

The Friends of Regent's Park & Primrose Hill

AGM

Thursday 21 April 18.30 for
19.00 at St John's Church Hall,

Lord's Roundabout, London
NW8 7NE. After the usual
Chairman's and Treasurer's
report the speaker will be Mark
Rowe, Assistant Park Manager,
on the Living Soils Project in
Regent's Park

CS11

20 March deadline
Final date for consultation on

the Cycle SuperHighway 11
which affects Regent's Park
entrance gates and the Outer
Circle is 20 March. If you have
not already stated your views
please do so without delay
tfl.gov.uk//cs11

Celebrate the Shakespeare Anniversary at the Open Air Theatre

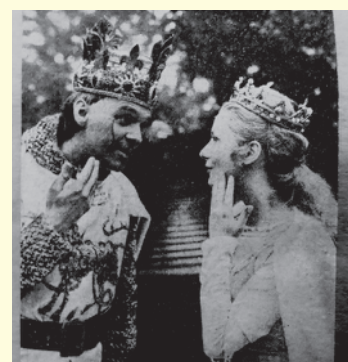
April 23 will mark 400
years since the death of
William Shakespeare.
In celebration of his life and
legacy, his work will again
be shown when the Open
Air Theatre stages a new
production of *Henry V* in
June. The theatre is proud to
be a part of Shakespeare400,
a season of artistic and

cultural events celebrating
Shakespeare's achievements
and profound influence, which
is coordinated by Kings College
London.

Founded in 1932, Regent's
Park Open Air Theatre has an
incredible history, and to make
this accessible to all, a new
digital archive has just been
launched. With over 300

productions to chronicle, the
archive will be digitised over the
coming years. The current focus
is on the productions of *Henry V*
in 1941, 1964 and 1977. These
hugely different adaptations
display just how Shakespeare
can be re-interpreted, and
the archive also gives us an
insight into the lives of actors
in very different eras.

The fairly spartan 1941
production of *Henry V* took
place as the Battle of Britain
was raging in the skies above,
and a story of victory and
triumph spoke to the hearts of
the audiences who had braved
the German bombs. The Open
Air Theatre and the Windmill
Theatre, off Piccadilly, were the
only two theatres to stay open
throughout the Second World
War. After the run, a love story
developed between the two leads



Left Clive Arrindell in *Henry V* 1977. Centre Clare
Luce. Top right Patrick Kinsella in RAF uniform.
Bottom right Cutting from *Daily Telegraph* of *Henry
V* 1964 with Dinsdale Landon and Amanda Reiss.

of *Henry V* - unknown Irish actor, Patrick Kinsella, and American starlet Claire Luce. His devotion to her continued throughout the war, even as he fought with the RAF overseas. In 1965 she published his love letters in a book titled *Letters from Patrick*, ensuring that his story was told long after his tragic death near the end of the war in 1944.

The 1977 production had its own story to tell. Another unknown actor, Clive Arrindell, had recently been discovered by Laurence Olivier, and stepping out on the Open Air stage marked his first Shakespearean lead. He was lauded as unpretentious and as an "honest, likeable and genuinely noble Harry (who) dominates the action" (*The Guardian*). This jubilee production was light and comic, turning the history play into something brimming with big characters and "ample delights" (*The Telegraph*) - quite different from the very traditional version directed by David Williams in 1964. This production made good use of the natural surroundings, and as one journalist put it - "open air conditions suit the play, which is largely set out doors anyhow" (*Daily Telegraph*).

The Open Air Theatre has been a bastion for showcasing how a Shakespeare play can be adapted to suit a contemporary audience; from the intensely gory *Richard II* in 1994, to the Big Fat Gypsy Wedding version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 2012. Whilst the Open Air Theatre's artistic programming now embraces a broad range of playwrights, in a year where cultural institutions are coming together to celebrate his profound legacy, it seems fitting that Shakespeare returns to the Park where so many wonderful interpretations have played out before.

For more information: <https://openairtheatre.com/1932>
To visit the Heritage Project: <http://openairtheatreheritage.com>

For more information on Shakespeare400: <http://www.shakespeare400.org>

Open Air Theatre production dates

13 May – 2 June
Running Wild
by Michael Morpurgo,
adapted by Samuel Adamson

17 June – 9 July
Henry V by William Shakespeare

15 July - 27 August
Jesus Christ Superstar,
lyrics by Tim Rice,
music by Andrew Lloyd Webber

2 -17 September
Pride and Prejudice
by Jane Austen,
adapted by Simon Reade

A philanthropist in our midst. Do you know this kind man?

