

Views from the Hill

NEWSLETTER OF THE TEWKESBURY LODGE ESTATE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION October 2024



Where have our wild flowers come from?



This is the second summer that the grass on our Triangle has been left uncut at our request. The wild flowers that have appeared so far are as follows:

Autumn Hawkbit
Bird's Foot Trefoil
Black Mednick
Cat's Paw
Common Knapweed
Common Ragwort
Common Sowthistle
Common Vetch
Creeping Buttercup
Daisy
Dog Violet
Oxeye Daisy
Round-leaved Cranesbill
White Clover
Yarrow

Where have they come from?

Some of these flowers appear in our gardens, and are often considered as "weeds". But the others, which are shown here in heavy type, are not seen in our gardens. These are proper wild flowers, whose natural habitat is a grassy meadow, and according to the Council's Ecological Regeneration Manager, these flowers are seen on uncut grassy verges in other parts of Lewisham. However as far as I can see there are none on our nearest areas of uncut grass on the Horniman Triangle or in other local green spaces.

Maybe these flowers on our Triangle have been here all along, ever since the Triangle was first closed to the public by the Council after the Second World War. Have they somehow survived 70 years of mowing by the Council?



*Birds foot trefoil
(top left)
and Dog violet
(bottom right)
happily growing wild
on the triangle.*

Autumn Festival Saturday October 12th

We hope you'll come along to our Apple Pressing and Harvest Event on 12th October for a seasonal soup and cheese lunch and afternoon of activities for all the family. Try your skills at harvest games and challenges or dress as a scarecrow and strike a pose for our scarecrow photo competition against the backdrop of a fabulous autumn display (Clothes and

props provided or bring your own!) Be creative - make flowerpot folk or decorations for Christmas and plant bulbs for spring. Bring your apples and help our apple pressing team transform your apples into delicious juice to take home.

Free entry and activities for TLERA members, or sign up as members as you arrive.

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Refreshments will be charged and all proceeds will be donated to Tree Aid. This charity works with people in the drylands of Africa. On their website Tree Aid states that "we are working with communities to grow millions of trees and protect huge areas of land each year. Led by local people, our projects make sure trees thrive so they can provide nutritious food and incomes today, and protect the environment for tomorrow."

Impressions of past Harvest festivals on the hill



This event is now a much-loved fixture on the Association's calendar and evolves each year, with new additions thought up by our ever-resourceful gardeners and volunteers, so do come along and find out what this year's has in store. It will all take place in the lovely garden at "Hilltop" 28 Horniman Drive, 12 noon - 4pm.

Repairs to the Night Walk

Repairs to the Night Walk have been made, seven years after TLERA member Michael Levin first wrote to the Council about the seasonal flooding of the Walk. Michael, who was then the TLERA committee member with responsibility for the built environment, wrote to the Council in 2017 describing the effects of seasonal flooding on pedestrians, and explaining how vegetation in the drainage ditch was blocking the ditch. He received a reply from the Council which included the following, which was published in the Winter 2017 edition of this newsletter.



Picture of the Night Walk (or more aptly 'Moon-River') before the recent repairs.

"We will not enforce against vegetation unless it is clearly obstructing the public highway. The inspector does not feel that the vegetation is the actual cause of the water on the footway and in any case this is not something we would take enforcement action over. Following periods of exceptionally heavy rain, such as we have had recently, some roads and footpaths will experience water ponding, but this should drain away and/or dry up fairly quickly".

TLERA has remained concerned by the seasonal flooding of the Night Walk which continues to this day. Unfortunately the flooding of the footpath does not "Drain away and/ or dry up fairly quickly": the path remains flooded (in the sense that there is no dry way through) for at least 4 weeks each winter. This year we raised our concerns with staff from the Horniman when they applied for planning permission to initiate their Nature + Love project. As part of this project they plan to introduce a new drainage system on the Meadow. This is designed to protect the new developments at the site of the former boating pond. We have asked about the effect of this new drainage on the flooding of the Night Walk. It is hoped that it will have a beneficial effect, but of course the responsibility for the Night Walk lies with the Council, who own it.

