



Common Knowledge

December 2011, Issue 43

Inside this issue

2. Community Safety; What to Report to Whom
3. Rookery Centenary
4. Streatham Common in Mitcham?; Memories
5. Recent and Next Events; Filling the Chair
6. Volunteering; What's Up?

Common Knowledge, the newsletter of the Friends of Streatham Common, is edited by Peter Newmark: tel. 020 8679 2908; email: peternewmark@gmail.com

Spot the Difference !

Help us look after your parks and open spaces
This site is managed by Lambeth Council in partnership with the local community. Please help us keep it clean, green and safe for all to use and enjoy. For more information please contact Lambeth Council on **020 7926 9000** or email parks@lambeth.gov.uk

Help us look after your parks and open spaces
This site is managed by Lambeth Parks and Greenspaces and patrolled by the Lambeth Parks Rangers. To help us keep the site clean and safe, or for further information, please report any problems or contact us on **020 7926 9000** or at parks@lambeth.gov.uk

Please join us on Wednesday 7th December at the bottom of the Common by the Christmas tree, and later at our party.



**7.00 pm - mince pies
and mulled wine
7.30 pm - carol singing
8.00 pm - Friends' Christmas
party in the Pied Bull pub**

Yes, the Park Rangers have finally gone. The top panel has been stuck over the bottom panel on notice boards around the Common (apart from one that was missed out). And note that the "local community" - that's us - has been added as a partner in managing the site. A number of issues related to these changes were discussed at the Friends' public meeting on Community Safety, where the idea of setting up a Park Watch was floated (see page 2). And there are more changes to come as the reorganization of the Parks department is still under negotiation. Meanwhile a first taste of the effects of cuts in the maintenance budget is already evident, with news, for example, that the memorial benches will no longer receive an annual 'service' but instead only be refreshed as and when it is deemed necessary, and that pruning of shrubs will no longer be carried out annually but only every three years. What the Friends will be fighting for in particular in coming months is that the Rookery is given extra attention as well as Green Flag status in the run up to its centenary in 2013 (see page 3).

Community Safety

A public meeting on this topic was organised by the Friends and held on 21 November. Speaking at the meeting were Nabil Mezoughi, the local Area Crime Reduction Manager, Derek Prentice, Lambeth's Assistant Director, Culture and Communities Division, and Sergeant Mark Brindley who is in charge of the Streatham South Safer Neighbourhood Team.

As a result of the meeting it was agreed that there should be prominent notices on the Common informing the public of how best to report problems. In outline, crimes and anti-social behaviour are matters for the police, whereas misuse of the Common is a matter for the Council. Details of what to report to whom are in the following article. One problem that emerged is that the police have no powers to enforce bye-laws on the Common and that with the demise of the Park Ranger service this leaves a gap, unless and until the police can be given the necessary powers, and always assuming they will consider enforcement of bye-laws a priority. Meanwhile it seems unlikely that much will be done about such problems as teenagers using the playground or people camping or driving on the Common.

An idea that was floated was that a Park Watch should be set up for the Common. This would be run along the lines of Neighbour Watch, with a group of local residents who agree to keep a look out for problems on the Common, reporting them through a coordinator to the appropriate authority. Visible 'Park Watch' signs would appear on the Common. Such a scheme has just started elsewhere in Lambeth - in Myatts Field Park, for example.

Sergeant Brindley said that the police surgeries are poorly attended and that if local residents want any change in his team's priorities, they need to make their voice heard at the surgeries, via petitions or even through local newspapers ♦

..... What to Report to Whom

Lambeth Community Safety Division works in partnership with Lambeth borough police and other internal and external agencies to tackle and deal with crime and disorder activities as well as anti-social behaviour issues.

Each of Lambeth's 21 wards has its own Police Safer Neighbourhood Team, made up of a Sergeant, two Officers and at least two Police Community Support Officers. The Sergeant also has responsibility for managing a Local Police Team made up of at least six Officers that work across four wards doing proactive work and responding to usually less urgent calls.

The local Streatham South Safer Neighbourhood Police Team has its priorities set by the Streatham South Safer Neighbourhood Ward Panel, which is made up of members of the community (usually residents but sometimes also local business owners), who are annually elected. At least four Ward Panel meetings a year are open to the wider public, who can thereby influence the crime and anti-social behaviour priorities that the police team will work on. To find out the dates for these meetings, please visit the following website:
<http://content.met.police.uk/Team/Lambeth/StreathamSouth>

Currently' one priority for the Streatham South Neighbourhood Police Team is to patrol the Common when schools finish to reduce the risk of robberies against school children.

The Common, itself, is managed by Lambeth Council in partnership with the local community. We ask that park users help us keep them clean, green and safe for all to use and enjoy. Please report any accidents or damage to Lambeth Parks.

