



Newsletter of the Kenwood Ladies' Pond Association

Welcome to the Spring Newsletter 2023

- Lucy Zanetti

Hello again. Winter is underway and we have had some pretty crispy days at the pond, with plenty of snow and ice as we haven't seen for years, so we have selected some photos here for prosperity.

It was a thrill to shimmy down into the freezing water and only be able to get from step to step with the ice tinkling at our sides, and super attentive lifeguards keeping a watchful eye on us to avoid any mishaps. It made a real Christmas of 2022.



- this one is something of a science lesson

We would love to hear more of your own experiences in the water here and elsewhere. We haven't had so much snow and ice in a long time, and still swimmers enjoy the challenge. There must have been plenty of inspiration for a bit of creative writing or a picture you would like to share with us all. Do remember to send it in to make the newsletter your own.

Eye to eye with a
mallard-
I duck-dive
Goosebumps as I
dress

by Maggie Jennings



Thank you for this one Cathy
- I love this picture, it tells a story of The Walking Trees

An update on the dog pen. Owners are relieved to have somewhere more secluded for their dogs' visit to the pond. The pen seems to be serving its purpose well, the dogs look relaxed. The owners are more comfortable leaving their dogs away from the main entrance. So far, the dogs have sat quietly ignoring each other and waiting for their owners' quick return.



Pepsi enjoying a quiet moment

KLPA Chair's Newsletter Report Spring 2023 - Mary Powell

Another KLPA year draws to a close, as we prepare for the Annual General Meeting on 5 March 2023. Last year we were able to meet in person for the first time since 2020, although attendance was lower than had been hoped. Please try to join us this year at the Highgate Literary & Scientific Institution to ensure that the meeting is quorate. As we have a growing membership, and need to ensure 10% attendance, at least 70 of you are needed!

Since the last newsletter went out, we held another successful Tea Party in November and were able to do so without being harassed by yet another COVID variant. Members enjoyed the usual generous helpings of tea and home-made cakes. We were also treated to a talk from ambassadors for the East London Waterworks Park (ELWP) project, about a proposed re-wilding scheme near Lea Bridge Road which will include free-to-access bathing ponds.



Guest speakers from ELWP Sally Fonseca, Cathy McLoughlin and Laurie Goodman

It was not possible to arrange a New Year's Day event this year due to availability of committee members to co-ordinate this, but the Ladies' Pond Lifeguards ensured that refreshments were made available on the day, for which they deserve thanks. We are now looking forward to the social get together which follows the AGM very much this year.

Through the winter the KLPA has continued to press the City of London Corporation about the worst excesses of its charging regime at the bathing ponds. This includes seeking an extension of the times when those under 16 or over 60 can swim for free, and the option of paying for season tickets by monthly instalment. It looks like there will be a 5% price increase for swimming in April, which although less than the current inflation rate, will still be a challenge to many swimmers.

The City has singularly failed to deliver on its pledge made in March 2020 to establish a "Support Fund" to assist swimmers at risk of being priced out. This is despite recent attempts to hold detailed discussions about what shape such a fund might take if jointly

managed by the swimming associations and the City. The City was not prepared to provide any funding or logistical support, only to associate its name with the fund, which the swimming associations had preferred to call an "Access Fund."

We hope you enjoy the newsletter, and a more detailed report from me will follow with the AGM papers. I would of course like to thank committee members for their continued hard work and hope to see many of them continue with the committee through 2023. If you think you have something to offer the KLPA committee please complete a nomination form and return by 6 pm on 3rd March 2023 to klpamailbox@gmail.com.

KLPA Membership Renewal

The easiest way to join the KLPA or renew membership is through our new online application "MemberMojo". The link is also on the KLPA website, homepage and membership pages.

Membership runs from 1 April to 31 March each year, so if you are unable to do this in person at the AGM, MemberMojo is the convenient way to do this. If you have already paid this year by this method you will receive reminders next spring to renew, with a direct link to your membership details.

