

4 *Heath Hands get set*

May 2010



Pictures by Liz Jellinek

Regular Saturday volunteers, students from UCS, work together to uproot a tricky tree stump at the Woodland Ride management session in early February. It took a bit of ingenuity to tackle the obstinate stump, but perseverance won through and they got there in the end.

**Birkbeck Field Trip**

Saturday 15th May Burnham Beeches  
Tour and talk by Helen Read,  
Conservation Keeper. Please contact  
Liz Jellinek (ECSS Field Meetings  
Secretary) on 020 7586 8329 at least  
a week in advance for more details.

**Extra sessions  
extra sessions**

Volunteers are needed for an extra  
maintenance session at the Athlone  
House Garden site during the Easter  
break.

**Tuesday 13th April at 10am,  
meeting at the Stock Pond path.**

Tick the box on your yellow booking  
form to reserve your space.

*and looking ahead...*

Join the team at Highgate Wood for  
some extra conservation work  
during the Summer break in  
September and again in November  
and December. More details will  
follow with your yellow booking  
forms nearer the time.

It's always fun to meet volunteers in their civvies (sans green shirt), so how about getting together in May for our first official Heath Hands social?

Our thanks go to volunteer Ginny Greenwood for organising a great night out for volunteers at the Tricycle Theatre in Kilburn. Ginny says, "Many volunteers will know and love the theatre and for those who don't it will be a revelation! I suggest the rock and roll version of Twelfth Night - Shakespeare like you've never seen it!"

**Twelfth Night by William Shakespeare**

*presented by Filter in association with the  
Royal Shakespeare Company  
directed by Sean Holmes*

Thursday 6th May 8pm (90 mins without interval)  
at The Tricycle Theatre, 269 Kilburn High Road,  
London NW6 7JR

Special "all in" ticket for £15 includes programme  
and a welcome drink.\*

Please contact Loretta at West Lodge by 23 April to  
book your place.

*\*The special deal is only open to Heath Hands volunteers.*

**Do you have an interest in butterflies  
or natural history, and are you confident  
interacting with the general public?**

We are looking for volunteers  
for the newly opened Butterfly House  
at Golders Hill Park, on Hampstead Heath.

Tasks include monitoring the welfare of  
the butterflies, maintaining the Butterfly  
House environment, welcoming visitors  
and helping them to understand conservation  
issues surrounding butterflies and their  
habitats in the wild.

The Butterfly House is open everyday  
between April and October  
from 2pm to 4pm

Contact 020 8458 9102 for more information  
or download an application form online at  
[www.heath-hands.org.uk/volunteer](http://www.heath-hands.org.uk/volunteer)






# Hands update

Newsletter of the volunteers on Hampstead Heath

## Watch out for Summer!

Volunteer involvement in Heath Hands' summer events is more important than ever. This year, as an alternative to the tea party, we thought we'd try something a bit different:



- Volunteers are needed to help with a Heath Hands and Hampstead Heath stall at the **Camden Green Fair** on **Sunday 6th June** in Regent's Park. The Camden Green Fair and Bike Fest is a big event, popular with many local people interested in a greener way of life, so it presents the perfect opportunity for Heath Hands to spread the word about volunteering on Hampstead Heath. Join us for a fun-packed day out!

- As if that wasn't enough for one day, help is needed to marshal the course and to cheer on the runners at the **Hampstead Heath Race for Life** on the morning of **Sunday 6th June**.

- It's litter pickers at the ready for the **Annual Hampstead Heath Litter Blitz** on **Monday 7th June**.

- Then join the City of London Festival for **A Day of Discoveries on Hampstead Heath** on **Sunday 27th June** between 12 noon and 6pm. The festival promises music, dance, participation in arts and crafts and story telling to celebrate its twin themes of biodiversity and the Portuguese speaking world.