The BBC was recently contacted by a lady who was walking her dog in Regent's Park near the junction of Prince Albert Road and Charlbert Street on New Year's Day. An elderly gentleman, who she suspects may have had Parkinson's, wished her a Happy New Year and then walked off towards the cars on Prince Albert Road. She saw him putting something on the windscreens of cars and thought nothing of it. When she returned to her car she found a £10 note on the windscreen and the same on at least 20 other cars parked on the road.

She would love to find out more about this man – she says it was a huge random act of kindness and would like to share it, but she doesn't know who he was, or anyone else who had the money left on their car.

Can you help? If so, contact the editor of this newsletter.

Zoo News

ZSL London Zoo's biggest experience ever will be unveiled to the public this Easter, as the doors open to Land of the Lions on Friday 25 March.

Home to a pride of endangered Asiatic lions (*Panthera leo persica*), the £5.2m Land of the Lions features a 'windowless-view' of the big cat's enclosure.

Created to transport visitors from the heart of London to the vibrant setting of Sasan Gir in India and covering an expanse of 2,500sqm (27,000sqft), visitors will enter through a grand stone archway, before picking up their 'park pass' at the Gir Tourist Information Centre. They will then explore Sasan Gir railway Station - where the



odd lion might be spotted snoozing on the tracks - or embark on a journey on the overhead walkway, to discover the troop of lively Hanuman Langur monkeys, and gaze across the lions' forest home.

ZSL London Zoo's designers visited the lions' wild home in the Gujarat state in India for inspiration and ideas, and worked with members of London's Gujarati community to ensure the exhibit lives up to the land it emulates. Rickshaws, bicycles, sacks of spices, maps, rangers' huts, and even a life-size truck – researched, sourced and shipped from India – are dotted around Land of the Lions, both inside and out of the lions' domain, highlighting the uniquely-close proximity in which Asiatic lions live with people in their native Indian habitat.

Wild Asiatic lions are found only in the Gir Forest region, in the Indian state of Gujarat. Protected by law, the lions play an important role in the local

community who deeply value the presence of the big cats. But due to their limited range, Asiatic lions are at threat from disease outbreak and conflict with humans in villages less comfortable with their presence.

The result of ZSL's Asiatic lions fundraising campaign, Land of the Lions will provide the excellent home for the big cats, and promises an enthralling new experience which will support and promote ZSL's international conservation efforts to protect Asiatic lions.

James Wren,
Development Director, ZSL

The Memorial Mob

This group was set up to remember the lost and forgotten events, individuals and organisations of the 'uniformed' armed and emergency services. It was founded by Iain Henderson, himself a member of the Royal Parks Constabulary. They are seeking approval and funding

to create what they call 'a blue plaque with a twist' which would be placed on all the Royal Parks Police former police stations across the Royal Parks to commemorate the work of this force. In 2004 the Metropolitan police took over their role. An inspector of the park constables in Hyde Park, Samuel Parkes (c. 1813-1864), was particularly distinguished. He was a private in the in the 4th Light Dragoons, later the 4th Hussars and served over 26 years in the army. His main claim to fame was his being awarded the Victoria Cross for his role during the Charge of the Light Brigade in the Crimean war in 1854. His citation reads:

4th Light Dragoons No. 635 Private Samuel Parkes
In the charge of the Light Cavalry Brigade at Balaklava, Trumpet-Major Crawford's horse fell, and dismounted him, and he lost his sword; he was attacked by two Cossacks, when Private Samuel Parkes (whose horse had been shot) saved his life, by placing himself between them and the Trumpet-Major, and drove them away by his sword. In attempting to follow the Light Cavalry Brigade in the retreat, they were attacked by six Russians, whom Parkes kept at bay, and retired slowly, fighting, and defending the Trumpet-Major for some time, until deprived of his sword by a shot. He died at Stanhope Gate, Hyde Park and is buried in Brompton Cemetery.