Then, at the end of August 2024, a notice appeared at the Westwood Park entrance to the Night Walk. It stated:

"This footpath will be closed from September 2nd '24 for 4 weeks for construction work."

Our councillors looked into this and we were sent the following statement.

"A site survey has been carried out which has identified areas for improving safety for pedestrians and cyclists. The path is being cleared to help remove foliage, and trip and slip hazards along the route. Improvements also include resurfacing and introduction of improved drainage".

This work seems to have been completed just as this article goes to press. All vegetation has been removed from the Walk and the camber of the footpath has been raised to above the level of the water drain at the place where the footpath usually floods in winter. However, as far as we can see, nothing has been done to clear the ditch which once collected flood water and directed it to the main drain which runs down the centre of the Night Walk. On the contrary, this ditch has been filled with earth and then topped off with shingle. A further complication is that two footpaths, which are part of the Horniman Nature + Love project, will cross the Night Walk and the former drainage ditch.

The fact that the parts of the footpath are now higher than the drain should ensure that they do



*No more 'soakers' on the way home at night...
...hopefully...*

not flood. But only time will tell what happens to the rest of the Night Walk. We will keep a close eye of future water levels and get back to the Council if there is still flooding which once more makes it impossible to use the Walk without getting wet feet.

We are grateful to Michael Levin for raising these concerns so many years ago, and to the Forest Hill Councillors for following them up subsequently.

*Stuart Checkley (TLERA chair)
Steve Griffiths (member and local resident)*

TLERA's AGM in January 2025 with focus on street crime

We are planning to hold our next AGM in January, and to make local crime the main focus of the meeting. As we know from Christine Noon's Crime Cascade Reports, there has been a spate of street crime on our estate and there have been two informative and most helpful meetings with our local police officer, PC Jordan Nye. Arising from these, the Police have posted warning notices to criminals and also

notices that they are considering the installation of CCTV cameras. (This is most encouraging and shows that they are responding to our concern) Christine, who is our crime and police liaison officer, is convening a small sub-committee to formulate a set of TLERA aims, objectives and action points regarding street crime on our estate. She will be reporting to the AGM on her conclusions.

We are also hoping to announce our next Membership Secretary. Carole Abrahams, who has carried this responsibility for many years, will be standing down, and we will want to thank her for her hard work over such a long time. We shall also announce a new membership fee of £10 pa and new arrangements for collecting most annual subscriptions by standing order.

The membership secretary works with the committee and the road representatives to collect the annual subscriptions which fund the activities reported in our newsletters. We are gradually transferring financial giving online.
Stuart Checkley



Please contact the chair at stuart@street-treesforliving.org if you might be able to help as the membership secretary?

Time to request a street tree

*Acer platanoides
Crimson Sentry*

Calling young people:
Are you interested in joining TLERA?

The TLERA executive would like to invite a young person to join the committee and advise on issues affecting young people on the estate and Forest Hill generally. If you are a young student, perhaps studying for A levels, and would like to gain some practical experience of community involvement and action, then this opportunity may be for you.

Apart from attending committee meetings (held quarterly) you will be able to contribute to the news letter with articles specifically focused on young persons' interests. You will also be able to bring fresh ideas for activities involving young persons and comment on events which you and your friends have been involved in.

If you feel you would like to advise TLERA then this opportunity may be for you.

