

Views from the Hill

NEWSLETTER OF THE TEWKESBURY LODGE ESTATE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION Spring 2017



Street Tree Scheme

Welcome to the Spring edition of our Newsletter.

As this goes out, our trees are in full leaf, the birds are singing and the frantic work of feeding nestlings has begun. Now is a good time to think about trees.

We have previously highlighted some of the damage that street trees are causing to our pavements. A detailed audit of the 87 trees on the Estate has shown that only 5 (6%) are causing no damage: 62 of the remaining 82 trees (75%) have damaged the full width of the pavement. Not only does this look unsightly, but the ridges and displaced paving stones that have been pushed up by tree roots are a hazard to pedestrians. The Council is aware of our concerns and has already taken some action. However, the Association is asking for further action to be taken, such as pollarding very large trees to prevent even more damage to pavements and adjacent garden walls.

As well as trying to minimise further damage to our built environment, the Association is also aiming to enhance our Estate with the planting of trees under conditions in which damage to the pavement is unlikely. Our audit of our trees suggested that damage to the pavement could be minimised by planting trees in squares of exposed earth, by watering them as they become established, by selecting trees that would grow no higher than 8 metres, and by avoiding cherry trees, whose superficial roots are so damaging to pavements. Nearby roads such as Court Lane, which follow this practice, have little damage to their pavements and huge benefits to their street.

Lewisham Council has no money to plant new trees in the way it once used to, and so it works with an independent organisation called Street Trees for Living (STfL) which manages the planting of new trees in the Borough. Following a discussion at our AGM in February it was agreed that the Association would liaise with (STfL) and explore the possibility of using

their sponsorship scheme. It was further agreed that TLERA would fund 50% of the cost of six new street trees on the Estate with the other 50% being raised by individual residents.



We are delighted to say that six TLERA members have confirmed that they will sponsor a new tree through the STfL scheme and are selecting the species of each tree and its location. The trees will be planted in squares of exposed earth under the conditions described above for Court Lane. From the species of trees that have already been selected by sponsors, we know that we shall have a spectacular canary yellow coloured magnolia flowering in the spring, some intense reds from acers in the autumn, and red colour though much of the year from a crab apple tree. The new trees will be ordered shortly and planted in the early Spring of 2018.

For next year, our plans are to look for matched funding from outside TLERA. STfL has recently (with the Council) received a grant of £25,000 from the Greater London Authority to fund the planting of street trees. Some of this funding is earmarked for the massed planting of trees in roads which currently have none. There are three such roads on our Estate: Canonbie Road, Netherby Road, and Langton Rise, each of which should be eligible for funding through this scheme, so long as there

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Court Lane street trees: something to aim for?

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are sufficient sponsors. The cost of each new tree will be £240, with 50% coming from the STfL grant and 50% from one or more residents. I am encouraged to hear of four offers of sponsorship for next year, even before asking for any! We will keep members informed of details of this and other schemes we hear of.

Trees play an essential part in making our hill a pleasant place to live. They are an attractive feature of our roads, provide a valuable habitat for wildlife, and may even improve property values. If you would be interested in learning more about sponsoring a street tree do get in touch via our website www.tewkesbury-lodge.org.uk or text me on 07709 578 417.

Stuart Checkley

Dates for your diary

•NGS garden opening

Sunday, May 21 between 1-6pm.

•Summer Picnic

Sunday, February 21 in the Triangle, Horniman Drive between 1-5pm

•Autumn Harvest Lunch

Sunday, April 16 at Hilltop, 28 Horniman Drive between 1 – 4pm.

•Carols by Candlelight

Saturday, 10 December in the Triangle,



*Valerie Ward
Chair*

Chair's report

Your Association continues to replace and update administrative and database systems that have been in place for many years – as you will see from the new style subscription requests enclosed with this newsletter. The annual subscription remains unchanged at £5 per household, which we hope you think is good value for money. As well as the opportunity to get to know your neighbours at the six events we now organise each year, TLERA can now keep you better informed about matters of interest to residents via newsletters, Facebook, email, and our website. My thanks to everyone who has

helped to bring TLERA into the 21st century, particularly Carole Abrahams who had the mammoth task of completely replacing an outdated, far from user-friendly membership database system.

