FRIENDS OF GREENWICH PARK
NEWSLETTER

Spring 2017 Registered Charity No: 1029933 Number 75

Wolfe statue viewing area: a prime candidate for landscaping improvements in the Heritage Lottery Fund bid.

The Royal Parks: looking ahead

This year's Annual Lecture attracted some 150 people and was given on 9 February by Loyd Grossman, the new Chairman of The Royal Parks, which has now become a charitable body. His subject was the future of the new organisation, about which he spoke eloquently and entertainingly - and without notes.

He began with a reference to the 'Green Necklace' of parks in Boston (where he first attended university) as an example of the importance to any city of green spaces. The Royal Parks, however, were 'the greatest urban parks in the world' and more extensive than in any other city. They contributed very significantly to London's 'green quotient' which, at nearly 40%, was twice that of New York's, with Tokyo and Mumbai managing only 3.5% and 2.5% respectively.

The parks, in Loyd's view, 'are one of the only theatres where we can be citizens together', but 'society has made a fetish out of selfishness and the public realm is constantly being chipped away'.

There were many challenges facing the parks. One was London's rising population, which would inevitably put pressure on the green spaces. There continued to be a decline in government funding and continued calls for development in the parks including more memorials. In addition, there were growing environmental threats such as new plant and tree diseases and pests like the oak processionary moth which threatened the landscape and were costly to control.

Continued on page 2

The Royal Parks: looking ahead continued

In Greenwich Park, horse chestnuts have been affected by bleeding canker and 50% of all the trees in Blackheath Avenue could die in the next 30 years. Biosecurity is probably the most urgent, difficult and expensive requirement of all, said Loyd, but he was confident that the issue was moving up the political agenda.

The new organisation would seek to improve the parks and the management of the organisation; generate sustainable income without over commercialisation; make effective capital investment; and increase support for the parks.

On this last point, Loyd pointed out that more could be achieved and part of that problem is that 'a lot of people think that the parks are maintained by elves at night'. Another is that 'the parks are just so good'.

Currently Greenwich Park is bidding for money from the National Lottery (see Graham Dear's article) and if the bid is successful we should see landscape and other improvements. Improvements to the area around Wolfe's statue, to the playground and boating lake and the deer park are options on the table.

The future looks exciting and this glimpse of it from Loyd was an optimistic and cheering one.

The government agency became a charitable public body on 16 March. The Royal Parks Foundation is expected to join the new organisation within the coming weeks. We shall update you on this in more detail in the next newsletter.

Wildlife Notes by Sue Yates

New Hedge around the Works' Yard

On 9 December about 15 people gathered to help plant whips of approximately 10 native species to create a deep hedging area to hide the buildings in the works' yard. The existing fence, used to keep the deer out of the yard, had been retained, but an additional fence of the same height had been installed some four metres further into the deer park. This was the area that we had to fill with small saplings and we were thus digging into soil that had, over many years, been well trampled by deer hooves. This was very hard initially, but one got better with practice. We were joined by some of the park gardeners and apprentices who proved we had a long way to go to match their speed.

A deep area of hedging like this will, in the fullness of time, provide a protected environment for birds and insects and dramatically improve the biodiversity of the Park. The stretch of hedging from the Blackheath Lodge to the Wildlife Centre has only been in place for about four years and is really bulking out now, so we should see the benefit of this new one in just a few years' time.

In total 750 whips were planted, including hawthorn, blackthorn, field maple, dog rose, hazel, spindle and beech. Many thanks to all those involved.

News from the Queen's Orchard

Orchard produce: Romanesco broccoli

We are lucky enough to have Dorothy Love returning to be the guardian of the Orchard again this year. From now on and throughout the summer the Orchard will therefore be open to the public on Wednesdays from 11.15am until 4.45pm and on Saturdays and Sundays from 9.15am until 4.45pm (closed for lunch from 12.30-1.30). It is so nice when visitors can just pop in and see how things are going.

The team from the Orchard had a lesson in live willow weaving and then set about giving the willow fencing and arches in the children's playground a winter tidy up. In January Ian Rodgers, the Arboriculture Manager of The Royal Parks, came to demonstrate the pruning of fruit trees and there is a useful summary of this on the Orchard Blog on *queensorchard.blogspot.co.uk.*

The Orchard now has a logo, created by Clyo Parecchini, who runs the blog. We visited Heather Burrell, the blacksmith who designed the gate, at her studio in Deptford to confirm that she did not mind us using this modified version of the gate as a logo. She was happy for us to go ahead and you can see some photos of the visit on the blog.

Planting in the Nature Trail

At the end of last year the dig-in team rolled up their sleeves and did some serious planting.

The area outside the Hide in the Nature Trail had been cleared of bracken and brambles by the gardeners and after our efforts there were six silver birches, six rowan trees (for berries) and below the trees, mahonia (for early nectar) and butcher's broom (for berries), thus creating another area that should benefit birds and insects.

