

Views from the Hill



NEWSLETTER OF THE TEWKESBURY LODGE ESTATE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION Autumn / Winter 2017

Carols by Candlelight -- back by popular demand!

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Our first *Carols by Candlelight* last year proved to be a great success with more than 100 TLERA members attending. A collection at the end raised £210 for the charity *Crisis at Christmas*. We were delighted that the feedback was overwhelmingly positive and that members were very keen for it to become an annual event.

So that is exactly what is happening! On Sunday 10th December, we will once again be gathering together to sing carols and other seasonal classics. The event will take place in the Triangle which will be festooned in festive style with fairy lights and candles. Mince pies and mulled wine will, of course, be provided.



Carols by Candlelight 2016

Calling all songbirds and minstrels

To ensure a rousing chorus, the singing will be led by a small group of songsters from the Estate and we are looking for vocalists and musicians who would like to join them. All abilities/levels of singing/playing are welcome - the only requirement is to enjoy carols and

other winter songs! There will be a meeting in early December to go over the programme, the date of which will be confirmed.

If you are interested in joining the group, do call Bea Jackson on 020 8699 7143.

Autumn harvest event



Following the success of last year's pilot event, our second Autumn Harvest Lunch and Fruit Pressing went

ahead on Sunday, 15th October in the lovely garden at Hilltop in Horniman Drive. It was one of those golden autumn afternoons with clear skies and warm sunshine – ideal for celebrating this year's bumper harvest.

Turn to the centre pages of this newsletter to read all about it.

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A date for your diary

The TLERA Christmas event, *Carols by Candlelight*, will be held between 5pm and 6.30pm on Sunday, December 10th in the Triangle (the enclosed garden bordered by Horniman Drive, Liphook Crescent, and Rocombe Crescent). The event is free to members and their families, but a donation to *Crisis at Christmas* would be welcome! We hope to see you there

Chair's report



Autumn - the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness according to the Victorian poet John Keats. Well we may not have had much in the way of mists this year, but there was no doubt about the fruitfulness of the apple trees growing on the Hill! Members turned up to our Autumn event with an abundance of apples that kept the fruit press going all afternoon. Everyone was able to taste the delicious juice produced, and still the apple growers went home with enough bottles of juice to last them for some time!

As an added bonus, it was unseasonably warm and sunny so everyone could sit in the garden and enjoy the autumn-themed homemade soups and cakes. Our thanks to Frankie Locke for hosting the event, and to

everyone who cooked, baked, mulled cider, operated the fruit press, and helped with the activities for the children as well as adults.

Our thanks also to Carole Abrahams who not only over-hauled our outdated membership database but has now linked it to a system that enables the Association to once again send out e-mails to members to let them know of events of interest in and around the Hill, as well as to alert them to any criminal activity on the Estate. And finally, our thanks to Stuart Checkley whose success with the launch of the Street Tree Scheme has surpassed all expectations. As you will read elsewhere in this newsletter, our Estate will be a greener and even more pleasant place to live over the coming years.

Valerie Ward

Local history

Camille Pissaro was a French Impressionist and a refugee of the Franco-Prussian war who lived in Norwood for a couple of years from 1870. His painting of Lordship Lane station hangs in the Courtauld Gallery in London, and the background shows our Tewkesbury Lodge Estate as it was in 1871 before the Hill was developed. The view he painted looks towards London – the station was just opposite where Wood Vale joins the South Circular. This station, part of the Crystal Palace high level line, was closed and demolished in 1954.



oak-lined avenue that crosses the wood by an ornamental footbridge over the old railway track, which still remains. It was from this bridge that Pissaro painted this view

Dave Leslie

Brenchley Gardens, the Nature Trail below Horniman Gardens, and part of the forest walk in Sydenham Hill Wood are all remnants of the railway track bed. Cox's Walk is an 18th century

Lordship Lane Station - as seen by Pissaro

Keeping up appearances

Over time, the boundary stones around the green verge at the top of Ringmore Rise, at the junction with Horniman Drive, have been loosened and in some cases removed, which really spoilt what should be an attractive green space for residents to enjoy.

After contacting Lewisham Council, with the help of Vince Buchanan similar stones were located and have now been replaced. Most importantly, they have been cemented into place!

A watchful eye will be kept on the area in the hope that no more will go missing...

