

‘Red Frog’
12th October 2025

“a hard rains a gonna fall”
Extreme Weather on the doorstep

Lester Hillman

The Great storm

The Great storm

1: 20,000?

Largest daily rainfall event ever recorded in London

Hampstead 14 August 1975
Thursday early evening 1.5 - 2.5 hrs

The greatest storm ever in London?

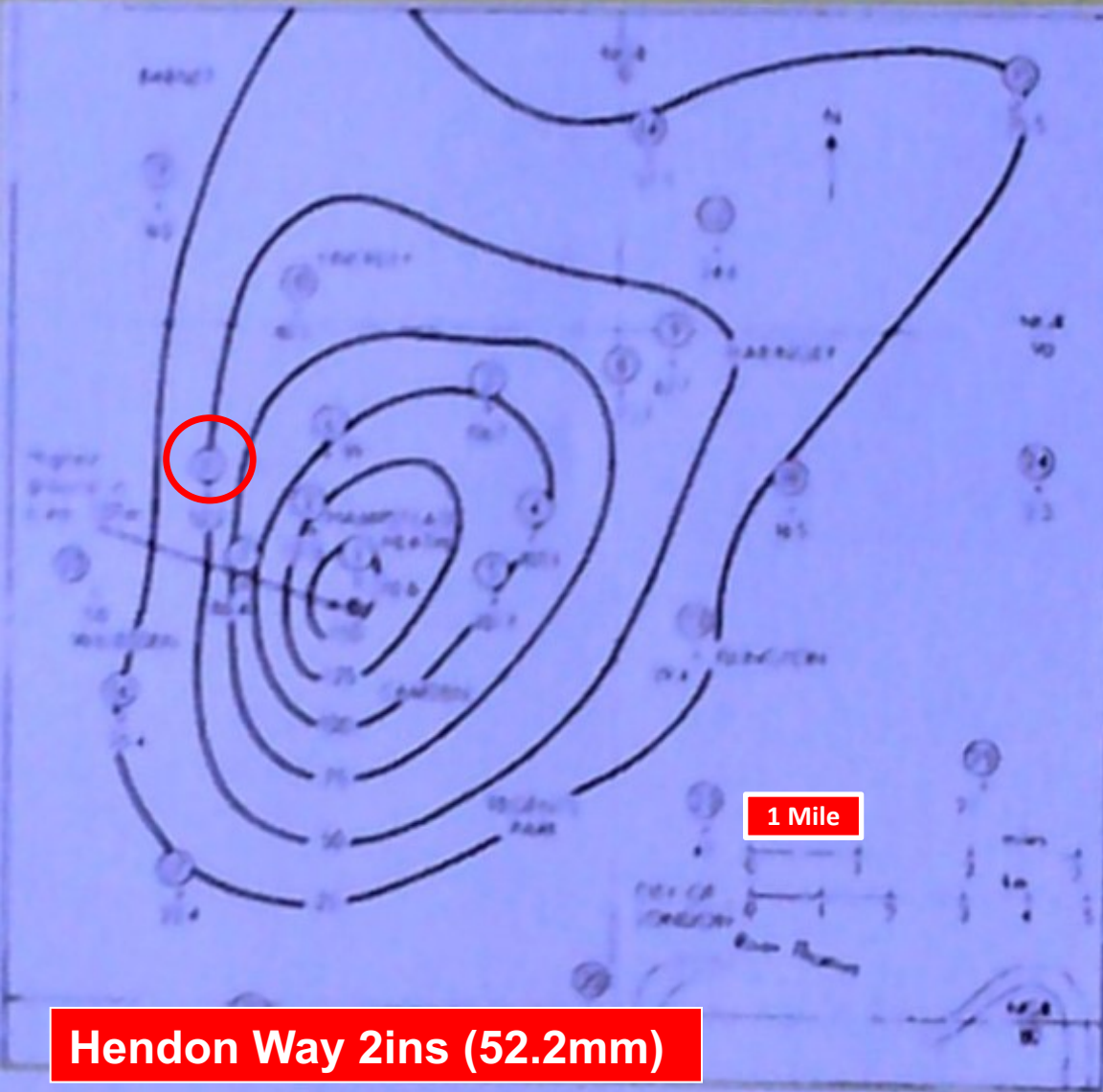
170.8mm 6.7 inches Possibly 200mm 7.9ins
(hailstones bounced out from Whitestone Pond gauge)

One in 20,000 year event?

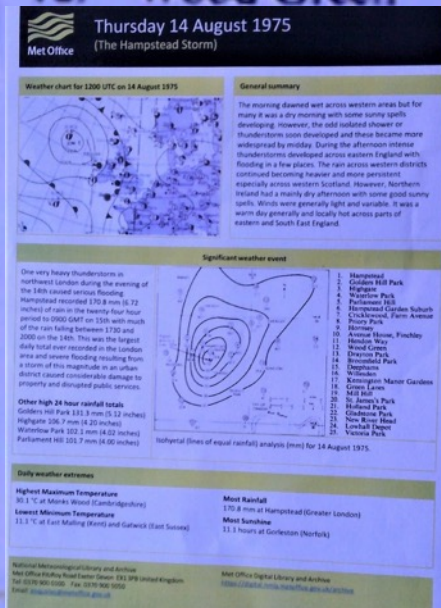
*“evening extremely heavy rain, came in windows and walls.
Hailstones – several inches of flooding at bottom of road”*

Diary entry 14 August 1975 Lester Hillman
Dartmouth Park, two miles east of Wyldes

Significant weather event



1. Hampstead
2. Golders Hill Park
3. Highgate
4. Waterlow Park
5. Parliament Hill
6. Hampstead Garden Suburb
7. Cricklewood, Farm Avenue
8. Priory Park
9. Hornsey
10. Avenue House, Finchley
11. Hendon Way
12. Wood Green