In the Wildlife Centre the drop-ins have been busy and at the end of January we handed out leaflets on the RSPB Big Garden Bird Watch. The display boards are now showing spring like topics. The next meeting of the Wildlife group is planned for **Friday 9 June at 11am**. Anyone can attend and you would be most welcome.

Do we have your email address yet?

The easy way to stay in touch with the Friends and Greenwich Park between our newsletter copy dates

- Details and reminders for Friends' events
- Updates from the Wildlife Group
- Information on other events in the Park

Please help us keep you informed. Go to *www.friendsofgreenwichpark.org.uk* and sign up on the home page.

THE VIEW from the Park *Graham Dear, Park Manager*

I can't believe we have escaped our third year in a row with no significant snowfall in Greenwich Park. My sledge has now been put back in the shed for another year. Even the winds have been kind to us with only storm Doris so far doing any significant damage and that amounted to two small trees and lots of twigs.

Public consultation 'open day' at the Vanbrugh Gate

That has meant that we can give our full focus to the Greenwich Park Revealed project which progresses well. The response to our public meetings has been excellent. Over 1300 people attended the first four open meetings in the park providing useful feedback from park users.

The intention is that The Royal Parks will make an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund/BIG Lottery Fund 'Parks for People' grant scheme. The application is a two stage process. The first stage is a competitive process when we are competing for funding against all the other parks applying at that time. If we are successful and get the all-important Stage 1 pass money will be reserved for our project. The second stage application is assessed only on the technical quality of our submission.

Preparing the bid is a long process. The intention is to submit the Stage 1 application in August 2017 with a decision in January 2018. If successful we will be awarded development funding to work up the detailed proposals and submit the Stage 2 application in December 2017 for a June 2018 decision.

Friends might be interested to see how the bid itself will be assessed by the Heritage and BIG Lottery Funds. There are ten outcomes the projects need to achieve for heritage, people and communities.

Heritage will be:	People will have:	Communities As a result of the project:
in a better condition	developed skills	the local area will be a better place to live
better managed	learnt about heritage	negative environmental impacts will be reduced
better interpreted and explained	volunteered	more people and a wider range will be engaged with heritage
better recorded		

The success of our bid is very dependent on the quality of our consultation. As our most valued customers, the Friends are vital to the project and many committee members are inputting a great deal. Other members could really help by completing the visitor survey which can be done at the open days or on-line at *www.royalparks.org.uk/greenwichparkrevealed.*

See this website also for more detailed information about the project, including possible proposals for different areas of the Park.

Friends' Festival of Music in the Park

We have another terrific programme of concerts lined up for this summer.

The Phoenix Dixieland Jazz Band is back for our Midsummer Jazz Concert

Our renowned Midsummer Jazz Concert on Sunday 18 June will this year be extra-special, to celebrate the **25th anniversary** of the foundation of the Friends.

The ever-popular Phoenix Dixieland Jazz Band will again be bringing their New Orleans bounce to the charming and enclosed Observatory Garden. This year they will be supported by the talented local youngsters of the Greenwich Steel Band. This is an event for the whole family. Tickets in advance are £5, with under-16s free. (Tickets on the gate, if still available, will be £7)

The Garden will open at noon, and the concert will begin at 12.30pm and end at 3.30pm. Come and enjoy the party. Our sponsors, Davy's of Greenwich, will run a bar, and the Park's Pavilion Cafe will have a stall providing food, ice cream and soft drinks.

A booking form is enclosed with this newsletter.

Twelve Bandstand concerts this summer

We are this year again increasing the number of our hugely popular concerts at the Bandstand. Concerts will take place on every Sunday from 25 June to 27 August. In addition, there will be a Saturday concert on 24 June and (for the first time) a Bank Holiday concert on Monday 28 August. Concerts, which are free, normally start at 3pm and end at 5pm.

We are featuring some new bands as well as old favourites – see the full programme on the flyer enclosed with this newsletter.

Greenwich Park Bird Walks

Bird walks occur roughly once a month, and are for anyone interested in finding out about birds in the Park and the best places to see them, or about bird watching more generally.

Because they will soon be migrating back to their Scandinavian homes, I was going to write this month about redwing. However, the last bird walk brought a different bird into prominence.

If I were to ask the ordinary British person what our smallest bird was, ninety percent would say the wren, and would be surprised to hear that in fact it is the much less well known, and much smaller, goldcrest. We managed to find two pairs of these amazing little birds on our last walk. Both pairs were seen flitting about rapidly in conifers, making their tiny "zi…zi…zi" noises. It is this sound, very high pitched and soft, that usually gives away their presence. They weigh only around 6gm. (half the weight of a wren) and, if one of them stays still long enough, you will see that they are olive green above, pale buff below with white wing stripes. But their standout feature is a striking Mohican-like headstripe of gold bordered by black. We are very fortunate that the Park provides many ideal habitats for these dynamic, flittering, 9cm long, marvels.

The dates and times of future "Birdwatching for Beginners" bird walks are on the back page of this newsletter and are also displayed on the Blackheath Gate noticeboard and on the website. I hope to see you there.