Elaine Pringle

Footnote: Our thanks to Elaine for taking the time to sort out this problem. The green space is looking so much better, especially now the broad-leaved Cockspur Thorn trees (*Crataegus prunifolia*) planted there are providing such beautiful autumn colour as their leaves turn from yellow through to red, and the red berries become more plentiful.

Street Tree Scheme: latest developments

As I write this, the golden leaves of our lime trees have fallen and the red leaves of our cherry trees are shining in the sun. In the years to come there will be more autumnal colour in our streets. Nine new trees will be planted on our Estate over the next few months. These trees have been funded by individual donations from residents totalling £840, a grant of £840 from the Forest Hill Assembly, and through a grant of £480 from the Greater London Authority allocated to us by *Street Trees for Living* (STfL). The Association would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this first step in our plans to improve the roadside environment of our Estate. And, in advance, we would like to thank everyone who has volunteered to water these trees over the next two years. This of course is to encourage the roots to grow down into the underlying soil and not up and into the pavement.

Many of these new trees will have white blossom in Spring and red leaves in Autumn and, together with more trees planted in future years, will add to the attractiveness of our streets. The smallest of the trees is the Amelanchier, which I described in our last newsletter. Two will be planted towards the top of Canonbie Road (treeless at present), a third will be planted at the very top of the road, and a fourth at the junction of Canonbie with Netherby Road.

The medium sized tree with the same colours is an unusual variety of Mountain Ash, *Sorbus commixta* 'Embley'. We shall plant one of these stunning trees in the upper half of Ringmore Rise, and there is room for more both in Ringmore Rise and in other roads, such as outside the electricity substation in Langton Rise.

The largest of the trees is the ornamental pear *Pyrus calleryana* 'Chanticleer'. Named after the cockerel (or 'chauntecleer') in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, our Chanticleers will certainly wake up any inhabitants of Liphook Crescent who find early rising more difficult as autumn sets in. And just as some manuscripts show Chaucer's chauntecleer to have both red and gold on his head, so our Chanticleer trees will have red heads and - after hot summers at least - gold ones also. These showy trees will be planted on an exposed stretch of Liphook Crescent - a prominence of which Chaucer's

vain cockerel would most certainly have approved!

But our planting scheme is not at all rigid, and we are welcoming other ideas. For example, in front of a large white house in Westwood Park we shall be planting a splendid white Magnolia 'Merrill'. We were to have planted a lemon coloured Magnolia (with a scent reminiscent of melon) in Tewkesbury Avenue, but the Council noticed that the proposed planting site was too close to a street light and so the planting cannot go ahead. However, the sponsor of that tree is still happy to fund this at present homeless tree, if it can be planted somewhere else in Tewkesbury Avenue. And there will also be two crab apple trees whose colourful fruit will fall onto the grassy verge at the junction of Horniman Drive and Ringmore Rise.

Exotic possibilities arise, especially in the hottest streets on the Estate such as the lower reaches of Langton Rise. Olive trees already grow there, both in a front garden and in flowerpots by front doors. They certainly would grow by the roadside, as has been found in several streets in London's West End. And even more exotic trees might thrive, such as the Australian Bottlebrush Tree, whose red blossoms throughout Summer wow the residents of Morton Place in Pimlico.

In addition to the nine sponsors for new trees this coming winter we already have fourteen additional offers of sponsorship for the winter of 2018/19. But we would welcome more, so if you would like to help in any way please contact me through the TLER website, (www.tewkesburylodge.org.uk) or by texting me on 07709 578 417.

Stuart Checkley



Ornamental pear tree - soon to be seen in Liphook Crescent

Autumn Harvest Lunch and Fruit Pressing

Although many might consider the key attraction of the Association's Autumn event was the lunch, the star turn was actually the traditional community fruit pressing!

Members arrived laden down with bags, bowls, buckets, and even a trolley full of their home-grown apples, keen to turn them all into juice. A manual, wooden fruit press took pride of place on the patio, surrounded by an assortment of pressing paraphernalia, and a trial run confirmed that amateur pressers could easily operate it. A production line on the patio was quickly established, with no shortage of eager volunteers of all ages lending a hand at each stage in the process.

Firstly, the ripe apples had to be checked to make sure there were no bad or badly bruised ones and then they were cored and chopped.



How to press apples in four easy (?) stages

Editor's note:
No children were harmed in the making of this apple juice.....!

