

Views from the Hill



NEWSLETTER OF THE TEWKESBURY LODGE ESTATE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION February 2024

Harvest Festival



The weather was just about kind to us - or at least we had showers rather than continual rain - here on the Hill we are brave folks and not put off by a bit of damp!

The TLERAs event has been evolving gradually over the years. This year people suggested that it should now become the TLERAs Harvest Festival as it offers so many other attractions - as well as the chance to bring your apples to turn to juice. The apple pressing was hard work, but a few dedicated volunteers cut and pressed away throughout the day and produced lots of bottles of delicious juice for everyone. Others worked hard to dress scarecrows and came up with some wonderfully creative characters.

These were then auctioned to raise funds for Demelza Hospice Care for Children. £110 was sent to the charity. The scarecrows were such a success that we are thinking next year of asking families to create their own and bring them along for a big Scarecrow Parade. There were songs for children in the Story Shed and a variety of other games that always keep them entertained, like throwing conkers into a pumpkin. That simple challenge always seems to be the favourite!

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A harvest lunch of seasonal soups, breads and cheeses was provided by TLERA volunteers, who went to town this year with Halloween ideas, since it was held so close to the day. Thanks to all the cooks, apple pressers and

other helpers, like Pat Rae who made the armatures for the scarecrows. And thanks to everyone for coming and making it such an enjoyable day.

Frankie Locke

Rewilding Rocombe Crescent Triangle

In the summer edition of our newsletter I showed a photo of the Bird's Foot Trefoil which is thriving on our triangle now that the Council is leaving most of its grass uncut - a strip round the edge is being cut to provide a neater edge. Bird's Foot Trefoil is the chosen foodstuff of the caterpillars of the Common Blue Butterfly. I wondered whether this beautiful butterfly, which is not at all common. In Lewisham, might appear on our triangle? Amazingly it did. The photograph shows a female Common Blue butterfly resting on Bird's Foot Trefoil. Is it laying eggs? And if so, will small green caterpillars emerge next Spring? Open the next edition of our newsletter to find out.

Stuart Checkley

*Common Blue
Butterfly*



Birds of prey on the Estate



*Kestrel (above) and
Sparrowhawk (right)*

I have been living on the Estate for over 20 years and have noticed a number of changes in the local populations of birds of prey. London is good for a number of species with the availability of nesting sites on buildings and trees, together with the presence of prey species such as rodents and garden birds. Two of the most widespread species in England are the Sparrowhawk and Kestrel. The Sparrowhawk nests and lives locally and I have seen it on

many occasions. Fairly recently I saw a female (the larger of the sexes) trying to kill a wood pigeon on the cycle path to the South Circular. It was unsuccessful as the pigeon was too big. Sparrowhawks can be a bit of a pain when they use our feeding stations as hunting grounds for garden birds, but they are a sign of ecological health. The Kestrel is also regular in the area and one year it nested in the Camberwell Old Cemetery. It is a particular welcome resident as it feeds extensively on vermin but this does mean it is at risk from rodenticides and its population is declining in some areas. I regularly see one flying past my house in Westwood Park. Kestrels are a similar length to a sparrowhawk but with longer wings, and they glide less frequently. Their reddish-brown backs are speckled with black spots and their buffy

breasts and bellies have rows of bold, black spots running down them, unlike the horizontal bars of a sparrowhawk.

The Peregrine Falcon is an exciting species and now much more common in Britain. It is large and fast and preys on pigeons. It has re-established itself now pesticide levels in pigeon meat are much lower. It is an exciting sight to see one flying down Westwood Park like a miniature fighter. For a number of years now it has



been possible to see large birds of prey overhead in the area. I have seen a number of buzzards soaring above the hill over the years, and one red kite. Like the peregrine falcon these birds of prey are increasingly appearing in London, usually in the wooded areas or outskirts. We have quite a good supply of day flying birds of prey. What about owls? Owls don't like cars, street lights or noise. But there

is food and nesting sites. In recent years I have heard a tawny owl in the Horniman Nature Reserve. I don't know if they have nested as they must be living at the margins of what they can tolerate.

Overall, I can report a healthy increase in birds

of prey in the area over the last 20 years – long may it continue. They are great to look at in themselves but they also indicate a viable local ecosystem, which is good news for other species including homo sapiens!

