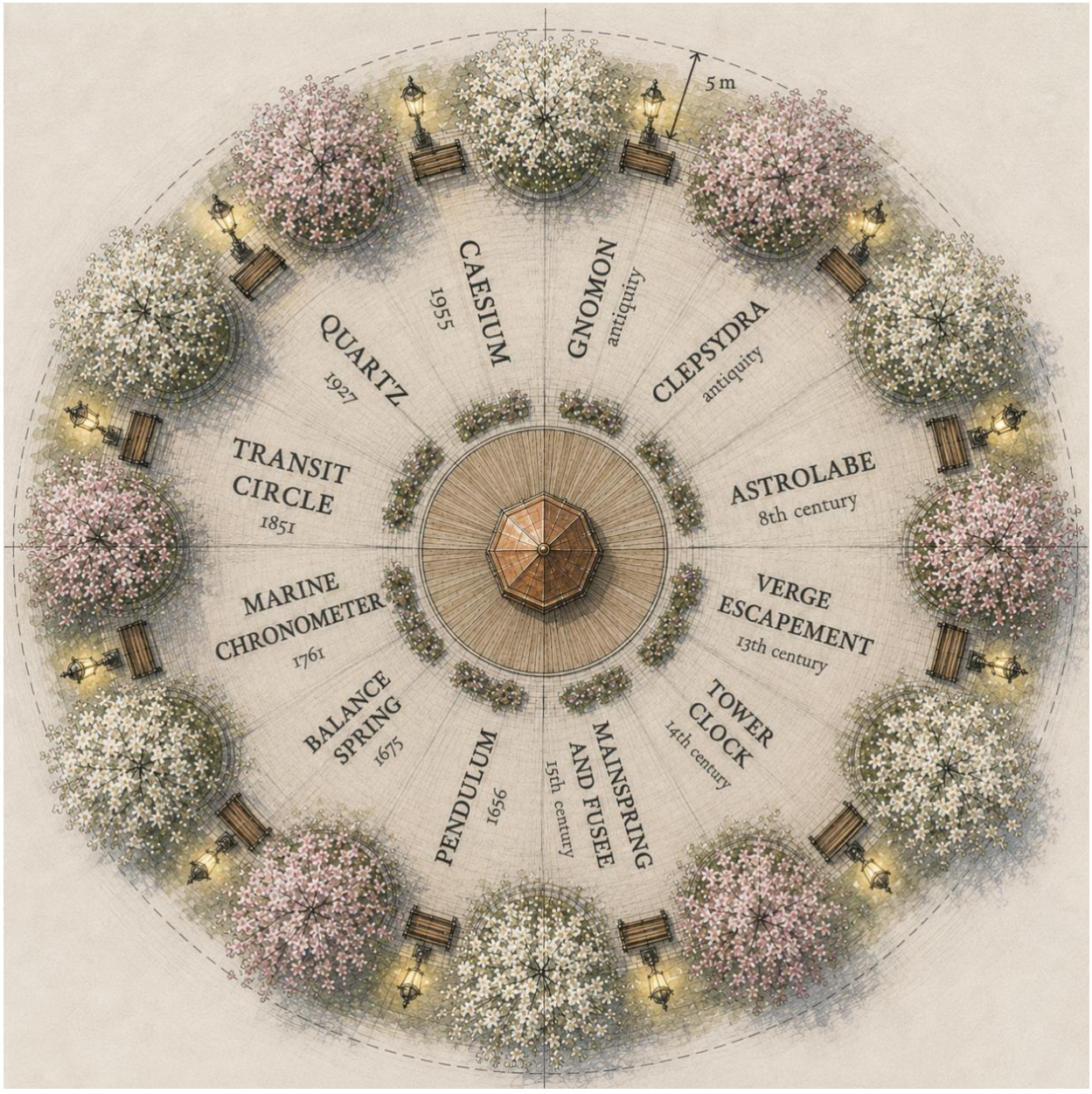
THE SAPIENS GARDEN

GREENWICH WEATHER BEACON



Status: Concept
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Date: 14 August 2026

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1. THE SAPIENS GARDEN

This is a long-term cultural, architectural and landscape ecosystem, built around memory, time, heritage, craft, music, literature, nature, education and contemplation.

