FRIENDS OF GREENWICH PARK

NEWSLETTER

Summer 2022 Registered Charity No: 1029933 Number 91

GREENWICH PARK REVEALED - WE WILL SOON SEE PROGRESS

The Greenwich Park Revealed Team writes as follows:

THE ROYAL PARKS EMBARKS ON RESTORATION TO SAVE GREENWICH PARK'S LOST 17TH CENTURY LANDSCAPE

The charity will carry out a restoration project to return the park to its original splendour and will simultaneously restore the declining tree avenues, which frame the view from the Queen's House, with new, more resilient trees.

The symmetrical layout frames the view from the Queen's House and comprises 'The Grand Ascent,' (the giant grass steps on the hill leading up to the Royal Observatory), and formal terracing (parterre banks), lined with tree avenues.

But today the landscape is severely threatened by erosion.

The current tree avenues framing the view from the Queen's House are declining. They were planted with Turkey oak trees in the 1970s and are poor quality and damaged. They are often host to pests such as Oak Processionary Moth and Knopper Gall. Many Turkey oak trees have already died, leaving incomplete avenues.

The declining Turkey oak trees, and a small number of badly-damaged beech trees, will be expertly removed. A total of 87 trees will be removed from the 'parterre' avenues in carefully-managed phases over three years. Wood from the removed trees will be retained in the park to support wildlife. All mature trees planted before 1970 will remain.

At the same time, the charity will plant 92 new, more resilient, semi-mature trees along the 'parterre' tree avenues, resulting in a net gain of five parterre avenue trees. Flowering, nectar-rich lime trees and elm trees will provide long-term wildlife benefit. Approximately 2,000 new native, diverse and wildlife-friendly trees and shrubs will be planted across the wider park in habitat enhancement work. Simultaneously, the landscape restoration will revive the original 17th century features and expand valuable acid grassland habitats.

Graham Dear, Greenwich Park Manager, said: *"This Park is all about people. Hundreds of years ago, this view was created to please a king. But today we're restoring it for the enjoyment of everyone."*

For more information about the project and to explore a digital exhibition including a 3D model of the proposals, please visit: www.royalparks.org.uk/gpr To enquire about the project please email: GreenwichParkRevealed@royalparks.org.uk

And if you wish to hear more on any aspect of this work then Graham Dear and Alice Rose Hoile are holding two sessions in the Park on Tuesday, 16 August at 10am and 6pm for 45 minutes each. Meet inside the Park Row Gate entrance just by the Herbaceous Border. No need to book – just turn up.

QUEEN'S ORCHARD

The Volunteers at the Queen's Orchard have been busy all year. Bulbs were planted amongst the fruit trees. Seeds for vegetables, flowers and herbs were sown in trays in the greenhouse and have been planted out into the beds. We have already harvested strawberries from the raised bed by the ornamental pond, as well as cherries from the orchard, although the birds have also had their share. The asparagus has again produced a good harvest but is now being left to regenerate to give a harvest next year. We have recently harvested the onions and are looking forward to runner beans, tomatoes and many other vegetables. Many of our vegetables have had to be netted as the pigeons think we are planting out the seedlings just for their benefit. Some of the lavender plants were replaced with new ones in the spring as they had become large and woody - they are all blooming well and we will be drying the flowers and filling lavender bags. We have a new gardener, Ashley Harrington, who joined us in March and keeps us busy on our volunteer days.

We are holding an Open Day again this year on Sunday 25th September 2022 from 11 am to 2 pm.
Everyone is welcome. *ESME PARTRIDGE*

HISTORY RESEARCH GROUP

The much needed website devoted to the history of Greenwich Park was finally launched at the Friends' AGM in May. Find it at https://greenwichparkhistory.org.uk/ Many articles are now available but work continues on all aspects of Greenwich Park and the surrounding area. If you are interested in the history of the Park why not join us at our "Teams" meetings – the next meetings are at 6.00 pm on Monday 1 August and Monday 3 October. Contact Helen Wallis at info@greenwichpark.org.uk and she will arrange for you to participate. *BARBARA HOLLAND*

WILDLIFE GROUP

It is really hard to think of cooler autumn days when the temperature is around 30 C, but I am pleased to say that we have organised two more Guided Tree Walks led by Monika Dunkel for 16 October - the first at 11.00am and the second at 1.00pm. Hopefully there will be some autumn colour by then - it is often earlier in dry years. **Booking for these walks will open at 10 am on Wednesday 10 August on our website.** We will also run a waiting list, as before, as we have very often been able to accommodate people from that list. We are not charging for these walks so they are restricted to members and only assistance dogs can come along. It is aimed at the adult audience.