Dr Andrew McCulloch (Chair of the Hawk and Owl Trust)

Why join TLERA? Membership provides great benefits for your household

- **Planning applications within our estate:** TLERA scrutinises all planning applications and opposes any which we think would threaten the green environment of our hill. Our objections are often upheld by the Council.
- **Planning applications near our estate:** TLERA member Dennis Stephenson looked carefully at the planning application submitted by the Horniman Museum and Gardens for its extensive Love+Nature proposal. With the support of TLERA he argued against the plan to allow HGVs access to the Horniman Gardens via Westwood Park and Horniman Drive. The Council agreed with our objection and gave Planning Consent to the entire project on the condition that HGVs only enter the Horniman Gardens from London Road. That was the only condition that was agreed by the Council.
- **Planning consultations on the list of sites for possible building development:** TLERA successfully argued against building developments on the Telecom site (which extends from Horniman Drive down to Honor Oak Road) on the grounds that its oak trees would be lost, and their benefits to carbon capture and to the wild life corridor of which they are part. The Telecom site has now been removed from the Council's list of sites for possible development.
- **Street trees:** TLERA has raised £21,300 at today's prices for 61 street trees on our estate. The trees have been planted, watered by residents, and in general the trees are doing well.
- **Improvements to the Ringmore Rise Green:** TLERA was awarded a Greening Fund grant to improve the Ringmore Rise Green. Two dead trees and a redundant pole were removed, new trees and bulbs were planted and a notice board for TLERA was installed. Further work is in progress.

- **Improvements to the Rocombe Crescent Triangle:** TLERA asked the Council to leave some of the grass on the Triangle uncut to encourage the growth of wild flowers. Downland flowers such as Birds Foot Trefoil have multiplied and these have attracted Common Blue butterflies which lay their eggs on this plant. Field grasshoppers have also returned. Further work is in progress.

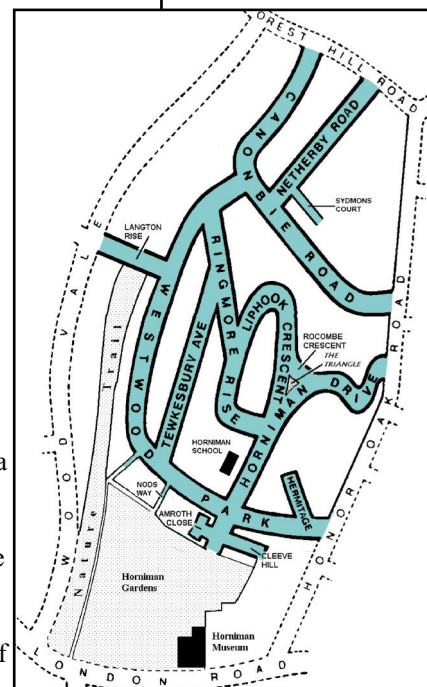
- **Improvements to the Horniman Triangle:** TLERA members raised the funds for the first of the trees that have been planted on the Horniman Triangle. Our chair helped raise the funds for a further 49 trees, all of which have now been planted.

- **Social events:** TLERA organises several annual social events which includes the summer picnic, an Easter event for children, an autumn harvest festival event which is partly for children, and carol singing at Christmas. The TLERA Gardening Club for new and experienced gardeners makes a large contribution to the Open Garden event which is organised by the National Gardening Scheme and attracts 400 visitors.

- **Liaison with Police:** a member of the TLERA committee attends regular meetings with the local police and keeps members informed of the risks to which we are exposed. Several streets have their own system of notification regarding crime, but TLERA runs an overarching Crime Cascade for the whole area and gives us all advice on how we can prevent crime.

- **Liaison with local Councillors:** our chair attends regular meetings with our three local Councillors. These meetings plan the meetings of the Forest Hill Assembly and are a good way to network generally.

- **Keeping in touch with your local community:** through direct contact with your road representative, regular newsletters and experienced committee officers.