Its final visible expression is a timber Beacon on the British coast, some forty-two metres in height. It is conceived as seven-sided in plan, broad at the base and narrowing towards the top, built in oak, which carries both the load and the meaning, and clad in larch after the manner of a ship's hull.



Within the Beacon are seven halls, joined by a central spiral staircase. The first hall is given to the philosophers, those who first asked what truth, goodness and being are. The second to the scientists: the laws of motion and light, the structure of matter and of life. The third to the architects and artists who gave themselves to work with line, colour and light. The fourth to those who live and create today: music, cinema, painting, the science of living nature. The fifth to poets and writers, and the sixth to composers whose music said what lay beyond words. The seventh, under the dome of the Beacon, is given to those who thought beyond their own time. In each hall there is a small museum display: artefacts, books and genuine things.

Around the Beacon a Garden will grow: seventy-seven trees, each one bearing the name of a philosopher, a poet, a scientist, a composer, an artist or a physician — all those whose labour, thought and courage shaped the course of human civilisation.

The principal siting hypothesis is Beacon Hill near West Runton in North Norfolk: the highest point of the county, one hundred and five metres, roughly 1.7 kilometres from the shore, on the glacial sands and gravels of the Cromer Ridge, a terminal moraine, with no chalk at the surface.

EVERHELG FOUNDATION is intended as a not-for-profit charitable organisation, the institutional base of the project. It is the footing that will hold what is created, carry the obligations and keep the legacy. Registration of the Foundation is planned for 2027.

2. GREENWICH WEATHER BEACON

is the first public and responsible step in creating THE SAPIENS GARDEN in Britain. It is a timber-framed structure fourteen metres in height, made of solid oak and clad in larch. The base of the Beacon is roughly four and a half metres across.

The Beacon will have a working revolving lantern and a restrained evening light that changes its hue with the weather of the city. Short quotations from the great thinkers will be carved by hand into the outer cladding and will follow the same upward order as the seven halls of the larger Beacon. Outside, the structure is planned without ladders, ledges or holds, so the Beacon cannot be climbed. In character the Beacon is conceived as quiet, calm and honest in its materials, as though it had always stood here.



The terrace around it will work as a chamber stage all year round. The principle is absolute: acoustic instruments and the human voice only. The piano lives inside the Beacon and is wheeled out onto the terrace before a performance. Volume is limited by the nature of the instruments themselves, so chamber music stays chamber music, the park stays quiet and the evening stays alive. London artists will be able to perform without a fee, on an open programme.

What happens on the terrace. The programme of evenings is run by the Lab, and the year is made up of several recurring forms.

- **'How Timber Stands for Centuries'** is a carpenter's evening: a maker assembles a joint in front of the audience, and the talk turns to the timber churches that have stood for a thousand years.
- **'Calligraphy'** is live writing to music: the letters are born before the eye and go into the archive.
- **'A Portrait of the Weather'** has artists painting the fog, the rain or the sunset on the spot, and the city sees its own day on paper.
- **'Music for Deep Fog'** brings premieres of chamber pieces written for the weather tones of the Beacon.
- **'Field Recordings'** is an evening of the sounds of the park itself and of singing at dusk, voices without a single cable.
- **'An Evening of Blossom'** brings florists and the scent of the season.
- **'Word and Thought'** is readings and lectures on time, landscape and memory.
- **'A Tale for Grown-ups Tired of Being Someone'** is an evening of quiet prose and chamber theatre by lantern light.

The schedule. The calendar is kept by London curators: the receiving of applications, the approval of the programme and the publication of the calendar in the app in advance. Slots open a set period in advance, so as to hold the balance between the theme of the month and the free initiative of the artists.

