



Hands update



Picture by Peter Holland

Education Centre launch celebration

9 June at 6.30pm

See page 3 for an update on volunteer effort to open the new education programme on Hampstead Heath.

West Lodge warms up

Heath Hands' headquarters, West Lodge Kenwood, has just been given a new lease of life. The 18th century gate house, on lease to Heath Hands from English Heritage, now has central heating for the first time in its life.

Damp and cold in the winter, the building was difficult to love and even more difficult to work in. Thanks to the Camden Volunteer Bureau, however, a grant for £3,500 was just enough for English Heritage to match and then some to give the building a proper heating system in all five of its little rooms, including the loo.

As builders were on site, EH took the opportunity to upgrade the loo, repair windows and to install a hot water dispenser which saves much time in preparing coffees and teas for work sessions.

When Ann and Lesley visited the City...

With more than 2,000 hours of service to Hampstead Heath to their credit, volunteers Ann Cowking and Lesley Lander received the Freedom of the City of London at a ceremony held in the Chamberlain's Court, Guildhall. Our picture shows, from left, Catherine McGuinness, chairman of the Hampstead Heath Management Committee; Ann who is a Heath Hands trustee; Chamberlain's Court Clerk Murray Craig; Lesley who is a former Heath Hands chair, and Catherine's deputy Dennis Cotgrove. Ann and Lesley received framed certificates and starred at a reception in their honour.

Time to blitz that litter

The annual Hampstead Heath Litter Blitz is set for Monday 12 June from 10am to noon. Heath Hands can join teams starting all around the Heath and working their way to Kenwood where a picnic lunch will await them. As last year, some 50 overseas Girl Guides will join the blitz, along with teams from the City of London and English Heritage.

Tea on the lawn
at Farm Cottages Kenwood
Saturday 17 June 2006
2.30pm - 5.30pm



Book now
By phone: 020 8458 9102
In person: West Lodge Kenwood

Adult £5 Child £2.50 Family £12.50
includes: cream tea, music, cake sales and children's activities

Training pays off

The continuing training that volunteers receive with Heath Hands won £50 for us in the Camden Volunteer Bureau's Volunteering Organisation of Year 2005 awards. Heath Hands came in as a joint runner-up for the support and training offered to volunteers.

Nominated by volunteer Deborah Wolton, this is the second time that Heath Hands has figured in the competition. Treasurer Annabel Wilson attended the awards event to collect the prize.

Make it your own

If you want to keep an eye on a special corner of Kenwood, consider looking after the Kitchen Garden and herbaceous borders. English Heritage wants two volunteers to take on this project as a regular commitment on Wednesday mornings. Contact Loretta at West Lodge on 020 8458 9102.

Reliable info yields gorgeous map

It takes as much time to check information as it does to collect it.

Jeremy Wright gives us the latest on the ancient tree survey.

About a year ago, the Heath Hands computer database of our ancient tree survey was linked to the City's very powerful MapInfo mapping system. Superb maps were produced showing all the 790 surveyed trees, plotted on aerial photographs of the Heath.

The old hedge lines are clearly highlighted by the surviving ancient trees. However, inevitably a few errors had been made in the laborious data entry of about 20,000 pieces of information, particularly with the grid references of the trees. These resulted in some misplaced trees, the most extraordinary example being a line of trees

which were plotted virtually through the Whitestone Pond!

In the last few months, the ancient tree survey volunteers have therefore rigorously checked the entry of data for almost all these trees. The City has found this checked data of great help. For example, the natural landscape working group (helping to prepare the new comprehensive Heath management plan) has been given a fascinating and useful map of all the trees, colour coded for species. We now are able to positively identify a specific tree, rather than describe it as, say, "the 13th tree along an old hedge line."

