

BROCKLEY SOCIETY



Lewisham's trees

Trees are a familiar and cherished feature of many parts of Lewisham. They provide a valuable habitat for wildlife and act as a barrier to noise and air pollution. Lewisham Council has procedures to care for them.

Trees in conservation areas

Trees form an important part of the character of Lewisham's conservation areas. If you are planning to cut down or carry out work to a tree in a conservation area you must give the six weeks' written notice of your intention to do so. It is an offence to cut down or wilfully damage any tree in a conservation area without prior written consent.

www.lewisham.gov.uk/myservices/environment/Pages/trees.aspx

Public spaces and streets ...

Lewisham owns and maintains the trees that grow in public open spaces, along pavements and on Council-owned property. Report tree problems online at www.lovelewisham.org/ or call Envirocall on 020 8314 7171.

... and on private land

Trees and hedges are normally the property of the owner of the land they grow on. You can only cut off the branches which overhang your boundary if they are in a conservation area or protected by a preservation order you need the Council's approval.

Tree Preservation Orders

Individual trees or groups of trees which make a particularly important contribution to the public amenity of an area are often protected by a tree preservation order. This may be because of their contribution to the landscape, their intrinsic beauty, their scarcity, or simply because they screen an eyesore. To justify a preservation order the trees should usually be visible from a public place.

www.planningportal.gov.uk/uploads/lappl/guidance/guidance_note-works_to_trees.pdf

Felling or pruning a tree protected by a Tree Preservation Order

You must seek approval from the Council before felling or pruning a tree that is subject to a tree preservation order. Applications are considered by balancing the visual qualities of the tree against the reasons put forward for its removal. Planning Information Service:

020 8314 7400, planning@lewisham.gov.uk

New Tree Preservation Orders

To apply for new tree preservation orders contact the Planning Information Service: 020 8314 7400, planning@lewisham.gov.uk

Trees in the City – A Spring Conference

Saturday 26th April 2014, 10am–3pm

LeSoCo (formerly Lewisham College) – Lewisham Way, SE4 1UT

Morning – The Green City

Stands and stalls open	9.30am
Welcome <i>Clare Cowen</i> Chair, Brockley Society and <i>Sir Steve Bullock</i> Mayor of Lewisham	10.00am
Who needs urban trees? <i>Tom Armour</i> Chartered landscape architect, founder and head of Landscape Architecture Business, Arup, London	10.10am
Trees are awesome – breathe easier for trees <i>Professor Barbara Maher</i> Lancaster University Environment Centre	10.30am
Break – five minutes	10.45am
Trees – managing our legacy for the Future Panel session and Q+As with <i>Keith Sacre</i> Barcham Trees tree nurseries, <i>John Thompson</i> , GreenScene Manager, Lewisham Council, <i>Nick Pond</i> Nature Conservation, Lewisham Council, and <i>Phil Ashford</i> (tbc) Planning, Lewisham Council	10.50am
Green services (tbc)	11.35am
Brockley Street Trees – our Blog <i>Eamonn Marshall</i> , Brockley Society Tree Committee	11.50am
Break Your opportunity to visit conference exhibitors, and enjoy food and drinks at the adjacent Brockley Market	12 noon

Afternoon – The Trees Around Us

Afternoon welcome <i>Melanie Loveday</i> Brockley Society, <i>Cllr Darren Johnson</i> Brockley Ward and GLA member, <i>Rachel Mooney</i> Friends of Hilly Fields	12.50pm
Making wicked places (tbc)	1.10pm
Greening your street Brockley Society Tree Committee	1.30pm
Trees – the practical issues Panel session and Q+As with <i>Angelo Morgan</i> Treesuk tree surgeons, <i>Rob Hooker</i> Bureau Insurance Services, specialist brokers for subsidence, <i>Richard Edwards</i> Vice President London Tree Officers Association	1.45pm
Designing the London garden <i>Andrew Wilson</i> Principal of London Garden Design College and of Wilson McWilliam garden design practice	2.30pm
Closing remarks <i>Anthony Russell</i> , Brockley Society Tree Committee, founder The Chandos	2.50pm
Close Stands and stalls open until 3.30pm	3.00pm

<http://brockleystreettrees.blogspot.co.uk/p/welcome.html>

Reserve your FREE place: trees@brockleysociety.org.uk or just turn up. All welcome!

Stalls: Community organisations: free, businesses: £25 email: trees@brockleysociety.org.uk



Photo Johnathan Hall – Hilly Fields

FREE

Exciting times. . .

Our FREE conference, **Trees in the City**, at LeSoCo on Saturday 26th April, 10am to 3pm, will be a fascinating opportunity to find out what's happening with trees, meet the movers and shakers (locally and nationally) and find out how we can help to improve our natural environment. Everyone is welcome!