My special thanks also to Stuart Checkley who undertook a detailed audit of every tree on the Estate, established links with other relevant societies and organisations, and is now liaising with members who are sponsoring trees to make our Hill an even pleasanter and greener place to live!

Valerie Ward

Join the conversation!

We do hope that more members will join our Facebook group over the coming year. It is a closed group, so only TLERA members will be able to see and comment on what is posted. It not only enables the Association to remind you of social events and alert you to any criminal activity on the Estate, but also gives you an opportunity to let us know what you think about what is happening in our area.

If you already have your own Facebook account, just log in to your account and search

for Tewkesbury Lodge Residents' Association (or find it at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/456579781396938/>). If not, go to www.facebook.com and follow the instructions to create an account with whatever privacy settings you prefer. Once you are logged in, then search for Tewkesbury Lodge Residents' Association.

*Carole Abrahams
carole@abrahams.org.uk*

Garden opening

We do hope you will come along to see the six very different gardens on the Estate that will be opening on 21 May. Last year we raised over £5000 for cancer and caring charities and, with your support, hope to do even better this year.

We can't guarantee the sunshine but can promise an afternoon where you can get ideas

and buy plants for your own garden, and choose from a wide range of delicious homemade cakes to enjoy with tea or freshly made specialty coffees while listening to music from a very talented duo!

Easter egg Hunt

We were lucky again with the weather on Easter Sunday morning and a regular stream of children arrived to hunt for chocolate eggs hidden in nooks and crannies around the garden at Hilltop. Adults enjoyed coffee and cake while the older children went around constantly re-hiding the eggs for the little ones. Of course the fun is in the hunting, as small children tend not to notice their egg baskets are being emptied! Some children also enjoyed collecting real eggs from the nest box in the chicken run.



Sadly, we didn't have real chicks for Easter since the hens didn't oblige and go broody in time, but hopefully there will now be some little chicks hatched ready for the garden opening on 21st May.

We raised £168 for Demelza Hospice Care for Children from entry money, refreshments, and generous donations. Thank you to everyone who made cakes and helped on the day.

Frances Locke

Hunting for eggs before they're even laid...

AGM

On Tuesday 21 February 2017, we held our Annual General Meeting at the Horniman Primary School. This is the formal meeting required under our constitution but it is also a great social occasion for members to meet and to talk about local issues. This year we had an environmental theme and were very pleased that around 50 members attended. On arrival, over drinks and snacks, members watched a presentation of pictures taken over the last few years, highlighting the variety of events held by the Association and the natural beauty of our area.

Valerie Ward, our Chair, welcomed everyone and, for the benefit of new members, gave a brief history of the Association, reminding us all that TLERA had formed in 1960 and that it has had a very successful record in various campaigns to maintain and improve the character of the Estate ever since. Last year, thanks in no small part to TLERA's opposition, a proposed Controlled Parking Zone did not go ahead. Although the Council were proposing to close Forest Hill library, a community body is now running it and a number of members are volunteering in order to help maintain this important resource. The round up of the year's social activities clearly demonstrated that the Association is going from strength to strength, with the year's new additions to the event programme of the Autumn Harvest lunch and Carols at Christmas proving very popular.

Turning to the formal resolutions, Rowena Lowe presented the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2016. She also explained that the proposed changes to the constitution were simply to clarify the aims of the Association and how the Committee operates. Accordingly, the accounts were received and the new constitution was adopted. Carole Abrahams, Membership Secretary, reported that membership had increased over the period and she praised the work carried out by our hard working Road Representatives. The Executive Committee Officers were all re-elected so all positions are currently filled; there were no other nominations.

With the formal business concluded, we were able to relax and enjoy three presentations covering various aspects of our environment.

Valerie updated us on the new Butterfly House in the Horniman Gardens which had received planning permission. The detailed plans had been discussed with members living near the site and no major concerns had been raised. A lot of support was shown for this new glasshouse attraction which will showcase a range of beautiful, free flying exotic butterflies; the opening later this year is hotly anticipated.

