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Trust Times

Spring 2024
Issue 07

YOUR HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB TRUST NEWSLETTER

Trees For The Future: Full Winter Lecture Write-up



Trees are such an important part of our green Suburb.

We feel passionately about preserving the ones we have, ensuring their health and longevity, and helping people understand their importance and what we can do to keep Hampstead Garden Suburb green.

Last month we had our Winter Lecture on the subject of 'TREES FOR THE FUTURE'. Our guest speakers came from two important areas of the tree world: Keith Sacre runs Barcham Trees, the largest container tree nursery in Europe, and has a wealth of experience in which trees we should be considering when replanting; and Dr Samantha Dobbie is conducting radical experiments with the Birmingham Institute of Forest Research (BIFoR) to help us understand how our changing climate will affect the health of our trees in the not-so-distant future, as well as helping us establish which species will be more resilient.

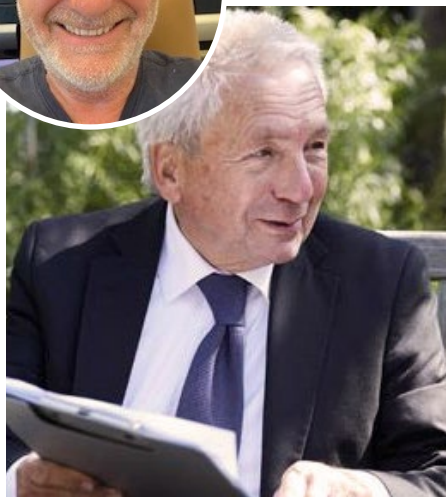
We have a full write-up of the lecture in this issue starting on [page 4](#).



Keith Sacre presents at the Winter Lecture

The Suburb is a unique place, and we have to consider the trees which we still have which were retained by Parker & Unwin from the pre-Suburb landscape – the so-called 'Unwin oaks'. A number of these were plotted on maps when we conducted our tree survey ten years ago, so that we could see just how many remained – remarkably, more than half do survive.

It's important for us to understand how those pre-existing trees shape the landscape around us, but we also need to look to the future, as many of these centuries-old trees are now in old age. When a tree has to be replaced, what should we recommend as its replacement? Careful thought needs to go into not just the location but also the type of tree we recommend.



Farewell Tony; Welcome Frank

After more than four decades working on the Suburb, our arboriculturist Tony George has now retired. He has played such a huge part of the Suburb's green landscape, advising the Trust on the consents we give to private homeowners, as well as on the trees in our care on public and shared private land.

Tony's intimate knowledge of the Suburb and expertise when it comes to trees is a hard act to follow, which is why we were delighted to appoint Frank Hawkins

last summer, who brings with him a wealth of knowledge in all aspects of landscape gardening, as well as tree planting and maintenance. Frank is a permanent, full-time member of the Trust team, and it's Frank who will come and see you if you need to do any work to trees on your property.

Give us a call on 0208 455 1066 to make an appointment for any tree work you're considering.

Tony George; Inset: Frank Hawkins

Trust Gives Talk on Charles Paget Wade at Snowhill

One of the Suburb's most eclectic and imaginative architects was Charles Paget Wade, a man now arguably more well-known for Snowhill Manor, the National Trust property in the Cotswolds that he bought, restored and filled to the brim with his collection of esoteric objects.

The Trust's Communications Officer, Paul Capewell visited Snowhill last month – while the Manor is closed for winter – to deliver a talk for more than fifty of the house's dedicated volunteers and staff who tell visitors about Wade, the house, and his collection.

Paul was invited by the National Trust to help fill in the gaps in Wade's story and explain what Wade did before he came to Snowhill.