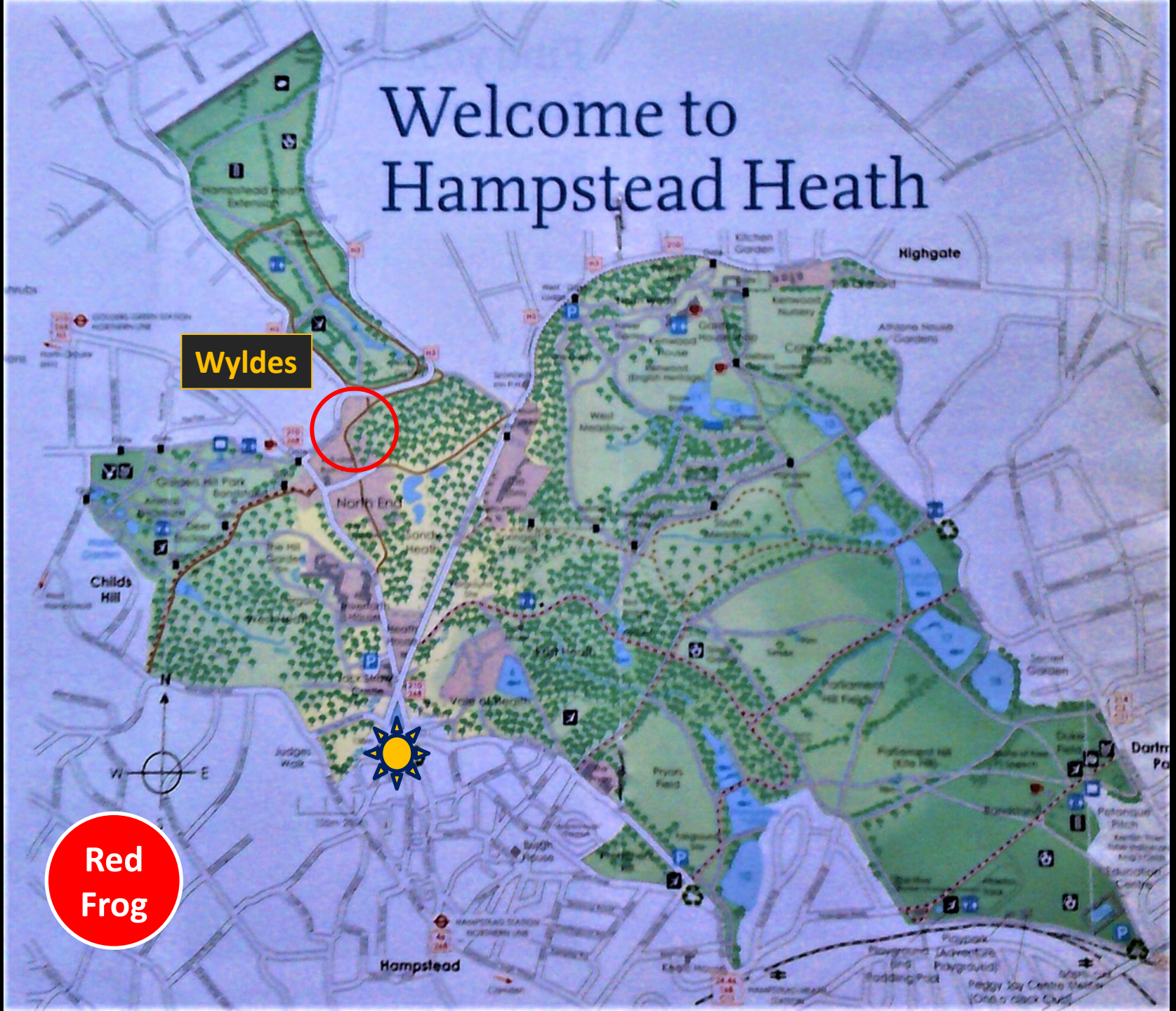
Hendon Way 2ins (52.2mm)

Isohyetal (lines of equal rainfall) analysis (mm) for 14 August 1975.

Welcome to Hampstead Heath

Wyldes

Red
Frog



Wylde
North End

Solid units

- BAGSHOT FORMATION
- CLAYGATE MEMBER
- LONDON CLAY FORMATION
- LAMBETH GROUP



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Wyldes Farm





Thursday 14 August 1975

**Grade II* Elizabethan
Timber frame**

“....a great thunderstorm and an epic cloudburst and deluge over the village of Hampstead....said to be the greatest cloudburst in recorded history....

floodings of houses....collapses of walls and and structures in Hampstead

....in front of Wyldes, a great head of water had accumulated....poured, like a river.... through the garden gate....down the garden path towards the front door, looking as if it might sweep away both houses....we were able adroitly to open....front and back doors”

The water flowed on, demolished a 20ft wall, crossed Hampstead Way, crushed parked cars and on to Manor House Hospital. Nicholas Pevsner’s grandson was injured.

