basement excavations, particularly in the Hampstead area, will affect the surrounding buildings and trees for some distance. However, the effect is difficult to predict accurately and could continue for many years. All very worrying in view of the large number of applications to construct basements which are still endemic to our area. Let us hope that the Heath and Hampstead Society's recent proposal to Camden's Planning Department to toughen up their Planning Guidance on Basements will cause Camden to restrict the size and quantity of this unfortunate type of development in the future.

Many thanks to Vicki Harding and Maureen Clark-Darby for organising this informative occasion. A synopsis can be found on the H&HS website and is reprinted in this Newsletter.

Trees

In the next Newsletter this report will have more on the subject of trees - the other main concern that we deal with in the Planning Sub-Committee. In the meantime, however, it is good to be able to report that law courts around the country are beginning to issue massive fines to those who remove trees without the necessary permission. So - developers beware.

Neighbourhood plan for Hampstead

The meeting held on the 3rd September was well attended.

(continued on next page)

Town Report

by Frank Harding

I write this report after a few weeks of real summer but with an early touch of autumn in the air. That will almost certainly be the feel when this issue of the Newsletter lands on your mat.

Hampstead and its residents, and I hope the traders, have benefitted from some good weather this summer; the village, as I prefer to call it, has looked good, those using its amenities and shops appear to have been enjoying them and themselves. Hampstead fortunately still has much to offer and to put on show for visitors.

Various Town Sub-Committee initiatives are still work in progress or being debated. However the following matters are worth recording.

Old Hampstead Rediscovered III

The third in a series of exhibitions of works from the Camden archives at Burgh House took place over the summer, featuring "The Taverns of Hampstead". Knight Frank once again generously sponsored this event.

Walks on Hampstead Plaques

Two new guided walks took place in early October. Julia Male, a Blue Badge London guide, explored Hampstead's plaques, old and new, the blue English Heritage plaques and the Society's own plaques. This is an example of

one of the reasons why members should provide their email addresses - these walks were arranged between newsletters and we were able to inform only members who have given us their email addresses.

Art Exhibition on Heath Street

Discussions are taking place with a view to holding an exhibition of artworks next summer at the top of Heath Street. This would be a much delayed successor to the regular summer weekend exhibitions held there many years ago and would provide an attractive venue for residents of and visitors to Hampstead and the Heath. I would hope to be able to provide more information on this venture in the next Newsletter.

The Toll Gate House

Regular readers of this Newsletter will recall that we have been trying to find a use for the Toll Gate House so that it will be regularly opened and maintained and thus not fall again into the state of disrepair from which it was rescued some months ago. We are hopeful that a possible solution has been identified which may lead to a commercial use being found which would be of benefit to the community, to Camden, the owner of the building, and not least to its lessee. At the time of writing, negotiations for this solution are proceeding.

Planning Report (cont)

This could be the start of an important initiative that might be able to affect future changes in Hampstead and influence the decisions that Camden Council take on our behalf. Some are concerned that any such proposal that comes from a Government that appears to wish to reduce the powers of the current Planning

Development Control system must be viewed with suspicion. For all its faults, the planning system is what stands between Hampstead and excessive or harmful development. However, a strong democratic forum in the area could be an excellent development.

Ground response to basement development in Camden

by Dr Michael de Freitas

What every resident should know about geology, groundwater and basement excavation

The key facts that residents should know are as follows.

Insufficient investment and understanding

Engineering is perfectly capable of creating basements that do not cause problems to neighbours but this requires advanced knowledge of the ground based on good facts, sophisticated design and meticulous supervision; that is expensive. Insufficient investment in understanding the ground is invariably the cause of developments that create trouble for neighbours. This means that damage to neighbouring properties arising from basement excavation is often a price the neighbours pay for owners not investing sufficiently in the work they commission to increase and realise the value of their estate.

An argument is made that it is unreasonable to invest such sums of money as are required without first obtaining permission to build. This is not a fair description of the situation. The problem is two-fold; design and construction. An argument can be made that it is reasonable to withhold permission to build until design demonstrates the work will not cause the ground beneath neighbouring properties to change in a damaging way.

The ground in Hampstead is complicated

It is not possible to excavate a hole without the ground responding and the key issue for neighbours is the extent of that response and its magnitude. The ground in Hampstead, especially near the Heath, is not as simple as most proposals suggest. The upper layer of the ground is formed from a mantle of gravel, sand and clay

which has flowed down the hill sides in glacial times, and now forms an apron of permeable material; this is the shallow aquifer that causes so much problem with wet basements and cellars – it is often misidentified as “made ground”. This can often be separated from ground in its “virgin” state by clay that has been softened and possibly deformed. The balance of horizontal and vertical stresses in the “virgin” ground can be difficult to know and this affects the prediction of ground response to unloading and reloading during basement excavation and construction.

