



NEWSLETTER ■ AUTUMN 2022

KITE DAY RETURNS TO THE HEATH IN OCTOBER

Following the success of last year's Kite Day on Blackheath, the first for 12 years, the Society has decided to hold the day of festivities again on Sunday 9 October.

Last time there wasn't enough wind to lift the big kites so this year, as well as crossing fingers that the Heath's famous wind co-operates, we're moving the main arena away from the trees and a little nearer the Village to try to catch the best breezes.

The Kent Kite Flyers, an enthusiasts' club, are once again coming to help us for the day, bringing their large demonstration kites and supplying volunteers to help members of the public improve their own kite-flying skills.

Last year (*see photo on the right*) they did a brisk trade selling kites and they plan to do the same again this year. There will be plenty of room for everyone to fly their own kites and we're hoping to see lots of home-made kites. All kite-flyers will receive a special badge.

It was great news to hear that stars of the show last year, the children of Grinling Gibbons Primary School, Deptford, will once again come to Blackheath to entertain us with their steel pan band.

The whole event will start at midday, with the children playing at about 2pm and the demonstration kite flying continuing until about 3pm.

Botton's Funfair for under-12s will be operating nearby for the whole weekend and Jimmy Botton and his family are again generously helping us, especially with rewards of free rides for our steel pan musicians.

We will again have catering and this time we are planning to organise additional places to sit.

We are very dependent on volunteer help for this event, for staffing the Society's tent, setting up and clearing the site afterwards and also for people acting as stewards.

If you can spare some time on the day, please contact the Society's office to offer your help.



LONG LIST OF SOCIETY EVENTS IN THE AUTUMN

We have a long autumn list of events for you to enjoy. Full details of the time and places to meet are on the Society's website with the links for you book, where needed, on Eventbrite.

WEDNESDAY 7 SEPTEMBER: Walk & Talk: Authors of Regents Park. Join friends and Robert Maurice Williams for a morning stroll round part of Regent's Park and Primrose Hill. We will find the houses of Edward Lear, Bernard Shaw, William Thackeray, Kingsley Amis, Alan Bennett and Sylvia Plath – and discover where Penguin books started. It is a beautiful and interesting area of London. We know a good place for coffee and lunch.

SUNDAY 11 & SATURDAY 17 SEPTEMBER: London Open House Festival events in Blackheath: The Old Golf Course of Blackheath. Neil Rhind MBE, President of the Blackheath Society, will lead this historic walk over the Old Course. The game was played by the Blackheath Society of Goffers from the mid-18th century to about 1914. The Golf House in Goffers Road was used as HQ until the merger in 1923 with Eltham.

Modern Architecture of Blackheath on the mornings of 11 and 17 September. Local architect Ana Sutherland will lead a guided tour of the Cator Estate, covering Eric Lyons' Span estates (built from 1954 to 1984) and unique modernist homes designed by architects Patrick Gwynne, Peter Moro and Walter Greaves. They form a unique group of architectural treasures that contribute to the rich historic fabric of the area.

MONDAY 26 SEPTEMBER: Meet & Eat at 12.30. Join other Society members at the Princess of Wales for a chat and a chance to catch up on events over a drink and a light lunch.

TUESDAY 4 OCTOBER: Walk & Talk: The Royal Golf Club of Blackheath. Join us for a morning guided tour of the inside and outside of The Royal Blackheath Golf Club, Court Road, Eltham, SE9 5AE. John Bunney, author of *Eltham Lodge: Where Perfection Meets Convenience*, will discuss the building and its history. You may recall Neil Rhind reviewed John's excellent book in the recent Newsletter. Here is an opportunity to visit one of the oldest golf clubs in England, established in 1766. Coffee will be available.

SATURDAY 22 OCTOBER: Heath Cleanup Day. Every year the Society teams up to support Lewisham and Glendale colleagues in their efforts to keep the Heath tidy. We will be issued with appropriate gear and rewarded with tea. We are keen to show our support with a big turnout and this year we will assemble at the private car park on Talbot Place at 1400.

MONDAY 7 NOVEMBER: Walk & Talk: Let's all do the Strand. Society member Jonathan Causer will lead this morning walk along a rich vein of London's history. Strand (in official documents it never has a "The") is only 3/4 mile long from Trafalgar Square to Temple Bar. For a thousand years it has been a major highway and is packed with history, including the Gunpowder plot, a buried church, two murders, a crazed elephant and sculptor and a megalomaniac Duke.