**David Sullivan QC
Wyldes’ resident 1968 – 1978
Camden History Review 37 (2013)**

***“It fell in misty sheets with
a noise like boiling fat”***

**John Hillaby
New Scientist 1975**

**Passageways
outside the door
were a stream**

**Hailstones stored in the fridge
at home for two weeks**

**Thrown out, just before a call
went out for any!**

**Getting home -
public transport
had stopped**

**Gospel Oak
Councillor
checking
residents**

**West End Lane
– a river**

**In the car passing, near
Wyldes no special
recollections, nor from
the children in the back**

East Barnet 3 miles to the East

**The view West that evening
To the north clear blue sky
To the south 'Pitch Black'**

**It stayed that way unmoving for 2
hours, no wind**

Maybe 1.5 inches in East Barnet

**Might we never have
known how severe
and rare an event it
was?**

.....perhaps

**Cometh the moment....
.....step forward the
Hampstead Scientific
Society (founded 1899)**

Recording & Reporting

**Weather Station
Hampstead Observatory
Whitestone Pond**

**Three dedicated recorders
spanning a century**

**Eric Hawke founder
1910 – 1965
55 years**

**Robert Tyssen Gee
(and Ms Tyssen Gee)
1965 – 1983**

**Philip Eden
1983 - 2018**

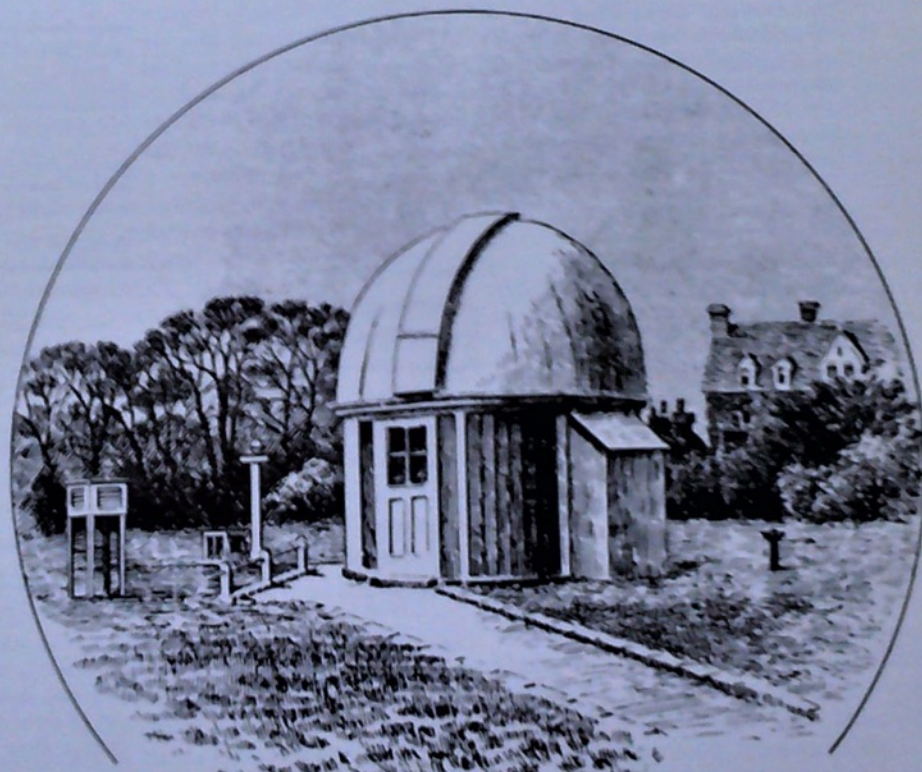


The Heath & Hampstead Society NEWSLETTER

May 2000

Vol 31 No. 2

Price £ 1



Philip Eden

Meteorologist who kept *Telegraph* readers informed and entertained with his Weather Watch columns

Philip Eden, who has died aged 70, was a meteorologist, weather forecaster, and author of the weather column in the *Telegraph*. He was born in 1929 in London and spent his childhood in the south of England. He studied at Eton and then at the University of Cambridge, where he graduated in 1951. He then worked for the Meteorological Office in London, where he spent 20 years. He was promoted to the rank of Senior Meteorologist in 1971. He was also a member of the Royal Society and the Royal Meteorological Society. He was married to Jane Eden and had two children. He died on 14 May 2000 at his home in London.



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Hampstead Scientific Society: A Century of Endeavour

Hampstead Scientific Society
Founded 3 July 1899

**1909 Observatory to present site on
covered reservoir and above
Northern Line Tube**

**Meteorological Station 90th
anniversary December 1999**

**Electronic upgrade of Weather
Station in early 2000
(Now decommissioned)**

Philip Eden
Hon Meteorologist from 1983
Weather correspondent Telegraph
Newspapers (1986 – 2015)
(Born 1951 died 3 Jan 2018)

Whitestone Observatory and Weather Station



11 Nov 2019 12.34pm

'Meteorology for Parrot Shooting'
Sir Ernest Gold Classified Document

Harold Wilson had
gone to Downing
Street a decade earlier

Sir Ernest Gold 1881 - 1976
8 Heath Close 1910 – 1976
(Backed on to Harold Wilson)
Met Office 1910 – 1947 incl.
Met Services to Armed Forces
World Wars I & II

**Hampstead Garden Suburb
View North East 1920s**

HGS Rainfall (inches)

2000	41.6	
2001	37	
2005	21.83	(lowest in N London records)
2011	29.39	
2012	36.8	
2013	29.2	
2014	36	(15 ins in last three months)
2016	26	

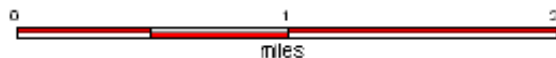
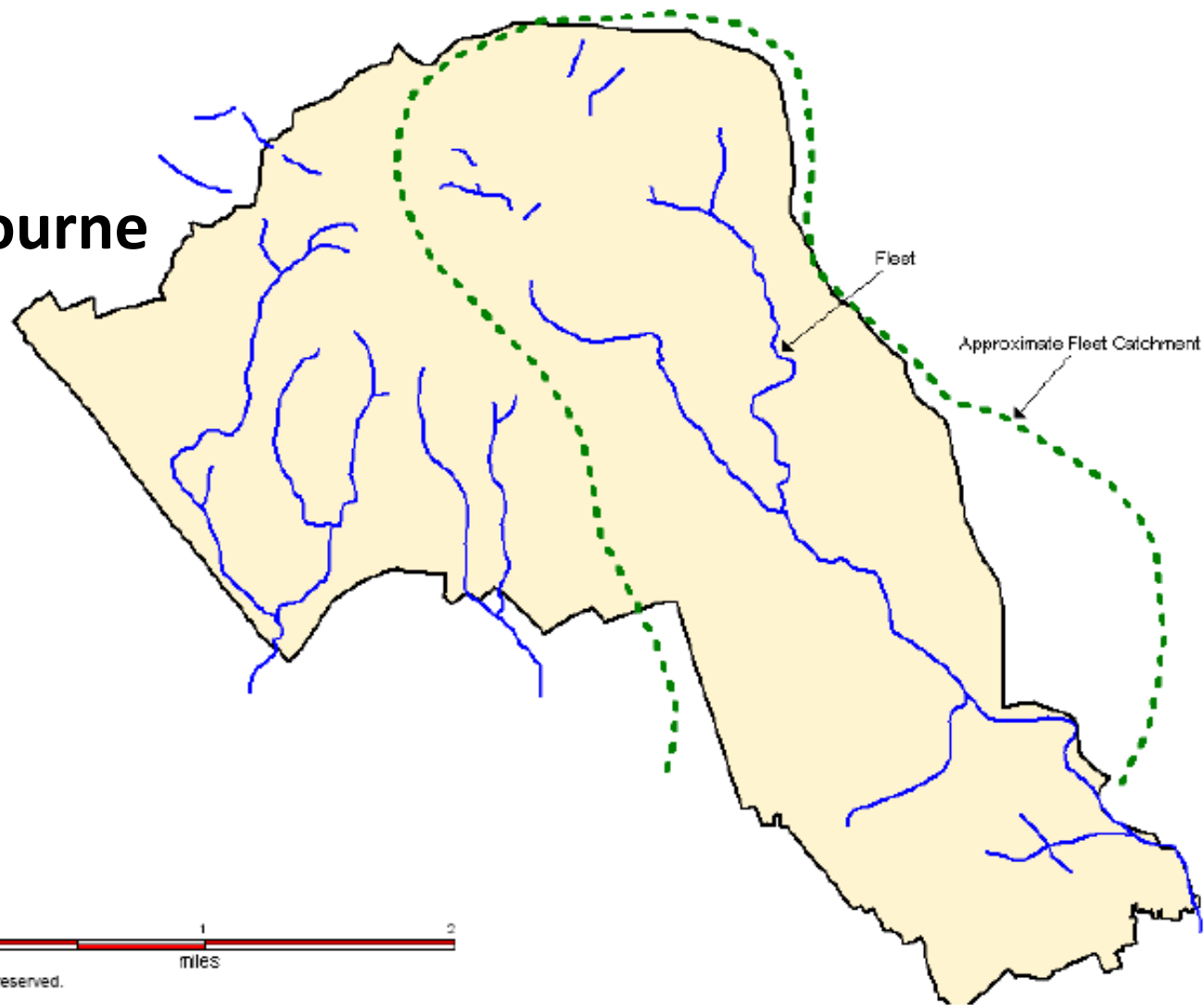
14th August 1975 Thursday

