FRIENDS OF GREENWICH PARK
NEWSLETTER

Winter 2017 Registered Charity No: 1029933 Number 77

Autumn light below One Tree Hill

Harvest Festival in the Queen's Orchard

Having an open day in the autumn in what is essentially a summer garden of fruit and vegetables can be quite a feat, but the Queen's Orchard volunteers rose to the challenge and the Orchard looked magnificent for its third Harvest Festival at the beginning of October. Despite an overcast day, there were well over 500 visitors with lots of activities for all to enjoy.

A new addition to the event was the 'Mission:Invertebrate' project, run by The Royal Parks, with its splendid giant snail caravan, sited opposite (but safely outside!) the vegetable garden. It offered plenty of opportunities for the whole family to learn about the importance of invertebrates in the Royal Parks, including through storytelling, bug hunting, scavenger hunts and creative crafting. As it was Harvest Festival, the activities had a particular emphasis on pollination.

On that note, back in the Orchard our resident beekeeper, Christine Sheffield, and Camilla Goddard of Capital Bees welcomed a steady stream of visitors eager to make beeswax candles, to taste honey samples and to buy jars of honey from the orchard beehives to take home.

The craft company, Ginger Cat, returned again this year offering elegant floral painted faces and potato and apple animal creations which were very popular with the younger children. Pond dipping took place alongside the natural pond overseen by the Field Studies Council, the Royal Parks education provider. Broad bean and onion planting, potting up daffodil bulbs and making up lavender bags were keenly pursued by children under the guidance of orchard volunteers. The reconstruction of a World War I vegetable bed, with its champion marrow, attracted much interest.

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A harvest festival is not complete without its fruit, vegetable and flower stall and once again it did not fail to impress. The autumn produce of potatoes, pumpkins, white figs, onions, shallots, rhubarb, carrots, kale, beans, tomatoes, peppers, aubergines and beetroot, and the colourful dahlias and pinks and bags of lavender displayed an abundance of variety. Donations raised a handsome sum which will go towards equipment and seeds for the coming year.

Dorothy Love

The Queen's Orchard is now closed to the public until Easter. The opening times are being reviewed but will still be Wednesday to Sunday.

Autumn is very much with us in the Wildlife Centre *by Sue Yates*

The Friday diggers have been clearing the leaves from the paths in the Nature Trail while for the Drop-in we featured a large poster of fungi together with useful reference books. The volunteers had gathered colourful autumn leaves which visitors could compare to various colour swatches to illustrate the wide range of colour in the leaves. The team in the Queen's Orchard had kindly sent up two pumpkins they had grown and at the end of the session they were given away to two very appreciative park visitors.

Christine Sheffield, the beekeeper in the Orchard, has kindly given the Centre a pot of her wonderful honey for visitors to sample. They rave about the flavour, which is superb. She has also given us some pieces of beeswax, removed from the hive before the bees filled it with honey (they sometimes get over enthusiastic and build in the wrong place and she has to remove it). This is great for us because children can handle it and feel the wax without getting sticky.

Please can you help?

Unfortunately our large wasp nest is beginning to show the ravages of time and we fear it may soon have to be retired. If any of the Friends have a dead wasp nest in their loft, we would be delighted to offer it a home and will come and collect it. The bigger the better!

Recent Fungus Foray

Anne Andrews met a lively group of 12 Friends on a pleasant morning in late October. Anne had collected a few specimens earlier in the day which she showed to the group before we moved off to look for more. She felt that good specimens were going to be hard to find this season. Anne summarises the outing as follows:

"Although there appeared to be no fungus, close examination of the grass by a dozen pairs of eyes revealed a number of small things.

There were quite a few Mycenas which have a slender, relatively tall stem and a pointed cap. Folklore says they were named after the helmets worn by the Mycenae tribe. There are many different species most looking superficially brownish or greyish and a bit similar but we did see quite a few Mycena flavoalba, pale yellow in the centre with a white edge as the name indicates. I hope the group will recognise that one when they see it again.

There were also quite a few samples of Laccaria laccata, The Deceiver. This is reddish brown on top, sometimes quite pale and varying in size. The giveaway is that when you look underneath the gills are pink. I hope they will recognise that again as well. There were a number of small fragile looking Coprinus species of a group that has now been aptly named Parasola because they do indeed look like a small delicate parasol; and also in the grass at one point was quite a spread of a bright yellow club fungus just beginning to appear.

The best "proper" toadstool, nice and fresh was just one Amanita fulva, Tawny Grisette. This is related to the well known Fly Agaric, which is red with white spots. This one has a relatively small cap, a reddish brown colour as the name suggests and has a tall slender stem sitting in a sort of bag known as a volva."

