

# Life and Death in Hampstead Project

Newsletter – July 2010



Welcome to the second edition of the 'Life and Death in Hampstead' project newsletter.

Hampstead Parish Churchyard is being given a top to toe makeover thanks to a grant of £324,500 from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The project started in July 2009 and is being delivered by Camden Council in partnership with Hampstead Parish Church.

The improvements to this picturesque churchyard include new footpaths and restoration work to its gravestones. The site has been open to the community with a variety of exciting events, including practical conservation sessions and wildlife walks.

**Contractor's work:** Richard Griffiths Architects and DBR Company have been commissioned by Camden Council to deliver the Capital works. You might have noticed that many of the tombstones and the western wall in the old churchyard have been already repaired. There is also a restoration work being carried out to the Columbarium in the Additional Burial Ground. Also, works on the pathways have started. The contract completion date agreed between the contractor and London Borough of Camden is the 17 of September 2010.

**Schools:** We have engaged many different schools in a variety of educational activities. The sessions are carefully adapted to contribute to specific learning outcomes in the National Curriculum; subjects covered include Local History, Victorians, Geography, Habitats and other. **If you are a teacher, please book your visit!** Also, children from the Hampstead Parochial school have helped to plant the wonderful **sensory gardens** in the courtyard by the main entrance. The plants are doing very well considering the cold weather at the beginning of the year and the latest lack of rain. If you visit the Additional Burial Ground you might spot some **Bug Hotels** made by the students from the Hampstead Parochial School and the International Community School.



Forget-me-nots in the old churchyard

**Wildlife surveys and conservation work; by volunteer - Tommy Root:** The monthly flowering plant surveys have proved most successful. This is thanks to a sympathetic management regime of seasonal mowing: allowing for a greater mix of habitats. The many nooks and crannies within the churchyard can result in unexpected plants in the most unusual of places, all giving colour to this wonderful wildlife friendly place. Every plant has its own unique history- a place of origin, an association with people: its own story. Monthly surveys regularly result in excess of 100 different flowering plant species- that makes for 100 different stories, all unique, wonderful and full of intrigue.

**Did you know:** the wild strawberry was first cultivated by monks?

**Spotted in the churchyard!**

**Birds:** breeding blue tits, blackbirds, nuthatch, goldcrest, green woodpecker.

**Butterflies:** speckled wood, gatekeeper, painted lady, large white, admiral, comma, common blue, small tortoiseshell.

**Ladybirds:** 7 spot, 22 spot.

**Plants:** nettle leaved bellflower, reflexed stonecrop, lady's bedstraw, lady's mantle, dusky cranesbill, wild strawberry, honeysuckle, lungwort.



Exploring history and wildlife



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**Green Gym - New Community Group:** We are pleased to announce that as a part of the project's exit strategy we have started a Green Gym community group that will help to carry on with the wildlife conservation and maintenance work of the site after the funding finishes. The group is volunteer-led and all of the community leaders are provided with the necessary training including First Aid, Leadership and Risk Assessments. The regular sessions take place each Friday, from 11am to 2pm. The sessions start with a warm up exercise to reduce the risk of injuries and are designed to give your body and mind a thorough work out in the great outdoors – without a dumbbell or rowing machine in sight. The tasks vary from gardening and litter picking to footpath repairing. **Please join us wherever you fancy spending more time outdoors or improving your CV!**

A fantastic **Open Day** took place on the 23<sup>rd</sup> July with guided walks, practical work and designing of a wildlife garden!



Green Gym Open Day – the enthusiastic team of volunteers

**Leaflets/Tomb Trails:** Volunteers have designed and provided drawings for the Wildlife & Nature Conservation Leaflet (big thanks to David Sims and Jess!). It is now available from the church.

David is currently working on the design of new tomb trail leaflets.

**Sound Trail:** Volunteers have been collating historical information about people buried in the churchyard. This will be used to develop a Sound Trail that will be available on CD's and to download from the website. We have commissioned Alan Dein, Radio 4 presenter to deliver the work including design, interviews and editing. The trail should be available by the end of the year.

**Events:** The variety of events proves to be very popular and well attended. So far this year we have had Moss ID workshop, Bat Walk and Wild about Plants events.

**History Guided Walks:** Project Officer and the volunteers have designed a guided walk around the old churchyard. The walk tells a story of the Georgian society and people who lived and visited Hampstead during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The first walks took place during the annual Spring Fair at the church.

The walks are conducted by our wonderful volunteers Dina, Jenni and Jon.

**If you are interested in becoming a volunteer guide please get in touch!**

#### **Date for your calendar:**

- History guided walks: 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> August, at 11am.
- Tree Heritage Walk from Belsize Woods to Hampstead Parish Churchyard: 22<sup>nd</sup> August, time to be confirmed
- Moth Night: 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 8pm
- Seed Gathering, 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 1-3pm
- Tree Dressing, 4<sup>th</sup> December, 1-3pm

There will be more History Guided Walks throughout the year. Please check on the [www.camden.gov.uk/hpc](http://www.camden.gov.uk/hpc) or Camden's 'What's on'

**For more information and volunteering opportunities please contact:**  
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