

FRIENDS OF WANSTEAD PARKLANDS NEWSLETTER



**Welcome...
to your
new-look
newsletter**

Ahead of what looks set to be a landmark year for Wanstead Parklands, we've freshened up our newsletter.

Every quarter, we will keep you updated on the Friends of Wanstead Parklands' efforts to safeguard this historic landscape. We also hope to bring to life its fascinating history, which dates back centuries, and showcase the multitude of people who make use of the Park today.

As well as news updates and in-depth features, we hope you will enjoy our new regulars. These include a "Notes & Queries" section where you can ask our experts about Wanstead Parklands (answers will be printed in future editions of the newsletter), and a light-hearted look at the strange Edwardian by-laws still in operation today.

New members are always welcome to join Friends of Wanstead Parklands.

To sign up or renew an annual subscription, see page 6. For a full list of membership benefits, go online at wansteadpark.org.uk/membership.

If you have any comments about the new-look newsletter, or would like to contribute to the Spring 2020 issue (to be published in late February), please email:

wansteadpark.org.uk@gmail.com.

Alternatively, you can leave your comments on the Friends of Wanstead Parklands **Facebook page** at facebook.com/groups/46936535702 or tinyurl.com/fwpfacebook

And if you have a story to tell about Wanstead Parklands, please do get in touch. We would love to hear from you. We hope you enjoy the issue.



Walk this way: the £500 wooden signs in Wanstead Park will adopt a similar style to this one in Aldersbrook. (Credit: Gill James)

Now looky here... new signposts are coming!

'How do we find the Perch Pond?' 'Which way to The Temple?' 'Is Wanstead Station over there? I'm lost!'

Such pitiful cries have long been heard in Wanstead Park. But, *writes Gill James*, perhaps not for much longer.

A new set of elegant signposts are to be put up across Wanstead Park, following a successful campaign by Friends of Wanstead Parklands (FWP).

The eight wooden signs will mark key junctions within the parklands, and indicate landmarks including the four Lakes, the Temple and the Grotto, as well as the five existing gateways.

The City of London, the corporation that manages Wanstead Park via a charitable trust, had previously proven reluctant to introduce new signage. But many of the existing signs around the Park are dated and need replacing.

'Proposal for an upgrade'

In late summer 2019, the corporation agreed to the Friends of Wanstead Parklands proposal for an upgrade after wooden signposts near Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge at Chingford ►

Review: 'The Tempest', Wanstead Park



Credit: City of London Corporation/
Yvette Woodhouse

Question? How do you perform a complex Shakespeare play in Wanstead Park with a modest budget on a wet summer's evening?

Answer: You ask Illyria, the UK's only open-air touring company.

This intrepid band of just five actors are world-renowned for the clarity, quality and ingenuity they bring to stagings.

In August, Illyria's performances of The Tempest - coupled with Ali Baba and the 40 Thieves - acted as a reminder why they have won four international awards.

The actors' amazing ability to slip into any role was tested to the limit by their Wanstead Park production of The Tempest - not by the text, but by the inclement weather.

There were indeed tempestuous scenes to add authenticity to the literal shipwrecking, with rain falling unexpectedly towards the end of the performance. Almost 300 people braved the elements as magician Prospero, marooned on an island with his daughter Miranda, conjured up a storm to shipwreck his enemies.

Despite the weather, the company was faithful to the sensitivities of the play. Even with their energetic, rapid-change routines, it never once turned into farce.

A very different performance of Ali Baba also attracted a similar-sized audience, in somewhat better weather conditions. Fun and laughter were had by both parents and kids. We hope Illyria will be back for more in 2020. **John Sharpe**

- Plain, which indicate two nature trails, proved universally popular with Epping Forest visitors.

The corporation has recently erected new signs by Jubilee Pond on Wanstead Flats and around the Lime Trail on Bush Wood Flats. The signposts destined for Wanstead Park will be in the same style, and will around £500 each. Friends of Wanstead Parklands will cover the cost from a grant application and our own funds, while and the City of London will cover installation costs.

Members of the Friends of Wanstead Parklands have already had fun working out which way the finger posts should point at each location. We hope to see the signage up in the new year.

Better signage is a key part of the Friends of Wanstead Parklands' ambition to raise awareness of the Park among the public at large.

'Raise public awareness of the Park'

In July 2019, seven street signs pointing to the Park went up at key locations around the London Borough of Redbridge.

Remarkably, these are the first - and still the only - street signs indicating the way to the Park. Many folk find our 'hidden gem' difficult to find, but these signs will help confused park-seekers.

Friends of Wanstead Parklands negotiated with Redbridge borough council to find locations for these familiar blue 'walking'



Lead on: the eight red dots indicate where the new wooden signposts will go up across Wanstead Park

route signs, rather than the black and white ones used to direct traffic. Erected as part of a borough-wide cycle sign scheme, they were affixed to existing signposts, to help keep costs down and save on visual clutter.