The survey also proved useful to Corporation staff when drawing up plans to

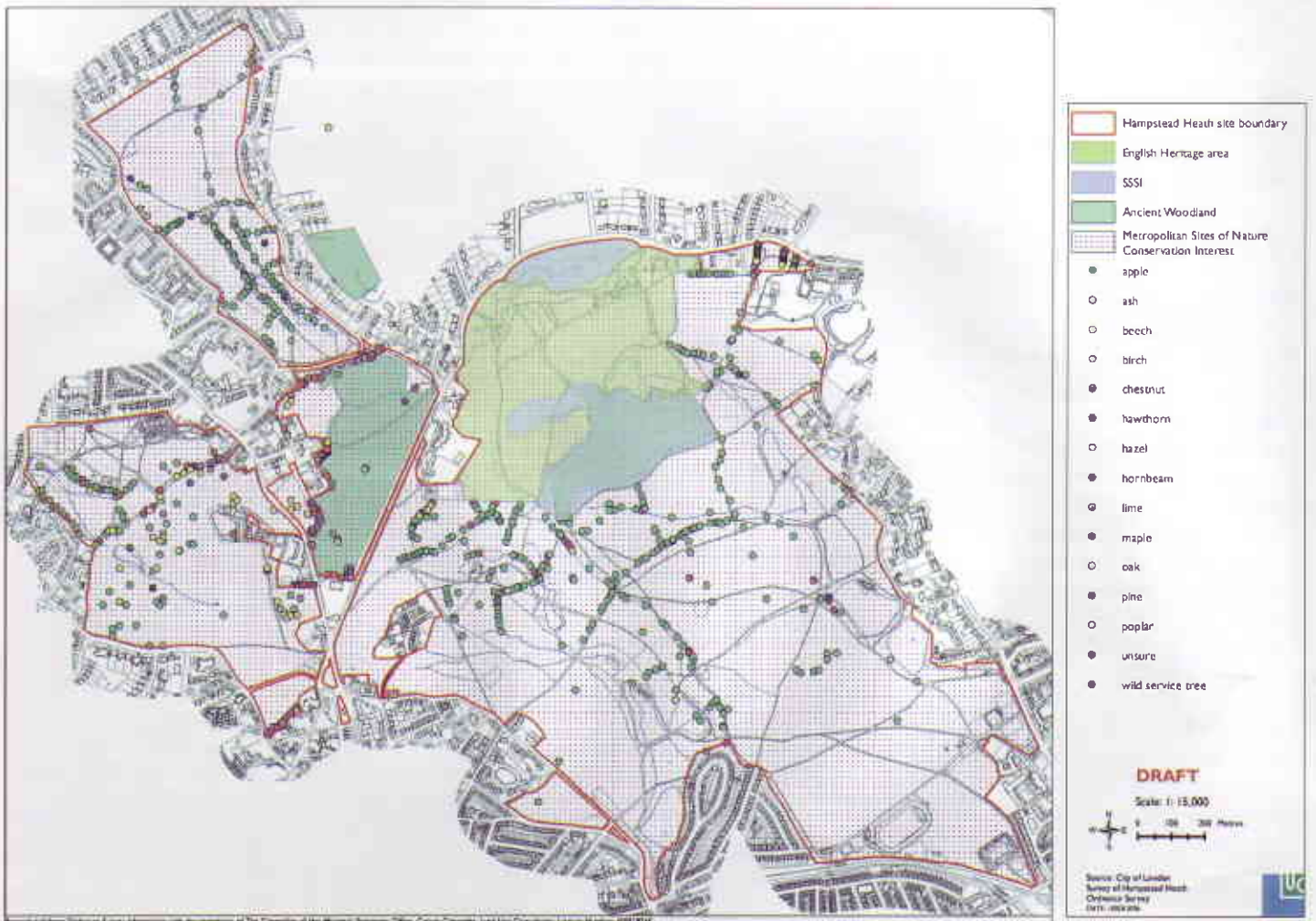
protect the fine veterans in the Hampstead Gate area. The project aims to move the gate into Kenwood a few metres and slightly divert a couple of footpaths. It is also intended to use the survey to inform the Heath's tree safety policy.