THURSDAY 10 NOVEMBER AT 12.30: Meet & Eat. Join us at the Princess of Wales for a relaxed drink and chat.

17 - 26 NOVEMBER: St Michael's Church Arts Group hold their next exhibition. It's a great place to buy Christmas presents and the church also holds its Autumn Fair on Saturday November 26.

FRIDAY 25 NOVEMBER: Walk & Talk: Lambeth and Waterloo. Join Society member Paul Wright on another of his gateway to Central London morning walks around Waterloo and Lambeth. Hear about the Old Vic, the two Waterloo stations and the Necropolis railway. Learn about the ill-fated Eric Ravilious murals at Morley College, see their successors by Edward Bawden and discover the early days of variety and music hall in Westminster Bridge Road. We meet at Starbucks on Platform B at Waterloo East station for this glimpse of a long unloved but fascinating part of London.

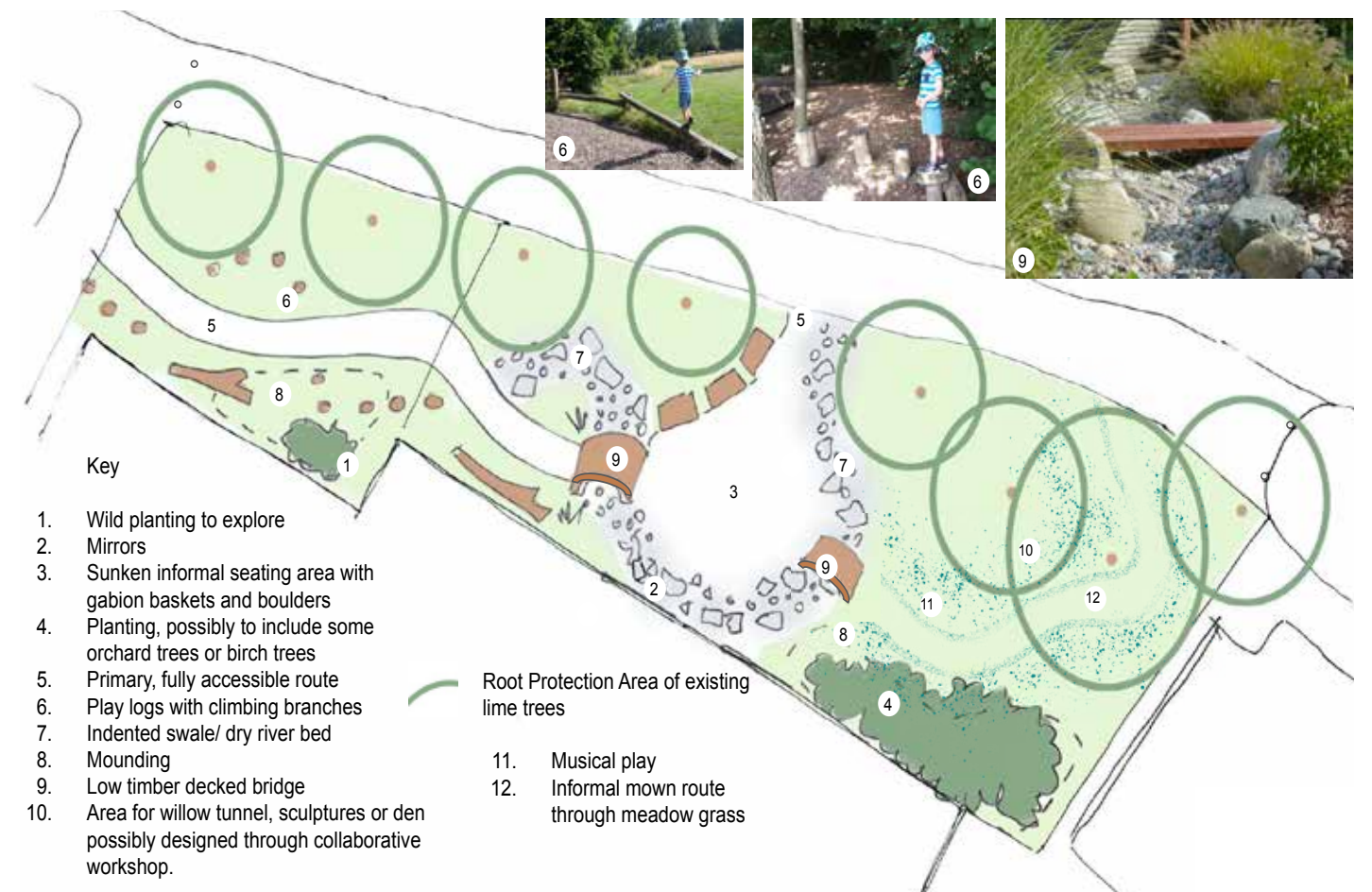
SATURDAY 3 DECEMBER: Blackheath Village switches on the Christmas Lights. See story on page 12.