More about the Memorial Mob can be found on their website <http://thememorialmob.webs.com>

Update on the new charitable body to manage the Royal Parks

The plans to launch a new organisation to manage and fundraise for London's Royal Parks have been given the go-ahead by the government. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has given the green light to plans by The Royal Parks Agency (TRP) and the charity for the Royal Parks, the Royal Parks Foundation (RPF) to create a new public corporation. They will now begin the process of applying for charitable status from the Charity Commission. The new charitable body will take over the role of managing the parks from TRP, which last year spent £36.6m maintaining the 5,000 acre estate. It will also build on the role of fundraising currently undertaken by the RPF. Of the £36.6m annual cost of managing the parks, about 65 per cent is self-generated through events, sponsorship, donations, catering, grants, lottery funding, licences, rental income from lodges, filming and photography. The rest of the Parks' income (35 per cent) comes from a DCMS grant. With more than 77 million visitors a year (Ipsos MORI

2015) and decreasing government funding, this means maintaining high standards and a public satisfaction rate of 98% (Ipsos MORI 2015) is becoming increasingly challenging.

The Royal Parks' press release says 'the new charitable public corporation will be increasingly self-sustaining, and so will be able to manage the parks even more efficiently, with better services provided at a lower cost while maintaining excellent visitor satisfaction'.

As we reported in the previous newsletter it is thought by the TRP that one single charitable body at arm's length from government can also present a more compelling case for support to corporate sponsors, private donors and charitable trusts, as well as attracting new volunteers.

Both organisations, TRP and RPF are now working together to create the new body, which it is hoped will be launched by the end of this year. The creation of the new entity will also see a new board of trustees appointed. Recruitment for its Chair will begin shortly with the role publicly advertised and candidates interviewed by a panel that includes an independent member. The appointment of other trustees will follow soon after. The advertisement will appear here: <https://publicappointments.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/>

In the gardens

With any luck the newly planted Sunset Boulevard cherry trees planted on Chester Road will flower in mid-April. They all have a tree hydration bag around the stem and a watering tree pipe installed underground each root ball. The bags will be removed when the new roots break out into the surrounding ground while the pipes will serve to enable watering during drought periods.

*Mark Bridger,
Assistant Park Manager*

A pair of fire crests have been wintering in Queen Mary's garden together with two water rails, in the rail ditch by Hanover bridge. A female goosander flew west on the 8th January. Tawny and little owls have been displaying and male great spotted woodpeckers drumming. Unfortunately Egyptian geese have been breeding in the heron nests, but the goslings are short-lived as they have been eaten by large gulls and crows. The herons are incubating eggs and some have settled down in the heron baskets which were installed just before Christmas.

A pair of kestrels has set up home in the wetland pen but the waterfowl numbers on the lake and the black gulls will start to decline in March as the birds head back to their breeding grounds.

*Dave Johnson, Wildlife Officer
and Francis Butler, apprentice*

Meet your new Chairman

Ianthe McWilliams joined the Friends of Regent's Park and Primrose Hill (FRP&PH) soon after it was set up, when she moved to her current home twenty-five years ago. She had visited the park as a child with her parents, and had enjoyed rowing on the lake and visiting the zoo, but it was her husband's love of cricket (Lords) that brought her to the area. Living close to the park she soon got to know it well, and enjoyed taking a 'long cut' each day through the park to work.

Ianthe served on the Friends' committee for several years, but resigned when her work commitments meant she was too busy to continue. Now she has retired from the Department for Education, and works part-time, so she was an

obvious person for the patron and the previous chairman to ask to take over the chair.

When I met her for this article, Ianthe had only just assumed her new role, and she emphasized that, until she was fully up to date with all the facts and figures involved, as chairman she was keeping an open mind on her position with regard to the several controversies currently affecting Regent's Park and Primrose Hill. She sees the role of chairman as one of pressuring the various bodies involved in the park to take into consideration, and react to, the views of park users. To do so she will first listen to the views of the committee, and to all the members of the Friends whom she hopes will be in touch with her, and then she will take firm action when she feels it is required. This she feels is particularly

important now that the park is to be managed by a charity, run by a board the composition of which has yet to be declared.