If you witness an incident or are concerned about any crime / anti-social behaviour issue in your ward or on the Common then

please contact the most appropriate of the following:

To report any intimidating or threatening activities that scare you or cause distress to you or to your neighbourhood, such as verbal abuse, aggressive behaviour, noise nuisance, criminal damage, street drinkers and so on (most incidents reported on this line are shared with your safer neighbourhood police team), contact **the Lambeth Council Community Safety Anti-Social Behaviour hotline on 020 7926 4000**.

To report any damage, vandalism, squatting by travellers or any other issues relating to the upkeep of the Common, contact **Lambeth's Parks and Open Spaces on 020 7926 9000**.

To gain police advice or bring their attention to local problems that require long-term solutions, contact the **Safer Neighbourhood Team on 020 8721 2628**. This number is *not* for reporting crime and incidents because the team is not always on duty and no one picks up calls for the team when they are not on duty.

For all non-emergency incidents that require police attendance, such as coming home to find you've been burgled, intimidation by drinkers or general anti-social behaviour, call the **police on 101**.

For emergency calls that require immediate police attendance – usually crimes in action, such as seeing a fight, having just been robbed or having lost your child - **always call 999**.

Nabil Mezoughi, Area Crime Reduction Manager

In response to a number of requests, we have started to send members timely email reminders of forthcoming events. If you have email, are not receiving our reminders but would like to, please let us know via: friendsofsteathamcommon@gmail.com

Rookery Centenary

Planning has started to celebrate the centenary of the Rookery in the summer of 2013. There are a number of major aims. The first is that the Rookery grounds and gardens are brought up to a high standard, true to the original character of the gardens, and in keeping with the fact that the garden is on English Heritage's Register of Historic Parks and is a Grade 11* Garden of Historic Importance. Preliminary talks have been held with Capel Manor College to see if a student project could be based on the Rookery Gardens. The second aim



is to mark the centenary with a major event, possibly focused on the White Garden, which is in need of sprucing up. Thirdly, there is the possibility of

applying for Green Flag status for the Rookery; this was on the cards until the council's recent financial restraints took hold, so now would require a major fund raising effort, largely to create the management plan that is a prerequisite for applying for Green Flag status ♦



'The Rookery' around 1900. Thanks to Tony Spain who sent us this photograph of his grandmother, a niece by marriage of the owner. She is posed in front of the house, which was demolished in 1913.

Streatham Common in Mitcham?

Opposition is rapidly mounting to the Boundary Commission for England's proposals that would make the Common and the area to the south of it part of the Mitcham parliamentary constituency. This is part of a wider proposal in which other parts of Streatham would end up in two new constituencies, one called Clapham Common and the other called Streatham and Tooting.

At present we have our own MP to speak up for Streatham. Under the new proposals, no one MP could speak up for Streatham and its concerns as a whole.

Streatham's MP, Chuka Umunna, has voiced opposition to the changes as have Streatham's Liberal Democrats and Transition Streatham, both of which have created online petitions that you might wish to sign. A public meeting to further raise the issues was held on 25 November, after this issue had been printed.

To see the Boundary Commission's proposals in detail and to let them know what you think of them, go to:
<http://consultation.boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk/whats-proposed/London/south-london/> ♦

Memories

My main memories of Streatham Common were as a young post-war child in the 1950s while living in a turning of Crown Vale, before we moved. I used to visit the Common and the Rookery with my family and we were proud to take our aunt from Canada to such a lovely place.

As a young child, I can remember watching people sailing boats in a large pool, which is no longer in use. I also remember the smaller paddling pool at the bottom of the Common and, as a trainee teacher later living in Norbury, I used to take a young child I was studying for my course

to the pool. It was well attended and popular. I remember the nativity crib displayed each Christmas by the pool.

Earlier, as a young child, I got to know many trees in the wooded area and thought there were 'teddy bears' there having their picnic! My grandmother alerted me to birdsong in the woods. My grandfather often collected conkers for me. My older sister took me to the circus on the Common.

The place that impressed me most was the Rookery. My grandfather became a gardener there after retirement and was able to employ his skills. I remember the colourful displays of flowers tastefully grouped and representing the four seasons as each bed was replaced. The old wishing well intrigued me and the rose garden reminded me of the Alice in Wonderland books. I always looked at the sundial with interest. I can remember looking for tadpoles in the little brook that was flowing well then.

The White House was at one time a tea room but we often used the Rookery café for ice creams. I think there were geese in Norbury Grove and I have some recollection of horses, but this is vague,

I have happy childhood memories of Streatham Common and the Rookery. Unfortunately, I feel that some of the areas have deteriorated and the presence of the Park Keepers in their brown uniform is a thing of the past. Many people feel unsafe there now.