The **Tree Committee** is now an impressive sub-committee of Brockley Society, comprising eight volunteers with different areas of interest. An exciting development this year was the appointment of an **honorary administrator** in Don Eliot to coordinate us, correspond with residents, plan our campaigns and give us some focus.

Over the last year the Brockley Society has built up an impressive list of forty **Tree Wardens**. If you have a particular interest you might wish to get more involved – the only requirement is to love trees. We will keep you informed of the latest news. Many wardens have elected to become responsible for caring for a particular young street tree - so the more who sign up the better.

Want a tree? We're working closely with Lewisham's environmental services (the ever-helpful GreenScene) and now have a well organised process allowing residents to sponsor a street tree themselves. So if you think your street looks a little bare, needs cover, shade, oxygen, organic fruit, reduction in pollution or generally enhancing, why not sponsor a tree yourself for £240 (including a guarantee). Or, get some neighbours to join you in a syndicate to share the cost. Any money raised at the tree conference will go towards tree planting and care in Brockley.

We're grateful to Eamonn Marshall for our wonderful **website and blog** which has interesting articles about tree matters and how to care for our trees.

If you wish to get involved, email Dom: trees@brockleysociety.org.uk Make sure 26th April is in your diary. Check out our website: <http://brockleystreettrees.blogspot.co.uk>

*Anthony Russell is founder of the Tree Committee, founder of The Chandos and author of the book 'Evolving the Spirit - From Democracy to Peace'.
www.thechandos.com*

Historic trees in Brockley

Brockley used to be an area of farms and some surviving fruit trees are therefore very old - older than most houses in the conservation area. Pears and plums were planted in groups of five. They are priceless and protected with council Tree Preservation Orders. Many front gardens display the remains of a row of lime trees, probably planted when the houses were built in the latter half of the 19th century. There are also some giant border oaks scattered around the conservation area.

<http://brockleystreettrees.blogspot.co.uk/p/welcome.html>

Our blog contains news about trees in Brockley, information for our tree wardens and lots of exciting material about trees in general, tree-related organisations and campaigns, and green links.

Trees in Hilly Fields

There are more than 700 trees on Hilly Fields - without them the park would not be such a pleasant place. When we look back 100 years at early photos, tree cover is quite sparse as the majority of trees were newly planted and only a handful of the present trees pre-date the park. We have some sturdy oaks on the hill top and we are told that two of the hawthorns lining Eastern Avenue could be as old as 300 years. This hasn't been verified, but the gnarled hawthorns do create the bucolic charm of a greenway. Later plantings of hawthorn create another attractive boundary on Vicars Hill.

The more stately trees within the park today were planted when it was laid out at the end of the 19th Century. These include London Planes and Limes, planted along the park boundaries and lining the south-facing footpath up to the café. Elms used to line the ridge and we wonder if the trees shown along the Montague Road boundary on early plans were also elms.

The remaining planting appears to be ad hoc, governed by fashions in tree planting and placed on a whim. We have a large number of horse chestnuts, a few Turkish hazels and

hornbeams by the stone circle. The most significant new planting is the 2011 orchard. Orchards were common in the area at one time, so we are continuing the tradition.

Guerrilla planting goes on and can cause its own incongruities, but recently the two black poplars on Eastern Road became the focus of research and discussion when one of them succumbed to a fungal disease. There is evidence to suggest that they were planted by Henry Williamson who lived on Eastern Road as a memorial to his fallen comrades in World War 1.

Our main interest as a Friends group is in trying to ensure that the best of the existing trees are conserved, that self-seeding trees are controlled and that suitable new trees are planted. Obviously, good maintenance is essential. This is the council's responsibility but we believe that volunteers have a huge and important role to play in shaping this process. A Jubilee tree was also planted on Hilly Fields in 2013

*Rachel Mooney and Tom Moulton
Friends of Hilly Fields*

The trees of St John's

St. John's is a small community, composed of two conservation areas, sandwiched between Brockley, Deptford, Greenwich and Lewisham. It was built as a new 'model' town on the site of London's 'market gardens'. The area remained very much rural in character until the mid-nineteenth century, when St. John's church was built and endowed by Angela Burdett-Coutts, the great nineteenth century philanthropist and heir to the fortune of the bank, Coutts and Co.

The St. John's Society, established in 1997 to rescue its local duck pond from desecration by the local authority, is a community-led group whose aim it is to improve the quality of life for all the residents. St John's, like Brockley, is blessed with tree-lined avenues which remain part of the legacy of the benefactors that built the model new town, street by street, over the course of the nineteenth century. These range from mature London planes, to cherry and apple trees. Many gardens in the community retain an apple tree or two - continuing the link to its heritage as market gardens supplying London with fruit and vegetables.

