

The Friends' Newsletter No.1



Thirsty police horses at the Russell Square fountain

The Russell Square Fountain

This unique feature among all the London Squares is loved and admired by all who pass by, especially children on hot summer days who don swimming costumes to delight in its spray. However, few people know that beneath the surface lies an underground wonderland (look for the manhole) – a machine room containing a tank to recycle the water, filters to clean it, pumps to power its jets and a computer to time the changing heights of the spray. The cycle lasts one hour with the central jet remaining at its zenith for 15 minutes. Just time it.



The Tropea family, Mamà, Papà & son Giovanni – see page 3

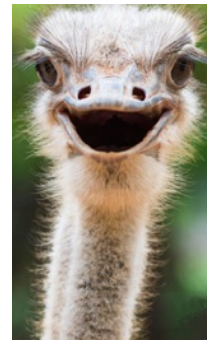
The Charming Anthropologist

One of the commemorative benches in the Square is dedicated to a young American, **Charlie 'Buddy' Lockwood** (1970-2008), who was a member of the Anthropology department at UCL. Much admired for his field work in investigating the evolution of skull anatomy in prehistoric people, he was on his way to deliver a lecture at the University when he was killed in a motorbike accident.



The Lucky Diamond Find

Among his many interests and enterprises, wealthy merchant and entrepreneur **Philip Feril Renault Saillard** (1839-1916) who lived at No. 24 Russell Square was a Master of the Worshipful Company of Makers of Playing Cards. When, in the 1870s, a boom in fashionable ostrich feathers happened, he invested in an ostrich farm in South Africa. Curious to know the reason for the demise of one of his birds, investigation revealed that a diamond had stuck in its throat. After locating the source of the diamond-bearing rocks on his property, a fortune was made enabling Saillard to buy a vast estate in Sussex where he built a grand mansion for his family. Since 1925, this palatial, Tudor-style, red-brick rival to Hampton Court has been a school for lucky boys and girls.



The Case of the Disappearing Bins

Eight elegant cast iron rubbish bins have come to Russell Square. Each is now firmly bolted through the bottom into the ground. The



reason? One by one the original bins had disappeared. How or why they were stolen remains a mystery. Not surprisingly, replacement is a costly concern so it has been a long time coming. But as can be seen, the new ones are bigger and better so were well worth waiting for.

A Family Affair

The Tropea family who hail from the beautiful town of Tropea on the coast of southern Italy have recently welcomed a second child of Giovanni Tropea whose parents Paul and Aurora are also celebrating. For them it is 40 years in business at Caffè Tropea in the Square. Home-cooked dishes inspired by grandmother's Calabrese upbringing are passed with pride to each generation and brought to life by Aurora in the kitchen. Recipes include their very own pasta sauces pizza dough, and a Tropea blend of coffee that is sold world-wide via Amazon.



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The London Plane

The plane trees in Russell Square were planted in the 1830s, and four of them are still alive at nearly 200 years old.

Their success is largely due to the all-year shedding of its bark. This may be messy on the ground but it has multiple benefits for the plane tree.

The peel that falls off can contain harmful parasites and fungal diseases that could damage its health. More importantly, it



allows the tree to rid itself of the effects of air pollution that accumulate on its bark. It is this process that makes the London Plane the perfect tree for cities.

However, tragedy lurks. Quite apart from the fungal diseases such as that which has blighted the 42,000 plane trees that grace a 150-mile (240m) length of a canal in France, traces of a deadly new plane tree bug called massaria are now evident in London. Long hot summers do not help. A tree that is starved of water is placed under stress and more susceptible to attack. The plane tree in particular needs an alarming amount. A mature tree can use 100,000 gallons a year. The Square's lawns that are bleached by the sun rapidly recover in the rain. It is fervently to be hoped that a solution to its plane trees' survival can quickly be found.

Clean up for the Duke

Francis Russell, 5th Duke of Bedford has emerged from his recent in-depth clean looking like a new man.

To a modern eye, his fancy form of dress looks very peculiar, but at the time this bronze was cast it was all the rage to associate important male figures with the grandeur of classical Rome. Some VIPs were clothed in togas, others had Roman armour thrust upon them. The Duke was immortalised with both.

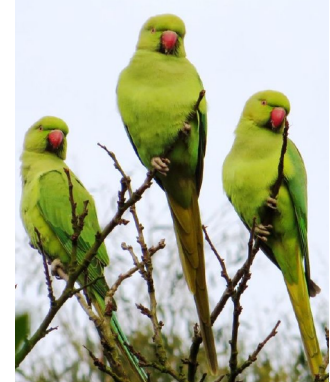


His monument is festooned with animals which is a fitting tribute to his interest in agriculture. Though he was orphaned at 7, and died at the early age of 36, he established a farm at the family's country seat where he pioneered scientific farming by breeding cattle 'with every convenience that could be desired' and directing 'valuable experiments upon the respective merits of various breeds of sheep'. Thanks to him, many a farmer attending his annual Farm Shows learned about improved farming methods, while enjoying ploughing competitions and other entertainments.

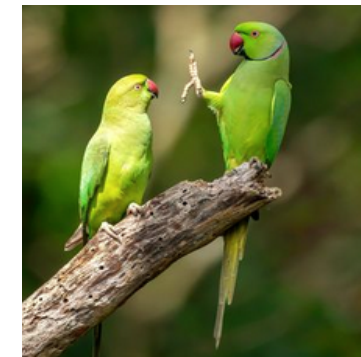
All this, in addition to the development of the Bloomsbury area and its carefully laid-out centrepiece – Russell Square.

The Garden's Green Invasion

A group of London's bright green residents has now settled itself in the Gardens. No-one knows how these 'ring-necked' parakeets first arrived in England, but since 1990 they have been spreading up the map from the southern counties and are now spotted in Manchester. Of all the unlikely stories about their UK start-up, one has it that a pair of pet parakeets was released by Jimi Hendrix in Carnaby Street.



This particular parrot species are natives of the jungles of Africa and parts of India that extend into the foothills of the Himalayas. They are therefore unperturbed by English winters and, as temperatures rise, do even



You're not green enough for me.

when a mate drops off its perch, the other will eventually feel the need to find another partner and raise more chicks.

better since they are more than able to cope with heatwaves.

Parakeets do not mate for life but they do have one mate at a time and like to work together to bring up their young. Then,