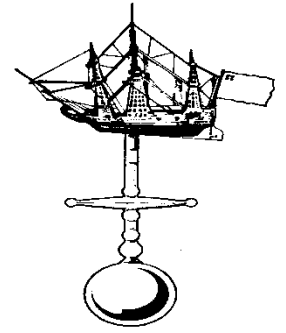




QUEENHITHE WARD CLUB

NEWSLETTER

Summer 2026



A round-up of our recent events — Epping Forest, the Annual General Meeting, a backstage day at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama and an Accessible City Gardens Walk & lunch at Guildhall in the Aldermanic Dining Room

President: Sir Alastair King DL (Alderman)

Vice President: Mr Gordon Warwick Haines MBE

Chairman: Mrs Caroline Haines

Hon. Treasurer: Judy Walker Hon. Secretary: Nanette Gibb

Epping Forest — Visitors' Centre & Hunting Lodge

Tuesday, 21st April 2026

Epping Forest is an ancient, Royal Forest, home to Europe's largest concentration of ancient oaks and beeches (over 55,000 in total) and, at over 6,000 acres, the largest of the open spaces' charities managed by the City of London as Corporate Trustee and protected 'for the enjoyment of the people' by the 1878 Epping Forest Act.

Deputy Caroline Haines, Past Club Chairman and Chair of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee, kindly invited members to join her for a guided 'walk and talk' amongst its trees, water features and heritage buildings.

On the day, members of Queenhithe Ward Club braved both tube strikes and local road disruption to experience a great day out in Epping Forest — the air was cold but the sun shone! Starting at the Elizabethan Hunting Lodge with a talk from the Superintendent and the resident historian, the group then walked down the Gloucester Ride, with its carved wooden Brambley Hedge features, to Connaught Water, with commentary along the way from Forest Keeper Luke. The Duke of Connaught was the son of Queen Victoria and the first Ranger of the Forest, the Duke of Gloucester being the present Ranger.

After an excellent lunch at Butler's Retreat, Chair Elect Caroline Haines walked the group across to Barn Hoppitt and Warren Pond — the spot where Shakespeare is believed to have gained inspiration for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, written and first performed for a society wedding at Copped Hall in Epping Forest. Ancient and veteran oaks still stand in the same landscape that Shakespeare himself would have witnessed.

A great day was had by all!

— *Caroline Haines, Chairman*



Members gather outside the Elizabethan Hunting Lodge at the start of the visit



On the boardwalk by Connaught Water, with commentary from Forest Keeper Luke



The group beside the water — cold air, but glorious sunshine

Annual General Meeting

Monday, 11th May 2026 — The Westin Hotel City, 60 Upper Thames St, London EC4V 3EH

Members gathered at the Westin Hotel City for the Club's Annual General Meeting, held at 6.00pm. The agenda covered confirmation of the minutes of the 2025 AGM, confirmation of new members, resignations and other membership matters, and the receipt and approval of the balance sheet and statement of accounts for the year ended 31st March 2026.

The Chairman presented her report on the year's activities, followed by the election of Officers and Committee Members and the appointment of the Hon. Independent Examiner for the coming year. Members also confirmed the Trustees and heard the programme of events planned for the year ahead.

The formal business was followed by a very convivial drinks reception, giving members the chance to catch up with old friends and welcome new ones.



Members at the AGM and the reception that followed



More scenes from a lively AGM evening at the Westin Hotel City

Guildhall School of Music & Drama

Thursday, 28th May 2026 — Backstage Tour, Lunch & Matinee: As You Like It

Members enjoyed a unique day arranged by our Chairman, Deputy Caroline Haines, in her role as Deputy Chair of the GSMD Board: a full backstage tour of the Silk Street and Milton Court sites, followed by lunch at the Barbican Grill and, as the highlight of the day, a matinee performance of Shakespeare's *As You Like It* by GSMD's Drama and Theatre Production students. GSMD is ranked 3rd in the world for Performing Arts and in the top 4 for Music, and in 2026 rose to the second highest ranking of any UK higher education institution across both subjects.

Members enjoyed a stimulating 'behind the scenes' visit, starting at the Milton Court building on Silk Street before moving across to the Silk Street site itself. Everyone was blown away by the talent, creativity, commitment and passion on show — from the seamstress and costume designer whose father had taught her to sew, to the set designers painting huge murals, and the performers who brought such energy and passion to the afternoon's production of *As You Like It*. In between, the group enjoyed a lovely lunch at the Barbican Grill, and a great time was had by all.

— *Caroline Haines, Chairman*



Backstage at GSMD — examining props from a current production



Set designers at work on a huge scenic backdrop



A lovely lunch at the Barbican Grill



On stage after a moving matinee performance of As You Like It

Accessible City Gardens Walk & Guildhall Lunch

Friday, 10th July 2026 — lunch at Guildhall in the Aldermanic Dining Room

There are nearly 200 gardens, plazas and church yards within the Square Mile of the City of London and members from the Queenhithe Ward Club visited a number of them today.

We began at St Mary's Aldermanbury, with its memorial stone to Sir Winston Churchill sitting in the bombed church remains. We met an American couple who had married in the church where it now stands - in Fulton Missouri - a library to Sir Winston.

City Gardens Team Leader, Clive, spoke about the scientific background to choice of soil, drainage and the importance of planting for sustainability.

A gentle walk onwards took us past a number of smaller gardens, through Moorgate to the Western Arm of Finsbury Circus and into the Award winning garden itself.

Clive was joined by apprentice, Zac, and between them they told the story of Crossrail and some of the difficulties linked to the gardens redevelopment.

The visit finished with a tasty fish and chip lunch at Guildhall.

— *Caroline Haines, Chairman*



Finsbury Circus Gardens



Aldermanic Dining Room, Guildhall



For more on the Club and forthcoming events, visit [queenhitheward.org](https://www.queenhitheward.org)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS May 2026 to May 2027

<https://www.queenhitheward.org/events>

Monday, 11th May 2026 - Annual General Meeting

*Thursday 28th May 2026 - Guildhall School of Music & Drama
(Matinee performance @ GSMD As you Like it)*

Friday 10th July 2026 - City Gardens Walk & Guildhall lunch

Sunday, 23rd August 2026 - Copped Hall: House & Gardens

Friday, 11th September 2026 - Inter-Ward Quiz

Saturday, 12th September 2026 - Ceremony of Keys

Thursday, 29th October 2026 - Queenhithe Shakespeare Day

December 2026 - Parish Carols

Monday 11th January 2027 - New Year Virtual Social (Faith in Education)

*Wednesday, 27th January 2027 - Bell Ringing Experience & Tower Tour at St James
Garlickhythe*

Tuesday, 23 February - Tour to Table Experience - Guinness Open Gate Brewery

Friday 19th March 2027 - Fenton House, Hampstead

May 2027 - Annual General Meeting

Photos on the website: <https://www.queenhitheward.org/gallery>