Examples of these blue signs can be found outside Wanstead Station, at the Centre Road Flats Car Park, on the Blake Hall Road entrance to the Park, Wanstead Park Avenue, Redbridge Roundabout underpass, and Wanstead Park Road. 🌳

The Parkland Plan: the future starts here

*A decade ago, Wanstead Park was deemed 'at risk' - now there's a strategy to save it, says **John Sharpe***

Ten years ago, Wanstead Park - a Grade II listed landscape designated "of special interest" by English Heritage - was classed as "at risk" by Historic England.*

This downgrading was in part on account of the deterioration of the Park's 300-year-old lakes, the most visible remaining feature of Wanstead House, the first Palladian mansion to be built in Britain - but which was demolished in 1823.

For more than a decade, the Friends of Wanstead Parklands has been working with the park's guardians, in particular the City of London, to identify long-term solutions to the numerous problems afflicting the lake systems.

These include changes to the water supply, as well as the repair of structural damage sustained

by the lakes during the Second World War.

Now, the Parkland Plan - a vision for the restoration and future management of Wanstead Park that will inform decision-making and direct future investment, which has been painstakingly stitched together over six years by a steering group of stakeholders including the Friends of Wanstead Parklands - is about to be adopted by the City of London.

And endless consultation, countless inspections by civil engineers and redrafting of costings - which are currently estimated to be upwards of £14 million - it is our pleasure to say that we give the Parklands Plan a thumbs-up!

Here, we highlight key points from the Plan.

What is the Parkland Plan?

The latest version of the Parkland Plan sets out how the City of London plans to regenerate the Park environment and enhance the user/visitor experience.

The Friends have worked with the other major stakeholders to best represent Park users within the developing framework. However, it is the main landowners - the City of London, Wanstead Sports Grounds Limited, Wanstead Parish, and the London Borough of Redbridge - which will have the responsibility of delivering the project.

The conceptual options are varied and range from one off major capital expenditures, such as restoring the lakes to stabilise water levels, to relatively simple actions such as



Shoulder of Mutton Pond. Credit: Richard Arnopp

re-focussing ongoing maintenance in the various parts of the Park.

The large size of the Park and the potential need for significant funding means that the Plan and its delivery is a long-term commitment with some actions more readily achieved than others.

The key objectives of the Parkland Plan are:

* Addressing visitor needs to provide an accessible and 'legible' historic landscape. This will include clearing and restoring selected historic features, as well as improving existing entrances and pathways. ➤

► * Improving visitor facilities around the park, including developing the surroundings of The Temple as a visitor hub with improved access, an enhanced catering offer, flexible space for events and a new children's play area. It is hoped this will also bring future activity and income generation.

* Improving water management and ensuring that the major package of works to the lakes (designated as "High Risk" in 2018), respect and benefit the historic significance of the waterscape and landscape.

* Conserving the Boathouse Grotto. A Conservation Management Plan has just been completed which is intended to guide the future care of this unique building.

* Promoting research into Wanstead Park, its history, management and biodiversity.

* Increasing community and volunteer involvement.

Although the "shopping list" for Wanstead Park's future is largely settled, some questions over funding and timescales still need to be resolved.

Questions over funding

Plans and priorities for phasing, including those that can be covered by existing staff/budgets will first need to be approved. This will enable both capital and corresponding revenue costs to be broadly agreed, prior to submission of a bid of up to £5 million to the National Heritage Lottery Fund (NHLF).

The NHLF have only recently revised their funding criteria for projects between 2019 and 2024 and it is not yet clear how or when this element will be integrated.

The Plan will then need to be endorsed by the Parklands Plan Steering Group, and formally adopted by the Wanstead Park landowners.

The most recent costing for all the planned work is around £14.5 million, and it is currently unclear as to which elements will be fulfilled if there is a shortfall in funding.

A further frustration for the Friends of Wanstead Parklands is that the latest starting point for major works later than anticipated. Work on the capital projects is now due to commence as late as 2024.

In advance of this, the Friends of Wanstead Parklands will endeavour to establish what work can take place to improve the visitor experience and the overall state of the Park and its lakes while plan development is in progress. ❁

How we shaped the Parkland Plan

The Plan has had a long gestation. It has been more than six years since the structures for the Wanstead Park project were set up, about nine since work began on the park's Conservation Statement, and about 14 since the predecessor to Friends of Wanstead Parklands was founded.

Work on the plan has had many twists and turns, with changes of emphasis at various points and extended periods in which not much seemed to be happening.

However, the relationship between stakeholders making up the project steering group has been generally friendly and constructive, and there have been few fundamental disagreements.

The Friends of Wanstead Parklands has played an active role in shaping the Plan and, from our point of view, it has been brought to a broadly satisfactory conclusion.

We have raised very few substantive queries on the two latest drafts, and believe it offers a balanced approach to Wanstead Park as an historic landscape, place of recreation and natural habitat. Over the last year or so, a realistic path has opened to implementing the plan within a reasonable

timescale. Instead of being a shopping list for a generation-long slog which might never be completed, much of the work stands to be completed within 8 to 10 years.