Annual membership is still just £5
You can also pay for life membership here for £125
(or £80 for age 60+)
Your membership matters, thank you for your continued support.



A moment from last year's AGM

The Incident of the Geese

A Story From Our Own Correspondent – Hat

The peace and quiet of a bright frosty morning at the pond. The light is sharp. The water still. The birds are getting ready for spring with flurries of activity and bobbing gently on the water are two plump, settled geese. Very plump. Very calm Canada geese. All is quiet. All is well.

However....

A few days later the lovely wintery scene is disturbed by a terrifying battle. In fly our two geese hotly pursued by a third. An intruder. An invader determined to grab the Kenwood Ladies Pond for himself. Or perhaps his eye was more on the female than the pond? It's the start of the battle as they scurry and skim across the water, taking no prisoners, paying no heed to other pond users – coots, moorhens, ducks and swimmers. Most swimmers cling to the life ring circuit for shelter; some remain oblivious to the danger of a collision with a heavy goose. The geese have no eyes for anyone or anything else except the determination to fight for the pond.

United Nations Peace Keeping Force is on red alert. 'Flying Geese beware!' Oh ye urban swimmers used to timetables and lanes and queues and Marie Kondo. Nature doesn't run to our order. Nature doesn't swerve humans...

With increasing urgency 'Geese! Geese!'

And eventually the cry of 'Geese! **Duck!**' is not an observation but an instruction.

The two males end up in a one to one battle in the undergrowth. One goose trying to drown the other at the water's edge. One male can't be found until... UN Observer on a paddle board spots him. The intruder seems to have been vanquished, his feet tangled in the reeds, his head floating just under the water. Médecins Sans Frontiers arrives. PPE summoned. Intervention happens. What to do? And then... a miracle. The goose revives and flaps off to a corner of the pond.

Our original geese remain all day on the far deck, occasional forays towards the intruder, honking at the world.

The sun sets. Night falls cold and crisp. The next day dawns and the geese have disappeared. Peace returns to the wintery scene. Swimmers glide through the coots. The cormorants dry their wings in the sun. The life belts float unadorned by swimmers. Spring may be just round the corner. Harmony.

The geese haven't been seen since.

(Editor's note: they're back...)



Image by Dee Mclean www.deemclean.co.uk

Not one centenary but two!

- by Mary Powell

The Ladies' Pond is of course a very special place but not unique. We have previously reported on the [Mclver's Ladies Baths](#) in Coogee, Australia. It is their centenary year, which makes our sister establishment in the Southern Hemisphere a little older than the Kenwood Ladies' Pond. They are holding a celebration picnic with "sausage sizzle" on 12 March 2023. Sadly, we have not managed to organise a KLPA fact finding visit to the Mclver's Baths yet, but send our sincere congratulations to our swimming comrades.



Mclver's Ladies Baths, Coogee, New South Wales, Australia

[The Randwick & Coogee Ladies Swimming Association](#) is now undertaking an archive and history project to gather information covering their last century, called "We Live – We Swim – A Herstory Project." An exhibition of the results will be held at Bowen Library in Randwick during August 2023.

We hope they enjoy doing this as much as the participants in the [KLPA Archive](#) project enjoyed that piece of work. The KLPA archive was formally launched in November 2020 and is held at the Bishopsgate Institute, as part of the Institute's collection of [Feminist & Women's History](#).

This brings us to the forthcoming centenary of Kenwood Ladies' Pond. The official opening of the pond took place in July 1925, conducted by George V and Queen Mary. This signified the formal handover of the land from the Kenwood Estate to the London County Council. However, we believe that more general public (female) access the Ladies' Pond did not come about until 1926. Therefore 2026 would appear to be the more suitable and democratic anniversary of a century of swimming at the Ladies' Pond.

We would be interested in your views about the best way to celebrate our centenary, as well as to mark the more recent difficulties in defending access to the bathing ponds. What do you think would be a good way to mark this momentous anniversary?