Wade's career as a draughtsman was short-lived, but the work he did while working for Parker and Unwin at the Suburb, from 1907-1911, had some significant manifestations: as well as detailing houses at Asmunds Place, Temple Fortune Hill and number 2 Rotherwick Road, he was also responsible for the

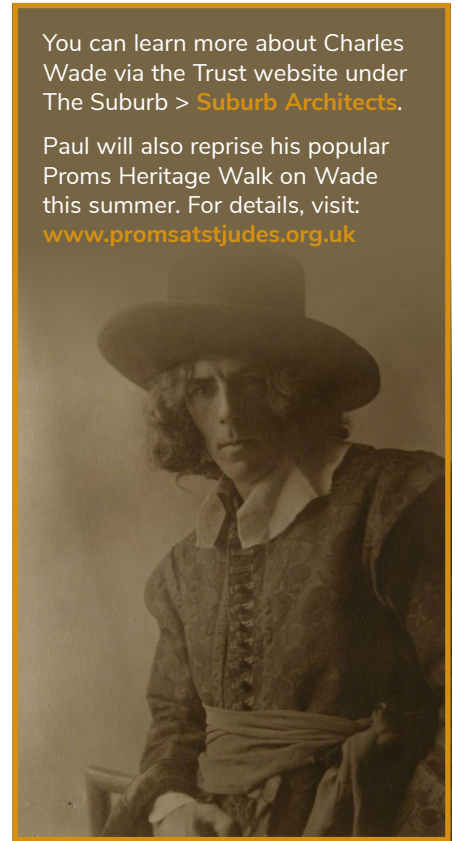
designs and drawings for the Great Wall, and for the Club House, which was sadly lost to enemy action in World War Two, and stood where Fellowship House now stands.

While visiting to give the talk, Paul was given a guided tour of Wade's fabulous house – though with the venue closed for winter, most of his collection was tucked safely away under sheets and purpose-built covers. It all added to the spooky feel of the place, with dimly-lit rooms containing suits of armour, artworks and ornaments, and a real feeling that "Mr Wade" (as the curators all seem to refer to him) is just lurking around the next corner, ready to jump out in fancy dress – just as he always used to.

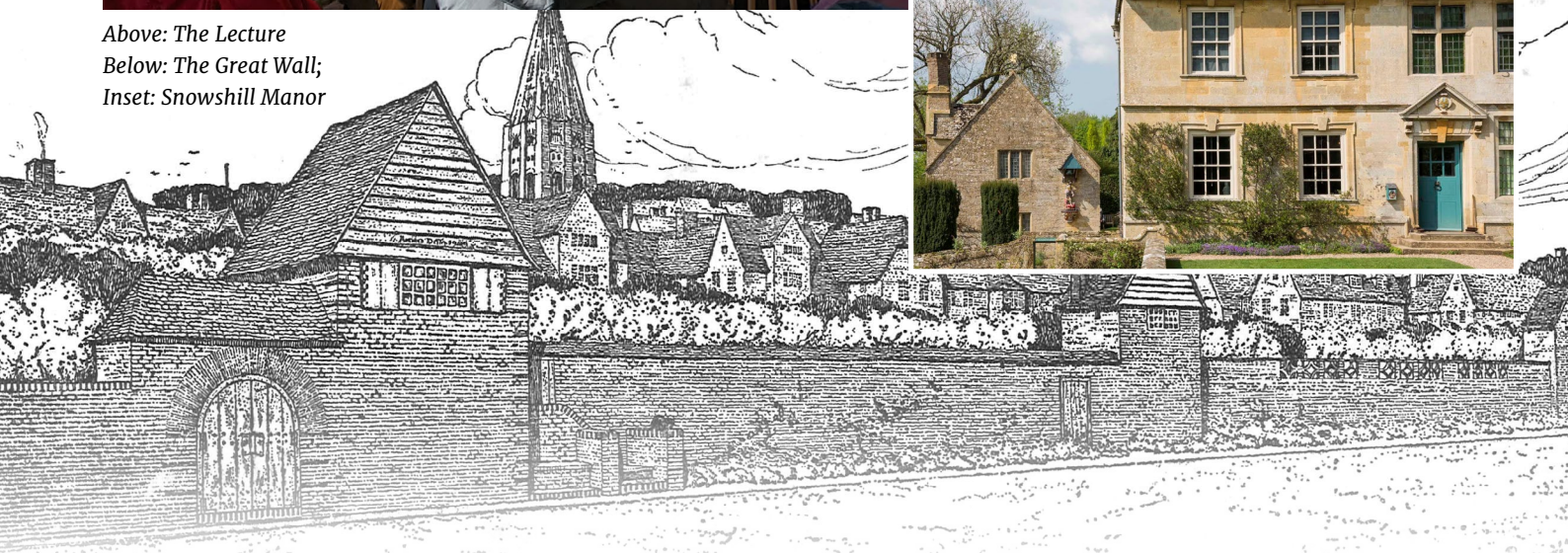
We feel it's important that Hampstead Garden Suburb, where Wade did the bulk – if not all – of his architectural work, plays a significant role in the telling of his story. It's with these kinds of outreach exercises and interactions with adjacent organisations that the Suburb's place in people's imaginations, and in the wider world beyond its physical boundaries, is assured.

