

Muswell Hill & Fortis Green Association

Incorporating Alexandra Ward

THE PARKLAND WALK LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

I've met plenty of long-standing residents of Muswell Hill who've never heard of, seen or found The Parkland Walk, so I can safely describe it as one of our local secrets.

Split into two parts, this former railway is part of the longest linear nature reserve in the whole of London at 3.5km in length. 'Our bit', the shorter at under 1km, runs between Muswell Hill Primary School and Muswell Hill Road and includes the viaduct over St. James' Lane, offering spectacular views over East London that take in the Olympic Park, Canary Wharf and the Shard. Its reputation is global - we've seen articles from Australian newspapers - yet for many it remains undiscovered.

Saved by the original Friends of The Parkland Walk in the 1980s from being turned into a dual carriageway, it was left to flourish on its own with little intervention, and soon acquired the status of Nature Reserve. That in itself marks it out as something special in the borough, but far from being a 'park' as its name implies, it is a young wood or *Secondary Woodland* and has more in common with the ancient woodlands of Queen's Wood, Highgate Wood and Coppetts Wood.



Photo by Stephen Middleton

Seventy years ago it was 95% meadow. It is now 98% woodland which, contrary to general belief, is actually not a good thing. Most people really enjoy that woodland quality, but without management the canopy of this beautiful green corridor could easily be overwhelmed by sycamore and ash and the ground hijacked by ivy and bramble, leaving little else to grow. That said, a flora survey last year still identified just under 300 species and sub-species of plants ranging from pre-historic ferns through to new plants that are benefitting from the effects of climate change.

NOTICE OF MHFGA AGM

Please see page 2 for details

May/June 2016 Newsletter

Inside this issue:

- 1 The Parkland Walk
- 2 AGM, MHFGA contacts, MHFGA stall, Ambitious about Autism
- 3 April meeting, Alex's Corner
- 4 Robert Linsky, Joanna Haydon-Knowell, Members' Walk
- 5 MidSummer Muswell Hill, Midhurst Gardens, Woodberry Crescent, Safer Neighbourhood teams
- 6 Muswell Hill Library, Have Your Say, Wave
- 7 Local Events, Contact Point
- 8 Queen's Wood



Work by the Friends and The Conservation Volunteers has opened up glades where wildflowers, absent for twenty years or so, are now returning, attracting insects and butterflies in greater numbers. Go down there now as spring kickstarts new growth and you will be amazed at the volume of the bird song from wrens, blackbirds, robins, thrushes and many more species.

Sadly, not everyone gives the Parkland Walk the respect it deserves. Litter is a constant problem. Neighbours pile up garden waste and discard old fencing or create paths which reduce the areas of undisturbed ground, further damaging habitats for wildlife, or just try and pinch a bit of land. Currently the Friends are involved in a campaign in Highgate to prevent a householder from using the Walk as an access for heavy lorries for up to 15 months.

It's a shame that the Friends have to expend so much energy addressing these kinds of negative issues, as we would rather be working on conservation projects and encouraging local people to take a part in caring for a very special piece of local nature. If you want to escape the hustle and bustle of urban London, The Parkland Walk is one of the great places to do it. Once you've found it, and the other half from Highgate to Finsbury Park, it will likely become one of your favourite walks.

Simon Olley, Chair of the Friends of The Parkland Walk



Photo by Stephen Middleton

MHFGA AGM

Our AGM is at 8.00pm on Wednesday 18th May 2016, upstairs at the Mossy Well pub, 258 Muswell Hill Broadway, N10 3SH. The meeting will be followed by a buffet.

The MHFGA is concerned with every thing contributing to the environment of and quality of life in Muswell Hill, Fortis Green and Alexandra wards, including roads, buildings and open spaces.

The Association represents local views on such matters as planning applications, traffic and transport. It provides a voice for local opinion on many areas of wider interest and is represented on the committees of several amenity and public bodies. Representatives of the Committee work hard throughout the year in response to requests from members for support or advice. The flower troughs on the Broadway enhance the town centre and the flower beds on Colney Hatch Lane and elsewhere are regularly tended.

You may like to give practical support to the Association by organising our speakers or meetings, helping with our PR and communication with local organisations, or editing our Newsletter. Please speak to one of the committee at the AGM or contact them using the details below.