Janet Porter

Recent and Next Events

On 4 September, our annual **Fun Dog Show** was threatened by bad weather, which resulted in a reduced attendance, but nonetheless around 50 dogs showed up and the rain stopped in time. Many thanks to Councillor Florence Nosegbe for

being one of the judges again and to both Dane from Streatham Hill Veterinary Surgery and David from the Vale Veterinary Clinic for judging and supporting the event in other ways. The return of a cricket strip to the Common was celebrated on 11 September with a splendid **Cricket Match** co-hosted by Streatham Society and kindly organised by Colin Hutton. Children flocked to the playground on 8 October for the **Big Draw** covering the surface with colourful chalk artistry under the watchful eye of organiser Clair Wilcox. Next day, an autumn **Bird Walk** had plenty of walkers but the birds were rather notable by their absence.

Put April 1st in your diary now for the **2012 Kite Day** on the Common ♦

Filling the Chair

We will be looking for a new Chair of the Friends of Streatham Common in June next year as I will be standing down after a three year term and having been Vice-chair before that. The job is really interesting and for those of you who are busy people (as most of us are – I work full time and have a family), I can assure you it is really not that time consuming. It matters of course that you are able to get things done but we have a good and supportive executive committee and a team of volunteers to help. I will still be around but concentrating my time on the Rookery centenary event in July 2013.

The Friends has made a lot of progress over the past few years and is now ready to enter a new phase when we need to be a bit more professional about what we do. We may be called upon to take more of a collaborative role with the council. In many ways this will make our life easier but it will mean that we need to have a bit more specialist help on the executive committee; we may also need to strengthen the executive as it is increasingly taking quite important (often financial or other

resource-related) decisions. We are currently planning an application for charitable status and will be submitting it in the New Year.

Would you be interested in becoming chair or do you know someone who you think could do it?

You would need to be able to commit to a meeting of the executive every six weeks (currently held in the Pied Bull at Streatham Common) and a couple of public meetings a year.

As you all know, we run events on the Common and in the Rookery and we also lobby for a better management of these spaces. We also have several long-term projects on the go. The events are run by various individual Friends or members of the executive and we have a team that meets the Council quarterly to talk about the management of the Common. The job of the Chair is to lead the Friends in ensuring that the Common and the Rookery are managed, used and developed according to our vision and objectives.

Ideally we would like to elect someone local and/or anyone who is already a Friend but we do not rule out someone who is not currently a member or looking further afield.

As I want to ensure that a new Chair is elected at the AGM in June 2012 I am proposing that interested parties contact me by email before 1st February 2012 via: friendsofstreathamcommon@gmail.com.

Please, however, feel free to phone me to discuss the post before you make a decision. If you know anyone who is not already a member of the Friends but you think would be suitable please encourage them to consider the proposal.

Barbara Wright
0208 764 8062 (evenings and weekends)



Haymaking after the annual cut of the upper Common's acid grassland.

Volunteering

A big thanks to all those who have helped run our events in 2011, including Kite Day, Easter Hat Parade, Band In the Rookery, Streatham Festival, Shakespeare in the Rookery, the Dog Show, the Cake Competition and the Volunteer Days.

We hope our events will become ever more established and increase in number. However, with growth and the increasing council cutbacks, we will be needing volunteers more than ever in 2012 if we are to continue putting on our events.

We are not only looking for help during events, but also in the setting up and taking down of the Friends' gazebo at three or four events a year. This takes about an hour. We'd love to have a small team take responsibility for this. We can show you exactly what to do.

We are all so lucky to have the wonderful Common and these events are an great contribution to the local community for all ages. So please help; also it is fun to run and be a part of them.

So come on, couldn't you spare even a couple of hours at one event during the year? This could make all the difference.

If you can spare a little time yourself, or know anyone else who might be able to, it

would be great to hear from you. Please contact Katherine Forster on 07753 675091 or gkpics@btopenworld.com ♦

What's Up?

Playground - the increasingly muddy entrance from the Common has been given a hard top; new picnic tables have replaced the three old deteriorating ones.

Footpath - the notorious dip in the footpath near the playground that has every winter turned into a well-nigh impassable 'lake' has been levelled off.

Bins - a number of new fox-proof bins have been installed - some to replace rusted through bins but also a couple of additional bins at rubbish hotspots. Any bin can now be used for dog droppings.

Community Garden - with help from donations from the Friends and Streatham Action, and up to 50 volunteers, visible progress has been made in clearing and digging over a large area of ground ♦

Advertisements

(to advertise, please contact the editor)

Alexander Technique

Can improve your posture and mobility or reduce pain. Try an introductory session for £20 (usually £28). To find out more, go to www.alexandersouth.co.uk

Local daytime, evening and Saturday sessions available; call Geraldine Gleeson on 0208 679 6131 or email info@alexandersouth.co.uk

S.E.A. Plumbing

We are a local firm that can reliably help you with your domestic plumbing needs and with bathroom fitting. If you would like to discuss your needs and to arrange for an estimate, give me a call.

Steve Atkins 07973 430295 or email seaplumbing1@aol.com