FRIENDS OF GREENWICH PARK

NEWSLETTER

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THE PARK'S FUTURE IS CLARE . . .

Clare Lanes hard at work

It's something of a homecoming for our new Park Manager Clare Lanes.

The woman who has taken over from Graham Dear gained a BSc degree in Landscape Management and Horticulture at Greenwich University's Hadlow College at the beginning of her career. She spoke to Clive Corlett about why she applied for the role - at such an exceptionally challenging time.

"I wanted to return to park management, and this was an opportunity to join the Royal Parks, which is recognised as the finest parks organisation in the country," she said. "And Greenwich Park reflected my interest in history, horticulture and nature conservation."

In addition to managing all day-to-day work in the Park, Clare is the "client" for the wide-ranging Greenwich Park Revealed (GPR) project, involving close working with the project team, monitoring progress and liaising with local "stakeholders" such as the National Maritime Museum, local amenity societies and of course the Friends.

During her training Clare spent a year in Australia working on bush regeneration. Back in the UK, her career has involved some 25 years in the landscape industry in the south of England, including for the National Trust and local authorities across Sussex and Kent. Her most recent job involved planning and managing community parklands including wetlands, woodland and grassland on the Hoo Peninsula.

What is a typical day for Clare now? "About a third of my time is spent out in the Park, talking with our gardeners and ground staff and dealing with concessions such as the Café or Tennis that require attention. The rest of the time is meetings connected with the GPR project, line-managing the Parks Team and working with other initiatives and colleagues across The Royal Parks."

What are the immediate challenges? "I'm looking forward to being handed the completed project and then being able to concentrate on bedding in the improvements. I would like to make further improvements in the Park after the GPR project finishes," And what are they? "The first, this coming year, is the renovation of the bandstand. Then there is the rose garden, the dell near the Blackheath gate, the Royal Observatory garden, and the restoration of the grass areas around the Park that have become eroded."

What is Clare's favourite place in the Park? "There are two – the Queen's Orchard and the Royal Observatory garden."

And finally, what does she do when away from work? "I love my garden, where I grow fruit and vegetables which I enjoy cooking. I'm a keen open water swimmer, both regularly in local lakes and in events such as the Henley Swim Festival and the Thames 14km marathon. And I walk my two dogs and try to keep an eye on my two teenage daughters!"

The new approach to One Tree Hill

Easier Approach to One Tree Hil

After some much needed restoration work at the viewpoint which started earlier this year, One Tree Hill has now reopened. One of the best features is that there is a new pathway which provides a more accessible route to the area when approaching from Maze Hill. A new level natural gravel surface has been laid, with the existing brick edges retained and repaired where required.

Alice-Rose Hoile, Landscape Project Manager, writes:

"Two new timber benches on the existing wall and around the tree create a seating area from where to admire the magnificent views across the park to the Royal Observatory, to the Old Royal Naval College and west towards Vanbrugh Castle. A new timber handrail has been added to the existing railings which have received a new coat of paint.

The new approach is lined with etched paving showing the verse about One Tree Hill from Thomas Nicholls's poem 'The Pride of Greenwich' This was originally found by a former editor of this Newsletter, Bill Clarke, and Frances Ward from the Greenwich Local History Library. A new interpretation panel displays J. M. W. Turner's 1809 painting of London from One Tree Hill, which highlights the division between the pastoral, deer-filled park, and the bustling metropolis beyond, This idea of Greenwich Park as a haven – somewhere beyond the city – was often repeated in the Georgian period, and One Tree Hill retains this character. There is still some planting to be done, particularly round the new grass areas and this will probably happen in the autumn. We are particularlypleased that this area will now be more accessible to wheelchair users. There are still a few things to be ironed out but the views are amazing and it is a favourite spot of many of our members.

An amusing footnote comes from Jonathan Ouvry, long-standing Friend, who recalls that in Gilbert and Sullivan's The Sorcerer when Mr Wells is trying to dissuade Lady Sangazure from falling in love with him he says among other things (such as dropping his aitches and eating peas with his knife) "Hate Me! I often roll down One Tree Hill."

Annual Lecture - 17 October

Andrew Mayfield will give the Friends' Annual Lecture on 17 October at 7.30 pm for 8.00 pm at Mycenae House, Mycenae Road, Blackheath, SE3 7SE. Entitled "Community Archaeology in Greenwich Park, findings from the Greenwich Park Revealed project" he will give an overview of what he has found during his time here – the digs have been extremely popular. Tickets are £10 to include a glass of wine and are available online and from Christine Bevan (see enclosed booking form).