Next, batches of the fruit pieces were tipped into the hand-cranked crusher (a favourite with the children to turn the handle) to produce a pulp.



The crushed fruit was tipped into the muslin-lined barrel press and, finally, the lid was secured and screwed down hard. It felt like a village scene from a bygone era rather than Forest Hill in 2017!



"There she flows!" From an initial trickle, a steady stream of juice began to appear and, as techniques improved, many bottles were filled, and the tasting began. What a revelation!



The Tewkesbury Lodge Blend 2017 vintage was declared to be absolutely delicious - somehow sweeter than the apples themselves but still retaining a hint of the original tartness and, of course, so much more flavoursome than shop-bought versions.

The volume of fruit from our gardens meant that the three planned pressings had to be expanded into a continual process throughout the afternoon. It was a case of "all hands to the press" and it was wonderful to see everyone joining in with such enthusiasm, although particular thanks must go to Maynard Firth and Dave Leslie who valiantly manned the press for multiple refills.

The mound of fruit gradually diminished and an impressive array of bottles were filled so there were litres for members to take home. Even the left over pulp would be put to good use as garden compost or chicken feed.

Meanwhile, as children tired of pressing fruit, they could retreat to the Story Hut to read or listen to the telling of traditional autumn-themed stories.



Alternatively, members of the Association's Garden Group were on hand to help youngsters plant bulbs and make lavender bags or cones of pot pourri from local, fragrant dried flowers.



The much neglected conker found new fans through a simple throwing game targeting a giant pumpkin, and children also used them as border decorations on paper plate leaf pictures.



Adults were encouraged to pick up the spray paint and create festive decorations from a beautiful array of dried garden foliage including teasels, poppy heads, twigs and berries; the results were stunning.



All this manual labour and activity led to hearty appetites, but this was not a problem as the Association's top-notch team of cooks and bakers had laid on a magnificent spread, using seasonal produce as much as possible. A selection of soups had been prepared, with a choice of fabulous flavours: carrot and cardamom; spicy pumpkin; leek and potato; French onion; and broccoli soup.

Accompaniments of crusty bread, crudités, sweet potato wedges and English cheeses all went down a treat, particularly when paired with our ultra-fresh apple juice or, for adults seeking something a little bit stronger, a moreish mulled cider. The temptations of the sweet corner also proved irresistible with a scrumptious selection of cakes including: apple and almond; ginger and pear polenta; chocolate and beetroot, plum, honey and cinnamon; and carrot cakes. Everyone could picnic in the garden in the warm sunshine with only the background of burnished leaves reminding us that it was actually October.

Such an extremely enjoyable and rewarding event - as clearly testified by the trail of mellow members leaving Hilltop at the end of the afternoon, now relieved of their apples but clutching instead bottles of apple juice, homemade gifts, and festive decorations. Thanks so much to everyone who came along, and to all those volunteers who helped to make the day such a success. A special thank you goes to Frankie Locke for hosting it at Hilltop, and to Maria Branchini for organising the loan of the all-important fruit press. Let's hope that next year's harvest is equally bountiful so that we can do it all over again!

Tina Hildrey

Fun and games were had by all – adults and children alike.

Not just a garden group!

I had been thinking of joining the TLERA Garden Group for some years but always put it off for another day – as you do! I took the plunge in July having been enthused at the Summer Picnic in the Triangle by current members and I am so glad I did.

Held at a different members house on an evening each month from February to October, you can wander round the host's garden before the well organised meeting with a set agenda of jobs for the month: what's good in the garden this month; gardener's questions; problems; tips etc.

Enjoying lunch during a visit to Standen Gardens.



Group visits to great gardens open to the public are planned, and there are bulk orders for organic compost and bulbs/plants twice a year. The enthusiasm for growing trees, flowers,

shrubs and vegetables is both heart-warming and inspiring.

A mix of ages and knowledge, and as lovely and fun a group would be hard to find. New members welcome – take the plunge! Leave behind work and home pressures, and come and enjoy a couple of hours of immersion in all things gardening!

Alice Hutton

Like Alice, I too am new to the gardening group having joined and been along to meetings in August and September. My garden needs a lot of care and attention, but I too am enthused and inspired by the discussion and encouragement from members and by seeing their gardens. I have to make a start by improving the soil so am benefiting from the bulk ordering of compost the group makes, and plan to get going spreading it during the next few months. It is good to get to know more people locally, and can recommend the group to new as well as experienced gardeners.