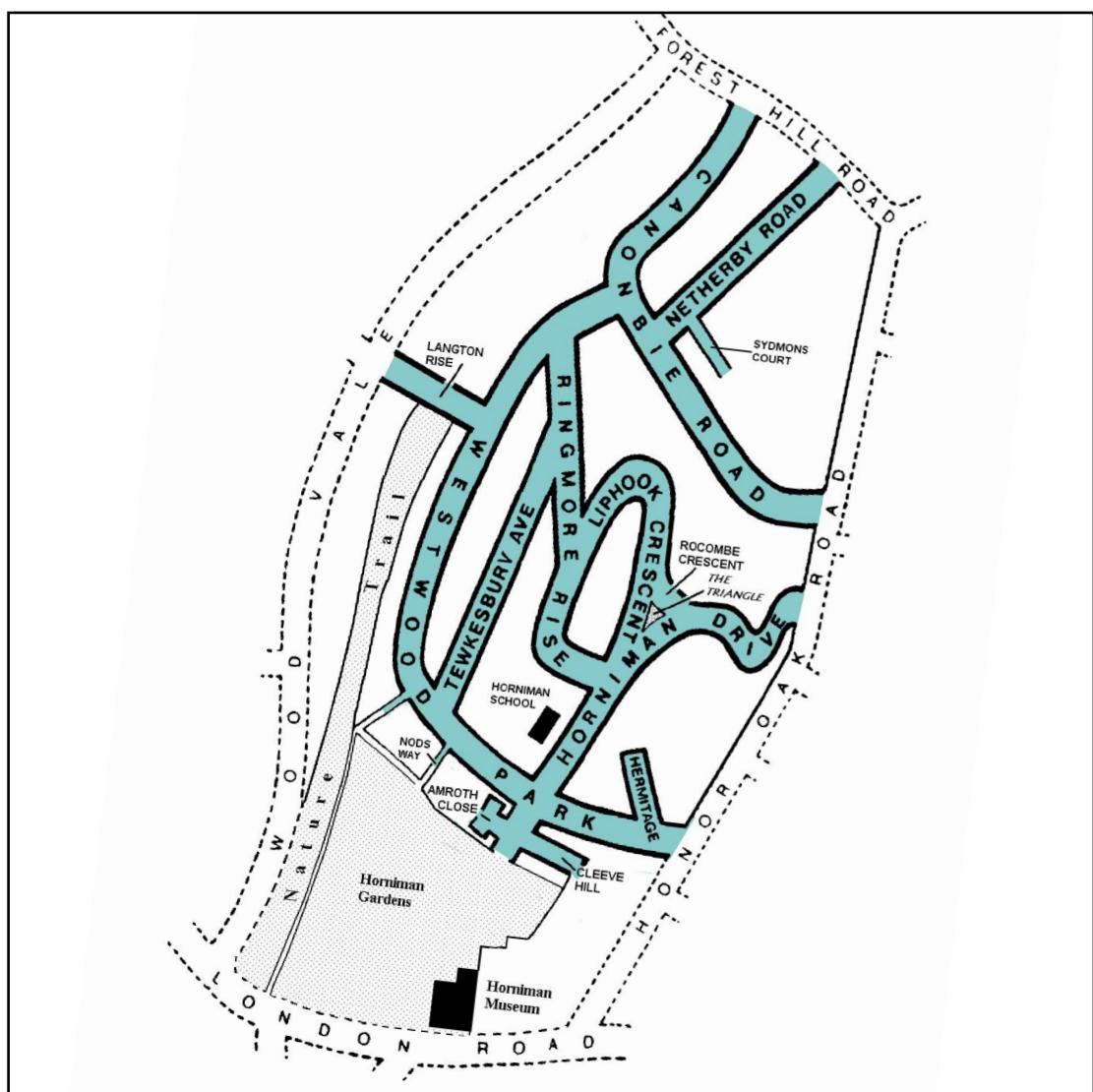
For further information and to discuss the role please contact the TLERA chairman.



So far we have planted 71 street trees on our estate. Most are small and colourful and because they are small they are most unlikely to damage our pavements. A lot of the trees we have planted are members of the rose family and so now in the interests of biodiversity we are planting more trees from other families. That is why small Acers are appearing on our hill, as are some unusual trees such as Tamarisk, which cope well with strong winds.

The cost of a tree has remained at £350 for 3 years but this year the Council has raised the cost to £425. Sometimes several neighbours share the cost of a tree and sometimes the Residents' Association is able to help. If you are interested, please go to the Street Trees for Living website and follow links to "plant trees" and then "I am a Lewisham resident". I am the local representative for Street Trees for Living and I will contact you as soon as you register with the charity.

Stuart Checkley



Contributions to the newsletter are very welcome and can be emailed to:
secretary@tewkesburylodge.org.uk