The group thoroughly enjoyed the morning and learned a lot. We are very grateful to Anne for sharing her knowledge and making it all so interesting.

October visit to the Greenwich Heritage Centre

Pauline Watson, our guide for the visit, met our group of Friends in the foyer of the Heritage Centre. To keep the numbers manageable we split into two groups, with some initially self-guiding around the permanent exhibitions.

In the Search Room Pauline had displayed Greenwich Park items around the tables and we spread out to inspect postcards, paintings and reference books. Ann Dingsdale, a volunteer at the Heritage Centre, who had inspired the idea of the visit, was also present to help people find things.

In the 1995 Jenkins Report on Greenwich Park reference is made to Roman items found in the early twentieth century. Pauline suggested that we consult their Roman specialist, Nadia Randle, who brought in a trolley loaded with finds from the Park. These included a tiny piece of mosaic, a long piece of terracotta guttering, a large roof tile with the inevitable cat's paw print and two decorative bowls. This was an amazing opportunity.

The beautiful panorama, "London to Greenwich by Boat", painted by Ernest George Cattermole in 1858 when 15 years old, was rolled out in stages. It is a quite stunning watercolour, some 27 feet in length, which shows some wonderful river scenes with Brunel's Leviathan on the north shore and the landing spot in Greenwich among all the buildings destroyed in WWII and where the Cutty Sark currently sits. We also heard that Ernest sadly died in his early twenties. A review of the panorama in the Journal of the Greenwich Historical Society (Vol 4, No2) can be seen at the Heritage Centre.

We would like to thank the staff and volunteers at the Heritage Centre for their enormous help and work in preparation for what was a splendid visit.

THE VIEW from the Park

Graham Dear, Park Manager

After a lot of hard work, consultation and encouragement, (not least from the Friends of Greenwich Park), the Greenwich Park Revealed Heritage Lottery Fund grant application was submitted in August. We now await a decision in mid-December to hear if our bid for a £4.8 million investment has been successful. As only 40 per cent of applicants achieve a first time pass the odds are against us, but we think it is a good bid from a great park; so fingers crossed.

If the bid fails this time we will resubmit. If we get through we will be awarded development funding to work up the detailed proposals over 18 months, and then follows a second grant application to the HLF. It's a long process but the end result will be very worthwhile. Very briefly the money will be used to: restore the avenues of trees (some of which are infected with disease); landscape the area around Wolfe Statue; build a new learning centre for schools and community use in the Nursery Yard; improve catering facilities; improve water quality in the boating lake and Flower Garden Lake using our new borehole supply; offer new opportunities for work experience placements and apprentices; and introduce a mobility scheme to help visitors up and down that hill and some great new interpretation to tell the story of this most historic of Royal Parks.

Greenwich Park Revealed is not the only bit of news you may have heard on the grapevine. Our friends at the London Marathon are initiating a new event, The Big Half, next year. It is intended to be a community event starting in Tower Hamlets and finishing at the Cutty Sark. Following the run there will be a community festival on the Queens Field in Greenwich Park. Details are still being finalised but the emphasis will be on the local community and healthy living. There will be a food festival, local sports club demonstrations and local musicians performing. The Big Half is on 4 March and the community festival will run from 12.00pm – 4.00pm.

Some of you may have seen Bubble Theatre's promenade production of the Arabian Nights. It is the first time for some years that we have staged a theatre production in the Park and I must say that I enjoyed it and would like to see more. Shakespeare is always good or a children's production maybe. That's the thing about working here; you never know what is coming next.

Our festival of music in the Park attracts record crowds

We organised and funded twelve free bandstand concerts over the summer. Once again, the weather was kind to us, with most concerts taking place in fine sunshine and none being cancelled or interrupted by rain.

The concerts attracted even larger audiences than last year. This was partly a reflection of people now being aware that there are concerts at the Bandstand every Sunday from the end of June until the end of August. The season concluded with an innovative and very successful concert on Bank Holiday Monday.

One welcome consequence of these concerts has been the number of new members who join the Friends on the day, expressing their appreciation of the contribution the events make towards their enjoyment of the Park.

We expect to arrange a similar festival next summer, including our traditional Mid-Summer Jazz concert in the Observatory Garden. Further information will be in our spring newsletter.

Photo: Roger Stevens

Painted Hall Ceiling Tour

Readers will know that the ceiling of the Painted Hall of the Old Royal Naval College, the Baroque masterpiece executed by Sir James Thornhill between 1707 and 1726, is currently undergoing a complete restoration thanks to a substantial Heritage Lottery Fund award and fundraising efforts. Tours on an observation platform 60 feet above ground to see the ongoing work up close have been taking place earlier this year. After a short closure, the next phase of this conservation work has recently resumed. We have been offered a special tour for the Friends which will be presented by lead conservator, Sophie Stewart, who will take us through the work and the discoveries made as this has progressed. This event, lasting about 50 minutes, will take place on Tuesday 9 January 2018 at 3pm. The tour costs £12. Please book early as places are limited.