The one lighthouse in London. Only one lighthouse survives in London today, a small experimental brick tower at Trinity Buoy Wharf, where the River Lea meets the Thames, built in 1864–66 on the site of an earlier experimental light and never serving navigation. It was built for Trinity House by the engineer James Douglass, and the lantern at the top came from the Paris Exhibition of 1867, where it had shown electric lighting. The tower served as a testing ground for the lighthouse lights

of England and Wales, and it was on this wharf that Michael Faraday worked as scientific adviser to Trinity House on lamps and lenses. In December 1988 Trinity House closed the wharf, and today it is a quiet arts venue, where '*Longplayer*', a musical composition a thousand years long, plays on. London has no living, well-visited timber Beacon, and the place for one stands open.

Requirements and permissions. These are settled from the very beginning: DBS checks for everyone whose role falls within regulated activity with children or vulnerable adults as the law defines it, a written safeguarding policy agreed with those who own the land, the licensing of public performance together with the music rights that any live programme carries and that the complete absence of amplification makes markedly simpler, and barrier-free access to the terrace and to the stage.

A network of Beacons. Once the architectural and engineering language of the prototype has been tested at Greenwich, the idea may grow further as a network of hand-made timber weather Beacons in British cities, done with discipline and with every consent required. Each city has its own view, hue and character, its own artists and musicians, its own small Lab and its own weather score. London and Greenwich, Edinburgh, Manchester, Liverpool, Bristol, Oxford, Cambridge, and Norwich would sound together as one family.

3. WHY GREENWICH

The place already holds the whole vocabulary of the idea: world time, the prime meridian, the Royal Observatory, navigation, maritime history, weather, measurement, astronomy and the public landscape of London. A timber Beacon reads here as a small civic observatory of atmosphere, culture and memory. Every part of the idea grows out of the ground on which it stands.

The Name

The first written mention is 'Gronewic', around 918, then 'Grenewic' in 964 and, in the Domesday Book of 1086, 'Grenviz'. The Old English grēne and wīc together give 'a green trading place', or, where wīc carries the sense of a harbour, 'a green harbour'. Long before the Observatory and the meridian, Greenwich was already a word about greenery and about the edge of the river — a direct line to timber and to landscape.

A Place of Memory

From 1011 to 1014 the Danish fleet was encamped at Greenwich. Ælfheah, Archbishop of Canterbury, was held prisoner in that camp. He forbade his people to pay the ransom that would have saved his life, and in April 1012 he was killed for it.

He was later canonised as St Alfege, and the church that bears his name stands where tradition holds that he died. The first layer of memory in this place is steadfastness.

The Cradle of the Tudors

In 1433 Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, began building Bella Court here and in the same year enclosed the park. After his death Margaret of Anjou renamed the house Placentia, 'the pleasant place'. Henry VII rebuilt it from 1498 as the principal riverside residence of the Tudors. His son Henry VIII had been born here seven years before, in 1491. Henry VIII's daughters, Mary I and Elizabeth I, were also born here, and both became queens.

The Observatory and the Meridian

In 1675 Charles II charged Christopher Wren with building a house on the hill for work on the problem of longitude. John Flamsteed became the first Astronomer Royal. Four meridians were drawn at Greenwich in turn: Flamsteed's, Halley's, Bradley's and, from 1851, the line of Airy's transit circle. It was Airy's line that the International Meridian Conference in Washington adopted in October 1884 as the prime meridian of the world, by the generally accepted account with twenty-two votes to one, France and Brazil abstaining.

Heritage

An ensemble has formed around the Observatory: Wren's Royal Hospital for Seamen, now the Old Royal Naval College, Inigo Jones's Queen's House, the National Maritime Museum and the clipper Cutty Sark. In 1997 Maritime Greenwich was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List under four criteria, among them the criterion of human creative genius. Greenwich Park is the oldest of London's enclosed royal parks.

4. THE NUMBER TWELVE

The number is given by Greenwich itself, and given through time. The dial divides the day into twelve hours twice over, a circle of twelve trees reads as a dial, and the Beacon at its centre as the axis and the hand.