Ianthe hopes that Regent's Park will always remain an open space offering a place for recreation to all its users. The use of the park for events, which contribute to its maintenance, must be limited to events compatible with, and not leaving lasting damage to the park, or the zoo car park. It is important that the FRP&PH maintain strong links with bodies, such as the park management and the Crown Estate Paving Commission (CEPC), and English Heritage, which will also be affected by the new charity board's decisions. Ianthe likes the variety of landscape in Regent's Park and Primrose Hill, and is particularly fond of the rose garden. She is pleased that it is being



renewed. She is also grateful to those whose contributions have enabled the renewal of the cherry trees on Chester Road. As she takes over the chairmanship of the FRP&PH she wishes to pay tribute to the committee, and to the outgoing chairman, Conall Macfarlane, for all their hard work over the past years.

Margaret Elliott

It has been a busy season in Queen Mary's Garden (QMG) as the ground has been prepared for planting in the Triton Border and the border between Chester gates and the toilets. A donation received from the Doris Day fan club has gone to create a new rose bed on the left lawn just after the Jubilee gates. The trials conducted last spring and summer using compost tea to improve the soil condition and increase plant growth have been successful and this work will continue with the use of QMG produced worm compost and comfrey juice. This continues the move to more organic management of the gardens.

*Mark Rowe,
Assistant Park Manager*

News from the allotment garden

140.6kg of fruit and vegetables were produced in 2015, the equivalent of 1758 meals. Five schools were welcomed and sessions were produced for 260 children. The harvest festival had 650 visitors and was the most successful ever. There were four open days attracting 150 visitors.

'We would like to thank our funders, the Royal Parks Foundation, the Regent's Park and the Friends of Regent's Park and Primrose Hill. We couldn't

do it without you, and we are hoping to achieve even more in 2016 thanks to your on-going support'.NB from Julie Riehl,

For the diary

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10 March 2016
Academy Big Band with Keith Nichols
19.30 Duke's Hall,
Royal Academy of Music
Tickets £7.50 (concessions £5.50) from the Academy's Box Office: online, or telephone 020 7873 7300
10am-4pm Monday-Friday.

21 March 2016
Fitzpatrick lecture – Churchill's medical men, Dr David Eedy
Registration from 14.30-14.55

Royal College of Physicians
No need to book

16 April 2016
The Big Dig
10.00 -15.00
Allotment Garden
If you feel like building trellises, planting seedlings or even shovelling compost then sign up via the website
http://www.capitalgrowth.org/events/big_dig/

9 May 2016
Dee Late: inside Dee's miraculous mind. Evening event exploring the world of the Tudor polymath John Dee (to accompany the exhibition currently at the RCP)
17.30-21.00

Royal College of Physicians
Tickets £10 per person, book online at www.rcplondon.ac.uk/events

31 May
Nature Explorers – Hedgerow and hedgehogs
An adventure day for 8-11 year olds in Hyde Park. Guided outdoor activities from building hedgehog friendly habits to uncovering prickly facts on a nature discovery trail
Tickets £15.00 from The Royal Parks Foundation
www.supporttheroyalparks.org/events or call them on 020 7036 8056 10.00-15.00

15 – 19 June 2016
Taste of London
Marylebone Green

Friends have responded to the CS11 consultation: key points are

Pedestrians should have priority, their safety is key.

There should be a 20 mph speed limit, signalled at the entrances and enforced, and proper traffic calming at all crossings (lights or platforms). There would then be no need to close gates which we oppose as it would significantly reduce access to the park, the Zoo and the theatre.

Appeal for help

The Committee is sad that Linda Johnson wishes to cease to be its Secretary, and is keenly searching for a replacement: the task involves arranging committee meetings and taking notes of these and the AGM and end of season reviews (approximately five occasions a year). Ideally the new candidate would also be able to help with our membership records. Anyone who wishes to put themselves forward should approach Ianthe McWilliams,

Useful phone numbers

Police telephone numbers:
Emergency: 999
Non-emergency crime reporting: 020 7706 7272
Non-urgent matters: 020 7161 9701 or 07711 028 422

Police NEW NUMBER for non-emergency police matters is 101. Use this number for Park Regulation offences where, for example, unauthorised activities are interfering with the comfort and convenience of park users.

Park Office 020 7486 7995
(Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm)

Friends of Regent's Park & Primrose Hill

Chair: Ianthe McWilliams
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Audience at *Seven Brides for Seven brothers* 2015 at the Open Air Theatre photo David Jensen