Accurate GPS positioning and tagging of trees is scheduled in this year's annual work plan, and volunteers for work may be welcome, perhaps next winter. Our Community Education Officer Sam Crosby would love to develop an interpretation leaflet about our ancient trees, possibly with detailed descriptions of some, and with suggested self-guided walks.

Now that we have an accurate data base, it may be

possible to attach photographs of some of our special trees using hyperlinks. It may be useful to develop the data base into a management tool for the City, to schedule work required and record the resulting effect.

It would also be great to extend the survey to include other interesting or unusual trees: several crab apples, the Yellow Buck-Eye graft on the Viaduct Path, and especially the *Crataegus punctata* tree in the Parliament Hill café enclosure. This last is a Champion Tree of the British Isles, and the best example of its species. The extension of the survey into all these areas could be fascinating and very useful.



Thanks to volunteers, the City's new map shows all the ancient trees on Hampstead Heath.

Education programme takes off

It's all happening at Hampstead Heath's new Education Centre. Volunteers have already completed three full days of training, got stuck in to refurbishing the centre and helping out with after school clubs and activities, all under the guidance of the new Community Education Officer Sam Crosby.

Now Sam is planning the next round of training programmes. Dates will be notified to members as soon as programmes are agreed.

Volunteers who have attended at least one of the first three training sessions are Jennie Deco, Kay Doobay, Francesca Floris, Carol Frankel, Liz Jellinek, Deborah Newbold, Claude Rennert, Judith Rose, Liz Tucker, Eileen Willmott and Joanna Wise.

"They were all bubbling with enthusiasm and have learned a lot already," says Sam. The training programme includes an introduction to Hampstead Heath including aspects of its ecology, geology, history and how the Heath is managed for wildlife. This is followed by a basic session of how to work with children, managing risk, safety procedures, child protection and behaviour management. The third programme is an introduction to the syllabus and how to engage with school groups.

There are also opportunities to practise skills learned in the classroom and on Heath walks by assisting with running after school clubs at the Gospel Oak Primary School and La Sainte Union, a secondary girls' school just across the road from Parliament Hill.

Volunteers who would like to start training should contact Loretta Schauer at West Lodge.

● The spring/summer



Above: Education Officer Sam Crosby with trainees Liz Jellinek, foreground and from rear left, Jennie Deco, Carol Frankel, Joanna wise, Judith Rose, Liz Tucker and Kay Doobay.

Right: Volunteer Joanna Wise teams up with her son Emil during an Education Centre creative workshop.



programme for the Education Centre gets under way on 7 May at 5am with an International Dawn Chorus walk leaving from the Parliament Hill Staff Yard. Half-term creative

workshops to continue the refurbishment work are planned for 31 May and 1 June from 10am to noon and from 1pm to 3pm. The Education Centre launch celebration is set for 9 June at 6.30pm.



Picture by Nigel Sutton



Picture by Loretta Schauer

Above: Young management trainees with the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) visited West Lodge in March to see how small charities are run. Visitors, shown here with Heath Hands chair Bobby de Joia (rear) are, from left, Claire Ranson (Ireland), Wafaa Al Sheridah (Kuwait), Rachael Marchese (Australia), Nahed Debian (Lebanon), Meriem Dridi (Tunisia), and Sajida Al Houli (Kuwait). WAGGGS is based in Hampstead and is a corporate member of Heath Hands. Some 250 of their members each year trade Guide uniforms for Heath Hands shirts for days out working on the Heath while visiting London.

Left: The London Raleigh Club joined Heath Hands for a second full day of work on the Heath. Some 15 members turned up on the day to work at the Hampstead Gate.

Below: Heath Hands came off the Heath and into the community last month, to launch (with the City of London) an initiative to turn a derelict bit of land near the Hampstead Heath station into a Peace Garden. Helping to clear the land here are volunteers Tony Grimes, left, and Liz Jack, right, with Justin Walsh of the City's Heath conservation team. Estate agent Jonathan Bergman masterminded the purchase of the lease and now chairs the project steering group.



Picture by Nigel Sutton