The Observatory's public clock, the Shepherd Gate Clock of 1852 at the entrance, has a twenty-four-hour dial. It was probably the first clock to show Greenwich Mean Time directly to the public. From the Observatory a single time signal went by telegraph to London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dublin and Belfast, and from 1866 across the Atlantic to Harvard.

5. WEATHER AS CULTURE

The Beacon's weather system would be a way of feeling the city. Rain, fog, wind, storm, snow and frost, clear sky, heat — and each of them answers to some inner state. Themes, sketches, music, paintings and voices give way to one another gently, separated by moments of silence and by the simple contemplation of the Beacon as a figure standing in the clearing.

The scheme is simple: the month sets the theme, the weather of the day gives the tone, the archive brings forward the works.

The month is led by a tree. Each month is led by its own tree of the circle, and the tree sets the theme — the field of human work belonging to the person whose name it bears. Within the month, the weather of the day chooses the tone, and in that tone both the voices of the great and the work of living Londoners are heard.

One scene, by way of illustration. September is Airy's month, the ninth tree of the circle, the month of measurement. The day has turned out foggy, and the whole circle burns milk-white. A person walks along the path, opens the app, and beneath that fog Debussy sounds, a Turner opens, a page of Dickens on the London fog, a short scientific note on where light comes from, and a poem written last week by a poet from Lewisham. Tomorrow it will clear, and the same theme will sound in Bach and Constable.

Seven tones. Clear, overcast and windy, rain, storm, fog, heat, and frost and snow — the same seven on which the archive is built. Each has its own music, painting, photograph, calligraphy, poetry, prose and short scientific note: Bach and Satie on a clear day, Debussy and Pärt in fog, Chopin in the rain, Rachmaninoff in the storm, Britten when the wind gets up, Delius in the heat, Friedrich and Frost when snow is falling.

How the instrument reads the weather. A weather station will be built into the Beacon: sensors for fog and visibility, for light, rain, wind and temperature. These readings govern the tint of the light at the summit and of the twelve lanterns of the circle, following sequences written in advance. When the weather turns, the whole circle changes with it, gradually.

The app. At the foot of the Beacon stands a small sign with a QR code: a person points a phone camera at it and opens the app, where the Beacon can be seen in real time. The same address works as a website from anywhere in the world. The tower and the sky above the clearing run live: the milky light of fog, the white radiance of a clear morning, the blue tone of wind — everything the Beacon and the garden are

living through at that moment. Inside, everything is presented as handwork: calligraphy, notes and poems written by hand on paper, photographs and paintings tuned to the tone of the day, musical fragments sounding quietly. Open the app in the rain, and there on the paper is a rain poem, with Chopin playing. Open it from Birmingham, and one hears how the sky above London sounds at that moment.

A look at the sky. A few small cameras watch the clouds, the sun and the Beacon's lantern and keep a live record of the sky above the clearing, and at the same time serve as back-up sensors for brightness and visibility. The frame holds only the sky and the top of the tower: the path and people's faces remain outside it, and privacy is protected by the very geometry of the view. This layer is an option, and it would be agreed separately with those to whom the park belongs.

The four seasons. Alongside the weather of the day, the year is at work: the white of spring, the clear gold of summer, the pale yellow of autumn, the silver of winter. The same fog glows and sounds one way in April and another in December, and the circle will live the year through as one long score.

Light, timber, the scent of blossom, silence — all of this works of its own accord. The app simply adds a second layer for those who want it.

6. SEVEN TONES: HOW IT SOUNDS

The weather of the day chooses one of seven tones. Each rests on music, painting, photography, calligraphy, poetry, prose and a short scientific note — so that the same park speaks in a different voice every day.

— Clear. Music: the Prelude from Bach's First Cello Suite and Satie's *Gymnopédie No. 1*. Painting: Constable's cloud studies, made on Hampstead Heath in 1821 and 1822, and the light of Monet. Poetry: Wordsworth's "Composed upon Westminster Bridge", written on a clear early morning. Prose: a June morning in London in Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*. Photograph: the open English skies of Fay Godwin. Calligraphy: Wordsworth's lines written out by hand at first light. Science: why the sky is blue.