Our main disappointment with the Plan is that serious capital projects are now envisaged as starting rather later than we had hoped, in 2024.

There are some specific matters which we feel could be further addressed in the Plan. For example, the Parkland Plan's section on access and transport could emphasise the need for designated cycle routes in the Park.

It might also consider providing at least one path with a surface suitable for wheelchairs, perhaps a circular path around or near the Heronry Pond.

The Friends will continue liaising and working with the City of London and other project partners, to establish what work can take place to improve the visitor experience and the overall state of the Park while plan development is in progress.

With the proviso concerning the starting date for implementation, we are happy to commend the Parkland Plan. **Richard Arnopp**



Under wraps: contractors carried out repairs to The Temple's columns and entrance (Credit: Richard Arnopp)

What *has* happened to The Temple?

Regular visitors to Wanstead Park will have noticed that The Temple - the striking 18th century building, with its large white porticoed entrance, that is now used a visitors' centre - has recently undergone external maintenance.

Since the autumn, it has been covered in scaffolding as contractors carry out repairs to the columns and tympanum (the decorative relief above the entrance), as well as repointing brickwork and doing some general repainting.

It is but the latest in a long history of work to keep The Temple in tip-top condition.

The Temple was probably built between 1760 and 1762. It is first shown on a 1779 plan of the grounds, and its architect could be John Vardy, whose most prominent surviving work is Spencer House in St James's, one of the finest 18th-century townhouses in London.

However, unlike many garden temples, the detailing of the Temple is very plain. It is in a simple Tuscan style. As its short Grade II Listing entry states, "the cornice mouldings [are] replaced by wooden bargeboards".

Wings were an afterthought

It might just have been put up by a builder under the 2nd Earl's direction. Although no documentation has survived, there are some

*Repairs started this autumn are the landmark's latest 'nip and tuck', says **Elisa Brady***

possible indications from the structure that the wings were an afterthought.

Under the new trustees, City of London, the building was connected to the new sewer under Wanstead Park in 1888, and during 1890 was fully repaired, with new floorboards laid, the kitchen and scullery whitewashed and the roof made good.

A Zeppelin raid on September 4, 1917 dropped a bomb on the roof ridge of The Temple, causing considerable damage to the building and its contents. No one was hurt.

Bombed in the Blitz

During the Blitz, in October 1940, both the Temple and the Chalet were hit by incendiary bombs.

The Temple came under renewed attack from V1 flying bombs in 1944. On July 8, tiles on the roof were blown off, plaster was displaced, and the ceiling came down. The windows were blown in during October.

On January 5, 1945, a V2 rocket fell in the Glade, damaging the 18th-century mount (where an air raid shelter had been sited), and again causing damage to The Temple. The main roof was stripped bare, all the glass was broken and the remaining plaster came down, while the stores outside were wrecked. ➤

► The keepers were forced to live elsewhere while it was repaired.

The City Surveyors, responsible for the fabric of The Temple, undertook a condition survey in 1992, prior to a major overhaul. This repair and refurbishment work was completed in May 1997. More authentic, glazed black pantiles were placed on the roof, small windows in the front recesses were bricked up and the steps leading to the Committee room were removed, as was the flag post. Paint was stripped off the brickwork which was repointed.

Bombed in the Blitz

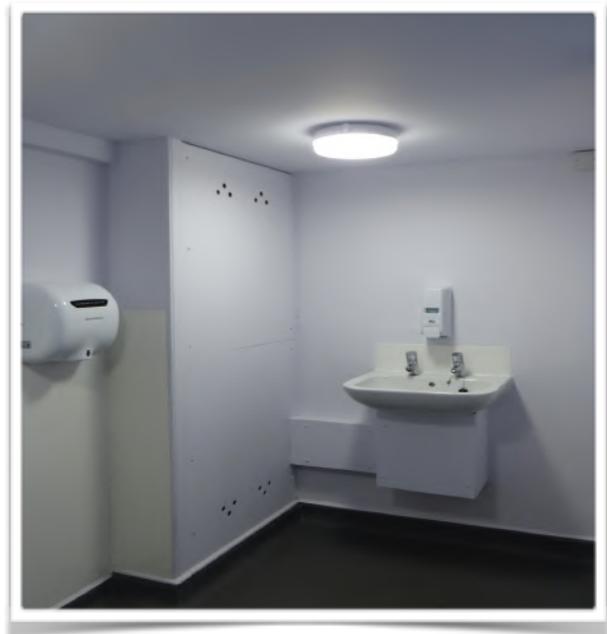
Internally, a new wooden staircase was inserted in the southern wing, now the public stairs, and the entrance hall was restored as close as possible to its 18th-century appearance.

In April 2008, the roof was retiled once more. Following months of closure, repairs to the external toilet doors were carried out in January 2018. At this time, a small section of the ceiling in a room downstairs collapsed.

Further remedial work caused the ceiling to come down again in March. Subsequently, The Temple remained closed for the summer.

In January 2019, the toilets were closed, reportedly due to vandalism. A cistern leak in the ladies and faulty timer locks had to be rectified.