Movement of ground water

The movement of ground water in this zone can be very variable as in this zone are located the old drains and sewers, many of them leaky, the trenches in which they were laid, and the receptors for soak-aways. When it rains, much water is shed rapidly from roof tops, covered ground and roadways, and pulses of water pass through the drainage system which, if it is leaking, allows the water to discharge to the “made ground”. That is why the occasional measure of water levels in a ground investigation is by no means an adequate assessment of ground water conditions that could be met over longer periods.

Many of the responses of the silts and clays in the ground are time-dependent because they occur in response to the decay of pore water pressure in the clay horizons of the Claygate Beds and in the London Clay itself. This means that the ground will continue to respond to basement development long after the basement work is complete. The response may be small in absolute terms but it may not be uniform, meaning that neighbouring properties can be gradually distorted as the ground nearest the excavation moves more than that furthest from it.

The importance of Basement Impact Assessments

What should every resident do? Every resident wishing either to develop a basement or cope with a basement development next door should insist on a good quality ground investigation of the site involved. Adequate design which avoids damage to existing and neighbouring buildings requires a verifiable model of the ground, good representative samples of the ground, tested for their mechanical properties, together with long term monitoring of water levels and their response to rainfall. If the Basement Impact Assessment reveals with Screening any issues that need Scoping then those issues should be scoped (i.e. quantified) before a request for permission to build is given. It is not appropriate for matters to be left to “good industrial practice” once planning permission is given – predicting ground response and responding so as to mitigate its effects is, in many parts of Hampstead, beyond what “good industrial practice” is able to guarantee.

Residents neighbouring a proposed basement development should therefore expect a Basement Impact Assessment that is supported by a good quality, site-specific ground investigation accompanied by long-term monitoring of water levels. They should also expect to receive a prediction of the ground movement that is likely to accompany the excavation and an assessment of the time over which those movements are likely to occur. All this can be undone by poor construction methods and a clear statement of construction sequence should accompany the submission.

Engineering in the ground is substantially more difficult than engineering above ground and there is a case to be made for councils to ensure, by

appropriate training, that those councillors and council staff involved with decisions in these areas are aware of the technical issues involved before recommending and granting planning permission.

This is a Summary of a talk to the Society on 23 May 2013 by Dr Michael de Freitas, Chartered Geologist and Director of First Steps Ltd, and Emeritus Reader of Engineering Geology at Imperial College London.



Date for your diary

The Heath & Hampstead Society

Annual Christmas Party

Monday 16th December,
7 - 9pm

St. Stephen's
Pond Street

Tickets £12



Invitation and reply slip
are enclosed with this
Newsletter



Is Hampstead still a village?

By Vicky Bobasch

Politicians talk a lot about The Big Society, claiming that an increase in volunteering is a legacy of the Olympics. If you are cynical that there is any community spirit in Hampstead, let me reassure you.

The most recent example is the Hampstead Summer Festival. This was its third year and it was bigger and better than ever. The organisers, Linda Chung, Els Bauer and Anne Ward, with a team of helpers running the component parts, did an amazing job, solely for the purpose of promoting Hampstead and raising money for two local charities, Age UK Camden (Henderson Court Resource Centre) and Keats Community Library. This is the first time that the library has been involved and we were stunned by the teamwork, resulting in a fantastic week of events, raising over £20,000.

The Committee spend a large part of their year planning, but a lot of people volunteered to help on the big day, directing traffic, selling raffle tickets and rattling charity buckets. It was hot and it was fun, but believe me, under the



direction of The Rotary Club, they worked hard! What about the businesses? Well yes, some of the chain stores have no real connection with us, but most of the local businesses, especially the privately owned ones, are generous. Over 40 local businesses contributed goods and services for the Festival Raffle, in addition to those who sponsored the

attractions. The traders may not live here but they spend their working week here and belong to our community too.

Many people give time regularly to local causes. There is a local charity training mentors to work with problem families. There are two highly trained specialists who use the library to give one-to-one literacy classes, and IT volunteers who help people improve their computer skills. Over fifty people regularly give up a chunk of their time to keep the library open 6 days a week

There are volunteers in Henderson Court, the Marie Curie Hospice, and Fenton House.

I must also include the Committee Members of the Heath and Hampstead Society who have been looking after and preserving the interests of Hampstead Heath and its surrounding village for over a century - from planning concerns, to dams, and the health of the Heath.

These are just some examples; there are many opportunities in our neighbourhood.

Volunteering can be fun, you make new friends, and helping people can be rewarding. Find something you care about and try it!

One last thing about Hampstead Village People.... there are residents who work long hours and have no time to participate – I used to be one of them myself before I retired – but they are not ungenerous. I have stopped strangers in the street to tell them about the library and they have donated generously on the spot. They may only be physically present at weekends but they feel they belong in The Village.