*Volunteers are needed to help at these, and other summer events and special work sessions. For further information please see your yellow booking form.*

## Taking the next step...

WHITESTONE GARDEN COULD become the ideal patch for the first ever volunteer-led Heath Hands work sessions.

This development is an important milestone for Heath Hands as an organisation. The Trustees will be working closely with Heath Superintendent Simon Lee over the next few months to set the project in motion.

Volunteer-led sessions will enable us to expand our work programme to include regular maintenance slots for two unique self-contained areas of the Heath. It is hoped that volunteers will gain a greater sense of involvement and will become very proud of their patch.

Simon Lee said "I'm confident that there are the volunteers out there who have the skills and experience to work in this way. Volunteer-led sessions will be an important way to enhance Heath Hands role in looking after the Heath"

Whitestone Garden is a fitting place to start as it was first created by Heath Hands volunteers in 2003. It was a project dear to the

heart of our founder Bobby de Joia, who's memorial bench is sited in the garden.

The other potential candidate is the Athlone House Garden site near Cohen's Field. This is a relatively new spot where volunteers have worked for just a couple of years since it was acquired by the City. The little known site needs a good dose of renovation and tlc - a perfect task for Heath Hands volunteers.

It will be important to find the right volunteers to work in the group and the right people to lead and supervise. Horticultural skills and experience are essential but so are excellent people skills and leadership, as the whole group must be able to work together as a team.

*So over to you... what do you think? Do you feel you have the experience and skills to take part in the project? Would you like to become a volunteer leader? If you would like to get involved, please contact Loretta at West Lodge. As soon as we get a group together, we will arrange a meeting to exchange ideas and to consider the next steps of setting up volunteer-led sessions on the Heath.*



Volunteers turned out in force on the first sunny day of March to give the Hill Garden a spring clean. Leaf clearing, weeding, mulching, cutting back ivy, bramble and bindweed are all jobs that form part of the winter maintenance schedule. The hard work through the winter prepares the way for spectacular summer displays. See page 2 for more on what the volunteers have been up to.

Source: National Insect Week / Creative Commons



**Drone-Fly  
Facts**

*Eristalis tenax*

- Our bee-fly was in fact a Drone-Fly. Thanks to volunteer Lesley Lander for researching these facts.
- You can tell it's a fly not a bee, because it only has one pair of wings, large fly eyes, its antennae are inconspicuous, and its body does not have a narrow waist. It also has no sting!
- Drone-Flies don't just mimic the appearance of honeybees, they fly like them too. Recent research has shown that the flight behaviour of *Eristalis tenax* is more similar to the flight of the honeybee than to that of related flies.
- Drone-Flies play an important role in the pollination of wild flowers and many food crops.

# What's bin 'appening... at the Hill Garden?



Above: Buddleia is a fast growing shrub that only flowers on new growth. Hard pruning by volunteers may look severe, but will stimulate new flowering shoots and prevent the shrub from getting leggy and overgrown.

Below: Spring cleaning team, from left to right, Charlotte Harkin, Liz Tucker, Rachel Mackenzie, David Mackenzie, Andrew Coulson and Lesley Lander.



Pictures by Loretra Schauer

*The voices were getting louder. I could no longer  
I tuned in:*

*Chorus of voices – It's a bee!  
Voice 2 (solitary) – No! It's a fly!  
Chorus – No; bee!  
Voice 2 – Fly!  
Etc. until, finally, the clincher;  
Voice 2 – Look. Look at its head. It's got a fly!  
(Oh! For goodness sake... I thought)  
Chorus – Oohhh...  
Slight disappointment but peace at last.*