Finally, the toilets at The Temple, a rather long depressing experience for those using them, have been nicely refurbished - and CCTV has been installed outside the building to deter further vandalism and misuse. ❁



Shiny and new... (Credit: Richard Arnopp)

Don't forget: time to renew your Friends of Wanstead Parklands membership

Dear members,

Thank you, once again, for your continued support of the Friends of Wanstead Parklands.

Your financial support remains an important factor in enabling the Friends to contribute to protecting our beautiful park.

For the membership year 2020, we have again retained our current subscription rates:

£5 single

£10 family

£70 Life Membership

Alternatively, you can make a donation.

Your membership enables you to receive quarterly copies of our Newsletter and to join FWP activities at reduced rates.

To renew your membership, you can renew online at wansteadpark.org.uk, pay by bank transfer to our account using the details below, or alternatively, you can return a cheque to me, payable to the Friends of Wanstead Parklands.

If you have any queries, please contact John Sharpe, Membership Secretary, at wansteadpark.org.uk@gmail.com

Cheques to John Sharpe, Flat 3, 15 Sylvan Road, London E11 1QL

Bank transfer: HSBC Bank; Sort Code: 40-06-23; Account No: 81516337 (please use your surname as a payment reference)

Why the fall of Wanstead House began long before ‘Wicked William’ arrived

*Historian **Dr Hannah Armstrong** argues that the fate of the opulent family seat was sealed generations before its final occupant moved in*



Left: Wanstead House (Yale Center for British Art / Paul Mellon Collection).
Below: Dr Hannah Armstrong

In October, historian **Dr Hannah Armstrong** gave a lecture to the Georgian Group at its headquarters in Fitzroy Square, about Wanstead House, the palace that once stood at the heart of the parklands. Delivered to a full house, the lecture told the fascinating history of one of England’s most influential 18th-century estates.

An expert in 18th-century architecture and landscape design, Dr Armstrong charted the rise and fall of Wanstead House and its gardens and addressed the challenges of maintaining such an opulent family seat in that era. The lecture also drew attention to the complexities of material evidence and the need to carefully cross-examine it to determine historical accuracy. “This is particularly important when recreating histories of lost buildings,” she told the Friends of Wanstead Parklands Newsletter.

Though many stately homes from that era survive to this day, the fall of Wanstead House serves as a fascinating warning from history. But, as she suggested in her lecture, even English country



houses that have been lost - in the case of Wanstead House, thanks to poor management and bankruptcy - need not be lost forever. Dr Armstrong said she intends to restore Wanstead House to its rightful place in the pantheon of English country houses, drawing on her PhD to produce the first fully illustrated monograph on Wanstead House and its gardens. Her book is due for publication by the University of Liverpool Press in 2022, the bicentenary anniversary of Wanstead House’s great sale.

Here is a taster of Dr Armstrong’s lecture to the Georgian Group:

“The demise and demolition of a house like Wanstead was a poignant business. These structures were built as symbols of power and optimism, anticipating a lengthy future for the family’s ownership. “History tends to lay the blame on William Pole-Tylney-Long-Wellesley, the 4th Earl of Mornington - or “Wicked William” – the dissolute nobleman whose stewardship of Wanstead House ended with its demolition in 1822.

“However, I would argue that just as Wanstead’s ►

➤ development was gradual, so too was its decline.

“Correspondence between the 2nd Earl Tylney and his brother in law, Sir Robert London, suggests evidence of financial struggle from as early as 1760, when the 2nd Earl opted to reside abroad, neglecting the family seat at Wanstead.

A once-magnificent edifice

“The occasional leasing of Wanstead House during this period and the sale of the greenhouse in 1799 are further indications that Wanstead was not in the healthiest financial state prior to William’s ownership.

“The dispersal and demolition of this once-magnificent edifice has meant that one of the most significant and influential Georgian estates has

long been overlooked. Its neglect is surprising, given that work at the property was among the first commissions of major designers, Colen Campbell and William Kent.

“Fortunately, a study of the wide range of material evidence shared with you tonight means we are able to correct this oversight and build up an accurate historic understanding of how Wanstead appeared, developed and was experienced throughout the 18th century.” ❁

‘Wanstead House: East London’s Lost Palace’ by Dr Hannah Armstrong will be published by University of Liverpool Press in 2022. To keep updated on the project, follow Dr Armstrong on Twitter (@hc_armstrong) or contact hannahcarmstrong@gmail.com

Unsung heroes

Each issue, we showcase a different local group worth getting involved with. This time: the Wildlife and Conservation Group (WREN)

Every organisation wants volunteers, and WREN - Wanstead Park’s tireless Wildlife and Conservation Group - is no exception.

At this time of year, you’ll find WREN’s hardy team of members in Wanstead Park on Thursday mornings, as well as the first Sunday of the month, to clear seasonal growth of young trees and briars in Wanstead Park, so that lesser species of plants might survive, breathe and grow.

A typical morning is spent removing overgrowth from the edges of the Ornamental Water - invaluable work, without which the current views across the waterscape would be lost, a healthy variety of green life would be choked and, over time, water features would be overwhelmed and disappear.