You can learn more about Charles Wade via the Trust website under The Suburb > [Suburb Architects](#).

Paul will also reprise his popular Proms Heritage Walk on Wade this summer. For details, visit: www.promsatstjudes.org.uk



Above: The Lecture
Below: The Great Wall;
Inset: Snowhill Manor



Trust AGM Last September

This year's HGS Trust AGM took place at the Free Church Hall after a series of different venues post-2020 – from online-only, to a smaller gathering at Fellowship House, to last year's return to the Henrietta Barnett School.

We were pleased to see such a strong turnout this year, despite horrendous weather. A recent campaign to raise awareness of Trust Membership has led to an upsurge in numbers, and we were particularly pleased to see a lot of new faces.

The formal business of the AGM covered a number of procedural processes including signing off the audited annual report and accounts – this was all done without issue.

Two resolutions were also passed which enable us to host Trust Council meetings electronically if need be, to allow electronic records to be kept, and to remove the need for Trust Members to renew every three years. This last had created a lot of administrative work, and added to the confusion of whether residents are current members or not.

We also elected our newest trustee Sarah Stafford, who joins Trust Council having stood unopposed, following Trevor Price's retirement at the end of his term. We thank Trevor for his time and dedication over the past three years acting as one of the four elected resident trustees, and we look forward to Sarah's contributions.

The AGM also provides an opportunity for members to ask questions of the Trust, and a number of topics emerged, leading to a lengthy Q&A session.

Chief Executive Simon Henderson answered questions on eligibility for



HGS Trust AGM at the Free Church Hall

Trust Membership, and he explained how the Trust ensures its records are as up to date as reasonably practicable. Questions were also asked on the provision of defibrillators and a community notice board, the Trust's investment properties, the wider use of email communication, and the future of the Tea House.

There followed a variety of questions about the Trust's plans for one of the disused tennis courts below Central Square. Several Members felt strongly that this court should be restored for sports use, following an on-line survey by a group of residents. Trust Chairman Raymond Taylor and Simon explained the practical and financial difficulties in now using this site as a sports court. There was also a lack of evidence for the need for a third tennis court, given the current actual usage of the existing courts and overall provision on the

Suburb. They acknowledged that block-booking and unused bookings affected availability, and that the Trust would look into ways of preventing these.

Simon explained that the wider area between Central Square and Willifield Way may offer more opportunity for community amenities, provided that various legal and financial issues could be resolved. An informed consultation with residents could then take place.

Residents who wish to stay up to date with the work of the Trust are encouraged to join as members – it's free and open to any adult resident of the Suburb. Join online at www.hgstrust.org/membership to receive two additional electronic editions of *Trust Times*, and to hear details of our occasional lecture series. You can also find out about the Trust's work on our website at www.hgstrust.org/news.

Trust Membership Update

A reminder to Members that a resolution was passed at last September's AGM. Previously, Membership had to be manually renewed every three years.