AGM Agenda

- 1 Apologies
- 2 Minutes of meeting held on 20 May 2015
- 3 Chairman's Report
- 4 Treasurer's Report
- 5 Election of Officers
- 6 Election of Committee
- 7 Election of Independent Examiner
- 8 Any other business, including questions from members



Alex Vincenti and John Hajdu at the MHFGA stall on 2nd April. We are still looking for volunteers to help out on the stall on occasional Saturdays. Please contact John for further information.

Ambitious about Autism, the centre in Woodside Avenue N10 for youngsters with autism, is expanding its activities to provide on-going education and training from late teens to mid-twenties. This involves entirely new facilities, and AaA is fortunate to have secured space at the new Tottenham College development. As well as needing new furniture and teaching aids, some existing equipment will have to be moved from the present temporary facility in Hendon to the new location; this will all cost many thousands of pounds.

Member Bill Tyler has a nephew with autism who never had the chance to benefit from the education now available and Members may recall that Bill has previously walked the Inca Trail and the Camino de Santiago to raise funding support for autism organisations.

Soon to be 82, Bill is going to walk the 82 miles of the rocky and sand dune coastline of the Baltic island of Bornholm - when long daylight hours of mid-June may be needed! - with the aim of raising £15,000 for AaA's new college facility. He will greatly appreciate Members' support for this special fund-raiser and cheques can be sent to Ambitious about Autism, The Pears Centre, Woodside Avenue, N10 3JA (mention Bill!) or donations made on-line at <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/BillTyler>.

MHFGA April meeting

Those who didn't get to the April 13th meeting missed the emotional, moving and heroic story of Sergeant Hugh Victor Hember who was killed on the first day of the Battle of the Somme, 1st July 1916. This was the complete story of one man's World War One experience told by his family from the pencil written letters he sent home and then by the letters and replies the family received as they searched to find out if he had been killed after going missing in action.



The story was made complete as the family have photos taken by an uncle (Gerald Patterson), who survived the war, that match the detail that Victor sent in the letters home. Together they told a powerful tale of life in the trenches from the scout jamboree feel of early letters to increasing and utter despair as the months go by. The letters were sent to Victor's brother Frank, who had been declared medically unfit to go to war, and the members of Carleton Tennis Club in Islington and tell a very human story with the added poignancy of Victor's handwritten will sent to his father when he realised the scale of the battle to come at the Somme. It took 9 months of not knowing if he had been captured or killed, an agonising wait for those at home, before a soldier who was taken prisoner was released and able to tell the family what happened. His letter told of Victor's bravery in remaining cheerful and helping others just before his death.

Victor's letters live on and the family brought the letters, medals and artefacts to show us. He was a talented writer and the quotes we saw and heard gave us an insight into how life was. His sense of humour came through as he tried to tell of his experience whilst also offering comfort to those at home. The photos are of course unique too, and a selection of quotes and photos can be found in the latest Hornsey Historical Society bulletin. A thought then from the pencil of Victor Hember to conclude - "One wonders that men can be such utter fools as to know of no other way of settling their disputes except by causing such destruction to life and property as can never be replaced." As true today as the day he wrote it 100 years ago.



ALEX'S CORNER

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

The new subscription year starts on the 1st of May and it's time for membership renewal. If you paid for a single year, you will get a reminder either by email or in your letterbox. To renew, please see the separate membership form inserted in this issue of the Newsletter. If the form has fallen out, you can download it from www.mhfga.org and click on the **Become a Member** tab. There, you will also have the choice to pay by credit or debit card.

Please consider setting up a standing order in favour of the Association: it helps us budget our projects more effectively and simplifies our administration. Please complete the Application & Standing Order Mandate form in this Newsletter or download it from our website.

You can also email me at membership@mhfga.org and I shall make sure you get the form through your door.

WELCOME

A warm welcome to our newest members: Liberte' Gregorio, of Victoria Road; Simon Olley, of St James's Lane, and Robin Lustig, of Dukes Avenue.

We are also delighted to announce that six new corporate members have joined us: Rhodes Avenue Primary School, Wav e, Barkers for Dogs, Flesh & Flour, Poppy Rose, and Muddy Boots.

This takes to 33 the number of local businesses and organisations supporting the Association. Below is their complete list and you can find the links to their websites at www.mhfga.org.