Subscriptions

You will soon be receiving your membership subscription envelope. If you are already a member, please could you pay your subscription as soon as possible. If you are not yet a member, I hope the rest of this Newsletter has interested you enough to join. Membership is just £5 a year, and includes everyone in your household. The easiest way to pay is by putting

£5 in your envelope and dropping it off to your road representative. However it is also possible to pay by bank transfer, and you will find full details on your envelope. Please use the correct Reference, as otherwise we can't guarantee that your payment will be valid. If you have any questions, you can ask your road rep, or email me at membership@tewkesburylodge.org.uk
Carole Abrahams

The Chitalpa Tashkentenis with its large frilly pink azalea-like flowers with veined yellow throats will stop you in your tracks in mid to late summer



Time to plant a tree

In the last few months seven new street trees have been planted on TLERA streets bring our total of self-funded trees to 61! Huge thanks to everyone who has contributed with funds or watering cans. If you would like a tree outside or near your house please send me an email. Now is the time to let the Council know where we would like more trees to be planted next winter. The (subsidized) cost of a tree is £350 and TLERA can sometimes help with matched funding. If you are interested please contact me at:
stuart@steetreesforliving.or

Property fraud

Property fraud is where fraudsters try to 'steal' your property, most commonly by pretending to be you and selling or mortgaging your property without your knowledge. In the last five years HM Land Registry has prevented 205 fraudulent applications being registered. Protect your property from fraud by signing up to HM Land Registry's free Property Alert service. You can monitor a property if it's already registered with HM Land Registry and also monitor the property of a relative. You don't have to own a property to set up an alert.

Each time there is significant activity on the property - such as an application to change the register, a new mortgage is taken out or a notification that an application may be due - the alert will tell you the type of activity, who the applicant is and the date and time it has been received. Not all alert emails will mean fraudulent activity. If you don't think the alert email is about any suspicious activity, you don't need to do anything. HM Land Registry also sends regular emails just stating that no activities have taken place, which is very reassuring.

Signing up to Property Alert won't automatically stop fraud from happening. You will need to decide if the activity on the property is potentially fraudulent and act quickly if so. The alert email will tell you whom to contact. For more information and how to create a Property Alert account go to:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/property-alert>
Chris Dobb

Problem garden walls

This article is based on the article Keeping it straight written by Nigel Carter, FRICS, MRTPI in the December 1999 newsletter.

Many properties on the Estate have retaining walls, usually on their boundaries, but sometimes within their gardens. A walk around the Estate will reveal that they are a problem. In Westwood Park, for example, many have cracked, broken, or are out of vertical. Whilst

several owners have rebuilt them at considerable expense, many new walls are failing.

Why do retaining walls fail? The short answer is because they are inadequately designed, or, more rarely, defectively built. Most domestic retaining walls are constructed using a conventional brick, or concrete 'footing', in order to spread the load of the wall onto a wider base. The vast majority of our houses have footings of foundations like this. Whilst this foundation



design may be perfectly adequate for houses which imposes only a vertical loading onto the ground, they are rarely appropriate for retaining walls. Retaining walls have a tough life – they have to cope not only with a vertical loading arising from their own weight, but also horizontal load resulting from the effort they have to make in retaining the soil and ground water pressure. This pressure builds up from rainwater percolating through the soil, seasonal expansion and contraction of the clay sub-soil, and the physical effort of holding back a massive weight of clay. These forces put tremendous stresses on them and if the wall is inadequately designed and built it will, in due course, either lean or crack. A leaning wall is highly unlikely to return to the vertical and once a wall has cracked, a line of weakness has developed and eventual failure is virtually assured. Although many retaining walls incorporate drainage, or weep holes at a low level to relieve ground water pressure, there are invariably not enough of them. In addition, they tend to become blocked over the years and are eventually useless.