Long-term Members will recall being sent a letter in November/December asking them to renew. More recently this was done via email.

Membership of the Trust is now **permanent** and **does not need to be renewed**.

It will of course expire if a Member leaves the Suburb (as it is only open to residents), or if a Member contacts us asking to terminate their Membership for whatever reason.

If you have a Membership card or email which states an expiry date, please disregard this – if you are a current member of the Trust, you will remain one unless you leave the Suburb, or if you ask us to cancel your Membership.

And remember, Trust Membership is a totally separate matter to payment of the management charge, or membership of other organisations like the HGS Residents Association. Read more about Trust Membership on our website.

If you have any questions about Trust Membership – or any other facet of our work – please don't hesitate to contact us via mail@hgstrust.org or call 0208 455 1066.

TREES FOR THE FUTURE



The Trust's Winter Lecture

Our Winter Lecture this year took place in February rather than the usual December, in hopes that fairer weather would encourage a strong turnout – and we were not disappointed. But it must surely have also been the draw of our two expert speakers on two distinct yet intertwined areas of the important subject of the future of our trees.

We first heard from Dr Samantha Dobbie of BIFoR (the Birmingham Institute of Forest Research), who gave us an informative and enlightening summary of her team's pioneering work on a piece of woodland in Lincolnshire which is being artificially subjected to levels of CO₂ which resemble what climate change models predict will be present in our atmosphere by 2050. The work aims to see how the trees behave, and to inform those who work with trees how we can adapt our care and maintenance of them in our changing climate.

Dr Dobbie conveyed the sheer scale of the operation, with structures erected in rings around mature trees which were lowered into place by helicopter. Aerial platforms enable scientists to work among the canopy of vast, mature trees and study them up close. A wide range of instruments is used to measure the exchange of water, energy, and gases between the forest canopy and the air, and trees are assessed right down to the molecular level. On the ground, equipment measures leaf-fall and other signs of the health of the trees, and even beneath ground, conditions are monitored using soil core samples.

The experiment has been running long enough now for scientists to see that, first of all, it is working as intended and their results are consistent with the levels expected with higher levels of CO₂. And second of all, the initial results seem



Keith Sacre and Dr Samantha Dobbie

to indicate that trees surviving in these conditions grow on average more than 25% larger (basal area index), as well as successfully processing the different levels of oxygen, water and CO₂ which occur.

Dr Dobbie also talked about an unusual estate where trees were inadvertently planted in a much more diverse population than might ordinarily happen, and how oaks, for example, appeared to be growing 2-3 times faster than they might in a more monocultural situation.

It was also noted that fewer infections were present, and would have less chance of spreading where species are of a diverse range. The variety of species also coexists more comfortably with different water and nutrient requirements; an identical plantation of trees would have to compete for the finite amounts in their proximity.

Dr Dobbie concluded on an upbeat note about how her team's work is informing not just current scientists but those of the future, with outreach programmes to reach school and university students. Trees for the future, indeed.

You can learn more about BIFoR's research via their website www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/bifor, or take a virtual tour of the very impressive facility online canvas.bham.ac.uk/courses/41982/pages/bifor-virtual-tour.

Up next was Keith Sacre of Barcham Trees, Europe's largest container tree nursery. Keith's 20+ years of experience with Barcham, and many more besides, has given him an encyclopaedic knowledge of tree species, where they can be found, and where they thrive.

Continued on page 5

How BIFoR FACE Works

CO₂ is transported from the tankers...

Two black pipes at the side of each mast have holes at regular intervals from top to bottom.

through a series of pipes...

CO₂ is squirted through the holes and dispersed by the wind.

to the green control sheds.

CO₂ levels are measured with sensors and maintained 150ppm above ambient.

One of Dr Samantha Dobbie's slides

His understanding of trees is on a deep level, and we were delighted to learn through him what sorts of trees we could consider when planting for the future.