95 mins to 160 mins deluge

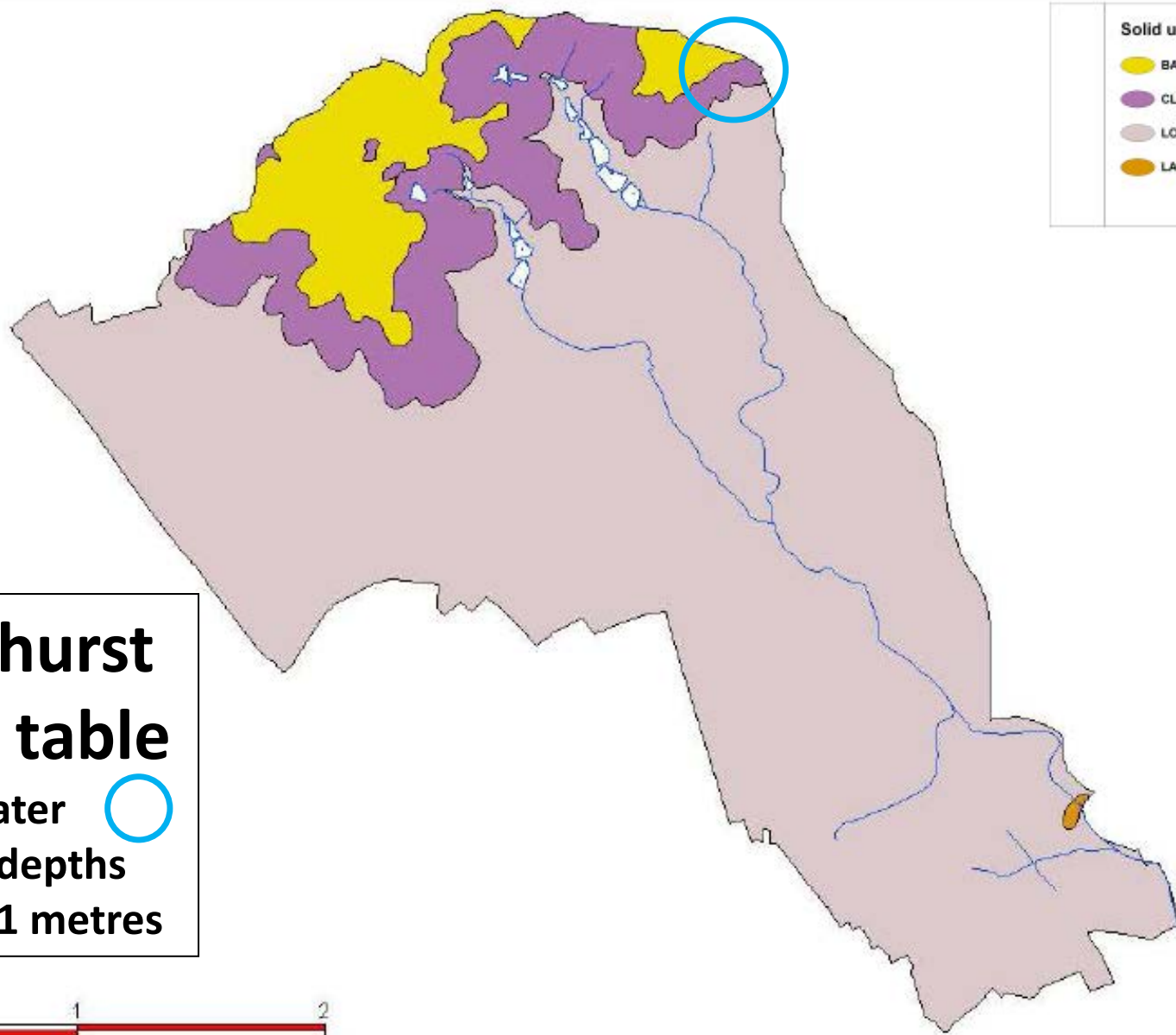
Society Rain Gauge 170.8mm 6.72 inches

Golders Hill Park	1,100 yds	5.17ins
Parliament Hill	2,000 yds	4.00ins
HGS	2,500 yds	3.90ins
London (Hendon)	8 sq miles	2.00ins (*)
Greater London	28 sq miles	1.00in

Rivers - Fleet Tyburn Westbourne



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Witanhurst Water table

Groundwater 
Borehole depths
9.36 – 11.1 metres



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**London and wider
Historic Records?**

Extreme Weather



16 May 2013

23 June	1878	Camden Square	82.1mm	90 mins
7 June	1993	Mill Hill	94 mm	
7 August	2002	Camden Town	60 mm	60 mins

August 1975
170mm

Hurricane Katia

(From Gulf of Mexico)

Monday 12 September 2011 2pm

Mature Sycamore 40ft toppled

**Aspern Grove Haverstock Hill
Belsize Park**



Aspern Grove Sycamore

Less than 24 hours earlier, afternoon of Sunday 11 September 2011, Ricky Gervais in sun glasses had strolled past on Haverstock Hill just a few yards away.