THURSDAY 15 DECEMBER: The Charterhouse, London, EC1M 6AN. Join us on a visit to this medieval almshouse with its opulent Tudor mansion (*seen below*). Further details to be announced later.



As we went to press, The Architectural Group was organising some visits. These will be announced via our weekly email and the Society website.

NEW TALBOT PLACE CHILDREN'S PLAY AREA PLANNED



The new children's play area on Blackheath is now at the design stage with hopes that something can be visible on site by autumn.

The natural-style play space will transform a neglected grassy area and the stretch of unsightly, broken paving slabs in Talbot Place in front of the disused changing rooms bordering the Heath.

The project, supported by the Society and a group of local parents, won a £60,000 grant from Lewisham Council, recognising that there are few facilities for small children in the area. The Council has also now pledged to provide a much-needed toilet nearby.

There will be no roundabouts, swings or other conventional play equipment and nothing out of keeping with the play area's location on the edge of the Heath. The emphasis will be on creative play, especially for smaller children, with logs, willow, boulders and a central dip with seating.

Local materials will be used as far as possible. We were delighted that the manager of Greenwich Park agreed that some logs and tree trunks being cut down in its Greenwich Park Revealed project could be reincarnated as natural play structures in the area.

Planting will be in keeping with the existing Heath flora. So there will be no ornamental garden plants, but we will have the wild flowers and grasses already found on the Heath, the bunds and on the raised edges of the Heath along the main roads, where wild flowers are encouraged.

These "bee roads", as well as being beautiful in bloom, are important to wildlife. Recently, volunteers collected some of the seed from the bunds in the hope that young plants can be grown in time for planting in the play area when the landscaping is finished.

The play space could eventually host events, such as willow-weaving workshops and musical instrument making from natural materials, and it is being designed to provide accessibility for children using wheelchairs.

The group driving the play area plans, the Friends of Blackheath Play Area, has awarded the contract via Lewisham Council to Glendale, its contractors for the Heath, and Glendale is using EPD Landscape Architects rather than conventional playground designers.

They are working closely with the Friends and the concept designs have already gone through several iterations. *A recent example of the plans is above.*

LEEGATE COMPLEX SETS HEIGHT AND DENSITY CHALLENGES

The most significant planning application we are contending with currently, albeit peripheral to Blackheath, is the Galliard Homes scheme for the Leegate complex.

Schemes for this sadly neglected and large area have been in discussion for over 10 years. The latest is a big improvement on earlier attempts, not least in terms of its 36% of affordable homes. There is, however, very considerable interest among amenity groups, including ourselves and local traders, in seeking improvements before approval.

It will be a test of Lewisham's commitment to engagement to see what degree of proper consultation is allowed on the many issues raised. Chief among concerns is the excessive height of 15 storeys for the main tower and the density, *seen below in a photo mockup.*



Other issues include the future of existing commercial enterprises in Leegate, the need for the complex to have the highest possible standards of energy efficiency and - crucially for Blackheath - the need for a clear commitment to avoid construction traffic using Blackheath Village.



In the Village itself, we were pleased to see Lewisham is still robustly resisting efforts to overdevelop the Pares shop at 25-27 Tranquil Vale, rejecting a further application following two earlier refusals.

We are also pleased to see councils resisting plans for sites for very tall, 18-metre telecoms masts in unsuitable locations - most recently in Vanbrugh Park Road.

We hope that Greenwich will support us in our continuing objection to plans for 62 Corner Green, which we believe seriously threaten one of Blackheath's most special trees, a 300 year old plane tree in neighbouring Pond Road.

