

# Friends of Mycenae Gardens

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## Newsletter No 10 Spring 2020

### *Next AGM at 7.00pm Wednesday 25th March 2020*

The Friends of Mycenae Gardens will hold its next Annual General Meeting on **Wednesday 25th March 2020 at 7.00pm** in the hall of the Greenwich Steiner School.

Membership of the Friends is free, and all those who use or are interested in the gardens are urged to join the group to contribute their ideas and to help with the protection and management of the gardens. There is a membership form on the website at [www.mycenaegardens.org.uk/membership/](http://www.mycenaegardens.org.uk/membership/).

*If you have time, please consider standing for election to the Committee. You need to be a member of the Friends group and must be proposed by two other members of the group. There is a nomination form on the website (see the link in 'Membership'/'Committee members'), to be returned by email to [friendsofmycenaegardens@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofmycenaegardens@gmail.com), or by post to The Secretary, Friends of Mycenae Gardens, c/o Mycenae House, 90 Mycenae Road, SE3 7SE.*

### *Dear Friends,*

Our gardens are a haven for wildlife and for people. Our aim is not only to protect or preserve, but to enhance them, and to enable people to appreciate all that is there. This newsletter sets out some of what has been done this year, but I am sure we could do more. I would ask you all to participate, by contributing your ideas, and offering to help us convert those ideas into action. That does not necessarily mean joining the committee: some of the most helpful ideas and substantial contributions come from members and others offering specific skills, who do not wish to get involved in general management of the group. But the committee still plays an essential role in facilitating and coordinating all such contributions, and all the other work done in the gardens. Even if you are no expert in gardening or wildlife, you can help to manage the group, to receive and discuss new ideas, to take and communicate decisions, and to coordinate action with RBG and others concerned. If you can help in any of these ways, please join us on the committee. We need new members.

To quote one of our helpers: "*the main reason people give for not volunteering is that they weren't asked*". You have now been asked!

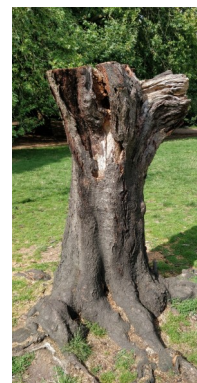
Mark Barnes

Committee chair

### *The cherry tree*



The cherry tree has been the focus of the lawns for many years, but it had come to the end of its days. The RBG team cut it down but, at our request, left a substantial stump. The plan is to turn it into a wildlife sculpture. Mycenae House, the school and the Friends are all contributing to the cost, and the work should be done in the spring.



Various different trees were considered as a replacement. The rowan was ultimately chosen as a native tree that offers blossom for the bees, fruit for the birds and autumn colour for the rest of us. It also has deeper roots than the cherry and might therefore be less susceptible to damage from footfall

RBG have planted three new rowans to replace the cherry, the first being planted at the PARKSfest event in July by Jack Partridge, the borough's tree inspector.



**Your community needs you.** The Friends of Mycenae Gardens is just one of several such groups in the borough. The borough's Parks and Open Spaces strategy is: "To work in partnership with the local community to provide and sustain ... safe, attractive, diverse and flexible parks", specifically by working with local Friends groups. The groups provide ideas and management tailored to the needs of the particular park and its users. This only works if users get involved.



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## Found! a gardening guru

Last year we were looking for a 'gardening guru'. We were very lucky to enlist the help of Fiona Machen, a very knowledgeable, active and energetic community gardener. (It is worth visiting the Christchurch Community garden, on one of their open days, to see how much that knowledge and energy can achieve).

Under her direction, we cleared a patch of brambles (thank you again, David Jervis and Shirley Broughton) and established a new bed of woodland flowers.

*The woodland bed, before ...*



*... during ...*



*... and after*



Fiona also advised on pruning of the shrubs (although few of us have had the courage) and on the placement of the bulbs on the autumn planting day.

The planting 'days' are actually short sessions of 2-3 hours, and have recently been arranged in weekday afternoons, to enable school children to take part. The photos above show that this has been a success. These are sociable occasions, with a surprising number of different languages spoken by the adults, while the children concentrate on the gardening.

Many thanks to all, children and parents alike, who have taken part.



*From behind the dead hedging: a resident of Mycenae Gardens, visiting the neighbours*

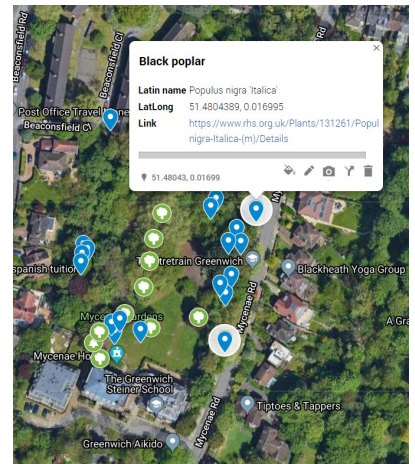
## Willow barriers

The willow barriers put up by our 'willow wizard', Richard Vidal, have been welcomed by everybody, and are a great improvement on the rope and post barriers that we had such trouble with. Richard uses willows harvested from the family farm in W. Sussex. We very much hope that he will be able to continue his work early this year, once there is more willow to harvest. Last year's barriers have suffered from children finding other uses for the willow wands. Please discourage this if you see it.



## Tree survey

Last year we posted on the website a copy of a tree survey compiled by Miles Dove some years ago. This year we have a more current but less comprehensive survey by RBG. This has now been posted on the website as well. RBG also supplied coordinates for the trees, and we had hoped to plot these onto Google maps, but it has proved difficult to convert RBG's coordinates into the equivalent used by Google (see the work in progress pictured). Are there any expert cartographers out there? Alternatively, does anybody have access to accurate (<1m) GPS locating equipment?



## Appreciating the gardens

It is heartening to hear walkers and others talking warmly about the gardens, and how much they enjoy them. Many (including the writer) would appreciate them even more if they understood more of the variety of wildlife that the gardens support.

Do you know of any local naturalist who could help, perhaps by giving talks on local trees, or updating the website with current pictures of our flora and fauna?

These steps might help members of the group, but it would be good to reach out to others as well, perhaps by labelling notable trees, or even installing one or more panels to explain the history of the gardens or (like the panel in the Dell) to point out the wildlife to be found behind the dead hedging. What do you think?

An understanding of the gardens is a pleasure in itself, but it may also encourage respect for the gardens and discourage casual misuse. It might even discourage the low-level vandalism that seems to bloom in the summer months.