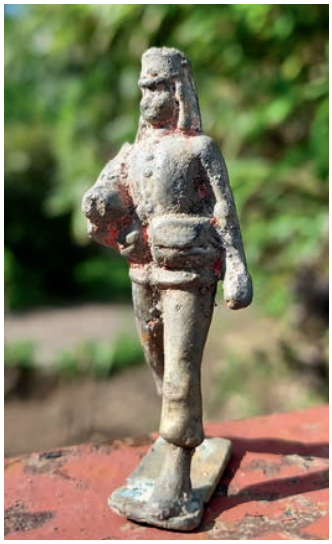
FINDING THE SECRETS OF ONE OF THE WWII AIR RAID SHELTERS

A report from Andrew Mayfield who writes:

Over three weeks in May, Greenwich Park Revealed archaeology volunteers, local schools and first year students from University College London (UCL) worked hard to reveal the secrets of one of the Park's lost air raid shelters.

Wartime aerial photographs hinted at structures on One Tree Hill and a geophysics survey revealed there were buried remains. UCL's Institute of Archaeology had approached us about a collaborative project in the Park and the air raid shelter project was born! Work by the Friends History Research Group found the shelter was built in 1938, while the air photos suggested it was pulled down in 1946. The shelter is one of four in the Park. What survived below ground?

After a lot of very hard digging by the whole team, we exposed the entrance steps, connecting corridors and main corridors of the northeast end of the shelter. Built into the natural gravels, the shelter comprised a brick entrance and reinforced concrete panelled walls. The roof had been ripped off when the site was decommissioned and the interior was backfilled with rubble, including burnt bricks from Blitz damage, a tarmac path, flower pots and even a park bench end. It seemed clear that the Park had used the hole as a useful space to get rid of a variety of rubbish and rubble! We also had a host of very nice small finds. Whole glass bottles, including a marmite jar and nail polish, a Victorian lead soldier, military plates and cups (some with RAF markings) and the concrete posts from the neighbouring barrage balloon base. These finds will form part of a Park finds handling collection in due course. We also researched and excavated elements of a World War II barrage balloon base on One Tree Hill, one of three in the park. We identified the cinder path around one of the balloon huts and two of the tether points for the balloon. These gas-filled balloons were raised as a deterrent to low flying aircraft across the park. This project was a great example of collaborative work between researchers, archaeologists, volunteers and students and has given us a lot more information about how the shelters in the Park were built.



The lead soldier found in the shelter

Work in Progress – What's Next

The Learning Centre: The building works for the new Learning Centre are progressing well. The Centre (pictured) will provide a space for learning and engagement sessions. You might just catch a glimpse of the new building as it takes shape. Paths are now being laid to connect the area to existing pathways. There will be a **new pond** and the GPR team are working on an updated Nature Trail incorporating the woodland between the Flower Garden and the Deer enclosure. Work is also underway to restore the **acid grassland** in the deer park and to plant native wildflowers to support the Park's biodiversity. It is expected that the deer will be coming back next year once the learning centre and café are completed. The old wildlife centre is being refurbished and will be retained to be used in conjunction with the new building. **The Lake in the Flower Garden:** This has now been refilled using bore hole water but the planting is being delayed until the autumn because of the dry weather.
Grand Ascent and Parterre: An archaeological dig will take place from Tuesday 12 September to Saturday 30 September looking for the steps built for Charles II.

Visit to Severndroog Castle,
14 and 28 September – Cream Tea and a Tour of the Castle £24

Susan Taylor has kindly arranged two visits to Severndroog Castle for the Friends of Greenwich Park. Spaces are limited so please book early. Each visit will feature a talk about the origins of the Castle followed by a cream tea. This will be a very enjoyable afternoon – do come along. To attend please book through Susan Taylor - see the enclosed flyer.

Midsummer Jazz opens our concert season in style

An excited audience needed no encouragement when the South Lond on Jazz Orchestra opened a stomping set with the crowd-pleasing Get Happy.