For more information about volunteering in the library visit the website:

www.keatscommunitylibrary.org.uk

Or email: keatscommunitylibrary@gmail.com

Bulletin Board



Keats Community Library

10 Keats Grove

The volunteer-run registered charity, operated by the community.

The library is open to everyone. It is easy to register for a KCL library card to borrow books. We have over 20,000 items

Events programme

Forthcoming Attractions – for your diary.....

22nd October 7.30pm,

The Royal Free Theatre
An Evening with Michael Palin

26th October Book Sale - 10-4pm

21st November 7.30pm

Ricardo Curbelo: Harpist
Programme to be announced

28th November 7.30pm

Max Arthur OBE: Eminent Historian on the topic of the First World War

12th December 7.30pm

Poetry Open Mic - with Keats House introduced by Paul Bertill

For more information about the Library, its events, and how to join, see the website:

<http://keatscommunitylibrary.org.uk>

Hampstead Film Society



**Hampstead Town Hall,
Tuesday evenings at 7pm**

A wide range of world cinema

Autumn Season

Tuesday, 22nd October

5 Broken Cameras

Emad Burnat, Guy Davidi, Israel, 2011

Tuesday, 5th November

To Kill a Mockingbird

Robert Mulligan, USA, 1962

Tuesday, 19th November

Amour

Michael Haneke, France, 2012

Tuesday, 3rd December

The Intouchables

Olivier Nakache, Eric Toledano, France, 2011

Tuesday, 17th December

Elena

Andrey Zvyagintsev, Russia, 2011

All tickets are now £5.00 on the door.

No membership required.

Cash bar wine/beer £3.00

Interchange Trust,

Hampstead Town Hall Centre

213 Haverstock Hill, London, NW3 4QP

Tel: 020 7692 5800

Email: hfs@wacarts.co.uk

Twitter: @hampsteadladFacebook:

Bulletin Board

Hampstead Arts Festival Autumn Season 2013

Music

The Brodsky Quartet

Sunday, 13th October
Sunday, 1st December

St Stephen's 3.00pm

Tuesday, 15th October
Tuesday, 3rd December

Hampstead Parish Church 7.30pm

Music by Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms
and Alexander Zemlinsky

North York Moors Festival Ensemble

Saturday, 2nd November 7.30pm
St Stephen's

Tchaikovsky, Strauss, Schoenberg

Sophie Bevan (soprano)
Sebastian Wybrew (piano)

Tuesday, 5th November 7.30pm
Hampstead Parish Church

Songs by Brahms, Schubert, Grieg, Strauss,
Vaughan-Williams, Bridge, Gershwin and Berlin

Gwilym Simcock (jazz piano)
Tuesday, 19th November 7.30pm St Stephen's

Tickets: £30 to £9 available online:

<http://www.hampsteadartsfestival.com/tickets/>
or personal callers, from J M Pennifeather pen
shop, 4 Flask Walk. Monday to Saturday 10 am
to 6pm, Sunday 11am to 5pm

Season tickets for all 9 festival concerts are
available; reductions are offered for season
and series tickets.

Literary events

Meeting Points at Burgh House

The Romantic Politician

Monday, 4th November 7.30pm

Neil Kinnock and Melvyn Bragg celebrate the
life and work of Michael Foot

And So On

Wednesday, 6th November 1.00pm

Jonathan Miller, talks to Piers Plowright about
the art of directing

Passion Playing

Thursday, 7th November 1.00pm

Zoe Wanamaker and Tim Pigott-Smith with
Piers Plowright: the art of acting, performing
Shakespeare,

Benjamin Britten - Hampstead and Beyond

Monday, 11th November 7.30pm

Music critic Michael White looks at Britten's
life and his connections with Hampstead.

Two Things at Once

Tuesday, 12th November 7.30pm

Fiona Sampson and Elaine Feinstein with Piers
Plowright: the genius of American poet Robert Frost

The Healing Swaying

Wednesday, 13th November 1.00pm

Actors Diana Bishop and Valerie Sarruf, with
Stephen Tucker and Piers Plowright, present a
lunchtime entertainment of poetry and prose
on the theme of music.

Antony Beaumont will talk on Zemlinsky's
quartets on 20th November. Austrian Cultural
Forum, London



Burgh House Museum, Buttery, Bookstall

Exhibitions, talks, concerts and classes
Burgh House, New End Square NW3 1LT
www.burghhouse.org.uk
Tel: 020 7431 0144

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

Exhibitions

Photographers of Hampstead Until 27th Oct

This exhibition will focus on Hampstead through photography old and new, artistic and documentary. As well as exploring the work of eminent photographers including Dorothy Bohm, John Gay and Allan Cash, the exhibition will include work by little-known photographers and will be complemented by work from the **Hampstead Photographic Society.**

Malvina Cheek Retrospective Scenes from a Hampstead Life 22nd Nov – 9th Mar

Malvina Cheek studied at the Royal College of Art and has lived in Hampstead for over 60 years. She has drawn inspiration from its combination of country and city. In addition, a selection of her graphic work, including book illustrations, will be on display, and some of her most recent works completed in 2005.