Brookmill (formerly 'Ravensbourne', after the river) Park, lining the north east of St. John's as a buffer between the river and Blackheath, is a mature park created largely after the close of the Second World War. It is home to St. John's duck pond, and a wild life park landscaped by restoration of the river from an industrial, concrete lining to something reflecting more of its natural state. Brookmill Park is believed to have been planted with a tree to represent every victim of the 1953 Lewisham rail crash, which took place at the south-easterly end of the St. John's cutting. The crash was one of the worst disasters in Britain's peace time history, the result of fog resting in the cutting - a ghostly phenomenon that continues today.

The church close of St. John's, on Lewisham Way, is also of interest. The trees planted by its congregation before the First World War are evergreen, providing green cover to this corner of St John's all year round.

*Roger Lewis
Chairman The St. John's Society*

Magnificent trees in Ladywell Fields

An original ancient water meadow, Ladywell Fields straddles the River Ravensbourne and was set aside as a recreation ground in the 1890s. The land was drained, the river straightened and avenues of ash and London plane trees were planted. Thankfully some trees were left to grow and are now veteran trees, including a meandering row of a dozen magnificent and rare black poplars (just north of the end of Malyons Road).

The famous and very rare 'Dutch Elm' is actually a Great Tree of London but may be mislabelled. The 2010 'Parklands' Project sought to replace a lot of the exotic riparian planting in the southern field with more wildlife-friendly native species. A remnant

ancient field boundary field maple is on the corner of the school grounds. Some fine English oaks can be found in the middle field, near the old Bermondsey Workhouse Institution. In 2007 the QUERCUS project resulted in a new river channel, already colonised by crack willows which have fared better than some of the planted trees. The project proposed the removal of the clump of trees by the Ladywell Bridge and was contested by some locals wanting to keep the park secluded.

Now the park is open to all to be discovered, enjoyed and explored as part of the fabulous Waterlink Way from Deptford to Bell Green.

Mike Keogh

Friends of Brockley & Ladywell Cemeteries

Oak, ash, poplar and yews are some of the trees in the two Cemeteries which opened in 1858.

Some of the Victorian plantings are thought to be still standing.

Visit the website for information on guided walks, history etc. www.fobl.org.uk



Photo Johnathan Hall – Hilly Fields

Managing Wonders

Angelo Morgan

80% of the UK population lives in an urban setting, and trees make that setting work, look and feel better. Trees are already part of the response to some of the key challenges of our age, from climate change to declining health and well-being. For the good, they affect the environmental and social balance of our cities. Moreover, they often do so in extremely cost-effective ways. For

example, consider the advantages offered by trees in so many areas - storm water management, urban cooling, air quality improvement and changing seasonal beauty. The job of a tree-surgeon is to manage these wonders of nature, and I will be talking about how I do it.

*Angelo R Morgan
Specialists in Urban Tree
Management,
www.treesuk.com*

Breathe easier for trees

Barbara Maher

Trees can clean up the air in roadside homes

Airborne dust is associated with early death and illnesses including heart attacks, cancer and bronchitis. Working on the BBC's programme, Trust Me I'm a Doctor, summer 2013, we tested how certain trees can reduce airborne dust in roadside homes. We temporarily installed a line of young birch trees at a kerbside. We then used two quite separate methods to measure the dust concentration in the houses nearby

- conventional monitoring, and novel magnetic measurements of dust taken from television screen swabs. Independently, the two approaches identified a more than 50% reduction of dust in houses screened by the temporary tree line. I'm really looking forward to explaining more about the trees that work this way, and how they do it.

*Professor Barbara Maher,
University of Lancaster
Air pollution experiment: www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01dgd9cl/features/pollutionexperiment*

Who needs urban trees?

Tom Armour

Our urban trees are special and have played an important role in combating the effects of growing urbanism for many years. It is impossible to imagine towns and cities without them, yet they face many threats. This talk will highlight the fundamental importance of city trees and considers their wider role and the vast range of environmental, social and economic benefits they bring to our urban environments. Backed by a growing body of research from around the world, understanding these benefits helps create a convincing case that tree planting is as essential as other city infrastructure. It follows that a more comprehensive approach is required to their retention and future planning, and this is especially relevant now in the

face of rapidly growing urban populations and the effects of global warming.

Tom Armour is a chartered landscape architect with 30 years' experience. He founded and heads the landscape architecture business at Arup (www.arup.com) working with multi-disciplinary teams on a wide range of major development projects in the UK and internationally.

Arup was founded in 1946 with an initial focus on structural engineering, and came to world attention with the structural design of Sydney Opera House, and work on the Centre Pompidou in Paris. Most recently, its work for the 2012 Olympic Park in London has reaffirmed its reputation for delivering innovative and sustainable designs that reinvent the built environment.