“More people are killed putting on their trousers than by falling trees”

Neville Fay
Chair of Ancient Tree
Forum



Phew!

Monday 12 September 2011
Telephoned Dan Carrier CNJ within the hour



Tree taken down
Wednesday 14 September 2011

Ice Melt Flood

27 January 1809

River Fleet overflows at Battle Bridge due to a sudden thaw
Flooding at King's Cross, Somers Town and Pentonville over several days and to a depth of 3ft



‘King’s Cross – 8th May 1818’

Rain water came off Pentonville Hill on Friday night 8th May 1818

Flooding to 7ft one mile around

Alarm at 3am on Saturday 9th May

Skinner Street/Church Row (Midland Rd) and Bagnigge Wells

200,000 bricks spoilt

Water in cellars of Wheatsheaf PH

4ft of water in houses

“In the house of a person named Creed their bed was floating about in near seven feet of water”



***“A May
flood never
did good”***

The Times Monday 11th May 1818

Storm of St Jude

28th October 2013 (St Jude's eve)

1am – 5am

Rain not hitting the ground

Wind from West trees bent over

By 8.15am bright sky, sun

Extreme weather – some examples...

Great Tornado 17 October 1091

1317 Fleet drought and famine

1331 St Pancras Church undermined by overflowing of the River Fleet, Edward III ordinances to limit repairing costs

Sunday 16th January 1362 Devastating storms

St Pancras Old Church damaged

Netherlands, Denmark & Germany 30,000 deaths

**1090 a tempest of wind, St Mary le Bow roof
overturned, wherein some slain, four 26ft rafters
buried in Cheapside only 4ft protruded above
'marish ground', they could not be retrieved**

**John Stow
Cordwainer Ward**

**A tornado flattened 600 houses and St Mary le
Bow in the City. It damaged London Bridge two
people died.**

**17th October 1091
That date....1091 & 1987**

**Reference to a storm at sea, four days
before Michaelmas 1091**

Anglo –Saxon Chronicle

Great Storm 16 October 1987

Much larger area plus wind
Assessed as a one in 300
years event (Storm in 1703)
.....another story

Thursday 15th October 1987

As night wore on a great hurricane raged 2 – 3am no sleep, no power, no TV, radio, trees down

Friday 16th October 1987

By 9am little wind, large tree down across gardens

Bought all the papers, few in office

9.30pm train from King's Cross out of London no problem

Monday 19th October 1987 'Black Monday'

Stock market collapse

Worshipful Company of Painters Stainers

St Luke Feast Formal Dinner Little Trinity Lane



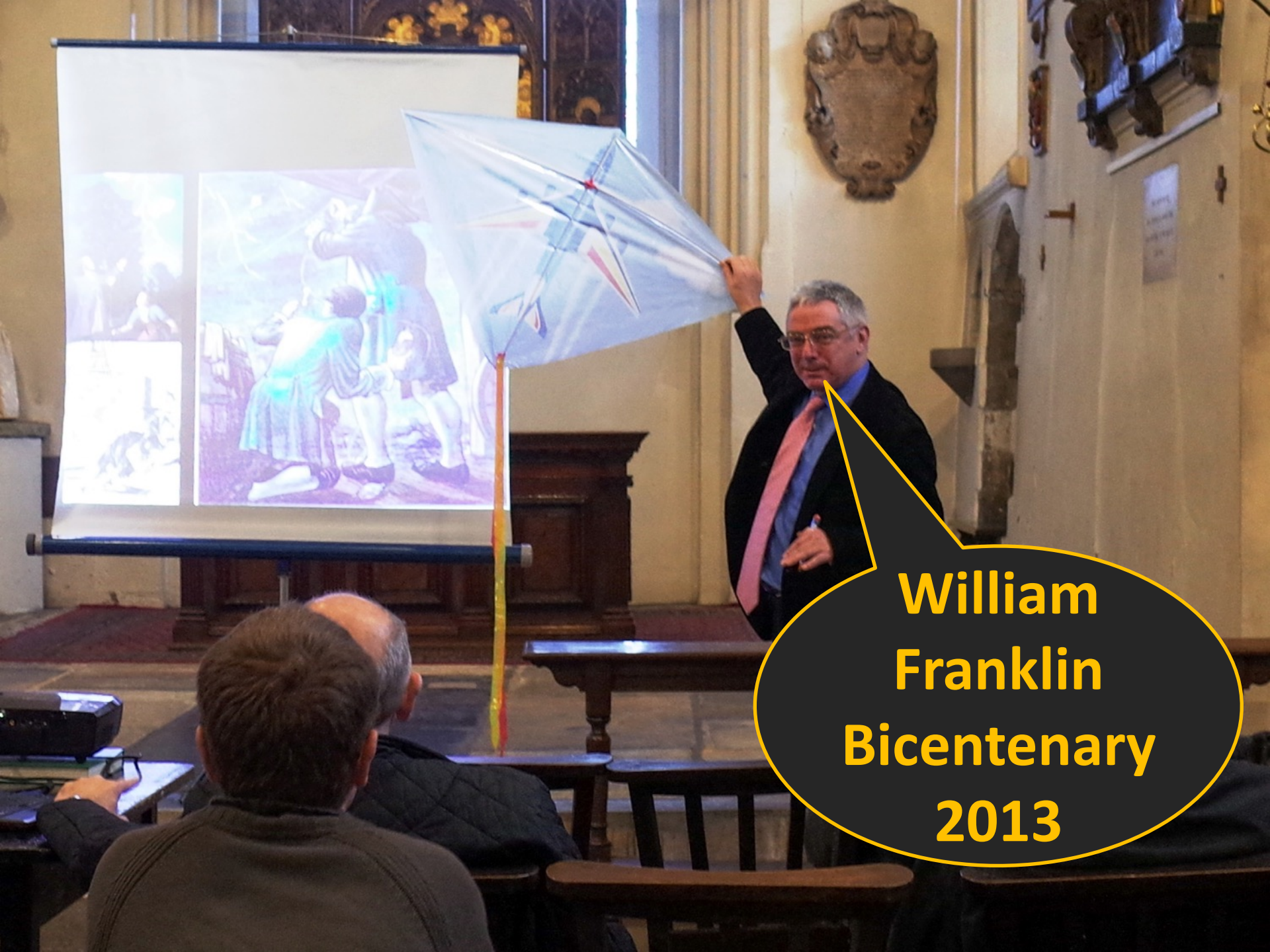
1 February 1444 St Paul's Cathedral lightning strike fire put out with vinegar

