FRIENDS OF GREENWICH PARK
NEWSLETTER

Winter 2018 Registered Charity No: 1029933 Number 80

New heights for General Wolfe....

The Open Day at the Queen's Orchard

In the past the date of the opening of the Queen's Orchard has been determined by The Royal Parks, with a Harvest Festival event moving round from one park to another week by week. Last year this resulted in 'our turn' being at the end of September. Plants and vegetables were certainly past their best by then and so the team at Greenwich decided an earlier date was essential to show off the Orchard at its best. By calling it an Open Day we could have a date of our own choosing.

The decision paid off. The weather was glorious with flowers and vegetables tumbling everywhere. The Orchard had never looked better. A lot of work goes in to having everything ready and, in addition, some 75 hours of volunteers' time went into the day itself. The long lavender bed had yielded baskets of flowers which the volunteers had packaged into fragrant sachets; lots of the vegetable crop, gathered that morning, was available for donations; and Christine Sheffield, the Orchard beekeeper, had jars of her wonderful honey for sale. Visitors could

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guess the weight of one of the pumpkins (harder than it looked) while the younger ones were helped to pond dip by the Field Studies Council. Camilla Goddard of Capital Bees worked with Christine to help young visitors make beeswax candles, while the craft team from Ginger Cat were kept busy all day. There were also sheets of recipes with ideas for lovely things to make with the produce.

The donations go towards equipment for the Orchard. Last year's donations paid for a worm composting system, which survived the summer heat and is now thriving, producing both organic compost and liquid feed.

No doubt the nearly 1,000 visitors enjoyed their time and you might like to note that the event next year is already pencilled in for 1 September 2019.

The Queen's Orchard is now closed to the public until Easter.

Park People

This and future Newsletters will feature interviews with some of the many people who work to keep our Park such a beautiful place.

Michael Loughnane – Assistant Park Manager

Michael is responsible, under Manager Graham Dear, for all the day-to-day upkeep and operations within the Park – the gardens, the trees, the grassland (what he calls the "soft" elements) and the "hard" infrastructure, such as the buildings, walls, roads, paths and benches. To do this, he oversees the Park's main contractor, Gavin Jones Ltd, who employ a permanent staff of 21, with additional part-timers in the busy periods. His "customers" are the four and a half million of us who visit the Park every year.

What is a typical day like? "I leave home in Sevenoaks and arrive at the Park at 7am. My first task is to deal with in-coming emails and any outstanding correspondence from the previous day. I then do my morning walk around the Park to check on all the work that is going on, speaking to the gardeners, the ground-staff and the vehicle drivers, checking on the litter collection, and generally looking for things that need attention. On getting back to the office at around 9.30am, the rest of the morning will include meetings with contractors, sorting out contracts, ordering materials and replying to correspondence. The early afternoon tends to be more meetings (including, from time to time, meeting with the Friends' committee). I then go on my afternoon walk around the Park, again checking on how all the scheduled work is going and speaking to the staff. I may finish the day with a meeting with Graham, so we can catch up with any major issues."

Michael comes from a farming community in Kilkenny, in Ireland. He moved to London as a young man, where he worked for local authorities for about 30 years on parks and other open spaces. In 2010, he was appointed Assistant Manager here – a job which he describes as "the most wonderful I could wish for – the beautiful Park, and the lovely colleagues and volunteers."

What is his favourite place in the Park? "One Tree Hill, the best view and the peace."

If he could go back in time in the Park, when would he have most liked to have been here? "Definitely in the early part of the nineteenth century. That was when the Victorian plant-hunters were roaming the world and bringing back all sorts of wonderful plants that we have here today."

Finally, what has been his biggest challenge in the Park? "No question about it – the Queen's Orchard, when we had to transform an overgrown, unloved and forgotten area into the fine orchard and garden that now provides so much pleasure."

Wildlife Notes by Sue Yates

The Fungus Foray

It has been a long dry summer and with the thin soil and gravel of Greenwich Park, it was always going to be a sparse year for fungus. Anne Andrews and a group of ten Friends gathered at the meeting point in late October. Anne had visited a much more promising site in a moist wooded area out in Kent the previous day and, before we set off, she showed us pots with labelled samples she had found there. She had already surveyed the likely areas in the Park and the group moved off into the Nature Trail which, being more shaded, proved interesting, with some beefsteak fungus growing from dead wood.