David Morris

Friends AGM is on Monday, 22 May 2017

The 25th AGM takes place on 22 May 2017 at 7.30 for 8pm in the Howe Lecture Theatre, Queen Anne Building, University of Greenwich at the Old Royal Naval College. Copies of the Chairman's Report and the Financial Report are enclosed with this Newsletter.

Officers and committee members proposed and seconded for the coming year are:

Chairman:
Liz Coyle, 3 Orchard Drive, SE3 0QP

Vice-Chairman:
Richard Jones, 65 Hervey Road, SE3 8BX

Committee Members:
Sophie Spencer and Brian Starkey stand for election

Tony Butler, Tina Challacombe and Sue Yates stand for re-election.

Clive Corlett and Jonathan Chandler continue to serve.

The committee confirms the appointments of Christine Bevan as Secretary, Julie Punter as Treasurer and Fran Tyler as Membership Secretary.

After the AGM Graham Dear, Park Manager, will outline some of the work undertaken in Greenwich Park and take questions on the Heritage Lottery Fund bid.

Remembering Greenwich Park in earlier times

The Greenwich Park History Group is hoping to gather information about the Park from long established locals. It is all part of piecing together the more recent history and development of the Park.

There is the book "Greenwich Park, Its History and Associations" written by Angus Duncan Webster covering the periods up to Victorian/ Edwardian times, but what was going on during the Second World War and in the decades afterwards?

Have you lived in the area for many years? Do you have a relative who was a local before or during the war who talked to you about the Park? Do you have photographs from visits in the fifties or later? For instance, in what state were the trees on the Blackheath Avenue which necessitated their removal and replanting in the fifties. We would love to talk to you to learn more from your memories.

Please come along on **Monday 5 June at 2.30pm to the Wildlife Centre** for a cup of tea, some cake and a chat. Your memories could really help us expand our knowledge. To plan the event and make sure that we have adequate numbers of people to talk to you, please fill in the enclosed form and return it to Sue Yates. There is, of course, no charge.

Friends of Greenwich Park

Chairman: Richard Jones, 65 Hervey Road, SE3 8BX Tel: 020 8319 3467
Wildlife Group: Sue Yates, 34 Hyde Vale, London SE10 8QH Tel: 020 8692 1760
Newsletter: Liz Coyle lizcoyle@waitrose.com Tel: 020 8852 8831
Membership Secretary: Fran Tyler, 51 Lock Chase, London SE3 9HB Tel: 020 8852 9540
tylerfrantom@btinternet.com
Annual subscription: UK £5; overseas £10. Cheques made out to Friends of Greenwich Park with sae please, and sent to the Membership Secretary.

Dates for Your Diary summary

Bird Walk: meet at the Blackheath Gate
Sun 26 March 8.30am

London Marathon
Sun 23 April

'Drop In' at the Wildlife Centre*
Sat 29 April 1pm – 4pm

Bird Walks: meet at the Blackheath Gate
Sun 30 April 8.30am

Greenwich Park Revealed: Open Day sessions in the Park
Thurs 11 May 3pm - 7pm
and Sun 14 May 10am – 4pm

Bird Walk: meet at the Blackheath Gate
Sun 21 May 8.30am

Annual General Meeting
Mon 22 May
(Members only)
Queen Anne Building, University of Greenwich. See left hand column. The AGM will begin at 8pm and finish at around 9.30pm. Wine and soft drinks will be served from 7.30pm.

'Drop In' at the Wildlife Centre*
Sat 27 May 1pm - 4pm

Meeting of the History Group at the Wildlife Centre*
Fri 2 June 11am Everyone welcome

Reminiscence Day meeting at the Wildlife Centre*
Mon 5 June 2.30pm

Jazz in the Park Booking now
Sun 18 June
Tickets from Friends of Greenwich Park, 52 Greenwich Park Street, SE10 9LT. Tel 020 8853 2150. Cheques payable to Friends of Greenwich Park.

'Drop In' at the Wildlife Centre*
Sat 24 June 1pm - 4pm

* **The Wildlife Centre** is near the south end of the lake in the Flower Garden. The 'Drop Ins' are organised by the Friends Wildlife Group on behalf of The Royal Parks and provide the chance for children and young people to find out about wildlife in Greenwich Park. Visit and watch any wildlife that is passing by. Included are wildlife-related craft activities and guided tours of the Nature Trail and Deer Hide.

Greenwich Park (Tel: 0300 061 2380) is one of London's eight Royal Parks. The others are Bushy Park, The Green Park, Hyde Park, Kensington Gardens, Regent's Park and Primrose Hill, Richmond Park and St James's Park. All have links with former royal palaces or hunting grounds. Between them they cover 2083 ha. (5000 acres) of historic parkland. The Royal Parks also manages Brompton Cemetery.
In Greenwich Park, there are police phone boxes at St Mary's Gate and at Blackheath Gate. In an emergency dial 999; for other calls Tel: 020 7161 9740

Printed by Greycot Press, Unit 4, Kencot Close, Erith, Kent DA18 4AB Friends website: www.friendsofgreenwichpark.org.uk