Barkers for Dogs (Dawn Rodriguez), Bill's Restaurant (Sebi Spano), Clissold Arms (George Kyriakos Karageorgis), Creative Writing (Nichola Charalambou), Chriskitch (Chris Honor), Delicia (Bob), Duo-Klier (Talia Ramos & Pablo Castro), Elsa (Saliha Demirel), Everyman Cinema (Will Green), Excel English Language School (Judy Loren), Feast (Roger Ward CBE), Flesh & Flour, Fortismere School (Helen Anthony), Kriskitch (Chris Honor), Muddy Boots, Muswell Hill Bowling Club (Paul Chapman), Muswell Hill Toy Library (Liz Luxmore), Muswell Hill United Reformed Church (Adrian Stannard), NCT Haringey (Matalie Steiner), Norfolk House School (Samantha Habgood), Planet Organic (Peter Marsh), Poppy Rose, Pret A Vivre (Lynda Mair), Rhodes Avenue Primary School (Adrian Hall), Robert Linsky Optometrist (Robert Linsky), St. James Church Muswell Hill (Chris Green), The John Baird (Keith Nicholas), The Mossy Well (Genevieve Gardiner), Tim Moss Furniture (Tim Moss), Toffs of Muswell Hill (George and Costas Georgiou), Topps Tiles Boutique (Sean Geb), Victory Auto Services (Mark Bharadia), WAVE (Bernice Hardie) and Woodland Tree Surgery (Christopher Hill).

We still need help to organise meetings, including finding speakers, and dealing with the press. If you are available, please write to John Hajdu, Chairman, at hajdu.clarion@talk21.com.

Please send your comments, suggestions and requests to membership@mhfga.org or write to The Membership Secretary, MHFGA, 49 Halliwick Road, London N10 1AA.

Members in Profile

Robert Linsky Optometrists

In 1948, Gunther Griffen, an Austrian Jewish refugee, who came to England just before the second World War, founded a small opticians practice on Fortis Green Road. He handed the practice to me, Robert Linsky, in 1982 but sadly died just a few months later.

Robert Linsky Optometrists continue to care for some of his patients to this day - we have many patients with records dating back to the 1950s and 1960s although new faces are constantly coming through our doors.

We are very much a family-run practice. My wife Jean works every Saturday as a dispensing optician and I have worked here for 34 years. Over the next 10 years I am slowly handing over the practice to my optometrist daughter Michelle Barry.



Although we have antiques in our window dating back to the early 20th Century, the practice has changed in many ways with new technology and different specialities such as Coloured Overlay testing for children and Dry Eye treatments. We have however kept Gunther Griffen's values of friendliness, patience, ethical values and clinical excellence.

Joanna Haydon-Knowell

Joanna has worked in Muswell Hill since 1988, and in 1990 she and her co director took over an existing Estate Agency, and became JH•K - "The Independent Estate Agents".

She is really passionate about what she describes as "our desirable London village", famed not only for its fine Edwardian architecture and wide tree lined avenues but for the swathes of greenery surrounding the Palace in Alexandra Park, the perfect environment for walking the dogs, climbing trees with the children and picking blackberries.



For a number of years she was also the Press Relations spokesman for the National Association of Estate Agents, raising the awareness of ethical practice within the profession. She has lived in the area for 25 years, ever since she and her partner first purchased an Edwardian wreck, which they then rebuilt and redesigned.

Over the years, she has been a member of a number of local protest groups, all of whom were fighting to preserve the best of Muswell Hill - whilst allowing it to deal with the demands of the 21st century, and has sponsored many local projects and charities, including the Muswell Hill Festival.

She has one son, who is also an estate agent and surveyor and a new grandchild.

Joanna's ongoing role in life revolves around finding "homes for humans" in Muswell Hill and conserving "homes for lemurs" in Madagascar.

Get your walking boots ready!

On **Saturday 2nd July** Bill Tyler will be leading a Members' Walk starting at **11.00am** through Coppetts Wood and the Islington/St Pancras Cemeteries. The little used Coppetts Wood and the open playing fields to the north form a wonderful green barrier between the North Circular Road and the residential area of Fortis Green. The two conjoined cemeteries similarly act as a buffer for East Finchley and their many acres of unkempt land - and graves! - provide a rich habitat for wild life and a constant source of interest for the keen-eyed but less wild walker.

Bill will start the walk at the middle entrance to Coldfall Wood on Creighton Avenue, almost opposite Ringwood Avenue. The route will then be across the playing fields and skirting the new housing estate at the very bottom of Colney Hatch Lane. Thence into cemetery land with its abundant wildlife and many monuments to dead life. Much clearance work has been under-way so memorials are more clearly visible and their variety and craftsmanship, and in many cases their ornateness, remain a testament to the wealth and tastes of passing generations.

