FRIENDS OF GREENWICH PARK

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2018 Registered Charity No: 1029933 Number 78

A view for all seasons

Lottery money for the Park

We were delighted to learn at the beginning of the year that The Royal Parks' bid to the Heritage Lottery/Big Lottery funds for initial development funding for the Greenwich Park Revealed project had been successful. As Graham Dear tells us on page 3, this is the first major hurdle cleared which will now allow detailed proposals to be worked up for the second stage submission in 18 months time, which we fervently hope will secure the full £4.8million award. This will enable The Royal Parks to conserve and improve the Grade1 listed landscape for its future millions of visitors. The investment will help:

- revive key historical features
- provide community projects and learning opportunities
- make the Park more sustainable and fit for the future.
- enhance the natural landscape
- improve visitor facilities

Congratulations to Graham Dear and all his Royal Parks colleagues and others involved in the project on securing this initial funding award. We and other local stakeholders will continue to be consulted and involved during this next stage. We shall keep you up to date on progress.

Wildlife Notes by Sue Yates

The Queen's Orchard

Only volunteers could get into the Orchard in winter but with the spring all that changes. From Easter, Dorothy Love, who has presided over this lovely garden so successfully for two seasons now, will be returning and people can visit whenever she is there, namely from Wednesday to Sunday. Because the area is enclosed and there are two ponds, the gate is locked whenever it is unstaffed. There are now many volunteers but if you feel tempted to join them, pop in while Dorothy is there and discuss it with her.

At the various Harvest Festivals funds have been raised from donations and selling the organic produce including the Orchard honey. The money is used to improve the equipment and facilities. The latest purchase, a worm composter, will be arriving shortly to stand beside the regular compost bins. The kit includes a sack full of worms to launch the system and you are invited to come and meet them. We don't know exactly when it will arrive, so keep an eye on the Friends' website and notice boards for more information.

This year again there will be a World War One vegetable bed. The Royal Parks have researched the varieties that were available and the timing of planting. This is part of a larger project across all the Royal Parks which includes researching gardeners who went off to war and tracing their descendants. The History Group has been heavily involved in this.

Christine Sheffield continues to look after her two beehives at the far end of the Orchard. They came through the winter and will continue to fertilise the vegetables and produce delicious honey, which you can sample at the Drop-ins.

We say goodbye to Clyo Parecchini, who ran the lovely blog on the Orchard, as she is moving out of the area. She has always been a very enthusiastic and imaginative supporter of the Orchard and will be much missed.

The Orchard opening times are Wednesday to Friday 12.30 – 4.45pm; and Saturday and Sunday 10.30am – 4.45pm (closed for lunch 12.30 – 1.30pm).

The Birds of Greenwich Park

You may not be aware of the supporting booklets on this subject. First, there is a collection of booklets recording the birds of all the Royal Parks from 1939 through to the 1980s. They are beautifully illustrated and are interesting historical documents that were given to the Friends by John Burton who contributed to the early volumes on Greenwich Park as a schoolboy observer. For safety they are kept in the Blackheath Gate office but we will have them on display at the next Drop-in on 31 March.

More recently, the Greenwich Park Bird Recording Group, together with Joseph Beale and Patricia Brown as editors, compiled The Birds of Greenwich Park 1996-2011. The Friends paid for its printing and it is available free of charge from the park office and the Drop-ins.

Joseph is now working on an updated and enhanced document. He says "We want it to be a concise reference work for the Park's birds, not just a checklist. It is intended not only to cover 1996-2017 bird records, but give an overview of the Park's wildlife habitats, changing seasons with regard to birds, standard bird counts, historical bird records and bird migration. It sounds like a lot but each of those will be fairly concise. The aim is for it to be something people can take home and keep for reference or bring to the Park if they want to look for birds. This should broaden its appeal and lengthen its lifespan." The Friends will again pay for the printing and so the document will be available free. There will be more information about it in the next newsletter.

To further enhance your birding experience, there are bird walks shown in the events diary led by Julia Holland and Joseph Beale. We may be able to squeeze one in on Sunday 6 May to coincide with the International Dawn Chorus Day on the Monday. Please watch the website and notice boards for further details.

Mistle Thrush: Joe Beale

Painted Hall ceiling tour

This event was considerably oversubscribed but, thanks to Teresa O'Flynn the Conservation Administrator, we were able to accommodate everyone in three separate sessions. An introductory talk by our guide in front of the magnificent west wall took us through how Sir James Thornhill conceived and executed the scheme in the early eighteenth century, adapting it in response to the changing politics of the time.

Then came the 60 foot climb up to the observation platform to meet the conservator Stefania hard at work cleaning the vast ceiling. It was last treated in the late 1950s when old varnish was removed with quite strong solutions and two new layers applied to enhance the colours. Since then smoke and dirt has built up and heat and humidity have taken their toll. Stephania showed how the current cleaning process involves gently applying a soft pad to the ceiling, using a water based solution to remove the grime and then sponging it to clear any residue. A pail full of dirty black liquid was produced in evidence of her morning's work. She stressed that although the earlier varnish is not being removed and replaced where it is generally in good condition, there are serious problem areas where varnish cracking and lifting - or 'blanching' - needs to be dealt with and a new modern varnish applied. As she demonstrated, this can be better identified nowadays using UV light. After she had dealt with all our questions, we then had the opportunity to look round the whole ceiling with our guide pointing out its focal historical and allegorical figures and features.