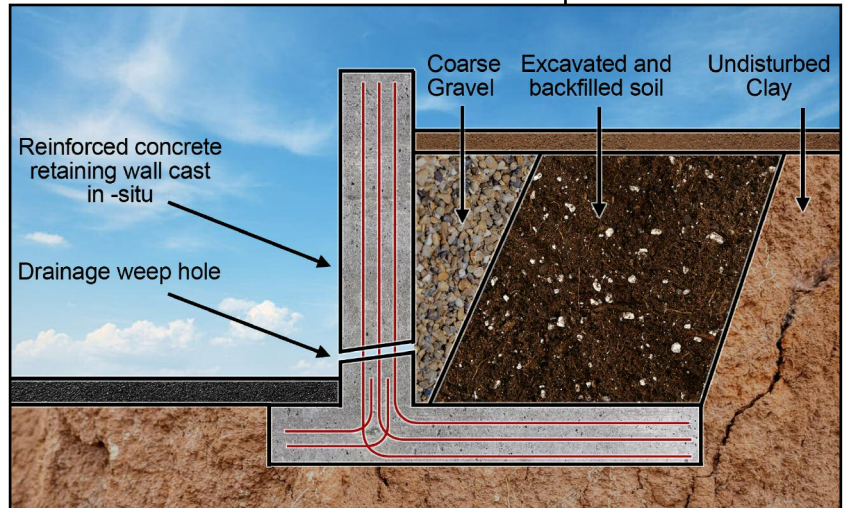
Another factor in retaining wall design is that they tend to be too rigid, or brittle, being constructed from rigid materials e.g. brick or cast concrete. There is no ability for such a wall to flex in response to the changing (usually seasonal) forces put upon it. Inevitably, if the wall is inadequately designed as a result of its foundation design, or it is made of inappropriate materials, it will crack, or lean.

Defective retaining walls are often re-built pretty much as before. This is generally not a good idea, for if the old wall failed because it was not up to the job, why repeat the mistake? An alternative is to design it properly and there are some examples on the Estate where this has been done. So why don't more residents have retaining walls built to last? The answer is probably cost. A fully engineered retaining wall, even it only 1.5 metres high, can cost a staggering amount when compared with just re-building a copy of the old wall. Quite understandably, many people will feel that if a new wall designed like the old one will give ten or maybe twenty years' service, why spend a substantial additional amount for one that will last into the 22nd century?

Another approach is to remove the need for the retaining wall altogether by removing soil behind the wall and re-profiling the garden. It is not always possible to do this, especially if the offending wall is very close to the house. However, it can be an option for front or rear boundaries – where the garden has a good depth

and the slope is not too steep. A word of warning – you may expose drainpipes, cables, or gas pipes, so it is essential to check with the local authority and utility companies before starting work.

We now come to the fully engineered solution, which will cost substantially more. This may



vary depending on the site conditions and the preferences of the engineer, but one particular design predominates. The wall is likely to be of reinforced concrete, cast on site. In cross-section, the concrete will be shaped roughly like an 'L'. The foot of the L will probably be as long as the vertical and the land behind the structure sloped back as shown in the drawing. The foundation has to be dug properly and a huge amount of clay must be excavated. When the concrete is poured it needs to be vertically reinforced with steel (in the foundation itself) and up further where the retaining wall is built. Concrete hollow blocks at three courses are then placed over the steel and filled with concrete. At each course, this needs to be reinforced with a 9mm steel reinforcement horizontally. This can be built higher and again concrete filled. The remaining excavated space should be filled with large-sized gravel to provide a drainage medium. Weep holes for drainage is imperative. Whilst the end result will not always be pleasing to the eye it can be faced with render or indeed bricks.

Here's how you do it...

In a following article in 2000, Nigel also suggested using a timber panel system. He'd found this to be very satisfactory in providing a retaining wall in his back garden. These systems and newer products are available and would be worth investigating.

Nigel later moved to be part of an interesting community; Cannock Mill Cohousing in Colchester. He died a few years ago.
Chris Dobb with technical additions by Mickey O'Brien

Horniman Museum and Gardens – Nature + Love Project Update

Nature + Love is a once-in-a-generation, transformational re-development project aiming to make the Horniman Museum and Gardens more inclusive and accessible, and to place environmental sustainability and a commitment to fighting the climate and ecological emergency at its heart.

Nature + Love will enhance the visitor experience and open up previously under-used areas of the Horniman site by creating three exciting new attractions:

- A Nature Explorers Adventure Zone, introducing a nature-themed play area and children's café, encouraging learning and wellbeing through exploration and play. This zone will also provide a new departure point for improved access to and better interpretation of the Horniman Nature Trail.
- A Sustainable Gardening Zone with new plant nursery and sustainable planting displays encouraging improved health and wellbeing. A horticultural hub will provide a space for community and learning programmes and adjacent to this an under-used part of the garden will be re-developed to improve access and planting.
- A redisplayed Natural History Gallery and indoor Nature Explorers Action Zone, exploring human understanding of and impact upon the planet, and supporting people to make changes on a local and personal level. These capital works will be complemented by a range of nature-focused partnerships and a programme of activities to diversify our audiences.