Affiliated to the Friends of Wanstead Parklands, the WREN team is also active in clearing briar growth from the bluebell wood. If left to nature, the bluebells would be gradually swamped by the briars, and one of



the outstanding springtime features of the Park would be sadly diminished.

As an occasional member of this team, I can highly recommend getting involved. As an alternative to going down to the gym, it is unbeatable: real and varied exercise in fresh air while you enjoy the proximity of the local wildlife.

When you have finished, you have the satisfaction of knowing you have made a valuable contribution to the future sustainability of the Park. The team are sociable and everyone

is welcome. Gloves and equipment are provided.

As a matter of necessity, the WREN team works closely with the City of London to complement the activities of the full-time Epping Forest staff. At a time when City resources are under pressure, there is a greater reliance on these marvellous volunteers, and they are very much appreciated.

If you are interested in joining WREN, see the listings page for details of forthcoming activities. Tel 020 8989 5453, email info@wrengroup.org.uk. www.wrengroup.org.uk. **John Sharpe**

Come again! Brush up on the ancient bylaws of Wanstead Park

When Wanstead Park opened to the public in 1882, as part of an enlarged Epping Forest, it became a popular destination for east-enders of all classes at weekends and on public holidays.

For this reason, some of its bylaws, which it still retains, display a concern with the kind of indecorous behaviour often associated with crowds.

"No person shall gamble, bet, play with cards or dice, tell fortunes, beg, brawl, quarrel, fight, curse, or swear, be found drunk, or, to the annoyance of any person, use profane, indecent, obscene or offensive language in the Park, or be otherwise disorderly..."

Donkey rides were permitted in other parts of the forest, but not Wanstead Park: "No person shall ply for the hire of, or let out any horse, pony, mule, ass, goat, or other animal, with or without carts or carriages, in the Park.

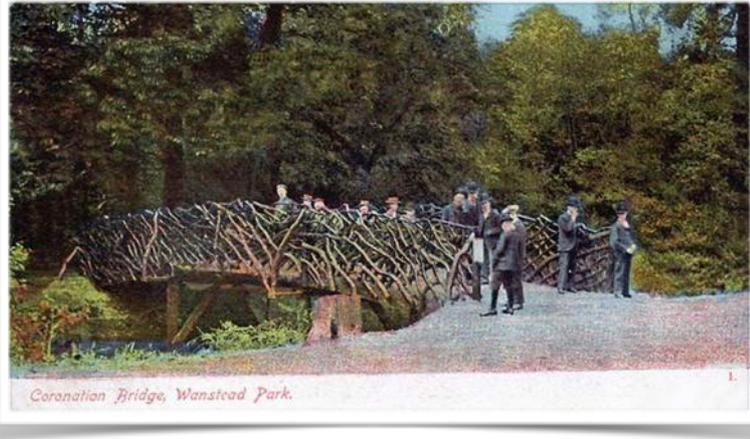


"No roundabouts, swings, shooting galleries, sticks for throwing at coconuts or other things, shall be set up in the Park, nor, without the licence of the Conservators, any photographic apparatus, either permanently or temporarily."

The list of forbidden activities concludes with a magnificent Edwardian flourish.

"The officers of the Conservators are empowered and directed to remove from the Park all brawlers, beggars, gamblers, fortune tellers, hawkers, gipsies, drunkards, tramps, rogues, vagabonds, and persons committing any nuisance therein."

Hear, hear! **Richard Arnopp**



What are we going to do about... the Coronation Bridge?

Every newsletter, we will throw the spotlight on a corner of Wanstead Parklands that could do with some wider attention. This month, GILL JAMES argues that, after eight years in disrepair, the Coronation Bridge is due for restoration

When it was first opened in 1902, the Coronation Footbridge provided a handsome pedestrian entry point into Wanstead Park for residents of Ilford. Originally built in a rustic-style with criss-crossed wooden branches over the river Roding, the bridge was replaced around 1960 in a more sober style.

But in 2012, after its wooden decks railings were deemed unsafe, it was closed off by Redbridge Council, which is responsible for its upkeep. Although the structure is reportedly sound, the deck and deck railings are in need of replacement.

However, since its closure, the estimated cost of repairing the bridge has risen to at least £25,000.

This almost ten-year closure is an inconvenience to Ilford residents. A bridge of similar design to the Edwardian original, but made of metal rather than wood, can be found in Lloyd Park in Walthamstow. It shows what can be done.

Or should the blocked-off Coronation Bridge just be left to rot? ❁

* **What do you think? Have your say at wansteadpark.org.uk@gmail.com or [tinyurl.com/fwpfacebook](https://www.tinyurl.com/fwpfacebook), or leave new 'What are we going to do about...' suggestions**



The 'ornamental' metal bridge in Lloyd Park (Credit: Elisa Brady)



An adult robin (credit: Kev Chapman). Below: a youngling (credit: Diane Rhodes)

Nature spotting: robins

*If you go down to Wanstead Park today, you're sure to see a redbreast, writes **Tricia Moxey***

With their scarlet breast feathers, adults robins will be familiar to most. A member of the thrush family, they were voted our national bird, and are currently listed at no 8 in the RSPB's annual bird count. Robins often feature on seasonal greeting cards, usually perched on a snow encrusted branch of holly, reminiscent of a time when snow could be expected in December.

