

# Views from the Hill

NEWSLETTER OF THE TEWKESBURY LODGE ESTATE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

May 2021



## Opening the Garden Gates!

For the last 20 years some of our Garden Group members have opened their gardens for the National Garden Scheme (NGS), raising over £4,500 for cancer and caring charities at our last opening. Sadly, the event had to be cancelled last year due to the Covid lockdown. However, subject to the current restrictions being lifted according to the Government's roadmap, we plan to go ahead in a very limited form on Sunday, May 23rd from 1 - 6 pm.

The event is organised by the TLERA Garden Group. Five wonderful gardens will be opening: a walled artist's courtyard garden packed with plants, sculptures and ceramics; a city sanctuary garden built on 3 levels with rose and jasmine draped arches; a jewel garden full of colour with topiary, a cutting border and vegetable plot; a garden planted with shrubs and perennial plants interspersed with drifts of



and caring charities, with a share to St Christopher's Hospice.

Unlike previous years there will be online central booking of tickets via the NGS\*, with numbers being restricted. Volunteers will be required on the day to ensure that social distancing is maintained and that numbers entering each garden are managed according to the size of the garden. In previous years, TLERA members have also been happy to bake and donate a cake for us. So please do contact me on 020 8699 8432 or email: [vpward44@gmail.com](mailto:vpward44@gmail.com) if you can help. It would be really appreciated.

Given how variable the weather has been this Spring, we hope that the day will be warm and sunny, or at least not raining! Whatever the weather, we are looking forward to seeing you for a wonderful afternoon.

*Valerie Ward*



\*Book a ticket at <https://ngs.org.uk/view-garden/30170>



drought tolerant self-seeders; and a vintage garden with a flock of 15 chickens of different varieties, and a new activity for children of all ages.

The open gardens are at 7 Canonbie Road; 27 Horniman Drive; 53 Ringmore Rise; the Coach House, 3 The Hermitage; and Hilltop, 28 Horniman Drive. In the Triangle of green space between Liphook Crescent and Horniman Drive there will be plants for sale, and delicious home-made cakes, tea, and coffee. Entry is £8 for a combined ticket for all 5 gardens - children go free. All proceeds will go to cancer

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## Three Peaks Challenge

The Three Peaks Challenge returns for a third year! The children from Horniman Primary School are once again taking to the hills to raise funds for the maintenance of the trees and grounds of our beautiful and unique school. On the morning of Sunday 23rd May, families and friends from reception (aged 4) to year 6 (aged 11) will be tackling a 3k route that takes the intrepid walkers to the summit of our 3 famous peaks (Canonbie, Ringmore & Westwood). In addition to the hills, our walkers will enjoy the scenic Horniman Gardens nature trail before a final push through our much loved local park.

In previous years, we have been graced by the ever generous TLERA community who kindly volunteered as marshalls but sadly, in Covid

times, we have had to reduce contact points and instead place visual clues along the route rather than have manned check points. Whilst this is a shame, we hope that you will still be able to shout some encouragement or cheer the families on as they make their way round our amazing neighbourhood!

*Adam Jones*

If you would like to sponsor our community event, please do so by using the following link. Any contribution, big or small is greatly appreciated.

[https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/charity-web/charity/displayCharityCampaignPage.action?charityCampaignUrl=hornimanschool\\_nature](https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/charity-web/charity/displayCharityCampaignPage.action?charityCampaignUrl=hornimanschool_nature)

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## The Spring Garden 2021

It's mid-April and the garden is bursting at the seams! One of the first stars to appear were the gorgeous pale yellow long-lasting primroses that take over wherever they are happy. The



pasque flowers (*Pulsatilla vulgaris*) are by the back door, so I don't miss them. They are a strange wonder – the furry buds are quite large and then open up to goblet-shaped purple flowers with bright yellow stamens. I love to watch the progress from their first appearance from the soil to opening up to their full glory.

In dappled shade is a statuesque evergreen shrub which proudly displays round clusters of honey-scented flowers. The *Berberis darwinii* evergreen shrub, given to me as a present, is covered in the brightest small orange flowers. Even on the dullest days it defies the gloom! Invaluable long-lasting forget-me-nots, the bluest sky-blue colour, fill every vacant patch of soil. They are perfect in spring and eventually will give way to summer flowering plants.