From the exotic, we turned to the sad state of our indigenous street

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trees with an update from Stuart Checkley. The poor selection, planting and maintenance of trees by the Council had meant that a large number had died, others were suffering and the root damage to pavements was considerable. A daunting set of problems to tackle, particularly when faced with a cash-strapped Council. An

one time local resident), was very supportive of our tree initiative. He emphasised how lucky we are in this area to have so many green spaces, including Sydenham Hill Woods and One Tree Hill, remnants of the ancient Great North Wood. It was fascinating to learn of the woods' considerable historic significance and to hear that our local reserves are still important for London as a whole. The benefits of the living environment to air quality and to our general health were evident.

It was also educational to learn and be reminded about the range of flora and fauna found here. Did you know that the painted lady butterfly comes all the way from Morocco to grace the gardens of Forest Hill? 45 species of bird have been spotted locally, including: peregrines; kestrels; long-tailed tits; and the slightly-controversial-but-here-to-stay green parakeets. Foxes, grey squirrels and the tiny soprano pipistrelle bat are visitors to our neighbourhood but, unfortunately, the poor hedgehog is rarely seen these days. The London Wildlife Trust have reported that London is losing a huge amount of natural habitat each year (equivalent to 2.5 Hyde Parks) so anything we can do in our own gardens, such as adding a pond, planting wildflowers, not concreting over front gardens etc, is helpful. We have been pleased to have a long standing association with the London Wildlife Trust and are most grateful to Daniel for his insightful presentation.

We also extend our thanks to the Horniman Primary School for providing the venue for the AGM and to all the staff who made us most welcome once again.

Tina Hildrey



The new butterfly house- a work in progress

initial, collaborative approach was proposed to replace trees whereby residents would raise sponsorship funds and take responsibility for watering a new tree; this approach had worked well for the Brockley Society. It was encouraging that a number of members indicated that they would be prepared to sponsor a tree. The Committee would progress the idea with the Council.

As you might expect, our guest speaker, Daniel Greenwood of the London Wildlife Trust (and



Changes to refuse collection

There will soon be major changes to our rubbish and recycling collections. Lewisham estimates that 38% of rubbish collected in black bins is food waste., so from July a weekly food waste collection will be introduced. Residents will get a small food waste bin to go alongside their other bins, together with a smaller kitchen caddy for food waste. Recycling collections, including the garden waste service introduced last year, will still be weekly, but the black wheelie bins for non-recyclable rubbish will switch to fortnightly. There may also be some changes to collection days. All households will receive a letter explaining the changes, as well as details on how to use the new service, and a calendar of collection days. If residents recycle wherever possible, and compost or use the brown bins for garden waste, only 11% of rubbish produced needs to go in the black bins. The Council expect the changes to waste and recycling

services to deliver a £500,000 annual saving over the coming years.

The Council is making these changes to increase recycling rates in Lewisham: currently the borough recycles only 18% of waste. This is the third lowest not only of the 33 London boroughs, but also in England. The Government has introduced a national target to recycle 50% of waste by 2020 – fines will be imposed on any borough failing to do so. If that happens, prepare for further increases in our Council tax...

So the message to residents is reduce, reuse or recycle!

Footnote

What does not help our recycling rates is that about 15% of everything we put into our green

bins is refused at the recycling centre because of contamination. A large percentage of this is food waste, which should be resolved with the introduction of the new food bin. Another major problem is residents putting their recycling in black bags before putting them in the bin.

There is also some confusion regarding textiles

that should be recycled separately. So residents are urged not to put food into their green bins, rinse out all containers, empty everything out of black bags, and take unwanted clothing down to the charity shops in Forest Hill - they can get £5 a bag for it!

Fly tipping

We have been asked by several residents about where to dispose of DIY waste, rubble, soil or stones. Unfortunately, Lewisham now classify this as construction and demolition waste and it cannot be put into your wheelie bin(s) or taken to the waste and recycling centre. The Council suggest you should consider hiring a skip or hippo bags, or contacting a licensed waste carrier.

The fact that they will also not accept trade waste, including waste removed by a private contractor on behalf of a resident, may also explain why the Association has received reports of three instances of fly-tipping of building materials in Horniman Drive, Westwood Park, and Netherby Road in the last two months, two of which happened in the early hours of the morning...



Traffic and transport

Langton Rise is an important access road for the Tewkesbury Lodge Estate. It is the road at the bottom of the Estate, by which we exit to East Dulwich or the South Circular. For many years Langton Rise has not been a problem for us, but the conversion of a previously derelict property to the north, (a great development for the area),



has led to more cars being parked on the road, and a 'Kamikaze' situation where cars coming up the Hill find themselves face to face with cars going down.