A woodland species, robins have adapted to living in urban parks and well-vegetated gardens, hopping round the feet of gardeners. Their large beady eyes enable them to see their insectivorous food early in the morning or at dusk. A few become sufficiently tame to take mealworms from the hand! They are a common sight in the gardens in Wanstead and are protected by the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act.

With a wingspan of about 22cm, male and female robins have identical redbreasts, but behave differently as they flit through bushes, the males being noticeably pugnacious towards other males. The fledglings are spotty, developing a red breast as they mature.

A fiercely territorial species, rival males sing to advertise their presence, often being heard after dusk in well-lit urban areas. Fighting occurs if

there is a shortage of shrubby habitat. Males feed a female once she has completed building a nest and continue to do so while she is incubating a clutch of between four and six eggs. These hatch in two weeks, with the fledglings leaving the nest about 14 days later. In southern England, there are usually two broods a year, an early one in March and a second one after the first brood has fledged.

Feeding the birds in your garden is an excellent way to observe them during the colder months of the year. The next Big Garden Birdwatch is scheduled for 25-27 January 2020 (www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/birdwatch). ❁



Fungis to be with...

*Wanstead Flats is home to rare and declining species of mushroom, as **Richard Arnopp** discovered on a 'perfectly damp' nature walk. Photographs: **Mary Holden***

Every autumn, botanist Tricia Moxey leads a walk through Bush Wood and adjoining parts of Wanstead Flats to search for the great variety of fungi that flourish there.

This year's walk took place on Saturday 2 November. As the day approached, the weather forecast became more and more ominous, with high winds and heavy showers predicted.

In the event, it wasn't quite as bad as we feared. The hardy band of eight who gathered on the footpath from Belgrave Road did initially get a bit wet, but then the rain stopped and the wind abated. After a while, we even saw glimpses of blue through the clouds!



The plus side of 2019's rather rainy autumn was that we saw a good display of what we had come to see. Mild, damp weather tends to bring fungi out in profusion.

Over the course of two hours, we encountered a couple of dozen different species out of the 150 or so that have been recorded in Bush Wood.

Mild, damp weather

Fungi play a crucial role in the decomposition of organic matter, and the great variety of mushrooms and toadstools which we see in autumn are their fruiting bodies.

There are many rare and declining fungi species in Epping Forest. Though they are often resilient, there have been problems over recent years with disturbance and large-scale collection. This deprives wildlife of a valuable food source, as well as impacting on the woodland's biodiversity by breaking the complex cycle of decay and renewal. Look, but don't touch! ❁

For details of forthcoming nature walks around Wanstead Parklands, see listings page 13



Anyone fancy a pint?

Our focus on pubs around the Parklands.

*This issue: **The Holly Tree, Forest Gate***

It only threw open its doors after an extensive refit in October, but the Holly Tree is one of Forest Gate's oldest surviving landmarks.

A handsome structure dating from 1868, with a painted stucco façade that's visible across Wanstead Flats, the pub was originally intended to cater to a growing local population attracted by the construction of Forest Gate Station in 1846. As well as commuters, the railway opened up this rural Essex backwater to increasing numbers of day-trippers, attracted by country walks within easy reach of London.

Today, a miniature railway runs through the beer garden!

It's but one of many improvements following a major makeover by new owners, the Remarkable Pubs chain. The kitchen has been reinstated, the garden landscaped and the interior

fully refurbished with a traditional look and feel. But, to go with fun, slightly off-centre vibe, plans are also afoot to add a vintage Routemaster to the pub's yard.

For fellow real ale lovers, several cask beers and ciders are always on tap. As well as Beavertown Neck Oil (£5.70/pint), there's two local IPAs on tap by Pretty Decent, the light Summer Session (£5.70/pint) and a 5.5% American (£5.70/pint). For something totally different, try the Jubel, an Alpine peach lager brewed in Cornwall (£5.80/pint).

Something of a time machine

Come for a pint, but stay for the food. Here, the fish and chips have a neat, beery twist: the line-caught haddock, served



with chunky fries, mushy peas and tartare sauce, is coated in a Hoegaarden batter (£13.25).

For Sunday lunch, there are half-a-dozen mains to choose from, including roast West Devon lamb shoulder (£15.50) and free-range Suffolk quarter chicken with bread sauce (£14), all served with roast potatoes, seasonal veg, Yorkshire pudding and gravy.