The walk will continue along East Finchley High Road to the Bald Faced Stag in East Finchley and will finish around 1 o'clock. Stout shoes at least are recommended; although much of the walk will be on well surfaced paths and roadways, there could be muddy parts, depending on weather.

MidSummer Muswell Hill

From 2pm on Saturday 25th June 2015 Muswell Hill will be celebrating MidSummer, Muswell Hill style.



MidSummer
Muswell
2016
25th of June

For a second year in a row, Muswell Hill will be holding this community-led festival that brings together fellow Muswell Hillians, their families, local traders and organisations. The festivities will be returning to **St James' Square** and **St James' Church**. This year's event has been put on by the newly formed Friends of St James' Square.

Following on from the success of last year's event, the aim is to show that the Muswell Hill community spirit is stronger than ever. We wish to give the neighbourhood a memorable family day out, hoping that this will be a date to look forward to in the Muswell Hill calendar for many years to come. With our strong team of volunteers we are hoping to bring more events on St James' Square making it a Muswell Hill hub for arts, traders and families.

From 2-6pm, the outside stage in St James' Square will host music, dancers, a fashion show, quiz and comedy. There will also be tasty food and drink, competitive events, a treasure hunt, games and stalls manned by local organisations and charities.

In St James' Church, there will be face painters, a bouncy castle, bands, gymnastics, choirs, an art exhibition, plus more games and entertainment.

The event will also act as a fundraiser for: WAVE (We Are all Valued Equally) at St James' Church, an outreach programme for young adults with learning difficulties, and LCCCP (London Centre for Children with Cerebral Palsy).

We are looking for volunteers to help us on the day. If you can spare a few hours, please do get in touch.

For more information on MidSummer Muswell:

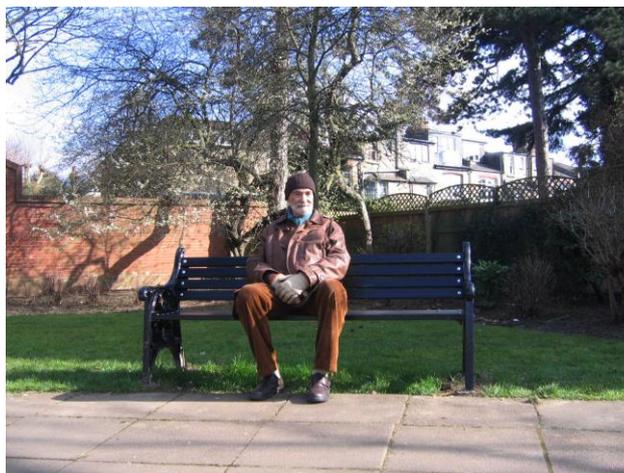
Twitter [@Muswellites](https://twitter.com/Muswellites);

Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/Muswellites>;
<http://muswelllife.com>

[Please come and visit the Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association stand.](#)

Restoration of benches in Midhurst Gardens N10

Midhurst Gardens, the two tiny open spaces on each side of Midhurst Avenue at its Fortis Green end, had been bereft of benches since the four it had previously were removed on police advice 5 or 6 years ago. That followed residents' complaints of unsocial behaviour centred around the benches.



In March 2014 I wrote to Haringey Council Leader Claire Kober asking whether there was any chance of having benches restored to this pocket park, as well as having a new tree planted to replace one lost to storm damage. She replied saying 2-3 new trees would be planted next autumn (since provided) and Parks Service are investigating re. the benches. In June 2015 I sent her a reminder query about the benches, and got a response stating that Parks Service will replace two of the benches (consulting the MHFGA on their location) and after "favourable monitoring" for some time (i.e. no vandalism nor repetition of unsocial behaviour) another two will be provided.

The first two replacement benches were installed in February 2016. They are made of sturdier material than the old ones, and hopefully will last many years. To illustrate their existence here is a photo of me sitting on one of them.

Eugene Myerson

Woodberry Crescent

There will be a controlled parking zone in Woodberry Crescent from 11th July. This followed consultation by the council which showed a majority of residents in favour. The controls will be in force every day including Sunday and operate from 11am to 1pm.