Finally, a very pleasing development is coming to fruition at an important site in Blackheath, the mid-19th



century Boone's Almshouses in Brandram Road (*seen above*). This dilapidated site of the Merchant Taylors Company has had permission for its rehabilitation for over 10 years.

Development company VFund, operating under a long lease from the Company, is finally nearing completion of this project which will transform this area.

This rare postcard shows the YMCA hut on the Heath, which provided a chance to relax for the Tommies resting and bivouacking during WW1. Blackheath people contributed considerably to comforting the troops and the Khaki Club on South Row was the most famous. The hut, possibly built from 1915-1916, was paid for by the YMCA and erected on what was then between the Hare and Billet and Goffers Road. It is impressive to see that they provided a grand piano to keep the lads' spirits up for singsongs before they were sent to the front.



The Society's committee and guests are seen at the Blackheath Luncheon Club's annual summer barbecue at the Clarendon Hotel. From the left: Paul Watts, Liz Rhind, Richard Senior, Marilyn Little, Neil Rhind, Helen Reeves, Ana Sutherland, Sacha Bright and Nicola Peers. The Club meets monthly, is organised by Helen McIntosh and is a networking group open to businesses in the Village. It has helped in publicising Xmas lights fundraising and with other issues.

BLACKHEATH CAR PARK FACES UNCERTAIN FUTURE

The future of the Blackheath Station car park is a topic of permanent interest and concern, and two new issues have arisen which will add to this.

First, Blackheath Car Park (M&A) Ltd, a company set up in June 2019, has applied to extend the hours of the farmers' market operation, granted last year to London Farmers Market, to include Saturdays.

There is some evidence that the current traders would not welcome extended hours.

From other discussions, it seems that this is an attempt to get more return out of market use from an under-used car park, perhaps by having craft or other types of markets at weekends.

Second, we have been approached by Acorn Property Management about their outline plans to develop the whole car park, beyond the permanent barrier.

Their architect's brief is to create a public square, backed by a ground-floor retail unit with apartments

above, where the current market operates on Sunday.

They would retain the existing Sunday Farmers Market, with other types of market and public use at other times, and put two further long and narrow blocks beyond.

The middle one would face Collins Street and comprise 3-storey terraced houses with three and four bedrooms. The one at the far end, opposite John Ball School, would be a 4/5 storey building of high quality 1/2/3 bed apartments, including affordable homes.

All homes would be car-free, but up to 70 spaces would be re-provided as public car parking, including disabled spaces.

All ideas are currently at an early stage and subject to feasibility studies and local pre-application consultation.

The developer is emphasising that it wants to develop the site sympathetically, retaining existing uses, but regenerating an under-utilised site to add new uses, while creating what it says is a welcome environment with good pedestrian routes and greening.

Consultation with local residents and the wider community is likely to happen over the next few months, informing the ultimate design, before a planning application is submitted early next year.

Watch this space.

XMAS CARDS

every year we have a Society Christmas card for sale and we usually sell about 5,000 cards. We give the artist full credit for the work with further details, if appropriate.

We cannot offer payment but it is a wonderful way to publicise the artist. The design needs to reference Blackheath and should have a seasonal Christmas theme.

Please let us know if you are interested, or pass this on if you know an artist who might want to be involved.

Designs should be submitted by 26 September by email to office@blackheath.org.

QUEEN'S BLACKHEATH BEACON SHINES BRIGHTLY ON HEATH

An estimated 2,000 people showed up on the Heath for a joyous evening of music and celebration in an event led by the Society to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee on June 2, the start of a specially extended bank holiday of street parties and royal pageantry.

The day could easily have been a washout, with heavy rain earlier in the week, but the sun shone and families and friends gathered early to picnic and find a good spot on the grass. The visual focus was the two-metre high beacon (*seen below*), which looked unimpressive when unlit, but burst dramatically into flame on the dot of 9.30pm, lighting up the night sky and joining a string of beacons across the UK and the Commonwealth.



The flame was ceremonially lit with a giant taper by 15 year-old Rosanna Campbell, the Young Mayor of Lewisham, who performed with great poise and confidence. The Young Mayor is elected annually by school students across the borough, and Rosanna was invited by the Society as a symbol of a new generation giving their time to public service.