— Overcast and windy. Music: Britten's Four Sea Interludes from *Peter Grimes* and Philip Glass. Painting: northern skies and the running shadows of clouds. Poetry: Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind". Prose: *Wuthering Heights*, whose house takes its name from the wind. Photograph: the North Sea coast in the work of Chris Killip. Calligraphy: Shelley's ode, written on the terrace as the wind gets up. Science: the Beaufort scale, devised in 1805, a sailor's alphabet of the wind, first used officially aboard the Beagle in 1831 and made compulsory in Admiralty logs in 1838.

— Rain. Music: Chopin's "Raindrop" prelude and the quiet pieces of Max Richter. Painting: Caillebotte's Paris Street, Rainy Day of 1877 — the wet cobbles and umbrellas of the modern city. Poetry: Edward Thomas's "Rain". Prose: the rainy opening of *Jane Eyre*. Photograph: Brassaï's Paris by night in the wet, from Paris de nuit, 1932. Calligraphy: Edward Thomas's "Rain", written out under cover. Science: petrichor, a word coined in 1964, and where the smell of rain comes from.

— Storm. Music: Rachmaninoff and the thunderstorm from Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony. Painting: Turner's *Snow Storm*, shown with the line "The Author was in this Storm on the Night the Ariel left Harwich". The account of his having himself lashed to the mast comes to us at second hand, through Ruskin, and it is given here as a legend. Poetry: "Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks" — Lear on the heath. Photograph: the storm portraits of Mitch Dobrowner. Calligraphy: the line from Lear, cut large. Science: Robert FitzRoy, captain of the Beagle, who from 1854 headed the department that became the Met Office. His storm warnings began in February 1861, and the first public forecast appeared in *The Times* that August.

— Fog. Music: Debussy's "Brouillards" and Pärt's *Für Alina*. Painting: Turner's fog-bound Thames and Whistler's Nocturnes. Poetry: the yellow fog from Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", which "rubs its back upon the window-panes". Prose: the first page of Dickens's *Bleak House*, the most famous fog in literature. Photograph: Alvin Langdon Coburn's London fog, from London, 1909. Calligraphy: Eliot's yellow fog, written in a hand that thins as it goes. Science: Luke Howard, the Londoner who gave the clouds their names, and his essay "On the Modifications of Clouds", read in December 1802 and printed in 1803.

— Heat. Music: Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* and Delius's *A Song of Summer*, dictated note by note to Eric Fenby after the composer went blind. Painting: Bruegel's *The Harvesters* of 1565, with its midday rest beneath a tree, and the Spanish light of Sorolla. Poetry: Housman's "Bredon Hill", which opens in summer with the clear ringing of bells. Prose: the hot summer of 1900 in Hartley's *The Go-Between*. Photograph: the English summer of Bill Brandt. Calligraphy: Housman's opening lines, written slowly in the shade. Science: why the air trembles above scorched ground.

— Frost and snow. Music: Pärt and Jóhann Jóhannsson. Painting: the winter landscapes of Caspar David Friedrich. Poetry: Frost's "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening". Prose: the snow falling all over Ireland at the close of Joyce's "The Dead". Photograph: Wilson Bentley's snow crystals, the first known photographs of a single crystal, made in January 1885. Calligraphy: the closing sentence of "The Dead",

written once and left. Science: Kepler's treatise of 1611 on the six-cornered snowflake.

Within each tone a day unfolds — dawn, day, dusk, night — and the hour colours the tone: Sibelius and Ólafur Arnalds in the departing light, Turner's *The Fighting Temeraire*, Hopkins on the sunsets after Krakatoa, described for Nature in January 1884, and the long road of light through the evening air that turns a sunset red.