*Thus the beautiful Hill Garden on the first sunny  
The bee-fly insect having now, I presume, flown on  
pitch, Heath Hands debating society too ambled by  
several tasks allotted to them by Caroline, who was  
wishing that Ian had not left her in charge whilst at  
Minutely detailed instructions, I am sure, had been  
to you and me). We, as always, obeyed.  
These involved heavy pruning of buddleia and snow  
as well as a general airing and spring clean of the G  
past months had been, you may recall, somewhat dra  
and greys predominating outside and beginning to pe  
inner cognitive processes too. We had gone back to H  
War conditions squishing lavender plants into a lovely  
Michelle) with allium and other flowers placed around  
During this rainy season we were trying to keep every  
manageable; trying to help The Hill Garden retain some  
decency. There was mulching too, of course; this never  
go out of season. And oh how we all love it. When damp  
doesn't just decorate your clothing, it can add a little  
embellishment to your face too.  
So the bee-fly debate was, perhaps, due to our all being  
stimulated by the sun's rays. The so-long-awaited boost o  
Vit D causing brains to work at a faster pace than accusto  
etc etc. We did get a bee, though. A big white-bottomed  
bumble-bee. It was picked up from the grass, whence it ha  
been struggling, and placed by the pond's edge to warm it  
back to health. Definitely a bee who, like us, had got a bit  
overwrought by the sun.*

Hill Garden  
2nd March

could no longer ignore them.

fly!

nd. It's got a fly's head.  
(ught)

e at last.

the first sunny day of Spring.  
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oo ambled back to the  
line, who was possibly  
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e, had been left by Ian (Sir,  
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leia and snowberry shrubs  
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somewhat drab; browns  
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# Lending nature a helping hand

It was all in a days work as Heath Hands volunteers helped to plant 420 trees throughout Kenwood's South Wood during February and March. Well...when we say trees, we mean saplings or "whips" of course. The aim was to boost regeneration in areas of woodland where gaps had formed in the canopy and the ancients had succumbed to old age. Volunteers selected oak, beech, alder, hazel and wild cherry, and searched for places to plant the new trees where they would have enough light to thrive and would grow in keeping with the naturalistic habit of the site. The woodlands at Kenwood are managed in partnership with Natural England and this formed the first phase of an ongoing project to plant 1,500 new trees at Kenwood over a three year period. Kenwood's Head Gardener Paul Jackson explained how as a general rule they try not

to intervene with the natural cycle of the woodland, but there had been concern recently that new saplings were struggling. Most of the trees at Kenwood are mature, so planting the saplings helps to balance the age profile and long term sustainability of the woodland. The new saplings were all native species, and had been carefully sourced so that they were from the same regional genetic stock as the existing woodland. The Forestry Commission has a system of categorising the genetic provenance of seed and tree stock within geographic zones. London and the South East of England is zone 405. Trees can be sensitive to slight climatic changes, so the zones help to ensure that trees and seeds that have evolved in response to a particular area's climate are appropriately planted and stand the best chance of thriving in their new location.



Volunteer Tom Walters prepares the ground. Saplings must be "healed in" to ensure no air is trapped around the roots. Roots must make good contact with the soil for capillary action to work so the tree can draw moisture and nutrients.



The newly planted saplings are protected by these trees guards and stakes to give them the best possible chance of establishing and developing a stable root system.

Pictures by Dave Lowe



## Help to research water pollution across the UK. Take part in the OPAL Water Survey on Hampstead Heath.



GREAT POND SNAIL  
*Lymnaea stagnalis*

You may remember our last issue of Hands Update where we featured the OPAL project which looked at lichens as indicator species for air quality. This time the focus is on water quality of our natural and man-made ponds.

On **Friday 14th May** a special training day lead by Dr Claire Ryder from Imperial College will launch an ongoing project on the Heath to monitor the animals found in our ponds and to discover what this tells us about the health of the water. The day will begin with an overview of the methods used in the survey, followed by a practical session where volunteers can practice taking pond samples.

Volunteers are advised to have a go at making their own long-handled pond-dipping nets to bring along to the session using an old wire coat hanger, a broom handle and a pair of tights or a fine mesh sieve.

For more information on the OPAL Water Survey in partnership with the Natural History Museum go to:

[www.opalexplornature.org](http://www.opalexplornature.org)

Drawing by Loretta Schauer