Where we are now:

Since the Horniman received planning permission for the Nature + Love project in August 2023, we have been working on the technical designs for the project to allow us to tender for contractors between February and June this year. We have also been working to address the planning conditions, including the development of a Construction Environmental Management Plan and looking at how to keep the Museum and Gardens open safely during the construction period.

We recently had a very productive meeting with TLER members Stuart Checkley and Dennis Stevenson to discuss residents' concerns about some aspects of the project and have agreed an approach to these concerns as listed below:

- 1 Vehicles of HGV size and larger will arrive and depart via the London Road entrance but lighter vehicles should go through the Horniman Drive entrance. This approach must be approved by Lewisham Planning department before it is finalised.
- 2 The Horniman project team are drafting the Construction Environmental Management Plan and will put this on our website for consultation with local residents once it is ready. We anticipate that the draft Plan will be on our website from 5 to 26 February for consultation, with responses by email to framework@horniman.ac.uk. We will write to local residents and the TLER to confirm this.
- 3 Once the contractors are appointed, they will hold a meeting for local residents to talk about how they will be managing site logistics and provide information about how to contact them if there are any concerns. They will provide regular updates for residents on project progress and we expect them to sign up to the Considerate Contractors Scheme.
- 4 Contractors will be encouraged to use public transport to come to work to minimise additional car parking in the local area. Once the project is complete, we will be encouraging visitors to come by public transport as well as signposting local car parks, so we do not anticipate lots of additional cars around the neighbourhood.
- 5 Although the area around the old boating pond is prone to flooding, we have designed in a series of soakaways and sustainable drainage to capture the rainwater before it reaches the new café and play area. There is a main sewer running along the path to take the foul waste but rainwater into the sewer will be minimised. We will also be using Propelair toilets which use 90% less water than standard toilets.

We anticipate that the contractors will be starting work in the Gardens and in the Natural History Gallery from August 2024. The Natural History Gallery will be closed from 4 March 2024 to allow us to remove the collections in advance of the contractors starting work.

If you wish to get in touch with us at any time during the works, please do contact us via email at framework@horniman.ac.uk. We are also hoping to set up regular catch ups with the Chair of TLER, Stuart Checkley, and will be providing updates for your regular newsletters.