4 June 1561 Cathedral struck by lightning, fire with steeple lost

**2025 Tercentenary of
Benjamin Franklin
in the City of London**



June 1752 Pennsylvania

A man with grey hair and glasses, wearing a dark suit, blue shirt, and pink tie, stands in a church. He is holding a large, light blue kite with a red cross and yellow and red streamers. Behind him is a projector screen displaying three images: a small group of people, a person in a blue robe, and a person in a blue robe. The church has stone walls and a wooden altar.

**William
Franklin
Bicentenary
2013**



William Franklin son of Benjamin





25th November 1813

13th September 1814

Mary Shelley and Frankenstein

1816 *“T’were the year with no
Summer”*

(Eruption of Mount Tambora)



St Pancras - Ice Saint

**St Pancras
Day 12 May**



Last words...

*The
Marion Ebe
Great Storm
MCMXXV*

Heath Ponds Project

£22m 2010 – 2016

Shortlisted options 2nd August 2013

Consultation 2013 – 2014



Taylor Swift
Miracle 2024

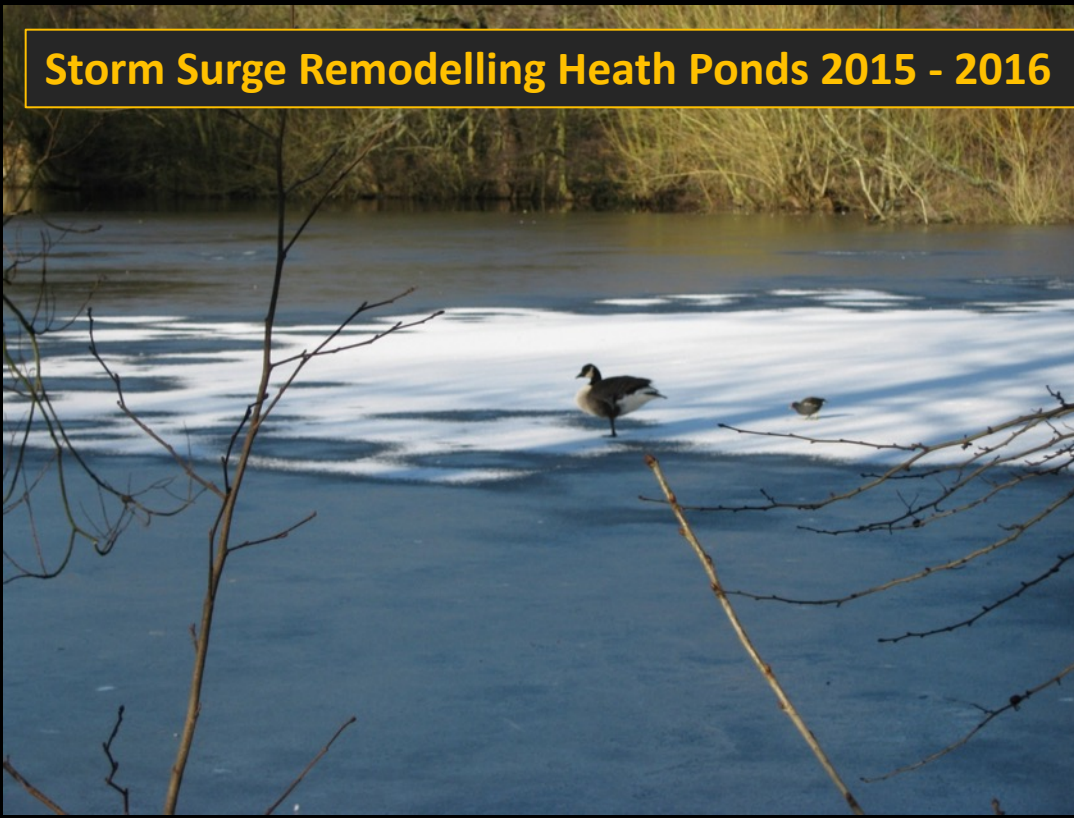
Works April 2015 – October 2016

Mostly Highgate Chain of Ponds

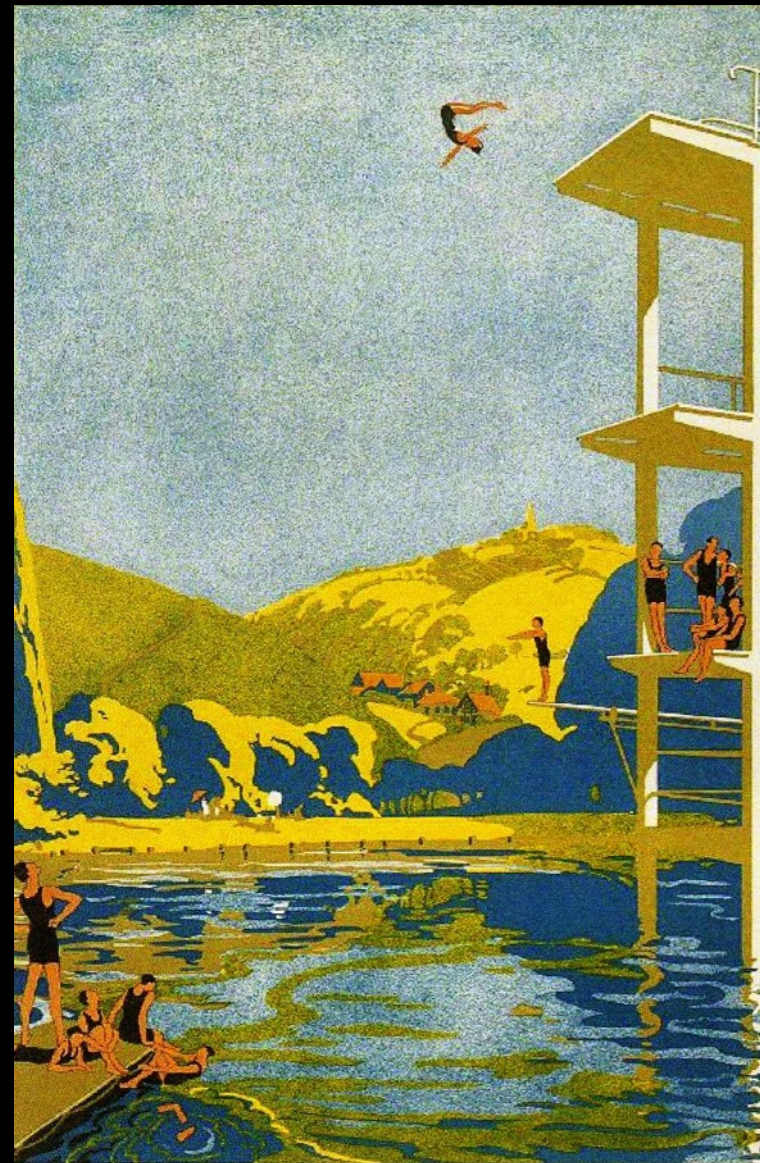