The Wildlife Centre: As was said in the last newsletter, work is due to begin here in the autumn as part of Greenwich Park Revealed and we are on notice to remove our equipment from our store room at some point in September. Depending on the exact date there will /won't be a drop-in at the end of September. That will then be the last drop-in of 2022 and we will await the move into the new Learning Centre at some point in 2023 with great excitement. Julie Punter stepped into the breach at the beginning of May to help with the International Dawn Chorus outing, since I had been struck down with Covid. Julia Holland led an extremely successful walk which was very well received by those attending and she continues with the Sunday Morning Bird Walks on the last Sunday of the month (see Dates for your Diary).

SUE YATES

MOBILITY BUGGY

The best-laid plans….. It was just not meant that there would be an easy ride for our mobility buggy. Easter came and went. There were problems with insurance and organising a back-up battery. Then Covid laid low the trainers for the drivers. But after these hiccoughs there is now a much-used buggy in place working with some lovely volunteers at the weekends and with more volunteers it is hoped the buggy will run each day in July and August. Check the Royal Parks website for details.

Friend Ian Powlton with Australian guests Geoff and Marilyn enjoying the ride – photo by Ann Powlton

ANNUAL LECTURE 2022

We were treated to a different view of Greenwich Park by local historian Jonathan Causer – this time a virtual walk around the Park with the emphasis on the people who lived near the Park or who used the park. He spoke about many characters including Ignatius Sancho (a plaque to him is on the Park wall near to Queen Caroline's Bath), Rebecca Schroeter (who lived on the edge of the park and after she was widowed became a close friend of Haydn), and the prostitute, Sarah Prydden usually called Sally Salisbury who, with one of her aristocratic lovers, was found romping naked in the moonlight in the Park! Who knew? Altogether a most enjoyable evening. John has very kindly sent the Friends a booklist which will be of interest to those who would like to know more about these characters and others and you will find it on the Friends website.

SUE YATES

At the Friends'AGM Sue Yates was elected Chair. She has now been diagnosed with cancer and has reluctantly stepped down to concentrate on getting better. We send her all our good wishes. Sue had prepared a letter for all members outlining what the Friends committee does and how members can become involved. It is enclosed with this newsletter.

MUSIC ALL THE WAY

We celebrated the Queen's Platinum Jubilee with a bandstand concert by Tequila Brass, then Midsummer Jazz returned on 26 June to a sell-out audience and our summer of Sunday bandstand concerts continues to 28 August and then on the Bank Holiday Monday, 29 August – do join us – all free and great fun!

Jubilee Concert - cold but enjoyable.

Midsummer Jazz - a perfect day.

Photos by Oliver Ray

VIEW FROM THE PARK – Graham Dear writes:

I am pleased to say that I am back in the role of Park Manager although in truth I never really went away. Now that the Greenwich Park Revealed project is entering the delivery phase I returned to my substantive role as Park Manager on 1 July. Other changes in the Park Office: Adam Stoter, who was a Technical Assistant funded by the GPR project moves on to Central Parks and we welcome Jerome Webb, a former skilled gardener from St James's Park. He is joined by Tom Brown in the new post of Head Gardener. Tom will be well known to some of you as he moves up from the gardening team in the park. You may notice a subtle change to the gardening staff. These are contracted out and have for the past few years been managed by Gavin Jones Ltd. As from 4 August a new contract starts under Idverde. All the current staff will transfer to the new contractor and it should be seamless although you may notice new mowers and vehicles.

Spare a thought for our gardeners who have worked so hard during the dry spring and the heatwave. Keeping on top of the essential watering is tough but can't be missed or we can lose trees that were planted 5-6 years ago!

The other thing that is hard work is collecting the refuse. We have had to resort to using larger wheelie bins to cope with the increasing volume. Be reassured that we are trialling this method and if successful the bins will be enclosed in attractive housings. Our objective is to have the least number of vehicle movements, least amount of manual handling and most efficient means of collecting and recycling waste.

I hope to see some of you in person at the bandstand concerts this summer.

