

# Toasts all 'round



Surrounded by chairs is administrator Loretta Schauer with new chair Bobby de Joia, left, and retiring chair Lesley Lander.



Heath Superintendent Simon Lee with trustee Ian Harrison and Jennifer Adams, the Corporation of London's Director of Open Spaces.



Kenwood staff at the agm are from left, Head Ranger Jake Williams, Senior Gardener Dave Gibbons and Head Gardener Paul Jackson.

## AGM marks our fifth birthday

Heath Hands celebrated its fifth birthday at the annual general meeting held in October at Kenwood House. It was a gala event, complete with cake masterpiece (see page 1) by volunteer baker Liz Jack and refreshments by Vicky Coral.

Both Simon Lee, Superintendent of Hampstead Heath, and Kenwood Head Gardener Paul Jackson told members how much their work—a staggering 5,423 hours—over the past year is valued. They also praised Lesley Lander for her work as chair over the last year.

The meeting named new officers and trustees. They are: Bobby de Joia, chair; Stewart Purvis, vice-chair; Jock Mutschler, secretary, and Annabel Wilson, treasurer. Elected volunteer representatives on the Executive Committee are Anne Cowking and Robert Deane.



## Christmas 2004

**Above:** A special tree gets special attention from Christmas party host Vicky Coral who opened her home for the event.

**Right:** Meet the team who made it all happen. From left: Party chair Renate Shaw, host Vicky Coral, raffle coordinator Sheila MacLeod, Coral family helpers Roger, Helen and Max and just peeking in, master cake maker Liz Jack.



**Left:** Red jacketed Annette Schiemann scoops first prize in the raffle, winning a meal for two donated by the new Carluccio's in Hampstead. With Annette here are Jeremy Wright, centre, and young Max Coral who announced the winning tickets.

Pictures by Michael Shaw

Picture by Diana Elena Antonescu



# Hands update



Watercolour of West Lodge by Andrew Ginner

## Same place, new address

DO MAKE a note of the new Heath Hands address shown on the envelope above. This is our official new address making our location on the Kenwood estate clear. Now our post is intended to go through our own letterbox, rather than making a detour to Kenwood House first.

This is all because English Heritage is pleased with how Heath Hands is looking after West Lodge where our administration is based. So

much so that when the time came to renew the annual license for the third year, EH offered a three-year lease for the building instead of another one-year license.

The move is a compliment to Heath Hands for bringing the Grade II listed West Lodge back into use, as well as an endorsement for the outstanding work volunteers have performed all over the estate. Volunteers have turned

out in their numbers for such labour intensive jobs as balsam and thistle pulling, bramble control, leaf clearance, coppicing, mulching and pond work.

English Heritage's regional estate surveyor Linda Legg paved the way for the new lease and has coordinated all the arrangements for necessary approvals. Heath Hands trustees are expected to agree the lease at this month's meeting.

## Book your place now

Heath Hands starts the spring programme on Hampstead Heath on 19 January 2005. Enclosed with this issue of *Hands Update* (for members only) is the full programme through April (on green paper) and the yellow availability form to be filled in and returned to West Lodge. Use the new address and send off that yellow form straight away.

## Inside this issue...



Picture by Liz Jack



Picture by Michael Shaw



Picture by Diana Elena Antonescu

Windsor visit page 2

Autumn work page 3

In party mode page 4

# Try Windsor for trees to remember

The latest in our series of visits to other open spaces was an eye-opening look at Windsor Great Park back in October. **Lesley Lander** and **Jeremy Wright** report. Pictures by **Liz Jack**.

**I**t was a pleasant reunion when Heath Hands joined Ecology and Conservation Studies Society members on a visit to Windsor Great Park back in October.

Windsor manager Bill Cathcart, who contributed so much to the ancient tree walk on the Heath (*Hands Update May 2003*) was on his own turf to give us a fascinating overview of this ancient royal hunting forest-turned designed landscape-turned farm-turned visitor attraction. Bill is a pioneer of the non-intervention approach to management of ancient trees.

He described how these trees spend 300 years growing, 300 years resting, and 300 years gracefully declining, and how he nurtures them to prolong their life. Our overall impression was one of awe at these unbelievably ancient trees.

He gave us some insight into the complexities of the site, balancing two million visitors a year with its status as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and candidate for European Special Area of Conservation. Although there are 2,000 oaks more than 350 years old, there are some that have seen eight centuries come and go. These magnificent, gnarled, misshapen, hunchback survivors from the time of Magna Carta are home to many rare invertebrates and fungi, and are the reason why this is one of Britain's outstanding wildlife sites.



Windsor's 2,000 veteran trees are mainly oak with some field maple and sweet chestnut. Compare that with the 790 trees recorded in the Heath Hands recent ancient tree survey on Hampstead Heath. The park is, however, considerably larger than the Heath at 14,000 acres, of which 8,000 acres are forest. We were able to see only a small part close to the Cranbourne Gate.

Early in our walk we encountered a hollow, almost dead oak tree (shown here) which featured in the opening shots of David Attenborough's television series, *The Secret Life of Plants*. It is some 700 years old and was probably a sapling at the time the park was enclosed as a Norman hunting forest in about 1200AD.

Bill Cathcart explained that ancient trees are not dangerous and do not need to be felled just because they contain dead wood. Most of Windsor's hollow oaks survived the severe storms of 1987 and 1991 (and who knows how many other storms in their long lives).

Ancient trees were not the only highlights of the visit. The film was running through our cameras when we came across the park's five distinctive longhorn heifers, introduced recently to help conserve the wood pasture landscape. The cattle keep down bracken and bramble which maintains the open aspect around the ancient oaks.



**Above:** Visitors admire the ancient oak featured in *The Secret Life of Plants*.

**Left:** Last year's Heath Hands chair Lesley Lander, right, trades notes on ancient trees with Frances McGrane who is also a member of the Ecology and Conservation Studies Society.

**Right:** Cattle make an idyllic scene among the ancient trees and grasses of Windsor.



# We're looking after those ponds



The pond edge reclaimed, thanks to Heath Hands.

## There's an elephant in our bog!

Volunteer Matt Baker, former head gardener at Kenwood, writes:

While clearing brambles and thistles from Kenwood's Sphagnum Bog on a Sunday in October, we discovered a huge caterpillar firmly attached to some Rosebay Willow herb.

It was almost four inches long, about half an inch wide and had wonderful markings all over. During our tea break we did a quick sketch of some of the details and then carefully placed it in a patch of Rosebay Willow herb which is not scheduled for clearance.

Having checked the details on the internet I can confirm that our wonderful visitor is an Elephant Hawk Moth (*Deilephila elpenor*). Although it is said that this species of moth is common, I don't think you get to see them very often.

Now that we've spotted the caterpillar, we will have to keep our eyes peeled for an adult. Now that really would be a treat.

• Matt has sent along some information about the moth downloaded from the internet. If you would like to see it, pop into West Lodge.



Enjoying a well-earned tea break during a session at the Wood Pond Kenwood are from left, Anne Cowking, Renate Shaw, Irit Cohen, Lesley Lander and Andrew Coulson.



Andrew Coulson works on removing a fallen tree from the water.



Sunday workers in the Sphagnum Bog are from left, Kristine Johanson, Anne Cowking (explaining the activity to members of the public) Akiko Nakahara and Conrad Blakemore.