Anon!

Footnote: The Garden Group meets on the first Wednesday evening of every month from 8pm. If you would like more information, contact Beth Falkingham-Blackwell (our garden group co-ordinator) on 8699 2616.

Damp patches and soggy bottoms

Are you suffering from unexplained boggy patches in your garden or a waterlogged lawn that never seems to dry up? Some residents appear to have actual springs in their gardens - maybe that's you?

We've decided to do some research to get to the bottom of the matter and try to find out why the area is so soggy. Local roads suffer from recurring flooding -Thames Water dig up the road only to find that it is not a broken pipe but an underground water source for which they can do nothing. There are many rumours of underground streams/rivers. Is this connected to the Victorian reservoir on the land between Liphook Crescent, Canonbie Road, and Horniman Drive, or is it just a coincidence?

Calling on any hydrogeologists or anyone with information or insight into the matter! Also,

any creative ideas on what we can do with our damp patches would be most welcome...



Dagmar Vesely
Telephone: 020 8314 4806

Permanent water source on Canonbie Road - currently used to water the rest of the garden...

Traffic and transport

Taking the sweat out of cycling up the Hill

One of the things that puts off those living on 'The Hill' from cycling into London, is the sheer sweatiness of it all. It is easy enough going down, but coming home is hard work. Can a battery-powered bike take the sweat away? The answer is yes, particularly if you recharge your bike at work for the return journey. The best route into London involves the Peckham Canal Path. A tube-style simplification of the route can be downloaded from <http://mappinglondon.co.uk/2017/route-plan-roll-cycle-map/>

The east side of Peckham Park (Homestall Road) is less crowded and busy than Peckham



Rye Road. Once in Central London, the segregated cycle routes are the best they have ever been. The battery can be taken off for recharging, though if used sparingly on the down should have sufficient charge to get you back up our Hill on the return journey.

Dave Leslie

Summer Reading Challenge

Forest Hill Community Library ran the national Summer Reading Challenge this year to encourage children aged 4-11 years to keep up their reading skills during the long holiday by reading any six books of their choice. The theme was *Animal Agents*, illustrated by Tony Ross of the Horrid Henry series. The children had fun collecting stickers and rewards and collecting clues to solve mysterious happenings in a library

On successful completion of the challenge they received a certificate and medal. Over 250 children completed the Challenge at Forest Hill - the second highest number of all Lewisham libraries!

Valerie Ward



Syrian Refugees in Lewisham

Lewisham *Citizens* group has been working closely with our Council to welcome and help to integrate some vulnerable families from Syria and Iraq, using United Nations grants, as part of our government's promise to take in 20,000 genuine refugees from the terrible conflict in the Middle East.

Lewisham Council agreed to our request to help by taking in 10 families if *Citizens* could find homes for them, as they would find it difficult given how many homeless people there are in Lewisham at present. We had to find generous private landlords through faith groups and other organisations who make up Lewisham *Citizens*. More recently, the Council helped us to settle a further seven families.

Although the refugees have the services of a small professional Refugee Services Group paid for by the UN grant, they need much more help towards integration into our community in their first year or two.

None of the families spoke English when they arrived and their flats, although furnished, provide no luxuries or extras, such as books, toys and scooters, extra bedding, and kitchen equipment.

Citizens have set up a Refugee Welcome Group, that meets monthly to discern the needs of the new families, introduce them to Arabic speakers, and organise bank accounts to which people can donate money. This has been used to buy second hand TVs (key to helping to learn English), mobile phones (to keep in touch with relatives in Syria), welcome food hampers when they first arrive, cleaning materials, Arabic/English dictionaries - and umbrellas!

Fun outings were arranged over the summer: picnics, fruit picking, and visiting parks and swimming pools. The Horniman Museum donated free tickets for a group of 24 adults and 18 children to visit the Aquarium. They loved it!