Your local police Safer Neighbourhoods Teams are now on Twitter! Each ward has two Dedicated Ward Officers who are here to make a difference in your community relating with issues such as Anti-social Behaviour, Burglary and Motor Vehicle Crime. We are committed to crime prevention and community engagement in your area. For all the latest local policing information, please follow the relevant team on Twitter.

Alexandra Ward - @MPSally Pally
Fortis Green Ward - @MPS FortisGreen
Muswell Hill Ward - @MPSMuswellHill

Future of Muswell Hill Library

The Council is due to consult the local public on the future of the Muswell Hill Library. The 12-week consultation will be held after the GLA and Mayoral elections in May.

The options which the Council will be consulting on are just two:

1. Do nothing – continue with the library as it is, complete with poor access and no lift etc.
2. Move the library function to the ground floor of the Green Man building in the autumn. Under this option the Council would sell the library and the land behind it and use the proceeds for whatever capital projects the Cabinet sees fit **but not the present library**. The Council is stating that the accommodation at the Green Man would be 25% larger than the library and has the advantage of being on one floor which is cheaper and easier to staff and will make the provision of cabling for computer terminals etc. much easier.

The Council held two preliminary public meetings in March at which it was very clear that its own preferred option is to move. The question was asked for how long could a responsible public body continue to use a building which is known to have access issues.

From comments made at these meetings it is clear that many people feel that the Council has been premature in ruling out a third option. Namely to sell the piece of land behind the library and ring-fence some of the proceeds to fund the necessary library upgrading works to the present library, in particular a lift. The point was made that estimated cost to carry out this work seem very high (at least £600,000) and could the public be sure that there was no cheaper option which could be considered.

This is clearly an important event in the life of Muswell Hill and there will be many shades of opinion amongst Association members as to what should be done. My personal view is that at the moment the Council has not demonstrated that it has seriously considered the option of remaining at the present site and carrying out some essential capital works to be financed from the proceeds of selling the land to the rear.

John Crompton



Wave Club: creating something special together

HAVE YOUR SAY – write to editor@mhfga.org

Dear Sir,

I attended the second meeting of the Muswell Hill Library consultation, held on Friday 18th March.

The upshot of what we were being told is that it is too costly to upgrade the library to modern requirements, and that the building should be sold off, with the library moved to a single floor in the new “Green Man” building. This plan - together with the economic arguments that support it, all of which have their own counter-arguments - completely ignores the psychological benefits of the present building. A graceful environment, in a configuration that preserves separation between groups, this library serves older people escaping cramped flats and younger people trying to do their schoolwork away from noisy homes. A single-floor facility would provide none of this tranquillity.

As for the cost, I have to point out that the £85,000 spent by the Council on the consultation procedure could have been spent on building the lift they say they cannot afford, which would give second-floor access for wheelchairs and prams.

Some years ago, Haringey used similar arguments about modern convenience to create the communal and architectural hell of Wood Green Shopping City. Despite the preservation order on our Library, when it is in private hands we cannot control what will happen to it. We also have to consider that once a process starts, precedents are set for ever more extreme catastrophes. We must not allow Haringey to replicate in Muswell Hill the mistakes they made in Wood Green.

Lydia Rivlin

Wave is mixing up Muswell Hill!

We like to think of Muswell Hill as a wonderful neighbourhood. But are we as welcoming and inclusive as we think we are?

Wave (We're All Valued Equally) believes that strong communities are ones that bring people together for everyone's benefit. We were set up by a group of parents with first-hand experience of the loneliness of ten experienced by children and adults with learning disabilities. Along with others they decided to do something about it by looking for opportunities where those with and without learning disabilities can socialise and work comfortably together as equals.

Wave wants to mix up Muswell Hill and we've made a pretty strong start. In the last seven years we've set up The Challenge Group for parents of babies and toddlers with additional needs; Wave Club for young adults; the Bread of Life lunch group; and Wave Church.

Find out more about these at www.wave-for-change.org.uk

Very often it's the people without disabilities who tell us how much they've gained from the experience of mixing, often over-coming ignorance or an in-built fear. We want even more people to be able to experience that sense of real inclusive community. Our vision is to establish an arts café in Muswell Hill as a place with a real purpose – providing a hub for local artists and performers to showcase and share their talents widely, whilst giving work experience to those who are so often excluded from local community life.

We were delighted to be the MidSummer Muswell event charity last year and a huge thank you to everyone who mixed with us there, tasting our delicious mocktails! And the great news is we'll be back again as one of the event charities this year. Please do come along and say hello.