Mother Nature on Hampstead Heath

Claire Mazurel and Sandrine Joseph 13th - 29th Nov, The Peggy Jay Gallery

Artwork on the trees; sculpture, photos, video installation by French sculptor Claire Mazurel (claire-mazurel.odexpo.com) and photographer SandJo Sandrine Joseph (sand-jo.com).

Support the Friends of Burgh House

Honorary President Piers Plowright

For more information or to join the Friends, tel: Burgh House: 020 7431 0144

Bulletin Board - Society notices

Members' email addresses

Are you missing out?

The Society is increasingly using email to keep members informed of news and events, especially with the spiralling cost of postage.

If you have not given us your email address you may be missing out on important local and Society news and initiatives. Email is invaluable for letting members know of important issues between Newsletters

So, if you have not already done so, please do send your email address to the Society at:

info@heathandhampstead.org.uk

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

This will also enable us to update our Membership Records and simplify our communications with you.

Thank you.

Delivering the Newsletter by email

We can send your Newsletter by email in the form of a PDF so that you can read it on screen if you prefer.

For those of you who do not keep your Newsletters, it is environmentally more friendly, saving paper and unnecessary waste. The occasional extra flyers could also be sent via email, if wished.

It would also save the Society a great deal of cost. With postage costs increasing enormously this is now becoming a major consideration.

If you would like to try this please let the Editor know at

info@heathandhampstead.org.uk

You can be sent a PDF to try out, to see if you like it. PDFs of the Newsletter can also be seen on the website.



Don't forget to use the Hampstead Card

The current list of businesses taking part in the scheme can be found on the Society's website

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

***Winter Fair in aid of Combat
Stress***

(Ex-Services Mental Welfare Society)

**Saturday 2nd November
11am – 3pm**

To be opened by

Martin Bell

**Free Church Hall, Northway, Hampstead
Garden Suburb, NW11 6PB**

Collectables, Jewellery, Crafts, Books, Cakes
& Produce, Tombola, Combat Stress
Christmas Cards Refreshments

New: Vintage/New Clothes
& lots more

Free parking

News from

***Marylebone
Birdwatching Society***

The MBS website has been newly updated and the new season has started, so watch out for Tuesday walks on Hampstead Heath followed by lunch and a good chat at Kenwood Cafe. Details of trip reports, news of events and other organisations can be found at

www.birdsmbs.org.uk

www.facebook.com/birdsmbs

and follow us on **Twitter @BirdsMBS**

www.flickr.com/photos/mbsbirds

Hampstead Theatre

***Hampstead Theatre
Friends Membership***

Avoid disappointment by becoming a Friend of the Theatre and taking advantage of our priority booking period.

For just £40 per annum Friends receive the following benefits:

- Priority Booking
- Guaranteed advance notice of forthcoming Hampstead Theatre productions
- Quarterly e-newsletter – Hampstead Backstage – featuring interviews with actors
- Invitations to exclusive events at Hampstead Theatre including breakfast with the Artistic Director
- 10% discount at Hampstead Theatre bar
- No charge on ticket exchanges for the same production

For details of our membership schemes please visit us at

www.hampsteadtheatre.com/support-us

or contact Sally Wilson, tel: 020 7449 4155.

sallyw@hampsteadtheatre.com

We look forward to welcoming you soon

www.hampsteadtheatre.com

Heath Walks 2013 -2014

Walks are normally held on the first Sunday of every month except January. Most start from Burgh House, New End Square. London NW3 1LT – 10 minutes walk from Hampstead Tube Station (for map see www.burghhouse.org.uk)

NB: *parking is extremely difficult locally, especially in spring and summer. 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,
mobile: 07941 528 034 or
email: hhs.walks@gmail.com

3 November 10.30am (*meet between the old Kitchen Garden and entrance to English Heritage staff yard, east of Kenwood House). Habitats of the Heath led by Linda Dolata, official volunteer guide, Kew Gardens

1 December 10.30am (meet in North End Way, on Hampstead side of Inverforth House) The Pergola, the Hill Garden and Golders Hill Park led by Peter Tausig, member of the H&HS Committee and Heath Sub-Committee

2014 (NB: No walk in January)

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

2 March 10.30am (*meet between the old Kitchen Garden and entrance to English Heritage staff yard, east of Kenwood House) The Hidden Heath led by Michael Hammerson, Highgate Society representative on the H&HS Heath Sub-Committee and member of Highgate Society Environment Committee

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

** This meeting point used to be identified as 'the gazebo' (since demolished), overlooking the City, with orientation table.*