The crowd enjoying the sold out concert
Photo: Oliver Ray

The annual Midsummer Jazz concert on 18 June saw the Royal Observatory Garden packed with music lovers of all ages enjoying another fine performance from the SLJO. Despite the weather forecast the thunderstorms held off while conductor James Keirle led the orchestra through a programme that ranged from Oye Como Va to Let's Face the Music and Dance. The afternoon provided an ideal setting for the audience of some 450 adults and children to enjoy their picnics. the music and (for the adults) the offerings at the Davy's Wineshop bar. There was even a rendition of Happy Birthday for the Friends' Clive Corlett who organises our music events. The concert was again sold out in advance, and at only £5 a ticket it must remain the best-value gig in town. The afternoon ended with singer Georgie Fellows belting out the final number Sing, Sing, Sing. Then the heavens opened and everyone ran for cover.
The proceeds from the Midsummer Jazz help to fund our bandstand concerts, which are now well under way, taking place every Sunday afternoon in July and August and finishing on Bank Holiday Monday. The first, on 2 July, featured another of our old friends, the Sessions Soul Band, playing their driving mixture of disco, soul, rock and contemporary chart material. The following Sunday we were delighted to welcome, for the first time, the talented local youngsters of the Greenwich Youth Band, who treated a large and enthusiastic audience to an excellent concert of popular numbers from films, musicals and classic jazz standards.

Singer Georgie Fellows with conductor James Keirle and the South London Jazz Orchestra *Photo: Oliver Ray*

REPORTS FROM THE AGM (AND OTHER NEWS)

New Chair: Meet our new chair Tina Challacombe, who was elected at the Annual General Meeting on 13 June at the West Greenwich Library. Tina is well known to many of you from her career as a GP in Greenwich. She is now retired and can be seen in the park with Daisy her labrador on many mornings.

Park Police : The increased numbers of dogs in the park and the London-wide nuisance of phone-snatching are the issues most concerning our park police, Sergeant John Berry told the AGM. There had also been an article in The Times about the level of crime in Greenwich and Greenwich Park but this had been misleading as it referred to the ward and not the Park itself, where crime is thankfully much lower than the London average.

Green Flag for Greenwich Park – again! The Green Flag is an internationally recognised award administered by Keep Britain Tidy on behalf of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities – it is awarded for excellence in a variety of ways and Greenwich Park scored highly in each category – community engagement, cleanliness, care of a historic site etc.

Sir Alan Bailey and John Gunn: Many members will be sad to hear of the deaths of two of our former chairmen earlier this year: Sir Alan Bailey, 92 and John Gunn, 89. They were both so influential when the Friends were establishing themselves and we certainly owe them a great debt for all their work on our behalf. Their work in response to the proposed privatisation of the Parks (can you imagine!) and later on the response to the Jenkins report was invaluable.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

BANDSTAND CONCERTS
30 July 3 pm – 5 pm: Old Jelly Rollers
6 August 3 pm – 5 pm: KIX Jazz Orchestra
13 August 3 pm – 5 pm: Lewisham Concert Band
20 August 3 pm – 5 pm: Phoenix Swing Quartet
27 August 3 pm – 5 pm: Greenwich Concert Band
28 August 3 pm – 5 pm: Great Cross Country Band

SEVERNDROOG VISIT
14 September 2 pm
Booking essential – see enclosed flyer
28 September 2 pm
Booking essential – see enclosed flyer

BIRD WALKS led by Julia Holland.
Meet inside the Blackheath Gates, FREE,
no need to book.
27 August, 8.30 am
24 September, 8.30 am
29 October, 8.30 am
26 November, 8.30 am

ANNUAL LECTURE- Andrew Mayfield
"Community Archaeology in Greenwich Park"
17 October, booking essential. See enclosed flyer.

ECO ADVENTURES: There are events in the Park throughout August for children accompanied by adults – go to the Royal Parks website and search for Eco Adventures.

Friends of Greenwich Park
Chairman: Tina Challacombe, 101 Mycenae Road, SE3 7RX
Secretary and Newsletter: Christine Bevan, 52 Greenwich Park Street, SE10 9LT Tel: 020 8853 2150
Membership Secretary: Rob Toogood, 48 Greenwich Park Street, SE10 9LT Tel: 07930 997155
email: rj2good@hotmail.com
Annual Subscription: UK £5; overseas £10. Cheques to Friends of Greenwich Park with sae please, and sent to the Membership Secretary, or pay online via PayPal at the Friends' website.
Friends Website: : www.friendsofgreenwichpark.org.uk
History of Greenwich Park website: www.greenwichparkhistory.org.uk
All enquiries to: info@friendsofgreenwichpark.org.uk

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 (5,000 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 Blackheath Gate. In an emergency dial 999; for other calls Tel: 020 7161 9740.

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