For anyone using Wanstead Flats, the Holly Tree is certainly worth a detour, not least because it is something of a time machine. Remodelled several times between 1914 and 1926, it had a narrow escape during the Second World War, when a "doodlebug" hit a trolleybus outside. Due to wartime censorship, it's not

clear how many died, but damage to property was devastating. Seventy-five years after its near-death experience, The Holly Tree is back. ❁ **RICHARD ARNOPP**

The Holly Tree is at 141 Dames Road, Forest Gate E7 0DZ. 020 8221 9830, thehollytreepub.co.uk.

Richard Arnopp is a member of the Campaign for Real Ale



Diary dates

What's on across Wanstead Parklands, Nov 2019-Jan 2020

Thursday 21 November Vision RCL Walking for Health. Free walks for adults. Walking has many health benefits and best of all its free, all you need to do is turn up and enjoy the company. No booking required. 60 minutes, steady pace, some gentle slopes and uneven terrain. Meet 11am at Wanstead Park entrance, Warren Road. Details: visionrcl.org.uk/event/walking-for-health

Friday 22 November Friends of Wanstead Parklands Quiz Night. A fun, fundraising night out at Wanstead and Snaresbrook Cricket Club (1 Overton Drive, Wanstead E11 2LW). Entry: £5 (members), £6 (non-members; £2 membership reduction if you join on the night). Compere Tricia Moxey. Raffle - great prizes! Cash bar. Nibbles provided, but feel free to bring your own food (not drinks, please). 7.30pm for 8pm start; ends 10.30pm. Please book your place - or an entire table for your team members (up to 8 per team, but no one we will be left out!) - in advance with Gill James (020 8989 4898, gilljames@btinternet.com)

Sunday 24 November Group dog walk in Wanstead Park. Let's welcome the winter with a refreshing long walk and have a chit-chat with other local dog-owners. Meet 12pm, corner of Dames Road and Sidney Road (E7 0ED). Details: www.facebook.com/familydogtraininguk

Thursday 28 November Help the Wren Conservation Group with the annual bramble clearance in Chalet Wood, to give the bluebells their best chance in spring. No particular expertise - or level of strength! - necessary to join in; just bring enthusiasm and a willingness to get a bit muddy. Tools and gloves provided. Meet in The Temple car park, 10am; ends 12.30pm. Details: Peter Williams, 07716 034164, www.facebook.com/WrenOrg

Saturday 30 November Nature Walk Winter in Wanstead Park. Go exploring around Wanstead Park on a

family nature walk led by knowledgeable staff from the Field Studies Council (FSC). The sessions will mix games and activities that will inspire you to find out more and discover how you can help wildlife on your doorstep. To take part, you do not need any experience or any expensive kit, just an enthusiasm for discovering nature. The first walk begins 10am, ends 12pm; the second starts 1pm, ends 3pm. Adults, £5; children go free. To book a place, go to www.facebook.com/events/2244205572329267 or www.field-studies-council.org/shop/courses/wanstead-park-nature-walk-winter-am/

Saturday 30 November St Mary's & Christ Church's Merry Quizmas Festive Quiz. Licensed bar available to help get that brain in working gear! Doors open at 6.30pm for a 7pm start. Tickets £10 (tables of 6-8), includes a curry meal. Christ Church Parish Hall, Wanstead Place, E11 2SW. Details: Phil Ryan 01707 876151, www.wansteadparish.org/event/merry-quizmas-festive-quiz

Sunday 1 December Wren Conservation Group goes bramble clearing in Chalet Wood. Meet in The Temple car park, 10am; ends 12.30pm. Details: Peter Williams, 07716 034164, www.facebook.com/WrenOrg

Monday 2 December 'Religion and Revolt on Wanstead Flats', a Wanstead Historical Society discussion. Local historians Dr Mark Gorman and Peter Williams journey through the history of the Flats. From 7.30pm at Wanstead Library, Spratt Hall Road, E11 2EQ. Details: pows.wanstead@gmail.com

Thursday 5 December Wren Conservation Group goes bramble clearing in Chalet Wood. Meet in The Temple car park, 10am; ends 12.30pm. Details: Peter Williams, 07716 034164, www.facebook.com/WrenOrg

Saturday 7 December The Temple - the 18th-century, Grade II-listed building in the middle of Wanstead Park - opens its classic white porticoed doors to visitors during the first full weekend of every month. Inside, discover artefacts that tell the story of Wanstead Park from the

Roman era to the present day as well as the remains of statues that were once the glory of the grounds. 10am-3pm. Warren Road, Wanstead E11 2LS. Details: 020 7332 1911, tinyurl.com/templewansteadpark

Sunday 8 December The Temple in Wanstead Park continues its open weekend. See listing Saturday 7 December or go to tinyurl.com/templewansteadpark

Sunday 8 December Wanstead Park Christmas Walk. Enjoy a pre-Christmas celebratory walk led by naturalist Judy Adams. Suitable for families. Mince pies and mulled wine available at the end. Meet 10.30am at the entrance to Wanstead Park on Warren Road, Wanstead E11 2LS. Ends 12.30pm.