Keith's slides came thick and fast, with a vast array of species that he feels should and could work well in our parks and gardens, but which are often overlooked in favour of more familiar varieties.

Following Dr Dobbie's explanation of the Norbury Park experiment of an accidentally diverse plantation, it was immediately obvious that this could be crucial to ensuring the health of our future tree populations, giving strength against common infections, and sharing out the natural resources more widely. As Keith put it, diversity of tree population brings resilience and sustainability. This can include diversity of species, age, size, and genetics – and even a diversity of 'public good', and aesthetics.

The slides from Keith's talk are available via the Trust website or via following this [link](#) and Barcham Trees has published a number of books and catalogues on tree selection for a variety of situations.

We were introduced the kinds of attributes that make a set of trees a 'collection', as well as identifying the kinds of themes to be considered when choosing varieties of species that can co-exist.

Keith was quick to call out the fallacy of headline-grabbing quotes about vast numbers of trees being planted thrown about by politicians or local authorities –

questioning how sensible such claims are when the numbers simply cannot be planted, maintained, or even sourced at such levels.

He argued that most local authorities don't actually have accurate figures for their tree populations or area of canopy cover, so without this how can they know to what extent the numbers should be increased? Is there enough 'spare' land available to adequately site this huge influx of trees? And of course there is the danger of putting far too much pressure on already-tight resources in terms of the teams who must take care of the trees, especially in their crucial early stages of life. Is the existing population of trees being adequately cared for anyway?

One local authority Keith pointed out that is bucking this trend was the London Borough of Ealing, whose 2017 i-Tree Report attempts to ascertain exactly these kinds of figures to provide an evidence-based foundation for future strategic planning.

LB Barnet has also put online its Tree Policy along with a map of its trees as part of wider efforts to understand their own estate, which necessarily also includes the Suburb's street trees and park land. Their Community Tree Portal can be found here barnet.ezyportal.com/Trees

At the Trust we will also be undertaking a much more rigorous approach to

understanding and monitoring the trees on the land we manage, as well as the trees in your gardens which we advise on when it comes to pruning or eventual replacement.

Keith didn't simply point out the problems that exist all around – with over-promised and under-funded planting schemes – he also gave possible solutions, encouraging us to think outside the box when it comes to selection of species and curation of tree collections.

The general feeling of his talk was one of cautious optimism, rather than a feeling that it was all too little, too late. His parting words were "Be brave, and good luck!" and the sense we got in the room was of our audience paying close attention.

A healthy question and answer section inevitably followed, with a variety of queries inspired by both our speakers' talks, covering issues from the micro level of "but what can I do?", right up to the global big picture.

We are hugely indebted to our two expert speakers, and it was heartening to see such a passionate response to our event on this most important of topics.

To talk to us about trees in your garden, or about our green spaces, please contact us via mail@hgstrust.org or call 0208 455 1066 and ask to speak to Frank Hawkins, the Trust's Green Estate Manager.

Next Steps... "Britain's Biggest Living Garden"

If you're left wondering where to make even the smallest change to your garden, another local event aims to show Suburb residents what's possible.

This free event at St Jude-on-the-Hill from 7-9pm on Monday 29 April 2024 will be packed with advice on wildlife gardening, and how to make not just your garden but the whole Suburb a more biodiverse area.

Suburb resident Dominic Rose will introduce the main speaker – lecturer, ecologist, broadcaster and founder patron of the Wildlife Gardening Forum Dr Stephen Head. Together, they have ambitions to establish HGS as a

national flagship of urban biodiversity. Dr Head will also touch on why he sees the Suburb as such an exciting opportunity and together they will take questions on biodiversity as well as the specific local ambition and how to get involved. There will be practical steps you can take and why they see involving children as being such a key part of the project.

Visit www.britainsbiggestlivinggarden.org to learn more and book your place at this free event.

FREE event
29 April 2024
7-9pm
St Jude-on-the-Hill



Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust

Residents are welcome to contact the Chief Executive, Simon Henderson, on any aspect of the Trust's work.

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