



4 Heath Hands get festive

January 2010

A round of applause

Left: Renate Shaw, former Chairman and Jamie Jenkins, new Chairman celebrate 10 years of Heath Hands at the AGM in October.

Below: Michael Welbank, new Chairman of the Hampstead Heath Management Committee, rallies the troops.



Before and after: clearing bramble, willow herb and scrub from the edge of the Wood Pond at Kenwood, the results of a morning's hard graft are clearly visible. Removing the exuberant Summer growth of these aggressive species gives the more sensitive marginal plants a chance to thrive next year.



Santa's green-shirted helpers get in the festive mood making Christmas wreaths at Kenwood.



Sheila MacLeod together with Dennis and Shifra Ross peruse the raffle prizes at the Christmas party. In total the party raised a heart warming £1,225

Pictures by Dave Lowe and Michael Shaw.





January 2010

Hands update

Newsletter of the volunteers on Hampstead Heath

Here's to the next 10 years!

IT WAS SPARKLING smiles and celebrations all round as volunteers and friends gathered for Heath Hands' tenth anniversary celebration and AGM in October.

Renate Shaw, chairman for the past two years, handed over the keys to West Lodge to her successor, our new chairman Jamie Jenkins. Jamie has been a volunteer since the early days of Heath Hands in 1999, and served as a trustee in 2001. These days Jamie spends much of his time helping at the Hill Garden and Pergola with gardener Ian Greenwood and at Keats House garden, leaving just enough time to fit in his new duties as chairman. We also welcomed a new volunteer representative Dave Lowe and our new Treasurer Sheila Macleod. Sheila was one of Heath Hands' founding Trustees in 2000. Moira Young was presented with flowers after serving three years in the treasurer's post.

This year volunteers notched up a further 6,106 hours and we are well on our way to having contributed 50,000 hours in total by the end of 2009. The year also saw volunteers branching out to work at Keats House garden and Highgate Wood. We launched our new Volunteer Handbook and revamped the Heath Hands

website. All at the AGM agreed that ten years was a good point to take stock, and to think about where we want Heath Hands to be in the next ten years.

The accolades continued as we were treated to an engaging and entertaining speech by the new chairman of the Hampstead Heath Management Committee, Michael Welbank. Michael is a passionate supporter of the Heath and, as he revealed, a great admirer of the work that Heath Hands volunteers carry out. Michael shared with us some of the challenges and issues that the Management Committee are currently tackling, and thanked all the green-shirted volunteers for their efforts in flying the flag for the Heath. He finished by announcing that he and Heath Superintendent Simon Lee had nominated our very own Renate Shaw to receive the Freedom of the City of London in recognition of her hard work whilst she was chairman of Heath Hands, and her dedication to the cause. A well deserved round of applause to Renate and congratulations to all the volunteers who have made the first ten years of volunteering on the Heath such a success.

See page four for more pictures of the celebrations.



Heath Hands' new chairman Jamie Jenkins can often be found at the Hill Garden and Pergola work sessions. Why not drop by and say hello.



Another magnificent cake creation by volunteer Liz Jack.

Pictures by Michael Shaw and Dave Lowe.



Curiouser and curiouser; what are they up to? Find out on page 3...



2 Heath Hands pays tribute

January 2010



Left:
Bobby's family were first to try out the bench. We will stay in touch with them as the foundations Bobby laid for volunteering on the Heath continue to grow.

Bottom left:
Spectacular show - A chainsaw artist from the City of London carves a demonstration piece to show how the memorial bench was created.

Bottom right:
Volunteers all lined up to help plant the commemorative tree near the Vale of Health. Vicki Harding, pictured, takes her turn.

Remembering the lady who made good things happen

Volunteers gathered in October to remember and celebrate the life of Heath Hands' founder Bobby de Joia. Bobby's family and friends were in attendance at the special day to remember the lady who devoted so much energy to her community in Hampstead and in particular to Heath Hands, the organisation she founded in 1999. Bobby loved the Heath dearly and wanted to make sure that as many people as possible got the chance to appreciate the unique oasis of open space so close to the heart of London. She was a champion for people power; motivating hundreds of volunteers to get involved and lend a helping hand in maintaining and conserving the character of the Heath. Persuasive, dynamic and thoroughly

passionate about the cause; Bobby got things done and made good things happen. The Vale of Health Society planted a special commemorative tree in her honour above Greenmoor, Bobby's home for 30 years. Friends, family and volunteers took it in turns to add a spadeful of earth and plant the tree.