Thursday 12 December The Wren Conservation Group's bramble clearing in Chalet Wood continues. Meet in The Temple car park, 10am; ends 12.30pm. Details: Peter Williams, 07716 034164, www.facebook.com/WrenOrg

Thursday 12 December Vision RCL Walking for Health. Free walks for adults. Walking has many health benefits and best of all its free, all you need to do is turn up and enjoy the company. No booking required. 60 minutes, steady pace, some gentle slopes and uneven terrain. Meet 11am at Wanstead Park entrance, Warren Road. Details: visionrcl.org.uk/event/walking-for-health

Sunday 15 December Traditional carol service at St Mary the Virgin, Wanstead. 6pm, St Mary's, 1 Langley Drive E11 2LN. Details: www.wansteadparish.org/event/parish-carol-service

Thursday 19 December The Wren Conservation Group's bramble clearing in Chalet Wood continues. Meet in The Temple car park, 10am; ends 12.30pm. Details: Peter Williams, 07716 034164, www.facebook.com/WrenOrg

Sunday 22 December The Spirit of Christmas. Experience the festive seasons at the Temple in Wanstead Park with a free drop-in event. Entertainment includes seasonal stories for all ages - including the

► crowd-pleasing Fifteen-Minute Christmas Carol - and live music by local musicians such as folk group Storm in a Teacup. Christmas crafts and refreshments available.

Organised by Friends of Wanstead Parklands (donations welcome), in partnership with City of London. No booking required. Help welcomed, especially with children's Christmas crafts and refreshments. Contact Gill James if you can help:

gilljames@btinternet.com. 11am-2.30pm. Warren Road, E11 2LS

Saturday 4 January The Temple - the 18th-century, Grade II-listed building in the middle of Wanstead Park - opens its classic white porticoed doors to visitors during the first full weekend of every month. Inside, discover artefacts that tell the story of Wanstead Park from the Roman era to the present day as well as the remains of statues that were once the glory of the grounds. 10am-3pm. Warren Road, E11 2LS. Details: 020 7332 1911, tinyurl.com/templewansteadpark

Sunday 5 January The Temple in Wanstead Park continues its open weekend. For more details, see listing above or go to tinyurl.com/templewansteadpark

Saturday 1 February The Temple in Wanstead Park's open weekend. For more details, see 4 January listing, or go to tinyurl.com/templewansteadpark

Sunday 2 February The Temple in Wanstead Park continues its open weekend. For more details, see 4 January listing or go to tinyurl.com/templewansteadpark



Wednesday 8 January Friends of Wanstead Parklands committee meeting. Open to all. If you value the park and would like to contribute, why not come along and get involved? Common sense and a willingness to work as part of a group are the main qualities we are looking for, but we particularly need people with communication-related skills. Starts 7.30pm at Wanstead Golf Club (Overton Drive, E11 2LW). Details: www.facebook.com/events/741389522983226

Wednesday 15 January Friends of Wanstead Parklands committee meeting. Open to all. If you value the park and would like to contribute, why not come along and get involved? Common sense and a willingness to work as part of a group are the main qualities we are looking for, but we

Clearing brambles with the Wren Conservation Group

particularly need people with communication-related skills. Starts 7.30pm at Wanstead Golf Club (Overton Drive, E11 2LW).

Details: www.facebook.com/events/741389522983226

Every Saturday Wanstead Flats Parkrun. Join a throng of amateur runners as they go for personal bests (or a convivial jog...) around a 5km course - two laps of Harrow Road and Bush Wood. Meet every Saturday at Harrow Road Changing Pavilion, Wanstead Flats Playing Fields, E11 3QD, for a 9am race start. Details: www.parkrun.org.uk/wansteadflats

The Wanstead Park Tea Hut, at the easternmost point of the Heronry Pond (E11 2LS), is open every weekend, every school holiday including Christmas, during daylight hours, weather permitting.

For an accurate **weather forecast for Wanstead Park**, go to <https://app.weathercloud.net/d0507444306#profile>

Please note: All events are subject to change. Please check websites for updates or call ahead

Send listings for consideration in the next edition of the Friends of Wanstead Parklands Newsletter (for February, March and April 2020) to wansteadpark.org.uk@gmail.com with "NEWSLETTER LISTINGS" in the email subject line. Deadline: January 18, 2020.

Notes & Queries

We would like to invited readers of the Friends of Wanstead Park Newsletter to get involved and ask questions about the local area. The editorial team have a wealth of knowledge about the area, and will endeavour to find you an answer.

However, if you think you can shed some light on any of the questions here, or if have one of your own, please email us at wansteadpark.org.uk@gmail.com. Alternatively, you can leave a message for us on the Friends of Wanstead Parklands Facebook group (tinyurl.com/fwfpfacebook).

- **What specific variety of bluebells grow in Chalet Wood - and can I buy the blooms and bulbs anywhere local or online? If not, what's the most similar variety?**

- Why is Wanstead Flats not considered part of the Wanstead Parklands, though neighbouring Bush Wood is?

- **Just as Waterloo Bridge was the setting for The Kinks' hit Waterloo Sunset, has Wanstead Park ever featured in the lyrics of a popular song?**

We will feature your replies, as well as new queries, in the next newsletter.