This was a fascinating and informative experience and a unique opportunity to see the work in progress. The general ceiling tours will continue until this September when the cleaning finishes and the scaffolding comes down. If you would like to take advantage of visiting during the last few months, g*o to www.ornc.org/paintedhall* for information and booking.

THE VIEW from the Park

Graham Dear, Park Manager

I hope every one of the Friends has now heard about the success of the Greenwich Park Revealed round 1 bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund/Big Lottery Fund 'Parks for People' grant application. We have been awarded development funding to help us prepare a round 2 grant application in August 2019. It is a huge milestone for the project but we are not there yet. There is a lot of hard work, consultation and decision making ahead as we shape the project over the next eighteen months.

We will continue to work closely with the Friends committee and I am pleased to have the chair, Liz Coyle, as part of the decision making project board alongside two Royal Parks Directors and two Trustees. At the moment it is a slow burn as consultants are appointed and temporary staff recruited to assist with developing the proposals, but more information will be forthcoming for the next newsletter.

One project that is going ahead this spring is the planting of one of the lost historic tree avenue features in the Park. The 'Brazen Face Circle' was a roundel of trees half way down The Avenue. Most of the roundel location is now covered in an expanse of tarmac and some of this will be removed so that the newly planted Lime trees will sit in turf. On the eastern side of The Avenue a small amount of tarmac will also be removed which will allow us to gap up some of the avenue trees which are currently incomplete. This will also remove tarmac from around the base of some existing Limes. Something that looks most unattractive.

In 2016 we installed a temporary catering kiosk in the Flower Garden to test the business case and visitor reaction. Financially it went well and the public reaction was overwhelmingly positive. There will shortly be a further trial, for a two year period, as we test the business case to convert Vanbrugh Lodge into a cafe as part of the Greenwich Park Revealed project. This would provide an alternative to the Pavilion Cafe for locals.

Another project that won't have gone unnoticed is the inaugural London Marathon 'Big Half' which took place on Sunday 4 March and terminated in a community festival on the Queens Field. The severe weather hampered preparations but on the day 11,500 runners enjoyed the event and attended the festival site in the Park. Once the event overlay was removed it was reassuring to see that the turf had not suffered unduly and our gardeners were straight on it to undertake minor repairs.

The London Marathon are good partners to work with and as well as locating the start of the world's greatest marathon in the Park, the London Marathon have contributed financially to it through their charitable arm. They have funded both the resurfacing of the tennis courts and the refurbishment of the cricket pavilion in recent years. Their generosity does not extend to letting The Royal Parks win our annual cricket match however; they are 2 to 1 up. We play again on 15 June, so here's hoping.

Annual lecture

This year's Annual Lecture was given on 7 March by Peter Marsden, Co-ordinator for Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site. Peter is the former Head of World Heritage at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, advising Ministers on UK policy and working closely with UNESCO. He opened his lecture by noting that World Heritage was a strange concept and one that was much broader than generally appreciated. Those of us in his audience who tended to think it was mainly about sites in beautiful European cities soon had our horizons extended as Peter showed us examples of the extraordinary sites that UNESCO has designated.

There are over 1000 of them, spread across 160 countries. Of course, we knew about Greenwich, we could guess that Venice would be included; but how many of us would have known about the Wadden Sea, a vast area of wetlands and tidal flats shared by Germany, the Netherlands and Denmark? Sydney Opera House, yes; but also in Australia 11 penal sites that held some of the 160,000 convicts transported to Australia over a period of 80 years in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries? And what about Asmara, the capital of Eritrea, where examples of Italian colonial architecture abound?

World Heritage, in fact, was about cultural, natural and mixed sites; about innovative architecture, ideas and history, and not simply about lovely European cities. It all started in 1972 when UNESCO adopted the World Heritage Convention. The triggers for it are to be found in the 1960s when the construction of the Aswan Dam threatened the ancient monuments of Abu Simbel and the unprecedented 'acqua alta' of 1966 submerged Venice.

Competition between countries to have a site 'inscribed' is intense. Submissions take years to prepare and only one cultural and one natural site per country may be proposed. In July each year the Committee of States Parties meets in a selected city anywhere in the world to decide, from the shortlist of 40 submissions, which site should be included on the World Heritage List. In 2017, 26 new sites were added (including the English Lake District which became the UK's 31st World Heritage Site).

Nothing, of course, stands still. All sites need to be protected and maintained. They need money, perhaps legislation, certainly a 'duty of care' from the authorities. And that is not always forthcoming. Liverpool, for example, is at risk of being de-listed because of an unsympathetic 30 year plan for developing its waterfront.

This was a fascinating lecture, beautifully illustrated and delivered with authority and wit.