Subsidence – fears and dangers

Robert Hooker

Tree-related subsidence can be a source of terrible anxiety for house-owners. It can profoundly affect a property's value, insurability, appearance and safety. Much of my work relates to the provision of insurance for buildings affected by trees, which is often otherwise unobtainable. There is much ignorance of this subject, even in the insurance

and building industry, and I look forward to the opportunity to speak about the needless fears – and the serious dangers – that I encounter.

Robert Hooker is a building surveyor, and director of Bureau Insurance Services in East Sussex. He is principal surveyor for business relating to subsidence, with over 20 years experience in this field.

Can tree-felling damage buildings?

No, in my experience tree-felling does not cause subsidence, either through the shrinkage of tree roots or the rehydration of the ground. Studies show that

after a tree is felled, the effect of root-shrinkage is negligible, and the ground rehydrates rapidly, but over such a wide area that it very rarely causes a problem for buildings.

Become a Tree Warden

In the two years of its life as part of the Brockley Society, the Tree Committee has had considerable success in harnessing local passion for trees. As part of a national initiative set up by the Tree Council, we have built up a list of over forty local Tree Wardens, who are, essentially, people who love trees in Brockley. We use the list to inform the community about what's happening to its trees. Obviously, this is good for trees, good for Brockley and good for its sense of community.

You may be willing to have your name added to this list of "Tree Wardens". No

obligations would result except your agreement to keep an eye on the trees near where you live, and to let us know if you see any Lewisham tree that needs care or action of some kind.

Of course if you wish to be more active, there are plenty of opportunities! This could be the guardianship of specific trees, providing or organising sponsorship of a new street tree or even taking on some voluntary work for the Brockley Society. You can find information in the link on our website - see facing page.

*Dom Eliot, Tree Administrator
trees@brockleysociety.org.uk*

Care of a new tree

It is vital that your newly-planted street or garden tree is given adequate attention over the first TWO years following planting. This is when the young tree is most vulnerable to drought because it has a very minimal root system.

So, watering first:

The ideal care for new trees is 20 litres at one hit (about one and a half watering cans worth) regardless of rainfall unless it is truly a deluge! REMEMBER - rainwater runs off concrete or tarmac pavements so you should not assume that your street tree will be getting watered adequately in wet weather!

It is very important to give water in ONE go as this makes the roots go downwards. Watering a 'little and often' is NOT good as it encourages the roots upwards to search for surface water.

Mulching the tree will also help to retain moisture - we suggest bark chippings, leaf mould or well rotted horse manure (fresh manure will be too acidic and kill your tree!).

Other:

Apart from this, check there are no broken branches. Keep an eye on branches that extend over the roadside - these are the branches that get damaged by unsighted high-sided van drivers! Report damage to us/or Green Scene.

Subsidence and trees with preservation orders

A tree in our back garden has a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) on it but is the suspected cause of subsidence in the rear of our property. The insurers arranged for a trial pit to be dug and found feathery eucalyptus roots. They demanded that the tree be felled.

We consulted a structural engineer. She was shocked that our insurers had not conducted longer-term monitoring of the cracks.

'Roots in a trial pit do not of themselves prove that the tree is causing the subsidence,' she said. 'To prove the cause of the subsidence, monitoring is required over several months, for instance with studs fixed to load bearing walls. This will indicate whether the

cracks are opening or closing. This requirement is listed on the government's planning portal.'

www.planningportal.gov.uk/uploads/1app/guidance/guidance_note-works_to_trees.pdf

The section, For work to trees covered by a TPO, lists requirements which applicants must include before a tree with a preservation order can be felled.

It is too easy for insurance companies to assume a tree is the cause of subsidence in all cases. Our trees are in danger from carelessness, ignorance and insurers taking the easy option.

Brockley resident

Landscaping new developments

When planning permission is granted, the planting of at least one small tree and possibly shrubs would make a huge and positive difference to the streetscape as well as improving air quality. At our request Cllr Darren Johnson recently tabled a question to the Council, answered by the Deputy Mayor:

Q: Given the environmental benefits that trees bring to the borough and given how spending cuts have drastically reduced the money available for new and replacement [street] tree planting, can the Council investigate the scope for ensuring tree planting is included as a condition for smaller scale planning applications as well as larger developments (where tree

planting and landscaping is often included as a condition anyway)?

A: Trees and landscaping are an integral part of the application and development process regardless of the scale of development. The overall aim is to ensure that high quality development is delivered. Policy 25 of the Council's Development Management Local Plan requires applicants of all major development and where appropriate smaller schemes to provide and retain trees and other landscape features. Where possible trees are provided as this is integral to the quality of the development being proposed.

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Photo Johnathan Hall - Hilly Fields

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