The late Michael Welbank CC

Chief Commoner City of London Belsize Av

Storm Surge Remodelling Heath Ponds 2015 - 2016



Pond (Number 4) Millfield Lane
250ft above Sea Level 30th Jan 2010



**KEN WOOD
& HIGHGATE PONDS**



The Heath & Hampstead Society

NEWSLETTER

October 2013

Vol 45 No 5



The threatened view from the cycle path

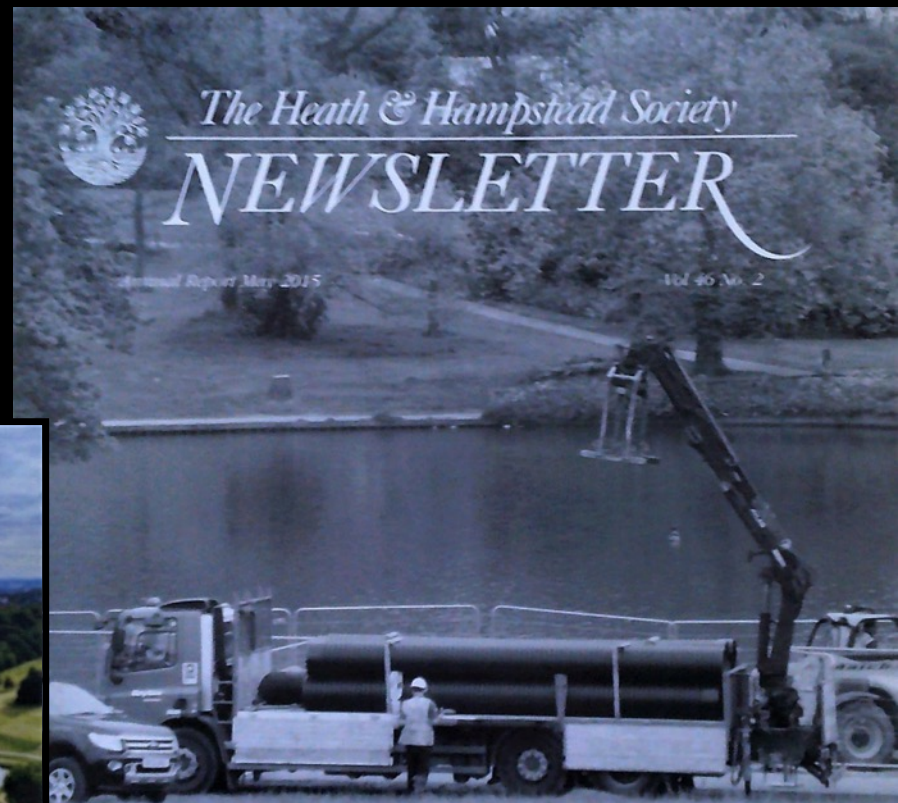


The Heath & Hampstead Society

NEWSLETTER

Annual Report May 2015

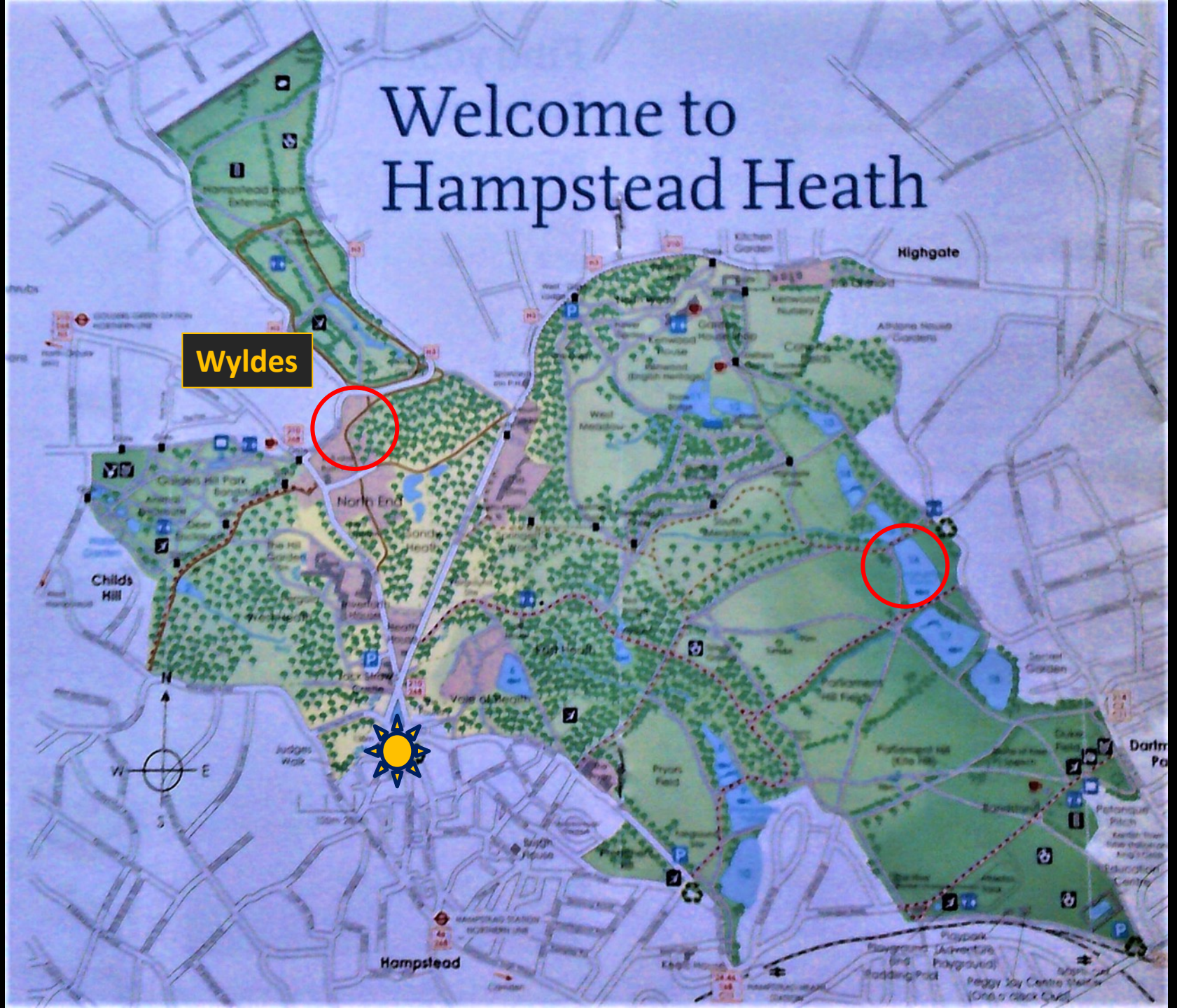
Vol 46 No 2



Boating Pond - the work begins

Welcome to Hampstead Heath

Wyldes



Location Plan:



Artificial Extreme Weather

75 years ago

A black and white photograph showing a ski jumper in mid-air, silhouetted against a bright background. Below the jumper, a large, dense crowd of spectators fills the landscape. The scene is set on a hillside with trees and a wooden structure, likely part of the ski jump ramp.

You next?

25 March 1950

Hampstead Heath

**London Ski-Jumping
Competition**

**Norwegians versus
Oxbridge**

**Snow imported from
Norway**

19m (64ft) ski ramp

Wednesday Evening 2nd September 2015
'Green' Rainbow



**Gold at the end
of the rainbow?**