Kirsten Walker

Director, Collections, Care and Estates



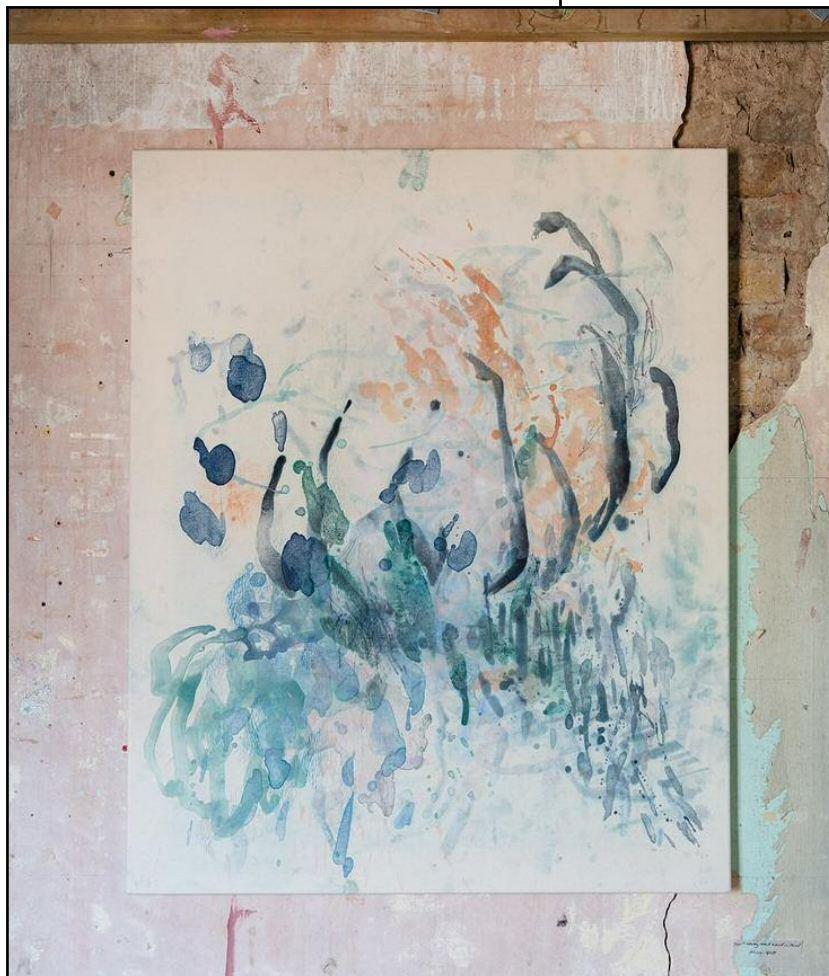
Misa Gott – one of our Estate Artists

We are lucky to have such a rich vein of artists on the Estate. I aim to feature them in subsequent newsletters. Some have participated in Artists' Open House as part of the Dulwich Festival which usually takes place in May. One of them was Canonbie Road resident Misa Gott.

Inspired by her emotional response to daily experience of nature - landscape, organism, phenomenon and our relationship with nature, Misa creates images with enigmatic motifs and gestural marks, gracefully oscillating on the boundary between semi-abstract and vaguely recognisable figurative or landscape.

Having grown up in Japan, Misa has always felt her everyday life is intertwined with the way of nature. Her work addresses the theme of affinity with and reverence to nature - the more than human world. Her work is mostly mixed media and she mainly uses printmaking as a way of making marks. Layered with marks and shapes, the final images often reveal feelings of figurative forms or landscape emerging. The images are the results of play between control and chance, randomness and inevitabilities, much like nature itself.

Aside from her art practice, Misa facilitates creative workshops for children and adults in the local area and she is currently studying for HICAT (Holistic Integrated Creative Art Therapist) qualification. She completed an MA in Printmaking at Camberwell College of Arts in 2013 and is a recipient of the Bainbridge Studio Award and the Intaglio Printmaker Awards at The Royal Society of Painter-Printmakers National Original Print Exhibition.



She regularly exhibits in London galleries. Details of the 2024 Dulwich Festival which is likely to be in mid May will be published soon. Their newsletter is available from dulwichfestival.co.uk. If they are still printing the booklet it may be available from local libraries.

You can contact Misa via: www.misagott.com & www.instagram.com/misagottart
Chris Dobb

*Don't worry about what is real.
2022*

Dates for your diary

Easter Egg Hunt

Sunday 31 March, 10.30am - 1pm at 53

Ringmore Rise

£2 entry. In aid of Demelza Children's Hospice

National Garden Scheme

Open Gardens

Sunday 19 May and 23 June

All with teas and plant sales

Chair's report

Our AGM took place on 28 November at Horniman School. The current officers were re-elected. Isabel O'Brien, our Treasurer, stood in as Secretary for the meeting, as our regular secretary, Tina Hildrey, was unable to attend. Tina has let us know that, although she is keen to remain an active member of TLER, she would like to step down as Secretary when a successor is found.

The informal part of the AGM was then devoted to discussion of the Council's plans for its new Sustainable Streets programme. The aims of this initiative are spelt out in the Council's paper 'Updated recommendation for Sustainable Streets programme, July 2023': Our sustainable streets programme aims to reduce the number of car journeys made in Lewisham and encourage more people to walk, cycle or use public transport, in order to reduce

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air pollution, traffic and congestion, improve road safety and lower carbon emissions.'

The details of the scheme have been reported in previous newsletters and include the combination of a Controlled Parking Zone with environmental improvements such as street trees, bike hangers and EV charge points in the first year of the project in any street, and funded from parking charges collected in the first year from that street. The wards of Catford, Deptford, and Honor Oak have all been consulted for their views on the scheme. Following these consultations, the whole of Deptford has been included in the Sustainable Streets initiative but only two streets in each of Honor Oak and Catford were included. A representative from Honor Oak gave us an account of his experience of the consultation.

There followed a long and detailed discussion of the likely effects of the above scheme if we

were to be included in it. Since the AGM we have arranged to have an online meeting with members of one of our road based WhatsApp groups to discuss this further, and we would be happy to do the same for other street-based groups.