Anne has very generously been leading Fungus Forays in the Park for the Friends for over 20 years. She has been brilliant at finding larger and more elusive specimens and awakening everyone's interest. Precise identification is a very skilled talent and she has inspired many of us over the years. Anne has decided that she will step down after this year's foray and so the Friends committee would like to say an enormous thank you to her for the many hours she has given to the Park, not only in guiding the forays but also in carrying out surveys for us.

THE VIEW from the Park

Graham Dear, Park Manager

Some people measure out their lives in coffee spoons, but for me it is spring and summer bedding. The gardeners, ably marshalled by ex-apprentice Frankie, have just completed the spring bedding in the Flower Garden. This year the pansies and primula have come in rather small, so I am afraid the popular selling of excess bedding will not go ahead; there's nothing left and the few spares we have we will hold on to in case of losses.

The mild wet spell we have had this autumn has been something of a bonus for fungi. Although I do a bit of foraying myself, I had never considered Greenwich Park to be a good fungi site. That opinion has changed since we commissioned experts Geoffrey Kibby and Andy Overall to survey the Park as part of the Greenwich Park Revealed project. Andy has turned up several records new to this part of London. He also ran a fungi identification training session which was well attended and enjoyed by all.

The fungi survey follows on from a study of the lichens on the park walls and bat surveys undertaken in the summer. This information will give us a baseline against which we can measure changes in biodiversity over time and the effectiveness of any management undertaken to enhance wildlife in the Park.

Research is not just confined to wildlife though. Archaeologist Graham Keevill is undertaking an investigation of the construction of the Giant Steps below Wolfe Statue. This historic landscape feature, which dates from the early 1660s, is unique to Greenwich Park and was part of Charles II's restoration of the Park. Graham's research will form part of a report to Historic England on the history of the Giant Steps and how to manage the feature in the future.

Funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) is paying for additional staff to assist with the preparation of our round 2 bid in August 2019. Former Hyde Park gardening apprentice, Adam Stoter, has joined Assistant Park Manager, Michael Loughnane, in the park office as a Technical Assistant. Sean Morris, who worked on the Brompton Cemetery HLF project for The Royal Parks, is working three days a week with myself and Head of Landscape Jane Pelly, as an Assistant Project Manager; and Helen Wallis started in October as a Partnership and Community Engagement Officer for the project. Helen joins us from London Wildlife Trust where she ran an HLF training programme for wildlife volunteers.

Over the coming months our new colleagues will pleased to meet and talk to you at open days in the Park as we formulate and consult on the proposals for the project.

One exciting milestone for us has been the appointment of architects, Architype, for the proposed new Learning Centre which is to be built in the Nursery Yard. The tender process attracted 47 applications from talented and experienced practices across the country and we are delighted to have appointed Architype for this prestigious project. We are very much at the start of the design journey for the Centre and we very much look forward to having your input to the proposals. Please look at the public consultation event dates below.

From the new PACE officer, Helen Wallis

As Graham Dear mentions, I have been recruited as part of the Greenwich Park Revealed project. Before coming to The Royal Parks, I worked at London Wildlife Trust for 11 years, in a range of roles including supporting volunteers, leading practical habitat management sessions and training conservation trainees.

My role as Partnership and Community Engagement (PACE) Officer is to consult park users and local communities about Greenwich Park Revealed and develop pilot programmes for the project. We have identified four main themes that we want to cover: biodiversity enhancements and tree replacement; volunteering and training opportunities; landscape restoration; and the Learning Centre.

We will be holding public consultations in the Park to discuss these themes during the spring half term and Easter holiday next year as follows:

- Thursday 21 February
- Sunday 24 February
- Thursday 11April
- Sunday 14 April

This consultation process includes surveying existing and potential volunteers about our new volunteering opportunities. These include researchers for new talks and walks, gardening, mobility drivers, education, community archaeology and Park Ambassadors to meet and greet visitors and give them information about the Park. If you want to share your views on volunteering at Greenwich Park or might be interested in the new volunteering possibilities, you can complete a short survey online or you can pick up a hard copy at the Park Office. Just follow the link on *www.friendsofgreenwichpark.org.uk.*

If you would like to know more about Greenwich Park Revealed, please don't hesitate to email me on *hwallis@royalparks.org.uk,* call me on 07817 882 135 or better still, drop in and say "Hello" if you are in the Park during the week. I'm based in Greenwich Park Office.