This situation is made worse by the fact that turning down into the road from Westwood Park is 'blind', so there are situations where the cars turning down are forced to stop and reverse through a 90 degree turn to allow upcoming traffic to go past - particularly a problem at 'school run' time when a whole queue may form. The remedy is simple - Lewisham Council need to allow residents to park on the pavement, as they do - just around the corner in Westwood Park.

We would be very interested to hear the views of residents via our website (www.tewkesbury-lodge.org.uk) or Facebook page.

Dave Leslie

Langton Rise, before the rush hour...

Night walk

The battle continues to secure maintenance of the 'night walk', the footpath that connects Westwood Park with the South Circular Road. In recent years maintenance of this path has been neglected. As it is at the foot of a long slope, the path is often very muddy with puddles across the path even when rainfall has

been moderate. The situation could easily be improved if the Council just cleared the vegetation that has been growing on one side of the ditch, but they don't think it necessary. As things stand, the muddy nature of the path and the puddles and wet leaves across it are a nuisance for walkers and a definite hazard for cyclists.

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The path is part of the Green Chain Walk, so on 14th of February I wrote to them asking if they were concerned about its upkeep. As yet no reply has been received. The path is also part of the London Cycle Network which is run by the Greater London Authority. So I also wrote to them. This time I was lucky enough to get an immediate response. It informed me that “the GLA is committed to responding to your query

within 20 working days”. This was positive news, or so it seemed, but after those 20 working days had elapsed I had to write again to remind them that no reply had been received.

Thus, your Committee works to maintain the quality of the local area, often successfully but not always so...

Michael Levin

Hedges

Our mature gardens with their established trees and shrubs can be a blessing and a hindrance with the maintenance they can bring. Many years ago, under the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003, one element was included that you may not be aware of: the law that covers high hedges – something that might be of interest to residents. The intention of the Act is to provide a definition of what a high hedge is, and clarify the position for householders to ensure no one is adversely affected by a high hedge. A high hedge is defined as a barrier to light or access that is formed wholly or predominantly by a line of two or more evergreens, and rises to a height of more than two metres above ground level.

The Act covers evergreens and semi-evergreen trees and shrubs, but they do not need to be consecutively planted if the overall effect is a barrier over two metres. More detailed information and guidance is available on the Royal Horticultural Society website (rhs.org.uk).

Rowena Lowe

Footnote

On the subject of hedges, do be careful about cutting them back before checking there are no birds nesting in them. While trimming an evergreen hedge, a blackbird sitting on her eggs was disturbed and flew off uttering an alarm call very different from her usual lovely song. Fortunately, she returned after the gardener's hasty retreat, leaving the rest of the hedge



untrimmed until the end of the breeding season in late July, or even later given that chicks may be found in a nest well into August!

Not a good look

Planning

The last few months have been quieter on the planning front, but not so with Lewisham Council. Under their new head of planning, Emma Talbot, they are restarting the community planning group, and now have a dedicated enforcement officer within the Planning department.

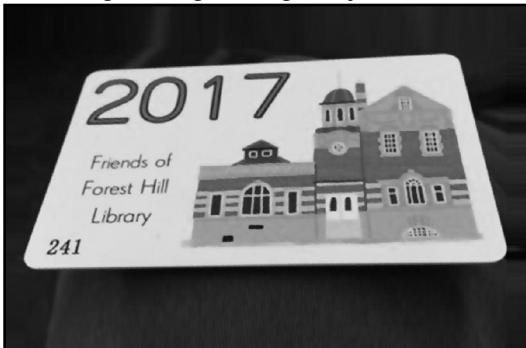
Over the past few years, the number of planning applications has tripled and the department has

reduced staff levels by half. Alongside all the local changes, they are monitoring the effects of Mayor Sadiq Kahn's proposals for London-wide planning. Therefore, we can expect a few consultations and changes to Lewisham's planning policy in the near future.

Rowena Lowe

Forest Hill Library

Our Community Library now has a new computer system for users, with newer, faster PCs, a new printer, new operating systems, and a new self- booking system to speed up tasks and increase the capacity in the system. This is thanks to various fund raising events, including over £10,000 raised in just over 8 weeks with an online crowd-funder in the late Autumn, exceeding the original target of just £6,000.