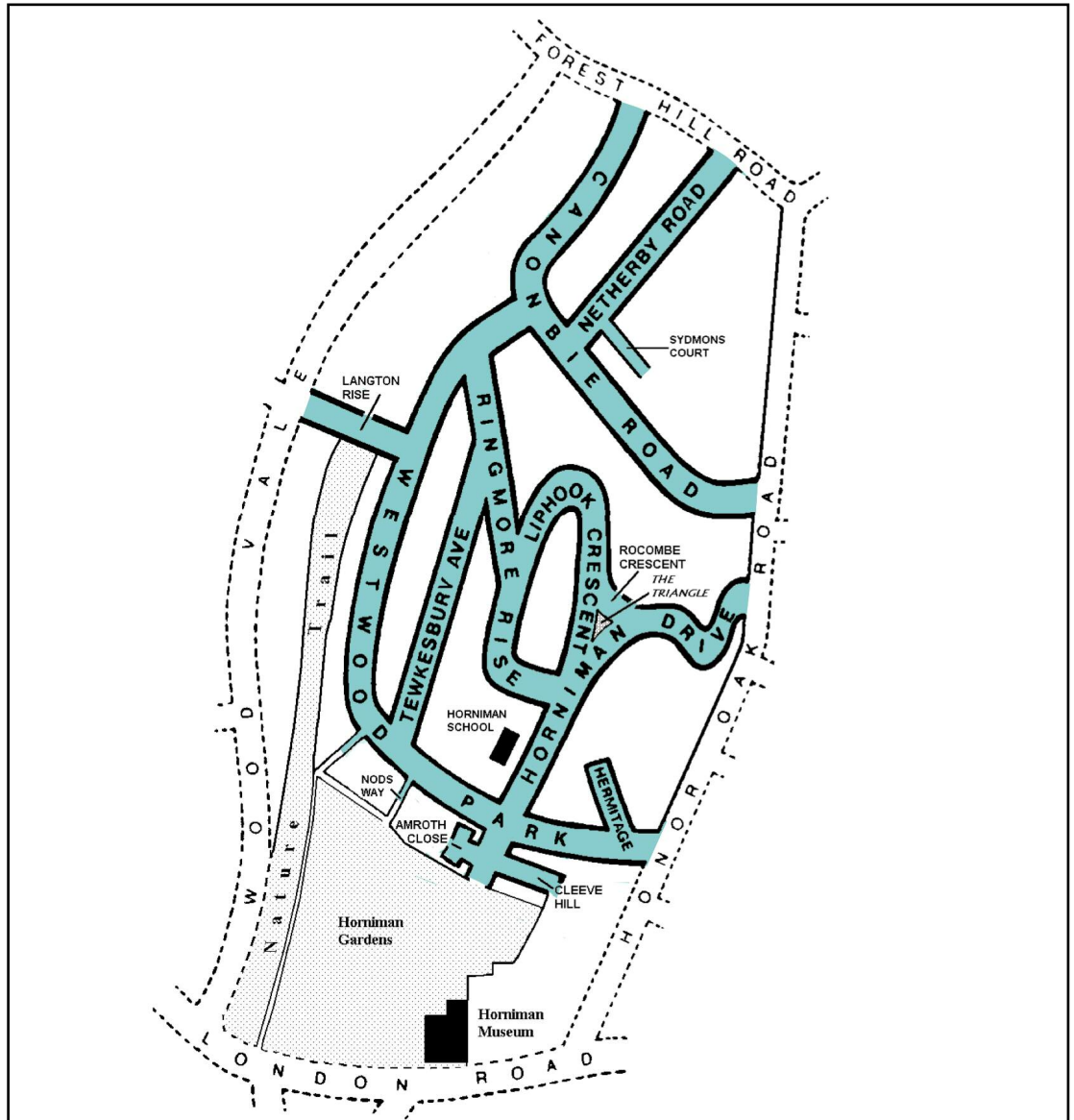
Although the principles of the Sustainable Streets initiative have not changed since it was introduced at the beginning of 2023, it has been decided to change the consultation process for the round of consultations in which we will be included, most probably in June or July. If that timetable is followed, then we should be able to discuss the initiative again at a further meeting of the Association.

I am deeply grateful for the time that all our officers, road reps and members of the sub committees volunteer. Please let me know if you are interested in any role or in helping the Association in some way.

Stuart Checkley



Pillarbox decoration in time for Halloween



Contributions to the newsletter are very welcome and can be emailed to: secretary@teWKesburylodge.org.uk