Please send your ideas to klpamailbox@gmail.com.

From 1926 to 2005 access to the Ladies' Pond was entirely free of charge and from 2005 to 2020 charges introduced by the City of London Corporation were self-policed (but not very competently collected by the City). Now we have enforced and inflated charges throughout the year, along with a cumbersome online booking system during the summer months.

However, let's enjoy the centenary - help us to celebrate a more open and accessible era at the Ladies' Pond and remind the City what they have undermined. We plan to have a jubilant celebration at our pond.



Ladies' Pond c1926 – note the lack of privacy!

Dates for KLPA stall:

March 19	August 20
April 30	Sept 24
May 21	Oct 29
June 25	Nov 26
July 30	Dec 17

The Crowdfunder is 100% funded

- report from Mary Powell

You may have been at the winter tea party where, speakers from ELWP elaborated on this project. We have good news on this one.



KLPA members have shown generosity in supporting the East London Waterworks Park (ELWP) Project, which aims to re-wild a former Thames Water depot and set up two free to access bathing ponds on the boundary of Hackney and Waltham Forest.

On 28 January 2023, the [Crowdfunder](#) reached the “all or nothing” target of £500,000 which needed to be achieved to progress further. There is now an increased “stretch target” of £600,000 and the web page will remain live until the planned closing date of 28 February 2023. There is [still time to donate](#) to this inclusive project if you have not already done so.

The initial target was met with over 4600 donations from a wide range of individuals, as well as some larger donations from local businesses and community action groups. This fundraising target is one step along the way to buying the land from the government, but further fundraising efforts are now afoot.

Abigail Woodman of the ELWP Project has stated “We’ve demonstrated that the community wants East London Waterworks Park to happen. We’ve demonstrated we can raise money to transform an industrial site into a brand new park for East London to provide educational, economic, health and environmental benefits for our community. And we’ve demonstrated that, together, we can take real

steps to tackle the climate crisis, biodiversity collapse, social inequality and social isolation.”



Thanks to everyone who supported this project – bringing outdoor swimming back to the people!

SWIM

- by Ilayda McIntosh

SWIM is an interesting project from the Omnibus Theatre in Clapham. Their upcoming production SWIM (16th -18th of March) is a new play from Liz Richardson about outdoor swimming, which is transferring to London for three performances only following a sell-out national tour.

We believe our community at Kenwood Ladies Pond Association would be interested in the show and have some links below for you should you wish to follow it up.

SWIM is a tender tale based on a true story, featuring live music and video projection. Written and performed by Liz Richardson (Gutted), SWIM premiered at Theatre by the Lake (Keswick) in Spring 2022 ahead of a rural and UK theatre tour.

Liz grew up in the Lake District. She spent her childhood walking in the fells, playing in the lakes and in the river at the end of her garden. After time away living in the City, Liz returns to the hills and into a new village for a new chapter of her life. But when her new community is rocked by tragedy, Liz rediscovers outdoor swimming and how it can keep both her and her new friends afloat.



Tickets are available here:
www.omnibus-clapham.org/swim/

**KENWOOD LADIES' POND
ASSOCIATION AGM
SUNDAY 5th MARCH 2023
3-5pm**

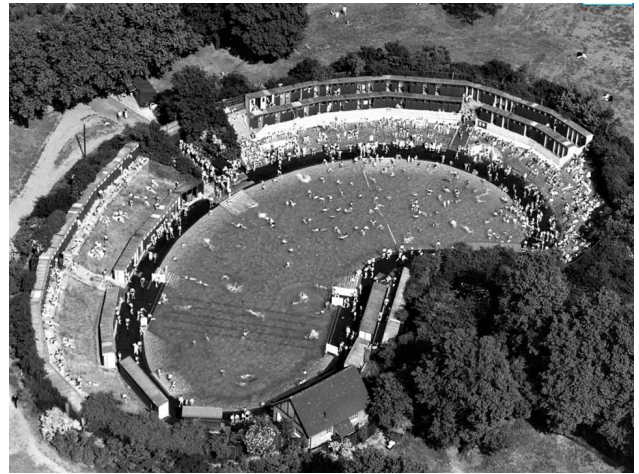


**HIGHGATE LITERARY &
SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTION,
11 SOUTH GROVE, N6 6BS**

Please bring sweet and savoury
contributions to share. KLPA will provide
cold drinks.