New caterers for the Park

Following a competitive tender, the contract for providing catering in the Park for the next two years was awarded to Benugo who took over early this month. Benugo are not unfamiliar with The Royal Parks and Greenwich Park in particular, as they currently operate both in Hyde, St James' and Regent's Park, as well as providing the catering for the Royal Observatory, the Cutty Sark and the National Maritime Museum. They have introduced new breakfast and main meal menus, including special menus for children, which will change on a seasonal basis. Do drop in to see and try what is on offer.

Members will be very pleased to learn that Benugo are offering the Friends a 25% discount on all purchases of food and drink (except alcohol) in the Park's cafés and kiosks. You will, of course, need to show your current membership card when paying in order to benefit from this reduction.

We wish Benugo a warm welcome.

Annual Lecture 2019
'The Painted Hall at Greenwich: Conserving a Masterpiece'

In September 2016 the Greenwich Foundation embarked on one of the most complex and challenging painting conservation projects in Europe. The aim was to clean and conserve 40,000 sq ft of Sir James Thornhill's magnificent decorated interior of the Painted Hall, at the heart of the Old Royal Naval College. The project, due for completion early in 2019, has included an ambitious public access component, with the huge Lower Hall scaffolding open to visitors to allow a close encounter both with Thornhill's work and with the conservators charged with rejuvenating the damaged surface. In this talk William Palin will discuss this landmark project.

William Palin is Conservation Director at the Old Royal Naval College at Greenwich. He is an architectural writer and historian, working previously as exhibitions curator at Sir John Soane's Museum and as Director of SAVE Britain's Heritage. He lives in London and Sheerness, Kent. He is a trustee of the Ancient Monuments Society and chair of the Sheerness Dockyard Preservation Trust.

The lecture is on Wednesday evening 23 January 2019 at the University of Greenwich. For full details see right hand column. A booking form is enclosed.

The Friends' Festival of Music

Our annual Midsummer Jazz concert will be held next year on Sunday 16 June in the Observatory Garden, again featuring the Phoenix Dixieland Jazz Band, with support.

Twelve Bandstand concerts

Galaxy Big Band

We will be again staging our hugely popular series of free concerts at the Bandstand, which will take place every Sunday from 23 June to 25 August. In addition, to start us off, there will be a Saturday concert on 22 June, featuring young local musicians, and, to bring the series to a close, we will hold a Bank Holiday concert on Monday 26 August.

Further details of all concerts, together with booking arrangements for the Midsummer Jazz Concert, will appear in our spring Newsletter.

Christmas trees – 10% discount

Capital Trees will again be providing trees for sale in the outer Royal Parks. The Greenwich store will have a large range of trees to choose from including Nordman, Noble and Fraser firs. It will be situated as usual close to the Blackheath Gate and open daily from Wednesday 28 November to Saturday 22 December from 8am to 5.45pm. A selection of stands, lights, decorations and wreaths will also be on sale.

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

Dates for Your Diary

History Group meeting at the Wildlife Centre*
Fri 7 December 11am
Everyone welcome. Parking permits from the office if needed.

Greenwich Park 5 and 10K run
Sun 9 December 9.30am

Run through Greenwich Park
Sat 22 December 10am

'Drop in' at the Wildlife Centre*
Sat 22 December 1pm – 3pm

Bird Walk: meet at the Blackheath Gate
Sun 30 December 8.30am
Free. Binoculars helpful.

Run through Greenwich Park
Sat 19 January 10am

The Friends' Annual Lecture 2019
Booking now
Wed 23 January 7.30pm for 8pm
Queen Anne Building,
University of Greenwich
Talk by William Palin, Conservation Director at the Old Royal Naval College
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. Tickets also available online at *www.friendsofgreenwichpark.org.uk.*

'Drop in' at the Wildlife Centre*
Sat 26 January 1pm – 3pm

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

'Drop in' at the Wildlife Centre*
Sat 30 March 1pm – 3pm

*** 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.

Friends of Greenwich Park

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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.

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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