The Society's partner in the event was Blackheath Halls and especially Rose Ballantyne, the Community Engagement Manager. She coordinated seven local choirs of children and adults, with each picking music representing the seven decades of the Queen's reign, ranging from classical and opera to musical theatre and gospel.

The choirs were: Blackheath Halls Opera Chorus; Blackheath Choir; Blackheath Halls Musical Theatre Choir; Halstow Community Choir; Blackheath Halls Youth Choir; London Joy Singers and the Blackheath Goes

Gospel choir. A final-year music student at Trinity Laban, Ed Habershon, sounded a specially-written trumpet call to herald the beacon lighting.

The beacon was supplied by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, which also sent volunteers to help with setting up. Lewisham Council contributed £1,000 and the Society also donated about £5,000 towards rehearsing the choirs and hiring the equipment. Many others gave their time voluntarily to make the event happen at comparatively short notice.

With the unexpected size of the crowd and the numbers on stage, we could have done with a music festival-style stage and sound system, but that would have needed much extra funding. For a free event on a beautiful evening, even those at the back took the chance to catch up with friends and neighbours, enjoy the party atmosphere and watch the spectacle of the lighted beacon.

Earlier in the day, the Village was treated to a spirited performance by local actor Nick Day, who took on the role of town crier. Kitted out with an impressive top hat and wielding a dinner bell, borrowed for the day from a local school, Nick read an official "Oyez, oyez" cry announcing the Platinum Jubilee and summoning the crowds to the night's celebrations on the Heath.



As a postscript, the top hat is worthy of its own mention. The *Newsletter* editor, John Bartram, was asked if he knew someone who could lend one for the day, and his wife Clare remembered that she had put her vicar father's top hat in the loft. It was retrieved in its original leather hat box and, despite being around 100 years old, was in pristine condition. By a wonderful coincidence, it fitted our town crier to perfection.

NEW BOOK ON MODERN LOCAL BUILDINGS DUE NEXT SPRING

Local architect Ana Sutherland's new book *Tradition of Change: Modern Buildings of Blackheath and Greenwich 1950-2000* is now at the fundraising stage and is planned to be published in the spring next year.

Most of the research is completed, text editing is underway and original photography and drawings are being carried out.

The book will be self-published and Ana, with Studio Blackburn which is responsible for the graphic design, are now fundraising to cover associated costs for RIBA photography rights, printing and production, photographer and design fees.

The Blackheath Society is pleased to be supporting this publication, which we publicised in a Zoom talk for members in March 2021. Ana will lead two Open House walks on the Cator Estate on behalf of the Society on September 17/18, and she also runs our Architecture Group.

As well as collating sponsors' donations on the website: www.franciscosutherland.com/book, she will give a talk about the book at St Michaels Church, on 22 September at 7pm. Tickets are available on Eventbrite or at the door. The initial fundraising efforts will then be completed with an open Kickstarter campaign in October.

Featuring original photographs by Pierce Scourfield, the book will be highly illustrated and is intended as a historic survey, an architectural resource and a walking guide.



This aspect has three suggested routes - the Cator Estate, around the Heath and around Greenwich Park. A large and easy-to-use foldout map, featuring all 63 buildings with their floorplans, is contained in the outer clear jacket.

Ana told the *Newsletter*: "The book will cover the most significant post-war buildings in Blackheath and Greenwich and explain how they redefined the urban fabric of the area. It identifies the key individuals and practices of the period, with the network of influences and relationships that linked them.

"The evolution of Span estates is another focal point which explores how Span and architect Eric Lyons's work changed the character of the area, contributing to an enduring sense of community.

"All the buildings are surveyed within a wider context, shining a light on how modernism, planning policies, conservation and the arts have shaped, and continue to shape, Blackheath and Greenwich."

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Sarah Beck	Patrick Kidd
Patricia Birch	Stephanie Lester
Susie Blackburn	David Loosmore
Hayley Conick	Anna-Louise Maloney
Barbara Conroy	Sarah Neville
Emily Critchley	Nara Paiva
Robert de Groot	Matthew Plant
Barry Gillibrand	John Robson
Roger Harding	Helen Rowley
Patrick Holden	Virginia Sherlock
Robert Jones	Mark & Sophie Smith

BARCLAYS BANK CLOSES BUT NEW BUSINESSES ARRIVE

BARCLAYS BANK in the Village plans to close on November 10, so there will no longer be a bank in Blackheath.