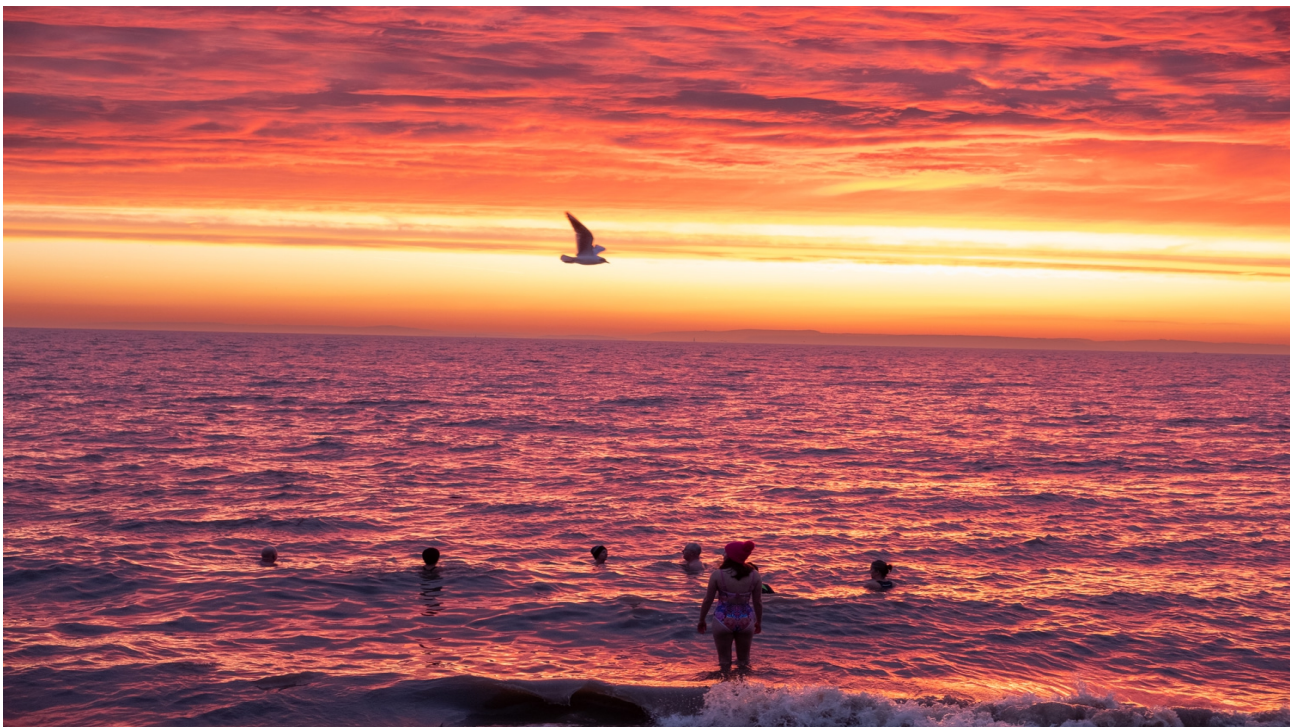
GUEST SPEAKERS -

Suzanne Gallagher and Sally Long



Hear about the local residents campaigning
to bring back Gladstone Park Lido in Dollis
Hill. It is one of many projects in London
and around the UK to reinstate lost lidos,
and this one is very local!

The campaign at Gladstone Park is also
affiliated to the Future Lidos Group.



*A stunning swim in February 2023 with the Penarth Dawn
Stalkers in Wales by Sarah Saunders*