Over £19,000 has also been raised to create a second-hand bookshop, Leaf and Groove, that hopes to open in Forest Hill this summer. Set

up to provide a sustainable income for Forest Hill Library, it will primarily be a book shop but will also be selling carefully selected vinyl records, and probably CD's as well, from some of the great artists and musicians. Although dealing in second hand, good quality, largely donated books and records, it will definitely not be a charity shop!

Libraries are essential to communities. You can really make a difference and help to maintain the library by becoming a Friend of Forest Hill Library – it works out at just £2.50 per month, and saves you money when you shop locally! As well as receiving regular newsletters, you also receive a 10% discount at many of the shops and restaurants in Forest Hill. Membership cards can be purchased either in person at the library or online at FHLlibrary.co.uk

Footnote

*The Library now has a new phone number
020 8244 0634*

Horniman Gardens news

2017 is turning out to be a great year for the Gardens team with big projects in the pipeline, including the new Butterfly House to plant up, as well as keeping the Gardens looking as lovely as usual.

Visitors may have noticed that the beds in the Display Garden that are normally used for food plants are empty and a bit weedy at the moment. Fear not, we have big plans for this area! The perimeter L-shaped beds will become an ornamental grass garden, and work on those will start in June. The two rectangular centre beds will become a display highlighting the connections between people and the landscape, tying in nicely with our anthropology redisplay in the World Gallery. We start planting for this in October, ready for 2018, and will tell you more about it nearer the time. In the meantime, we will be growing 20 varieties of pumpkins in these beds through the summer, as a one-off pop-up garden. These plants grow really fast, so if you're here regularly you'll almost be able to watch them grow. Daniel, our pumpkin expert, is hoping to grow a record-breaker!

The new Horniman Butterfly House is currently being built, and we are really looking forward to planting this up with a fantastic mix of tropical plants, that will not just provide a suitable environment for the butterflies but will be a fantastic display for plant lovers. We want to create a real jungle atmosphere. We have just had the first delivery of plants, and they are

being stored in our nursery at the moment.

Look out for our Prehistoric Garden this year. It will start looking really good as the plants begin to establish, with many of the ferns already producing a new

flush of leaves. The Rock Garden also looked great when the spring bulbs were in flower.



We have, of course, been doing a lot of the usual spring maintenance which at this time of year involves mulching as many of our beds as we can. We create tons of our own compost every year from our garden waste, and this all gets reused in the Gardens. Organic mulch helps improve soil structure, retain water and suppress weeds, as well as adding nutrients. Over the next few weeks we will be giving the cacti and succulent garden a tidy-up and makeover, and will be replanting the tropical border around the new Butterfly House.

When you're next in the Gardens look out for our wildflower bed behind the Sunken Garden – it's looking amazing, and is fantastic for wildlife.

So lots to see this year in the Horniman Gardens. The team here hope you enjoy them!
Wesley Shaw
Head of Horticulture at the Horniman Museum and Garden

*Footnote
Our congratulations to
the Horniman Museum
for being awarded a
gold accolade from
Visit England given
only to the highest
scoring venues taking
part in the Visitor
Attraction Quality
Scheme.*

News from the Horniman Museum

The recent renovations to the Conservatory are now complete and the hoardings have come down. This Victorian listed building now has under-floor heating, new interior lighting, and better drainage. And if you haven't already seen it, take a look at the spectacular new tiled floor next time you're passing. The Conservatory reopened in April and is once again available for weddings, civil ceremonies and parties, as well

as Horniman events. The Horniman at Night event – our annual event as part of *Museums at Night* – will be an ideal opportunity to see the new-look Conservatory in all its glory. Keep an eye out for the full programme on the website, and join us on Thursday 18 May to enjoy the galleries and Gardens at sunset and after dark.