The blossom on my native bird cherry *Prunus padus* is getting ready to display its long tassell-like scented racemes of white flowers that dazzle like long dangly earrings. A treat for pollinating insects. You could almost not notice the tiny scented wild violets that this year are popping up in many of their favourite corners of the garden. They are good to decorate a plate of food, as are primroses. Much to enjoy along with fabulous daffodils and stunning tulips, whose colours seem very pure. Maybe the air is cleaner and clearer this year. Finally, all the indescribably amazing tree blossom can be admired - not only in our gardens but on our streets and local parks.

*Alice Hutton*

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## Dates for your diary

**NGS Garden Opening** – Sunday, 23 May, 1-6pm. Pre-book at <https://ngs.org.uk/view-garden/30170>

**Annual General Meeting** - Tuesday 8 June on Zoom (to be confirmed)

**Summer Picnic** – Sunday, 27 June, 1-5pm in the Triangle, Horniman Drive.

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## Chair's Report

It has been a very difficult year for all us, but it's been heartening to hear the many instances of how the community spirit on our Estate has been strengthened, with neighbours coming together to help each other during the pandemic crisis. Let's hope that our lives will begin to

resume some semblance of normality with the lifting of lockdown and with more and more of us being vaccinated.

With this in mind, as you will read elsewhere in this newsletter, subject to current Covid restric-

tions continuing to be lifted, we are planning a limited Garden Opening for the National Garden Scheme on May 23rd. We have also ambitiously set the date for some form of Summer Picnic in the Triangle on Sunday 27 June. This will of course be subject to review - but let's live in hope and put it in the diary.

The 2021 AGM is to be held at 8pm on 8th June via Zoom, providing our planned guest speaker, Cllr Sophie McGeevor can make it. We hope that as many of you as possible join us (we need a quorum of 20). Further details will be sent via the TLERA email. On that point,

we have email addresses for the majority of our members but do urge those of you who have not provided one to do so. It is primarily used to keep members rapidly informed of any criminal activity on our Estate as well as reminders of any forthcoming events. Importantly, it has also enabled us to send newsletters and keep members informed during the Covid lockdowns.

Hopefully the Covid restrictions will continue to be relaxed, and we can all get back to our normal lives this Summer! Meanwhile, stay safe.

*Valerie Ward*



*Valerie Ward, Chair*

## Membership and subscriptions

Thank you to all our members for supporting the Association over the last year and for all the help given to the neighbourhood during this difficult period. We declared a subscription holiday for 2020/21 but the collection of this year's subscription - still only £5 per household - will commence later this year as long as it is Covid-safe to do so. Some new residents joined over the past year and their subscriptions will be counted as 2021-22. Our coffers are diminishing and events are hopefully restarting so funds are required. New members are always very welcome so do pass on any

requests for information about the Association from new (or old) neighbours to your Road Representative.

Remember that all members can join the TLERA Facebook Group, where matters discussed range from planning to recommendations, local news, and splendid photos of our Street Trees and other natural beauties. If you want advice about using Facebook, please feel free to contact me.

*Carole Abrahams, Membership Secretary*

## Award Winning Street Trees

As members will know, as part of the Association's Greener, Cleaner, Safer campaign, a street tree initiative was launched in Winter 2017. Damage to our pavements was being caused by trees which were much too big – and a cash strapped Council could do little other than prune the worst culprits. So the decision was taken to raise funds for much smaller trees that would not spoil our pavements.

The Association is now part of the best community tree planting project in London (2020 Forestry Commission prize) and we are delighted that, thanks to members' generosity since 2017, we now have an additional 49 street trees on the Estate providing colour and interest all year. At this time of the year the impact of the new trees is particularly apparent with the burst of blossom, and a stroll around our streets in April and May is an absolute delight.