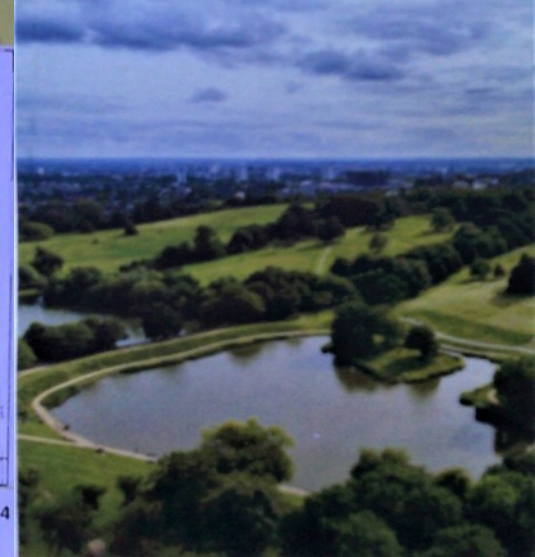
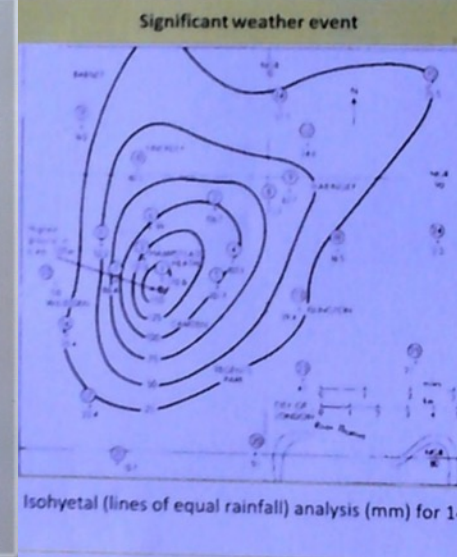
Official



**Thank
You**



Any Questions



Acknowledgements

Recollections including HGS Residents, John Hillaby, Charles Commander, David and Jane Morgan, Fmr Cllr Derek Jarman, St Pancras Old Church, Camden History Society, Heath & Hampstead Society, Hampstead Scientific Society, Hampstead Observatory, Meteorological Office, Daily Telegraph, London Borough of Camden, Tudor Allen, Camden Local Studies and Archive Centre, Camden New Journal, Daily Telegraph, Ham & High, Camden Tour Guides Association, University College London, Ordnance Survey Crown Copyright, British Library, Wikipedia, Bob Dylan (1962), Kentish Town City Farm, Rachel Schwartz, HGS News, Diana Iwi, Anthony Isaac, Belsize Library, Castlehaven, TAP, PHCC, HGSAS, Andrew Glendinning, HGS Free Church, Fellowship House, Andrew and Sally Botterill, Hampstead Community Centre, Trustees, Volunteers, Grant & Carmen, City of London Corporation, Hampstead Heath, Guildhall Library, Ursula Yeboah Afari, Zoom, Shoe Lane Library Team and Sona, St Margaret's School,

Red Frog & Nancy