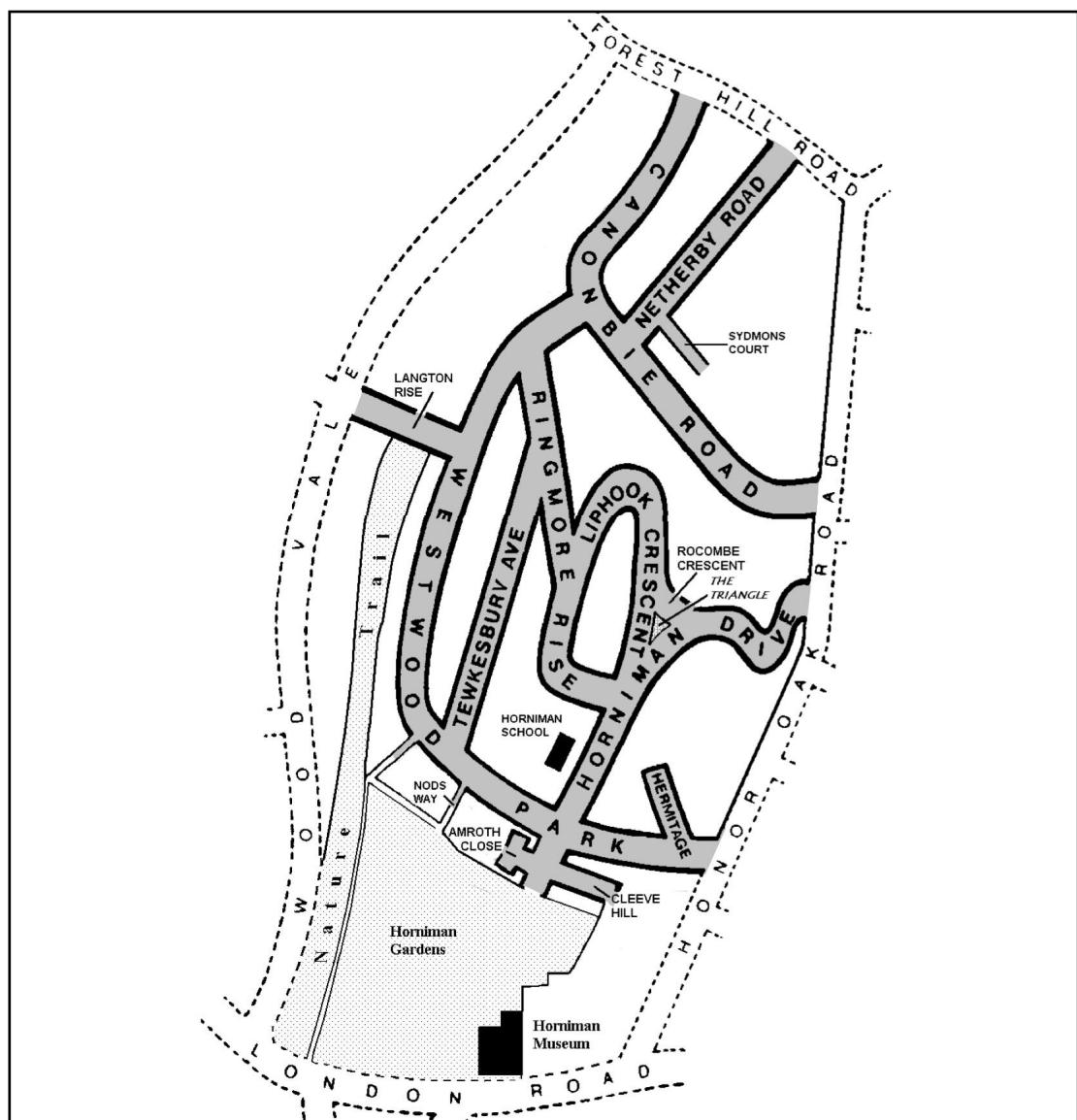
*Alison McKay
PR & Media Officer, Horniman Museum &
Gardens*

Horniman School event

The Horniman Primary School will be holding a May Fair on Saturday 20th May between 12.30-3pm. There will be a bouncy castle, treasure hunt, craft stalls, oven fired pizzas, a maypole, cream teas, and much more. Taking place alongside the fair will be a community Chelsea Fringe event, a Celebration of gardens and

gardening, where you can make a flower garland or seed bomb, help lay a wild flower meadow turf, or enjoy a flower inspired cocktail! Entrance fee £1/£1.50.

Do go and join the fun!



This newsletter was compiled and edited by Valerie Ward, and proof read by Carole Abrahams. Graphic Design by Michael Schlingmann. Contributions from members are very welcome and can be e-mailed to us at secretary@tewkesburylodge.org.uk