We then moved on to Whitestone Garden which was created and maintained by Heath Hands volunteers - one of Bobby's favourite projects - where the City of London had arranged for a memorial bench to be carved in the shape of two hands. Although Bobby died in 2008, her legacy to Hampstead and to the Heath is wide reaching. Both the tree and bench will be fitting reminders of such a caring and determined lady.

Getting to know

"Volunteers needed for OPAL lichen survey". This email from Loretta sparked quite a bit of interest amongst Heath Hands volunteers, so it was an enthusiastic band of us who gathered at West Lodge for our introduction to the complex world of lichen identification.

OPAL (The Open Air Laboratories network) is an exciting new initiative (based at Imperial College London and the Natural History Museum) that is open to anyone with an interest in nature.

It aims to create and inspire a new generation of nature-lovers by getting people to explore, study, enjoy and protect their local environment. In 2007 OPAL received a grant of £11.75million from the Big Lottery Fund and is organising a selection of major, England-wide projects to run until 2012. The project which Heath Hands has been asked to help with involves using the distribution patterns of a limited number of key lichen species to monitor air quality. I think most of us were already aware that the presence or absence of lichens was an indication of air quality (or lack of it!), but, as with so much in modern times, things are not as simple as that these days. The major sources of air pollution are not, as in the past, sulphur dioxide, but instead the various nitrogen-based gases produced by cars (and the waste products of



Nitrogen sensitive Evernia's strap-like lobes are grey-green on top, but white below. Lichens prefer alkali tree bark such as oak or sycamore.





How to know your Physcia from your Flavoparmelia

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Pictures by Dave Lowe and Liz Jellinek.

Lichens are notoriously difficult to identify, so volunteers were lucky to have lichen expert Amanda Waterfield on hand at our training day in November to guide us through the nine indicator species used in the survey. Here volunteers get up close using hand lenses to find the tiny features such as dark tipped hairs or white powdery wrinkles that differentiate the species. Clockwise from the left are Mazal Cohen, Jackie Lowe, Dave Lowe, lichen expert Amanda Waterfield, Heath ecologist Meg Game, Liz Jellinek, Heath ecologist Adrian Brooker and Judith Rose.

dogs – particularly relevant on the Heath!) and different lichen species respond in different ways to these chemicals. Joining us for the training day were the Heath's own ecologists Meg Game and Adrian Brooker, keen to learn more about monitoring these useful indicator species.

The session was led by Amanda Waterfield, from Kew Gardens, who explained the aims of the project and guided us through the various check and information sheets provided. We were then encouraged to identify a number

of lichens – not an easy task, but after much discussion, changing of minds, gentle encouragement from Amanda... and the help of Liz Jellinek's super, high-power hand lens with a built-in light (I think these will be in great demand!) we found that our identification skills were improving. Then the moment of truth – we put our newly-found knowledge to the test in the field. We were then made aware of all the problems associated with identifying living things in their natural habitat – the variability

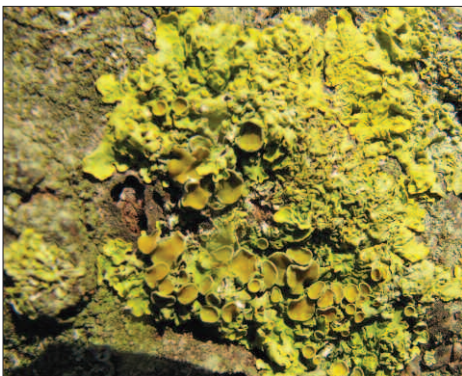
comes as quite a shock – but once again, after some shaky starts, we began to improve both our speed and accuracy. We all finished a very enjoyable morning feeling that we had gained valuable skills and would be contributing to an extremely worthwhile project.

So when in the next few weeks you see pairs of us peering closely at twigs and tree trunks, earnestly discussing minute pieces of bark and juggling pieces of paper and clipboards you will know what we are up to!

Story by volunteer Jackie Lowe.



like lobes are
v. Lichens
or sycamore.



Nitrogen loving Leafy Xanthoria, not to be confused with Cushion Xanthoria, develops orange fruiting bodies as it matures.



Jackie Lowe and Amanda Waterfield measure the girth of this sycamore near Stable Fields. Both Leafy Xanthoria and Physcia were found.



Nitrogen neutral Parmelia's lobes are grey on top and dark brown underneath. Using a hand lens white lines can be seen on the surface.