THE FORTISMERE COMMUNITY ORCHESTRA
Based in the heart of Muswell Hill at Fortismere School, the Fortismere Community Orchestra is made up of talented and enthusiastic members of the local community, including students, instrumental teachers, composers and highly skilled amateurs. The FCO welcomes new players. If you would like to know more about joining, email the Fortismere Music Centre Manager at fmcinfo@fortismere.org.uk.

HORNSEY PENSIONERS ACTION GROUP

We meet to discuss local and national issues with visiting speakers on the third Wednesday of the month. Coming up: May 18th at 1.30pm prompt - 'What does the EU do for us?' Prof. Emeritus Steve Jefferys and Angela Pollitzer. Our meetings are held in the main church hall of Hornsey Parish Church, Cranley Gardens, N10 3AH. Contact Ann Anderson (020 8340 8335), Pamela Jefferys (020 8444 0732), Janet Shapiro (020 8883 9571) or www.hornsey-pensioners-action-group.org.uk

WHAT'S GOING ON AT ST JAMES CHURCH?

Community Cafe - Tuesdays: 11.00am-1.00pm. Free coffee, cake and conversation. Venue: through the main doors, just turn up. Tea Time: For seniors in the Muswell Hill area. Wednesdays: 2.30-3.30pm. Tea, sandwiches and entertainment - contact: gebrazier@gmail.com 020 8883 6453. Venue: St James Centre. Legal Advice: Free legal advice - Mondays & Saturdays walk-in service from 10.00am-12 noon, venue: St James Church, contact: anything.legal@dial.pipex.com

RETIRED, OR HEADING FOR RETIREMENT?

UNIVERSITY OF 3RD AGE NORTH LONDON can help you on a whole new path of discovery, learning new skills and subjects or teaching your own special skills. 'We believe learning never stops and should be a pleasure.' Come along to one of their meetings, at St Paul's Church, Long Lane, N3 2PU. To find out more, visit www.nlu3a.org.uk.

HIGHGATE CHORAL SOCIETY

Saturday 25 June HCS JS Bach Mass in B Minor 7.00pm
All Hallows Church, Savenake Road, NW3.
Tickets www.hcschoir.com or Les Aldrich

MUSWELL HILL TOY LIBRARY

Open Mondays 2.00-3.30 pm, Thursdays 9.30am to 12 noon, and Fridays 9.30am to 12 noon. Toys, DVDs and music CDs. Children must come with an adult carer! 'Stories and Music' sessions during the Monday and Thursday sessions are FREE to all. 1st Floor - Muswell Hill Library, Queens Ave, N10 3PE.

NORTH LONDON EPILEPSY ACTION is a support group for those with epilepsy or with an interest in epilepsy. The group meets on the third Monday of each month and has lectures, information and social events. For more information, contact Barbara Penney 020 8883 0010 or e-mail barbarapenney@yahoo.co.uk

MUSWELL HILL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

The club meets every Wednesday at Jacksons Lane Community Centre at 7.45pm. We show and discuss our photographs, and we have guest speakers, competitions, and practical activities. Visit our website, www.muswellhillphoto.org.uk, for more details. We welcome new members. If you would like to join or come along one evening as a guest, please email contact@muswellhillphoto.org.uk.

THE CLISSOLD ARMS, 105 Fortis Green, East Finchley, N29HR

Entertainment:

Groove @ The Clissold - top session musicians performing live - Free Entry - Thursday 12th May 9pm
Motown Party - DJ playing all your favourites - Free Entry
Friday 27th May and 24th June - 9pm
Pianist every Sunday from 1pm to 3pm - relaxing classics while you enjoy your lunch

Community:

Sing Along for All - Wednesday 25th May and Wednesday 29th June from 7.30pm £12.50
North London Backgammon - Wednesday 11th May and Wednesday 15th June 6pm £3
PLUS: a wide range of other groups please see website for full details.

Children:

Eco Art Workshop - Saturday 14th May and Saturday 11 June - 10am £3 donation per child goes to GOSH
Comics Club - Saturday 28th May and Saturday 25th June - 10am £3
Kids Film Club with free popcorn - alternate Saturdays 7th and 21st May, 4th and 18th June - 10.30am £3

QUEEN'S WOOD

Friends of Queen's Wood: Wednesday 13 July 6.00pm
Information Hut Highgate Wood Geology in Highgate and Queen's Wood. Guided walk comparing soil and geology in both woods, all welcome
Working parties last Sunday of month. 10.30-12 meet outside Café in Queen's Wood. Please bring gloves and mobile phone if available.