(Continued overleaf)

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If you would like to be involved, perhaps by coming to our next Refugees Welcome Meeting (held at Lewisham Mosque) or donating money or a TV, please get in touch with me at nanomccaughan@btinternet.com Also, if any Arabic speakers among Association members could spare an hour or so to interpret for a visiting helper, we would be delighted to hear from you.
Nano McCaughan

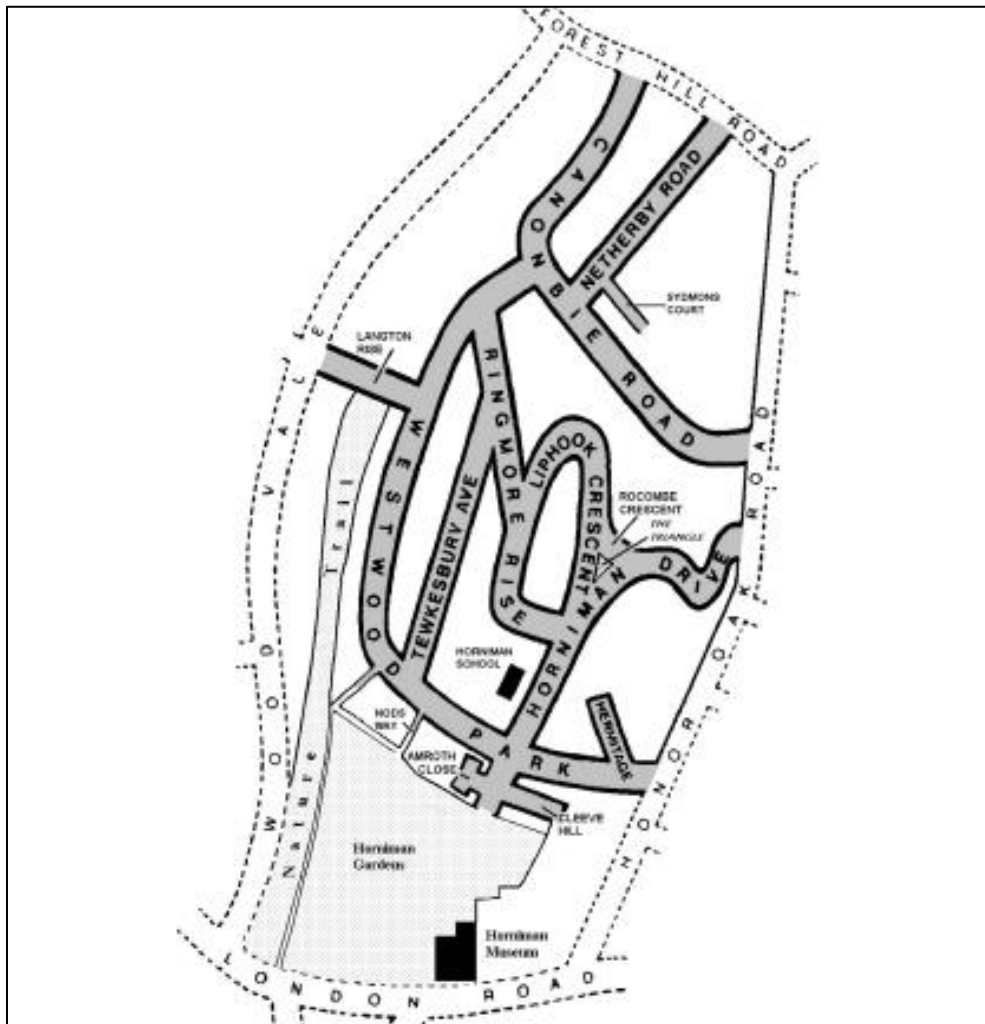
Crime and policing

The Met Police have recently launched a new website with a greater focus on the local policing team and contacts. The new site is <https://www.met.police.uk/your-area/lewisham/forest-hill/> The new website provides regular updates on reported crimes, and gives everyone the opportunity to report or inform the police of issues of concern, which can then be addressed at the local Ward panel meetings.
Rowena Lowe

Subscriptions

Our thanks to those of you who have already returned your subscription. Enclosed with this newsletter is a reminder letter for members who have not yet done so, together with an envelope to return to your road representative. The annual membership has remained at £5 for a number of years and enables us to maintain and improve our area, as well as to enhance the strong sense of community within the Tewkesbury Lodge Estate by organising regular social events throughout the year. As this covers all members of your household we hope you agree it is £5 a year well spent!

Tewkesbury Lodge Estate Residents' Association area



This newsletter was compiled and edited by Valerie Ward and proof read by Carole Abrahams. Contributions from members are very welcome and can be e-mailed to us at secretary@tewkesburylodge.org.uk