Stuart Checkley leads the initiative and is a fount of knowledge about the varieties chosen. Some of the existing supporters and members were treated to an inspirational guided walk at the beginning of this month and more will undoubtedly follow for those interested. The



scheme goes from strength to strength and it is hoped that further planting will take place this winter. Residents can support the project either by contributing towards the cost of a tree or by offering to water a tree near them. If you can help, please contact Stuart Checkley at [stuart@streettreesforliving.org](mailto:stuart@streettreesforliving.org).

*One of our newly planted trees*



## TLERA continues to oppose development of our green spaces



*Mature tree on the Tetra mast site*

London is fortunate in having many parks and open spaces where residents can escape their sometimes crowded homes to find peace and recreation. But there is another stakeholder in the open spaces of London – the wildlife and plant life of England. In our own area we are lucky to have Sydenham Woods nearby, in addition to One Tree Hill itself, but also important to our wildlife are pockets of undeveloped land on the Estate that have been completely undisturbed for decades: the Metropolitan Police Telecoms site adjacent to Horniman Drive, and the site of the Victorian covered reservoir enclosed by houses on Canonbie Road, Horniman Drive, Rocombe Crescent and

Liphook Crescent.

In our last newsletter emailed to members we highlighted the development proposal of the Metropolitan Police Telecoms site, that Lewisham Council has put forward. The question we at TLERA are asking is – why? We understand that Lewisham is under pressure from the Government to meet targets for new housing in the Borough, but surely the preservation of green space is also a target? There is still under-developed brownfield land in our local area, a very good example being the Forest Hill Industrial area by the station, which is little used. Planning to build housing there will help Lewisham to meet its housing targets, provide better access to Forest Hill station, and help to revive the town centre and improve our amenities without destroying a wildlife sanctuary. Both the Association and individual members objected to this proposal. We wait to hear the outcome.

The Victorian underground reservoir was built in 1887 and it has been a haven for wildlife. The owner, who also owns the land at 116 Canonbie Road, purchased the site in 1995 from Thames Water, and the three planning applications submitted over the following four years



*The appearance of the reservoir before and after digging commenced*



were all rigorously opposed by the Association. With the support we received from the Friends of the Great North Wood, the London Wildlife Trust, and the London Ecology Unit, the Council not only refused all applications but also designated the land as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC).

However at the end of last year the owner started to remove topsoil and undergrowth from the site, thus destroying most of the natural habitat. The Association will continue to closely monitor the situation.

*David Leslie*



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## On the Verge

Members may have noticed that the green space at the top of Ringmore Rise has been having something of a makeover over the last year or so, thanks to receiving a grant from the Council's Greening Fund. In addition to the new trees and smart edging, bulbs have been planted and, earlier in the spring, it was lovely to see both the snowdrops and narcissi emerge. A new noticeboard has also been provided for the Association and this will be fully utilised (once we locate the key). Thanks to Stuart Checkley for successfully applying for the funding, and then planting the bulbs. There are more plans afoot so keep watching this space!

A little harder to spot at the moment, but no less welcome, are the English bluebells adding a little colour this Spring under the woodland trees in the Triangle. These bulbs were planted 'in the green', a couple of years ago in the hope

that they would quickly naturalise and cover the area. However, they are taking their time to get established. This may largely be due to the problem of watering them in very dry periods, and the soil not proving to be that fertile. We plan to add some organic manure this Autumn to improve the soil, and hope that in years to come residents will be treated to a carpet of blue at the top of the Hill rather than the small number of bluebells that have appeared giving more of a spotted handkerchief look! Meanwhile, if you live opposite the Triangle and have a hose point that we could use, do let us know.

And if you love to see bluebells, why not visit Beckenham Place Park where there really is a splendid display? Definitely something for us to aim for in the Triangle.

*Tina Hildrey*



*The bluebells at  
Beckenham Place Park*

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## Crime and Policing

Statistics comparing last January and February 2020 with the same months in 2021 were provided at a Forest Hill Ward panel meeting with the Police on 14th April. These follow the same trend as the whole of March to December last year and reflect a nationwide picture of lockdown.

Basically, burglary is down by about 12%, criminal damage by about a third, and violence against the person down by about a quarter. The big increase, and this is a trend that is national, is theft of and from motor vehicles. The police believe that most of this crime is opportunistic. Statistics were also presented for Brockley, Sydenham and Dulwich Village. There were similar reductions but for some reason they were all greater than for Forest Hill.