For more information about World Heritage, go to www.whc.unesco.org. For details about Greenwich as a World Heritage Site, go to www.greenwichworldheritage.org

Friends' Festival of Music in the Park

We have another terrific festival of concerts lined up for this summer, all of which are organised by, and paid for, by the Friends.

The Phoenix Dixieland Jazz Band is back for our Mid-summer Jazz Concert

Our renowned Midsummer Jazz Concert takes place on Sunday 17 June. The Phoenix Dixieland Jazz Band will again be bringing their brilliant New Orleans bounce to the charming and enclosed Observatory Garden. They will be supported by the talented local youngsters of the Greenwich Steel Band.

The Garden will open at noon, with the concert beginning at 12.30pm and ending 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. Just a reminder that seating is not available in the Garden, so do bring a rug or chair if you don't want to sit directly on the grass. Please note that dogs (apart from guide dogs) are not permitted in the Garden.

This is an event for the whole family. Tickets booked in advance are £5, with under-16s free. (Tickets on the gate, if any are still available for this popular event, will be £7.)

A booking form is enclosed. Tickets are also available online at www.friendsofgreenwichpark.org.uk

Twelve Bandstand concerts this summer

We are once again staging our hugely popular series of free concerts at the Bandstand, which will take place on every Sunday from 24 June to 26 August. In addition, to start us off, there will be a Saturday concert on 23 June and, to bring the series to a close, we are repeating last year's very successful Bank Holiday concert on Monday 27 August. Concerts normally start at 3pm and end at 5pm.

Once again, we are featuring bands covering a wide range of musical styles. See the full programme on the flyer also enclosed with this newsletter.

Friends AGM is on Monday, 23 April 2018

The 26th AGM takes place on Monday, 23 April 2018 at 7.30 for 8pm in the Howe Lecture Theatre, University of Greenwich, 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
Lesley Jones stands for election.

Jonathan Chandler stands for re-election.

Tony Butler, Tina Challacombe, Clive Corlett, Sophie Spencer, Brian Starkey and Sue Yates 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.

Changes to Park Regulations

The Royal Parks would like to hear your views on some proposed amendments to The Royal Parks Regulations. The full consultation paper can be found on their website *www.royalparks.org.uk* under "What's On", "Latest News", "Consultations". In summary, the suggested amendments include:

- The introduction of a 20mph speed limit for motor vehicles in Hyde Park, The Regent's Park, St James's Park and The Green Park. This does not affect Greenwich Park as the speed limit here is already 20mph.

- An increase in parking charges in all public car parks in Hyde Park, The Regent's Park and Greenwich Park. In Greenwich Park the proposal is to raise the current 15 minute charge, Monday to Saturday, from 30p to 35p, and from 30p on Sundays and Bank Holidays to 60p per 15 minutes.

- The introduction of ticketless and cashless payments for car parking, with the removal of an option to pay by cash.

- Further amendments are being made to clarify the intention of some existing regulations, for instance to make it explicit that drones are prohibited outside designated areas without written permission, and that barbecues and fireworks are not allowed to be lit in the Royal Parks without written permission.

If you wish to comment, feedback can be given by emailing: consultation@royalparks.org.uk or by writing to *Consultation - Regulations Review, The Royal Parks, The Old Police House, Hyde Park, London W2 2UH*. Comments must be received by Thursday 12 April 2018. You may also send your comments to the Secretary of the Friends of Greenwich Park – Christine Bevan, 52 Greenwich Park Street, London SE10 9LT, christinebevan@ntlworld.com.

Any change to The Royal Parks Regulations requires Parliamentary consent and will be subject to the pressures of the Parliamentary timetable.

While the Friends' committee has no problem with most of these amendments, we intend to object to the proposals to double the charge for Sunday and bank holiday parking, which we feel is against the spirit of the HLF bid with its emphasis on reaching out to the local community; and to remove the facility to pay for parking with cash, an option still available across the borough. Our full response will be posted on the website.

Friends of Greenwich Park

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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

Bird Walk: meet at the Blackheath Gate
Sun 25 March 8.30am

'Drop In' at the Wildlife Centre*
Sat 31 March 1pm – 4pm

London Marathon
Sun 22 April

Annual General Meeting
Mon 23 April
(Members only)
Queen Anne Building, University of Greenwich. 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 28 April 1pm – 4pm

Bird Walk: meet at the Blackheath Gate
On behalf of the London Natural History Society and the Friends
Sat 26 May 8.30am

'Drop In' at the Wildlife Centre*
Sat 26 May 1pm - 4pm

Meeting of the History Group in the Wildlife Centre*
Fri 1 June 11am
Parking permits available from the office if needed.

Jazz in the Park **Booking now**
Sun 17 June
Tickets from Friends of Greenwich Park, 52 Greenwich Park Street, SE10 9LT. Tel 020 8853 2150. Cheques payable to Friends of Greenwich Park. For online booking see page 3.

'Drop In' at the Wildlife Centre*
Sat 30 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.

A weather-worn General Wolfe looks forward to his annual clean

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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