EXCAVATIONS AT THE CHRISTIE ENCLOSURE, GREENWICH PARK – Andrew Mayfield writes:

For our first community dig of 2022 the Greenwich Park Revealed archaeology team hunted for the remains of a series of Observatory structures built in the middle of the Park, near the Roman Temple. Today it is an unassuming quiet spot, but between the 1890s and 1950s it was home to a complex of buildings, linked to the main Observatory site. The first of these was a Pavilion, built in late 1890s on a magnetically quiet point, to measure magnetic variation. This timber building (see pic) had an ornate lead roof and used copper nails throughout as iron would have disrupted the readings! By the 1930s the Pavilion had been decommissioned and a large telescope was added to the site, funded by philanthropist William Johnston Yapp. This impressive building dominated the enclosure until its demolition in the late 1950s. We had photos, maps and some plans for these two buildings, but what survived of the structures beneath the turf? The magnetic pavilion's foundations survived in part just below the surface, but the northern half of the building had been cut by a later toilet pipe and scraped away to fill in other

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parts of the site. Inside the extant part of the foundations were numerous copper floor and roof nails and bits of copper sheeting. We have accurately located the foundations and hope to leave them exposed for future visitors. We had high hopes for finding structural elements of the Yapp telescope building but it had been comprehensively demolished to the very base of the foundations! There were no walls to follow although the wall robber trenches showed up very clearly. The demolition crew had left us something to find, the drains and electrical conduits! These demonstrated the expense and care taken with the services for the building and helped us accurately locate this structure as well. In and amongst the demolition we found numerous clay pipes and Victorian china fragments. We think these have come from the ground scraped around the Yapp building and point to generations of picnickers on this tranquil spot in the Park!
Read our dig blog here https://www.royalparks.org.uk/parks/greenwich-park/things-to-see-and-do/recent-history/magnetic-observatory and keep an eye out for the archaeology team out and about and working at the Old Keeper's Cottage in September for the second community dig of 2022.

Dates for Your Diary - Friends Events

Youth Takeover Day and Music Showcase – Greenwich Park Revealed initiative
Sunday, 13 August *1.00pm – 7.00pm*

Discussion about the Greenwich Park Revealed Project (see front page of this issue)
Tuesday, 16 August *10.00am and 6.00pm*

Family Films in the Park
Mamma Mia
Saturday, 27 August *8.00pm*
Jhoom Baraba Jhoom
Sunday, 28 August *8.00 pm*

"Drop-in"/Family Wildlife Activity Afternoon outside the Wildlife Hut
Saturday, 27 August *1.00pm-4.00pm*

Bird Walk led by Julia Holland: meet at the Blackheath Gate
Sunday, 28 August *8.30 am*

Big Half Marathon
Sunday 5 September

"Drop-in"/Family Wildlife Activity Afternoon: outside the Wildlife Hut (check on the website if this is going ahead)
Saturday, 24 September *1.00pm – 4.00pm*

Bird Walk led by Julia Holland: meet at the Blackheath Gate
Sunday, 25 September *8.30 am*

Queen's Orchard Open Day
Sunday, 25 September *11.00am – 2.00pm*

Guided Tree Walk led by Monika Dunkel: meet inside the Blackheath Gate
Sunday, 16 October *11.00 am*
Guided Tree Walk led by Monika Dunkel: meet inside the Blackheath Gate
Sunday, 16 October *1.00 pm*

NOTE: The two walks above are available only to those members who have booked on the FoGP website

Bird Walk led by Julia Holland: meet at the Blackheath Gate
Sunday, 30 October *8.30 am*
(Note: clocks go back one hour this weekend)

Bird Walk led by Julia Holland: meet at the Blackheath Gate
Sunday, 27 November *8.30 am*

BANDSTAND CONCERTS CONTINUE IN AUGUST
– All run from 3.00pm to 5.00pm:

Shadey Scandals	*7 August*
Phoenix Swing Quartet	*14 August*
Sessions Soul Band	*21 August*
Greenwich Concert Band	*28 August*
Midnight Bluez Band	*29 August*

DON'T FORGET YOUR DISCOUNTS – SEE WEBSITE FOR DETAILS
JUST ADDED: 10 percent off at Boating Lake on presentation of your membership card

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Friends of Greenwich Park
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www.friendsofgreenwichpark.org.uk
Contact the Friends by email at *info@friendsofgreenwichpark.com*

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.

Friends Website: *www.friendsofgreenwichpark.org.uk*

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