The police were unable to account for this and thought it might adjust in the coming months.

*Lewisham Police  
Station*



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There have been ongoing disturbances and possible drug dealing in Ringmore Rise during the evening hours spanning a considerable period of time. This has been distressing for the residents nearby. It has been brought to the attention of the police several times and some of those residents affected participated in the meeting to present their concerns.

Unfortunately, the offenders have not been caught to date, but it is important this remains an ongoing item until it is resolved.

The police in Forest Hill Ward are a small team of four and issues regarding the enforcement of Covid restrictions have been quite dominant and time consuming. They are limited in what they can achieve but it is important that the police listen to the concerns of the community and reflect these concerns in their ward priorities for action. If any of you would like to participate in any future Ward Panel meetings to present your concerns do not hesitate to contact me. Your contributions would be most welcome at [christinem.noon@gmail.com](mailto:christinem.noon@gmail.com).

*Christine Noon*

## Road Works



Over much of the winter road traffic in one part of our area was disrupted as Thames Water worked on their necessary task of installing new pipes. During this time Langton Rise was reduced to one-way traffic and Westwood Park was narrowed at its north end. Canonbie Road looked even more like a building site, a particular blemish on one of London's most amazing roads, both for its steep gradient at the Honor Oak Road end and for its stunning views towards central London and, in the other direction, towards Kent.

To ascertain the current situation my dog Chango and I boldly ventured out into the affected areas. It was a positive experience. Spring has come and the trees in the local streets are in blossom; the Covid pandemic is much reduced; and perhaps the greatest miracle of all – the local road works have gone! Within the Tewkesbury Lodge Estate area normality has at last been restored.

Thames Water have clearly favoured the residents of the Borough of Lewisham because the pipe replacement work still continues on the part of Langton Rise that extends over the border into Southwark, a reminder of what we endured for so many months.

*Michael Levin*



*Woof woof, yip and a  
woof, yip squeak  
growl wooff wooff...  
good boy.*

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## Library reopening

Forest Hill Library reopened on April 17th, but for click and collect only. To reserve books you can ring 020 8314 8024, email [reservations@fhlibrary.co.uk](mailto:reservations@fhlibrary.co.uk) or via the online library catalogue. Books can then be collected on Saturday from 10am - 2pm, Tuesday 10am - 2pm, and Thursday 3pm - 7pm.

Valerie Ward



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## Horniman Museum re-opening

The Museum, Aquarium and Butterfly House will reopen from Monday 17 May, subject to government confirmation. To ensure safety and social distancing, entrance is by ticket only and

face masks are required indoors. Tickets are free but should be booked in advance online, <https://www.horniman.ac.uk/>. The website also has further information to help prepare for your visit.



*Inside the Horniman  
Butterfly house...  
Is that butter on the  
plate, to attract  
flies...?*

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## Planning

It seems that there are more planning applications than ever in our area, ranging from small extensions to large scale new builds with many proposals for infill and back garden developments. Planning regulators should take account of any negative impact on the character and appearance of the locality, as well as the living conditions of neighbours, and recognise the established residential character of our area with its gardens, spaces and vistas.

The Association tries to monitor new planning applications and recently objected where several inappropriate, overbearing infill proposals were made, following which the Council refused planning permission. However, our resources are limited and we cannot help in every case. If there is anyone interested in planning who would be available to assist me with my work in this area, please let me know.

Rowena Lowe

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## New faces

Although Rowena Lowe will continue to review and comment on any major planning applications that will have a major impact on our Estate, Alison Welch has agreed to take over from Rowena as the road representative for Tewkesbury Avenue. Alison writes:

“ We moved here in 1997 with a 3 week old baby, attracted by the quiet, hidden location, views and sense of community. The views have changed somewhat since then but it’s still a great place to live. I’m currently working in the Horniman Museum in the Learning department and looking forward to the long awaited

