

Exhibition - 25 June – 8 August 2021. Installation on 23/24 June (to be ready to launch on 25 June).
Removal Monday 9 August (am).

Location: it is proposed that all nine monoliths will be placed on the left side of the concrete path, leading from Hampstead Heath station towards East Heath car park (known as the 'Cathedral' entrance).

The outdoor display consists of nine monoliths with dimensions of w1500 x d1000 x h2200mm;

The roadside side of the 9 monoliths will be used to spell out #HEATH150. The below sets out the theme of each monolith.

Monolith 1 – About #Heath150 – panel A = 0

Monolith 2 – The history of the Heath – panel A = 5

Monolith 3 – The passing of the Act – panel A = 1

Monolith 4 – Habitats of the Heath – panel A = **H**

Monolith 5 – Trees of the Heath – panel A = **T**

Monolith 6 – Art of the Heath – panel A = **A**

Monolith 7 – Enjoy the Heath – panel A = **E**

Monolith 8 – Heath volunteers – panel A = **H**

Monolith 9 – The future of the Heath – panel A = **#**

Monoliths 1-3: Introduction and history of the Act and what it achieved, including wider London and national context of saving and caring for open spaces.

Monolith 1: Draft Text

'... shall for ever keep the Heath open... and protect the Heath, and preserve it as an open space...'
June 2021 marks the 150th anniversary of the passing of the Hampstead Heath Act 1871, which preserved the original Heath as a public open space.

Although the Heath which was saved at that time was much smaller than the space we enjoy today, it was a significant moment in the protection of the Heath and other open spaces which were under threat from development.

After decades of rapid urbanisation and expansion, the role of green spaces in being the lungs of the capital was legally established. The individuals who led the fight to protect the Heath and elsewhere, also became founder members of new organisations to protect the nation's built and natural environments, beginning the tradition of volunteer engagement which still flourishes.

Today, the Heath, along with other open green spaces within and around London, is home to a wide variety of sometimes rare and endangered plant and animal species, as well as being vital to the health and wellbeing of millions of Londoners.

The 150th anniversary of the passing of the Hampstead Heath Act, is an opportunity to discover the story of how the Heath and other open spaces were preserved for the benefit of the public, how the Heath has changed over time as a result of this protection and use, as well as the role we can all play in ensuring it remains as a protected wild habitat for the species that live there and the people who visit it every day.

Monolith 2: Draft Text

'A steeple issuing from a leafy rise,
With farmy fields in front, and sloping green,
Dear Hampstead, is thy southern face serene,
Silently smiling on approaching eyes'

From a sonnet by Leigh Hunt, 1815.

By the early 1800s, Hampstead was already popular as a place to escape to from the city. The area was home to writers, poets and artists inspired by its wild beauty and increasing numbers of people came on day trips from London.

The population of London grew from an estimated one million people in 1801 to over two and a half million people in 1851. The rapid expansion of the city, and the associated building of railways and roads, threatened the villages, common lands and countryside around it. Local landowners began to sell off portions of their land to developers and the individual villages began to grow in size and number, at the expense of green space.

In 1821, Sir Thomas Maryon Wilson inherited most of the Heath's lands as Lord of the Manor of Hampstead. He believed that the Heath was his private property and wanted to be able to sell its natural resources and build on the land. His plans were opposed by local people, the press and Members of Parliament who were aware of the threat this posed to common land across London.

The Commons Preservation Society, founded in 1865, launched legal objections to the extraction of gravel from Hampstead Heath as well as the claims of railway developers. The Hampstead Heath Protection Fund Committee was established in 1867 by local residents and including representatives of the Commons Preservation Society, to raise money for the legal case challenging Sir Thomas's right to ownership of the common lands of the Heath.

The case they brought before the courts in June 1868 was seen as a crucial test case in establishing the people's rights to use the common lands of London. The initial judgement failed to reach a clear decision, leaving the potential for a lengthy and expensive legal battle, but in May 1869 Sir Thomas died, opening a different path to saving the Heath from development.

Monolith 3: Draft Text

'the Board shall forever keep the Heath open, unenclosed and unbuilt on... and shall at all times preserve, as far as may be, the natural aspect and state of the Heath, and to that end shall protect the turf, gorse, heather, timber and other trees, shrubs and brushwood thereon.'

The Hampstead Heath Act 1871.

In June 1871, the Hampstead Heath Act was passed, confirming that 220 acres of land were to be purchased by The Metropolitan Board of Works. This body had been founded in 1855 to deliver new streets, bridges, sewers and parks for the growing city.

The area of the Heath that they purchased included East Heath, Sandy Heath and West Heath and the Act laid out strict conditions on what they could and couldn't with the land.

The building of South Hill Park between the lower Hampstead Ponds and Parliament Hill fields in 1878 led to concern that land in different ownership could still be sold for development, to the detriment of the Heath.

A new campaign, again led by Shaw-Lefevre, Robert Hunter and Octavia Hill, led to The Hampstead Heath Enlargement Act, 1886 and subsequent purchase of East Park, Parliament Hill and Fields.

In 1889, the London County Council was formed and took over the management of the Heath. Following protests against the laying of roads across the Heath, the Hampstead Heath Protection Society, now Heath & Hampstead Society, was formed to campaign for the protection of the Heath as a natural, open space, rather than a more formal park.

More designed landscapes were added to the Heath with the purchase of Golders Hill Park in 1898. A campaign by Henrietta Barnett led to the inclusion of , followed in 1889 by parts of the Kenwood Estate. [Later Ivagh Bequest of 1928, placed Kenwood House and remainder of that Estate 'for all time and

By the early 1900s the Heath was encircled by the continued expansion of London.

Monolith 4: Draft Text

Hampstead Heath is an ancient landscape shaped by the last Ice Age, which ended about 12,000 years ago. It is one of the highest points in north London, with views across the London basin, to Epping Forest and the Thames estuary in the east and the Surrey hills to the south.

The retreating glaciers left easily-draining sandy and pebbly soil on top of a layer of impermeable London clay. This gives rise to springs and small streams which feed the River Fleet, one of London's main rivers and a historic source of drinking water for its residents.

The area was once covered in forest, but thousands of years of human settlement, agriculture and grazing reduced this to small, isolated copses of trees. Low shrubs and gorse grew naturally on what, up to just 150 years ago, would have been a wild open space, or Heath, just outside the expanding City of London.

This urban growth led to exploitation of the Heath's natural resources for drinking water and building materials and, by the early nineteenth century, threatened the very existence of the Heath as an open space as it was seen as prime land to build on. Its protection and enlargement from 1871 onwards preserved what appears to be a natural piece of countryside within the largest city in Britain.

In addition to the Acts, the Heath is protected as Metropolitan Open Land and as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation. About one third of the Kenwood Estate is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, due to the ancient woods and species they support and the presence of a rare sphagnum bog.

Today, the varied habitats found on the Heath all need to be carefully researched, managed and protected to ensure that they do not conflict with each other or become negatively affected by our activities as we enjoy visiting this natural sanctuary from our busy, urban lives.