One cash point will remain at the station and the two others, at McColl's and the Post Office will only be open during shop hours.

This follows the closure of the Barclays Blackheath Standard branch, which lasted from the 1890s to 2021 and re-opened as the Green Goddess Microbrewery.



Blackheath Village used to enjoy three banks. The oldest was the North Kent Bank Ltd of 1864 on the corner of Blackheath Grove and Tranquil Vale, founded and directed by local people. But the manager ran off with the funds in 1878 and it was rescued by the London & Provincial Bank, which rebuilt the structure we see today in 1889.

This company lasted until 1921 when it became part of Barclays.

The London & County Banking Company prospered and eventually became part of the National Westminster Group. It occupied 1 Lee Road from 1881 until it closed and became a restaurant.

We had to wait until 1922 for Lloyds to put up its plate, on the Village corner of Cresswell Park, and this was taken down about 100 years later in 2020.

JIMMY FAIRLY is the new opticians in Tranquil Vale. It is a private French company which began in 2011 and came to London in 2017, and Blackheath is their latest development after stores in Covent Garden, Kings Road and Wimbledon.



They sell their own designs and introduce new collections every five or six weeks, so there are always new frames in store, and they personalise them to provide unique glasses. Prices range from £129 to £149 and eye tests are available, but they do not work with the NHS and so charge for the tests unless you buy their glasses.

They do not deal with children or prescribe for contact lenses. *Time Out* has described them as "probably the city's largest suppliers of eyewear to bearded hipsters." The store supports the charity Restoring Vision by giving away a pair of glasses, for every pair sold, to impoverished communities across the world.



MARY'S LIVING AND GIVING store on Montpelier Vale arrived seven years ago and has just re-opened after a full make-over.

Manager, Roxy Huma (*seen below left*) told the *Newsletter*: "We love our new look which includes a beautiful mural painted over the fireplace by local artist, Debra Malley."

The designer charity shop, created by Mary Portas, gives 100% of its profits to the Save the Children fund.



Rachel Dawson is the owner of the new clothes and gifts store **ON THE HEATH** in Montpelier Vale.

She was part of the Creatives Pop Up store but decided to move to her own permanent shop.

Rachel, *pictured above*, supports local brands, including Anorak from Dulwich, and sells jewellery made by local teenagers.

Sustainable, hand-made clothes are a key focus. Her selection includes What Ted Wears clothing, set up by a local lady during the lockdown.

She stocks a wide variety of gifts and will also be organising craft courses in the autumn.

HYDE VALE DRINKING FOUNTAIN RESTORED AND RE-OPENED

The restored Grade 2-listed Portland stone drinking fountain and streetlight in Hyde Vale were reopened in an evening Greenwich Society ceremony on July 11, which the Blackheath Society's chair and vice-chair attended.

They were erected by the Metropolitan Drinking Fountain and Cattle Trough Association in 1871, and the accompanying granite cattle and sheep trough was installed in 1881.



The trough superseded two smaller cattle and dog troughs and was sponsored for the Association by Emma Trotter in 1877 in memory of her husband Robert, a magistrate from Kensington. She also sponsored three more fountains in Fulham, Notting Hill and Waltham Abbey.

A plaque on the trough says: "Located prominently on the main cattle and sheep drovers' route from Dover to London, the fountain and trough embody the spirit of Victorian philanthropy, providing clean drinking water for the local community, market traders and their livestock."

The fountain fell into disrepair following the disconnection of the water supply and the removal of the lantern and taps during the 20th century.

It was restored in 2021 by the Royal Borough of Greenwich and was grant-aided by the Heritage of London Trust, Historic England, the Culture Recovery Fund, the Greenwich Society and the Peter Harris Trust.

There is a similar disused drinking fountain on Royal Parade in Blackheath Village. It would be good to see that also repaired to its former glory.

NEW CONSERVATOIRE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR APPOINTED

Blackheath Conservatoire has appointed Patrick Holden as its new Executive Director and he began work at the start of August.

He has over 20 years' experience of leadership in not-for-profit and commercial sectors and a lifelong passion for music and the arts, studying music at Goldsmiths College before focusing professionally on music therapy and community arts.

He was previously Development Director at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, an Indian Music and Dance institute in West London, where he was the organisation's strategic lead articulating future planning and policies, working with artists and groups to develop their ideas for new creative projects, overseeing the fundraising programme

and building partnerships with local authorities and third-sector organisations.