A booking form is enclosed.

Please help us to help you

On 24 October 13 people turned up, as they thought, for a Fungus Foray. However, this had been postponed due to unforeseen circumstances. Had they been on our emailing system they would have been informed about this change. Twelve people, who had received the email, turned up on the changed day.

The process is EASY! First, you'll need your membership number (on your membership card).

Then go to *www.friendsofgreenwichpark.org.uk* and scroll down to the bottom of this first screen.

Enter your name in the section 'Subscribe to our email News Bulletin'.

Add your membership number, your email address and the number given for you to copy and click on 'Subscribe'. DONE!

Please do it. This is not because we are planning to replace the paper newsletter but just to improve our communications with you between newsletters.

Annual Lecture 2018
'Our World Heritage: A UK and International Perspective'

Peter Marsden, Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site Co-ordinator, will speak about World Heritage from a broad international and national perspective, what it means and why it is important for all of us, how World Heritage is managed and some of the key challenges for the future. He will also showcase Maritime Greenwich, one of the UK's foremost World Heritage Sites.

Peter is a former Head of World Heritage at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, advising Ministers on UK policy and working closely with UNESCO. Whilst at the DCMS, Peter also worked on Free Access to the National Museums and Galleries, Historic Ships Policy for the UK and liaison with the Royal Household on ceremonial issues, Historic Royal Palaces and The Royal Parks. During a lengthy Civil Service career, Peter held posts at the Tate, the Imperial War Museum, Treasury and Customs and Excise. He is currently a Trustee of ICOMOS-UK, an independent charity with a mission to promote and support best practice in the conservation, care and understanding of cultural heritage in the UK and worldwide. Peter is also Trustee of a local community care scheme, FiSH (Friendship, Independence, Support and Help) based in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames.

The lecture is on Wednesday evening 7 March 2018 at the University of Greenwich. For full details see right hand column. A booking form is enclosed.

Christmas trees: 10 per cent discount offer for Friends

This year Capital Christmas Trees will be providing the trees for sale in The Royal Parks. The Greenwich Park store, with a large range of trees to choose from, will be situated as usual close to the Blackheath Gate for the weekend of 18/19 November and then daily from 25 November to 20 December from 8am to 6pm.

Just present your membership card when making your payment to get discount on your total purchase.

Other local discounts

This is a good opportunity to remind readers of discounts generously offered to the Friends by local businesses. These include:

Catering outlets in the Park - 15% discount on food and drink

Waterstones Greenwich (this branch only) - 10% discount on all merchandise unless already discounted

Cafe Rouge Greenwich (Ibis Hotel branch) - 20% discount on food and drink on Monday to Friday all day and Saturday/Sunday lunchtime only

Davy's Wineshop - 10% discount excluding other offers

Blackheath Eyecare (Old Dover Road) - 20% discount on second pair of complete spectacles

Greenwich Baby (Greenwich Market) - 10% discount on any purchase.

Make sure you have your membership card with you. See the website for any new offers or updates.

Friends of Greenwich Park

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Wildlife Group: Sue Yates, 34 Hyde Vale, London SE10 8QH Tel: 020 8692 1760
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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

'Drop in' at the Wildlife Centre*
Sat 25 November 1pm – 3pm

The 10k MoRun
Sun 26 November 10am

History Group meeting at the Wildlife Centre*
Fri 1 December 11am
Everyone welcome

Greenwich Park 10K run
Sun 3 December 9.30am

Run through Greenwich
Sun 17 December 10am

'Drop in' at the Wildlife Centre*
Sat 23 December 1pm – 3pm

Greenwich Park 10K run
Sun 7 January 9.30am

Painted Hall Ceiling Tour
Tues 9 January 3pm
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'Drop in' at the Wildlife Centre*
Sat 27 January 1pm – 3pm

'Drop in' at the Wildlife Centre*
Sat 24 February 1pm – 3pm

The Friends' Annual Lecture 2018
Booking now
Weds 7 March 7.30pm for 8pm
King William Building
University of Greenwich
Talk by Peter Marsden, Greenwich World Heritage Site Co-ordinator
Tickets £10 to include a glass of wine from Friends of Greenwich Park, 52 Greenwich Park Street, SE10 9LT. Tel 020 8853 2150. Cheques payable to Friends of Greenwich Park, with sae.

*** 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

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