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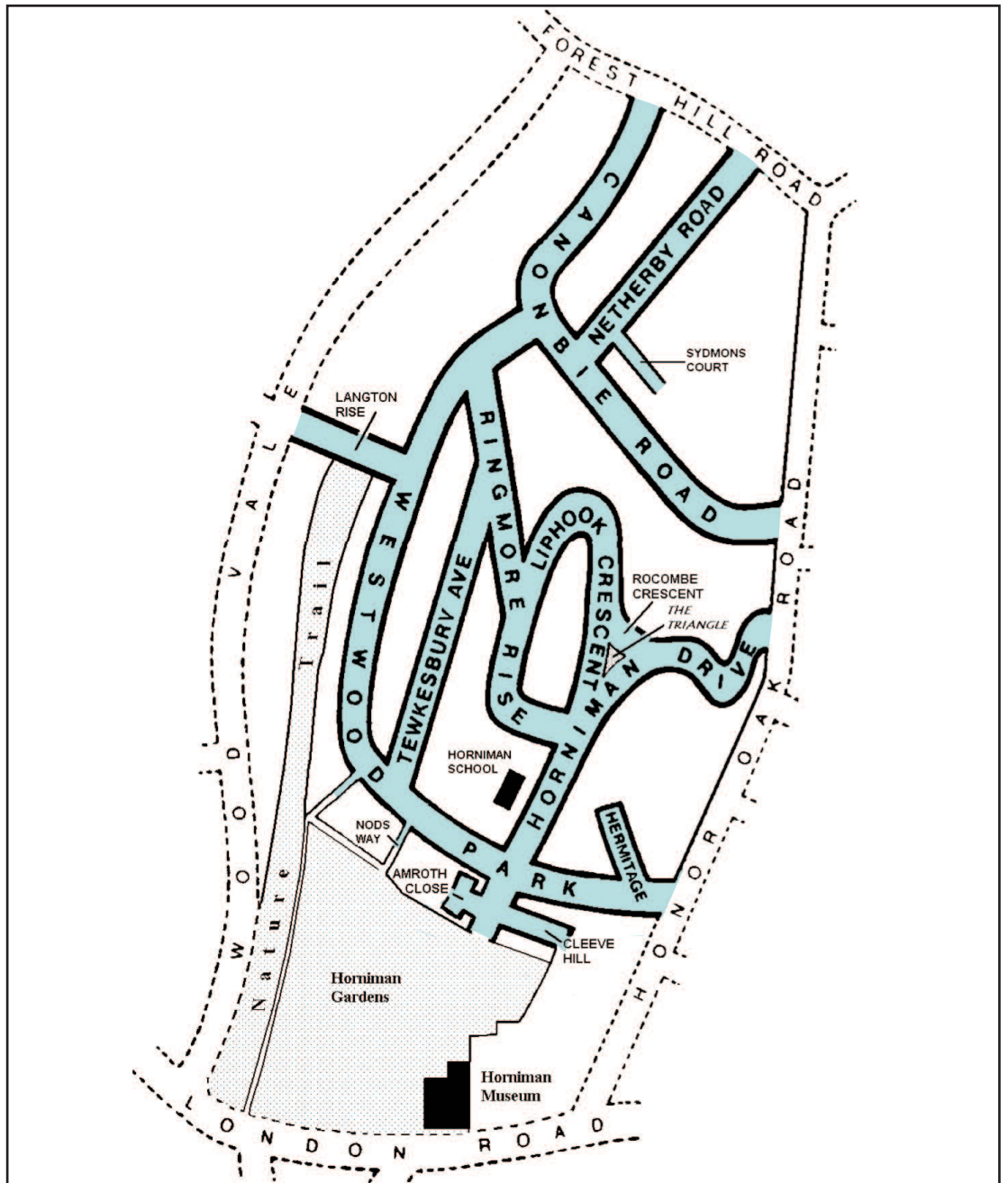
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reopening of the heritage sector on the 17th May.

My hobbies and interests have changed during the pandemic with travel and visiting anywhere of interest clearly off limits. Home based interests have been gardening, sewing and creative projects, family and local history research. Lockdown walks reveal to me many local points of interest.

We have belonged to TLERA since we moved here and value the work it does to benefit us all as well as the social and family opportunities. I look forward to being the road rep and re-engaging with people rather than screens."

*Alison Welch*



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