Patrick, *seen below*, told the *Newsletter*: "I am delighted to be joining the Conservatoire at this important stage in its evolution. As we emerge post-COVID, it is clear



the role of the arts in enriching individual lives and building a sense of togetherness has never been more critical. With its increasingly diverse team and expanding range of classes and courses, the Conservatoire makes a real difference in the community. I look forward to working with our staff, teachers, students and supporters as we forge the next steps in its illustrious history together."

Jane Burton and Clare Cornwell, Joint Chairs of the Board of Trustees, said: "Patrick brings substantive experience in leadership and management, and has an impressive track record in fundraising and developing external collaborations with a wide-range of organisations. We believe this experience, plus his passion and enthusiasm for the arts will herald an exciting new chapter for us."

ROYAL PARKS PROJECT TO SAVE GREENWICH 17TH C LANDSCAPE

The Royal Parks will begin a three-year project this winter to restore Greenwich Park’s disappearing 17th century landscape and damaged tree avenues before they are lost.

The charity said it will redefine the World Heritage Site’s eroded landscape and restore the declining tree avenues with new and more resilient trees, returning it to its original splendour with a £4.8 million grant from The National Lottery’s Heritage and Community Funds.

The restoration is a key element of Greenwich Park Revealed, an £8 million, four-year investment in the park, and will protect its natural heritage and deliver events and opportunities for the local community. A digital exhibition featuring the history of the Park, with blogs, videos and images, is available on www.royalparks.org.uk/gpr.

Greenwich Park’s formal landscape was commissioned by Charles II in the 17th century and its terraced layout, or parterre, was designed by French landscape architect André Le Nôtre,

But the tree avenues, which were planted with poor-quality Turkey oak trees in the 1970s, are now severely squirrel-damaged and often host pests such as oak processionary moth and knopper gall, which interferes with the reproduction of native oak trees. The restoration will remove 87 trees - the declining Turkey oaks and a small number of badly-damaged beech trees - but all mature trees planted before 1970 will remain.

It will also plant 92 new, more resilient, semi-mature trees, showing a net gain of five avenue trees, to

provide a long-term wildlife benefit. Flowering, nectar-rich limes and elms will support pollinators, including the endangered white letter hairstreak butterfly.



Park Manager Graham Dear said: “In my 12 years here there has been nothing more wonderful than seeing people enjoying this much-loved park to relax in nature and connect with others, or to discover its history. Sadly, this landscape is threatened and, if we don’t act now, the 17th century features could disappear forever. Hundreds of years ago this view was created to please a king. But today we’re restoring it for the enjoyment of everyone.”

Greenwich Park also said that it has won a Green Flag award this year, which is the international quality mark for parks and green spaces.

LOCAL PAINTINGS ON DISPLAY AT GREENWICH OPEN STUDIOS

Greenwich Open Studios, a longstanding group of artists who live or work in Greenwich and Blackheath, hold their next exhibitions at nearly 20 local studios on weekends in September.

GOS, as the group is known, is an annual feature of the Greenwich calendar and the public will be welcomed into the artists’ studios on September 10/11 and 17/18, when visitors can meet the GOS artists and browse or buy the paintings. The artists live in Heath Lane, The Orchard, Blackheath Park, Brooklands Park, Weigall Road, Blackheath Standard, St Johns Park, Ulundi Road and various parts of West and East Greenwich.

Sarah Hyde’s stoneware piece Strata and Deirdre Ellis’ painting, Rocky Shore Iona, *seen below*, are two examples of the wide range of visual art on show in the studios.

Details are on Instagram @greenwich_open_studios and



also on the internet at: www.greenwichopenstudios.co.uk, where you can see detailed maps showing how to find the studios and examples of many of the paintings that will be on display.



SOCIETY REGAINS CRICKET TROPHY IN NARROW VICTORY



The teams relax at the end of the match with the final scoreboard showing a Blackheath Society victory

Richard Dinkeldein reports: It was a lovely day for cricket on July 13, warm and mostly sunny. If you remember, the match between the Blackheath and Greenwich Societies last year ended in a tie with 95 runs each, and our Sam Gardiner was adjudged lbw on the last ball.