Check all times and dates with the organisers. If you have an event or activity that might be of interest to the Association's members, write to editor@nhfga.org and patriciajlott@aol.com by 8th June 2016.

Contact Point

You can meet your local police at Planet Organic, 111-117 Muswell Hill Road, N10 3HS on

*Wednesdays and Thursdays between 6pm and 8pm
Saturdays between 1pm and 3pm*

At the Contact Point you can

- Report a crime
- Obtain crime prevention advice or advice on other police-related matters
- Discuss community concerns
- Make an appointment to speak to a local officer
- Make an appointment to give a statement if you would prefer for the police not to visit you at home or your place of work
- Hand in self-reporting forms for road traffic accidents

You can report crime online at www.met.police.uk

If you need to speak to the police, call 101

Always call 999 in an emergency

QUEEN'S WOOD: A UNIQUE ASSET

As Muswell Hill Road snakes northwards from Archway Road it cuts a swathe through a piece of ancient woodland. To the left is Highgate Wood; to the right is its lesser known neighbour, Queen's Wood. There are of course great similarities between the two. Both were part of the Bishop of London's extensive hunting grounds in olden times; the array of trees is much the same – predominantly hornbeam and oak – and the birds, bats and squirrels know no frontiers.

But there are many differences. This is partly a matter of the different terrain. Highgate Wood is situated primarily on a flattish plateau. Queen's Wood is riven by steep sided small valleys; and it can boast the site of the headwater of the River Moselle that flows through to the River Lea. Its woodland is denser and wilder and it has an altogether more mysterious (and some would say spooky!) air to it. It is also rather quieter (birdsong apart). All these features give it its particular fan base.



Perhaps the most important difference is the way in which the two woods have been managed. Whereas Highgate Wood comes under the jurisdiction of the City of London, Queen's Wood is owned and run by Haringey Council. Over the years the Wood has not only lost its dedicated park keepers but has been progressively starved of the funds that are essential to keep it in a reasonable condition. In a way this benign neglect benefited the Wood, allowing many species of flowers and birds to thrive. But with it came the risk that it would no longer be open to the public to enjoy in the way that they had a right to expect.

As a reflection of this the Friends of Queen's Wood was formed in 1990. Initially it was an informal group of litter pickers and path sweepers, acting also as the Council's eyes and ears. In 1999 it became a formally constituted group and has now more than 200 households in membership. It organises regular events such as talks and guided walks, focusing on flowers, trees and other forms of wildlife, as well as fun days for children. It has commissioned surveys of the Wood's flora, bird life, invertebrates and fungi. It runs regular working parties to undertake basic management jobs supported by The Conservation Volunteers for rather more difficult tasks. It has worked with the Council to set up more substantial projects such as the creation of a wildlife pond on the site of the derelict paddling pool and coppicing at a number of sites to increase the biodiversity of the Wood. And we should not forget how important the Lodge Café and the organic garden next to it are in giving the Wood its unique appeal.

As a result of all these efforts over the years the Wood was granted Green Flag status in 2015. It also won a Gold award, and first place, in the 2015 London in Bloom awards in the large nature reserve category. These awards are most welcome, but we need to keep up our efforts to ensure that the public continue to enjoy this wonderful asset to the full. Please pay a visit and see for yourself!

John Dorken, Chair of Friends of Queen's Wood Website: www.fqw.org.uk Contact e-mail: info@fqw.org.uk

Copy date for July/August edition of this newsletter

If you would like to submit an article or letter for our next edition, please send your copy to editor@mhfga.org by Wednesday 8th June 2016.

MHFGA

FOUNDED
1948

Got a photo or news item?
Share it on Twitter with our members



@theMHFGA

or visit www.twitter.com/theMHFGA
We tweet regularly on Association and local news - so please follow and spread the word!

The Muswell Hill & Fortis Green Association Newsletter is printed by J G Bryson (Printer), Graphic Designers, Printers & Bookbinders Huntingdon Works, 158-162 High Road, East Finchley, London N2 9AS
Tel: 020 8883 6648, Fax: 020 8883 5155,
E-mail: info@jbrysonprinter.co.uk