This year it was again very, very close. Greenwich opted to bat first and went off at a cracking pace, eventually reaching the dizzy heights of 143 after their 20 overs.

This was nearly the highest total in the 19-match series and it set a real challenge for Blackheath.

But we were not downhearted and gradually amassed runs at a steady rate, with four of our batsmen scoring around 20 runs each, including Joe Gardiner who reached 28 including an impressive six straight over the bowler’s head.

Helped by some interesting bowling by Greenwich, which gave us 33 extras, we arrived at the last over needing just one run to win. Excitement reached fever pitch and the fielders crowded around our batsman.

Four deliveries went by and still no runs came, only two more to go and then Rob Lee nicked the one run needed to win the match. Huge applause from a mightily relieved gathering of Blackheath players and supporters and the beer and wine started to flow.

Before the match got underway we held a short game for the youngsters present, who had great fun and played with huge enthusiasm. An impressive number of people came to support the players and it was good to see the Society’s chairman, Paul Watts, and President Neil Rhind there.

Big thanks are due to Howard Shields and Denise Mabey who kept the score book up to date. As last year, John Bartram was our umpire and, of course, was out on the field for the whole day.

But a really big thank you goes to Olly Taylor, our intrepid captain, who not only scored over 20 runs and took two wickets, but was on the pitch when Blackheath achieved victory on the day. The Golden Elephant trophy, seen below enjoying a glass of rose wine and watching the match, has now returned to its special and rightful place in the Society’s office.



This photograph of All Saints Church on a hot summer evening was taken by new Society member Bob Jones on July 8 and reflects the intensity of the heat that we have all been experiencing during the long drought this summer.

This is brought home even more by the photograph of the “blasted Heath” on the front cover, taken by Howard Shields.

NEW CHRISTMAS LIGHTS COMING TO BLACKHEATH

The Christmas lights in Blackheath are old and many no longer work, so the Blackheath Society has decided to buy new ones. These will light up Village Day on Saturday 3 December.

This is a very challenging project, but we are pleased that we will again be able to kick off the season with a festive day and switching on the lights.

They will be similar to those seen below and will be on the lampposts covering the entire Village centre. The cost will be around £25,000.



We have already received over £15,000 from local businesses, who have very generously donated to our cause. Our top sponsor is Judge & Priestley, the solicitors who moved to Blackheath last year. Additional sponsors to date are: Blackheath Yoga Studio, Copper & Ink restaurant, Sparkly Smile dentist, Winkworth Estate Agents, Boulangerie Jade, Heath Prep School, In Focus Opticians and the Everest restaurant, plus a number of smaller donations.

The Society will also make a donation but, with councils currently unable to help financially, there is still some way to go in our fund raising. We need more support. We hope more Village businesses will come forward to help, and any members interested in helping should contact the office. We will provide a full report in the December *Newsletter* with a list of all our sponsors.

SOCIETY AGM HOLDS LIVELY DEBATE ON KEY ISSUES

The 77th annual general meeting of The Blackheath Society was attended by some 75 members at St Mary's Church Hall on 22 June, chaired in his inimitable style by our president, Neil Rhind.

All resolutions were passed, including the formal transfer of the Society's business from an unincorporated charity to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), concluding the work on that project and ensuring that the Society has a modern constitution and structure.

After the formal business, Diane Summers hosted a Q&A session where four members of the Management Committee were interviewed and asked to summarise their key activities of the last year.

We then held a healthy Q&A session. Issues covered included the possible closure of Blackheath station ticket office, which would be just one of the hundreds of threatened closures around the country.

If this goes further, it will no doubt generate a national outcry and a campaign to stop. The Society would then support this campaign and mount a local campaign to raise awareness and encourage local residents to protest, as we did against the threatened transfer of the direct Victoria service to the Sidcup line.

Other issues covered trees around the Heath, the state of the Village in terms of plants, flowers and decoration of buildings, dangerous traffic and potential crossings in the Village, use of the Heath for events such as On Blackheath, the number and frequency of emptying the bins there and the new station car park regime using only mobile phone apps.

We are carrying a detailed story on page 5 of this *Newsletter* about the future of the station car park and its farmers' market, which were also raised.

Many of these issues will, of course, be followed up by the committee. We shared a glass or two of wine after the meeting to mark the Society's 85th anniversary this year, when the lively conversation and debate continued for some time.

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