7. THE SAPIENS LAB, LONDON

is conceived as the cultural and craft house of the Beacon and the garden, and as THE SAPIENS GARDEN in miniature — a small workshop of timber, drawing, calligraphy, floristry, painting, sound and music, the spoken word and theatre. Its purpose is simple: to teach crafts, to gather a community around them and to keep a living archive. The Lab will hold classes and masterclasses, lectures and concerts, open competitions with a local jury, all on clear terms of rights and authorship. Where it will stand, and how large it will be, remain open questions.

8. THE LIVING ARCHIVE

One shelf for everyone. A great name on the plaque beside a tree and yesterday's work by a person living in London will stand together, under the same theme of the month and in the same tone of the day. The historical figures give depth, local painters and performers give life, the weather gives rhythm.

How the shelf is arranged. The year is laid out in cells: four seasons crossed with seven weathers, with each season taking only the weather that belongs to it — heat falls to summer alone, frost and snow to winter, and fog keeps closer to the cool of the year.

Spring rain and November gloom are different cells and different music. Each cell holds forty-four places and divides again into four: dawn, day, dusk, night. Half of each cell is the canon, the works that carry that weather, and it stays in place and is reviewed once every few years. The other half is open to what is being made now.

How this would run through the day. The live sound of the clearing, one piece from the archive, then seven minutes of silence, and round again. A piece runs from three to five minutes, four on average, and comes up in roughly two rounds out of three. The clearing is the host here, and the music comes to it quietly.

How often a piece sounds. The rarer the weather, the fewer times a piece sounds and the fewer neighbours it has. An overcast piece is heard dozens of times a year. A storm piece waits for its sky a year and more, and therein lies its power.

The old and the new. Work already made would be accepted on the same terms as work written for the Beacon: a painter may offer a canvas ten years old, a composer a piece from the drawer.

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A word on the figures. The size of the cells is taken from the number of days in the year, and the call on the archive is counted by the hours a given weather holds without a break. The figures given are approximate, and the final ones will be recalculated from the Met Office's hourly data. The full grid, cell by cell, goes out separately, in a note for participants.

An open question. Beyond the Lab, we have yet to find the person who will keep the archive itself. This is the first post the project needs to fill, and the thing we should most like to discuss with those who read this.

9. THE GREENWICH TRIAL

What was here. On 26 April 1766 the Board of Longitude resolved to try John Harrison's timekeepers at Greenwich — H4 and his three earlier sea clocks. In 1822 the Admiralty began premium trials. Thirteen of them were held, the last in 1836. In 1840 George Biddell Airy, whose name stands on the ninth tree of the circle, began the annual Admiralty trials of chronometers, and the rates were published. From the season of 1888–89 a separate trial of pocket watches ran alongside them. The trials were held year after year until the First World War stopped them in 1914, and the published rates end with 1915.

The idea. A day of open trial: hand-made timekeepers run under seal for an appointed term, and their rates are taken and published once a year. Twelve chronometers would form its constant core, each one of a kind, each made by a

named maker in his own country and bearing one of the twelve names of the circle. They are never sold. They pass into the keeping of museums in their makers' countries, open to everyone, and return each year for the day. Alongside them anyone may bring a watch of their own, from a master's work to one found in a drawer, and take home a card with its rate.

Britain has no such day at present, and nowhere in the world is there a public record of the rates of hand-made mechanical timekeepers. What remains is certification, and certification is a private matter between a maker and a laboratory.

Britain once had more than that. The Kew certificate, awarded to a watch after a trial of forty-five days in five positions and at three temperatures, was for the better part of a century the standard by which a British watch was judged, and the trial passed from Kew to the National Physical Laboratory. The Class A certificate was closed in 1951, and the last of the craftsmanship trials ended in 1978. Nothing has stood in their place since.

The record. The rates would be published as a circle, like a dial, with no top line and no winner, so that a modest rate is printed on the same terms as the finest.

Whose day this is. Such a day could bear the name of Greenwich only together with those to whom the place and the subject belong, and it is to the Observatory that I would bring it first. Everything here remains a proposal, and its protocol, its classes and its date are yet to be written together.

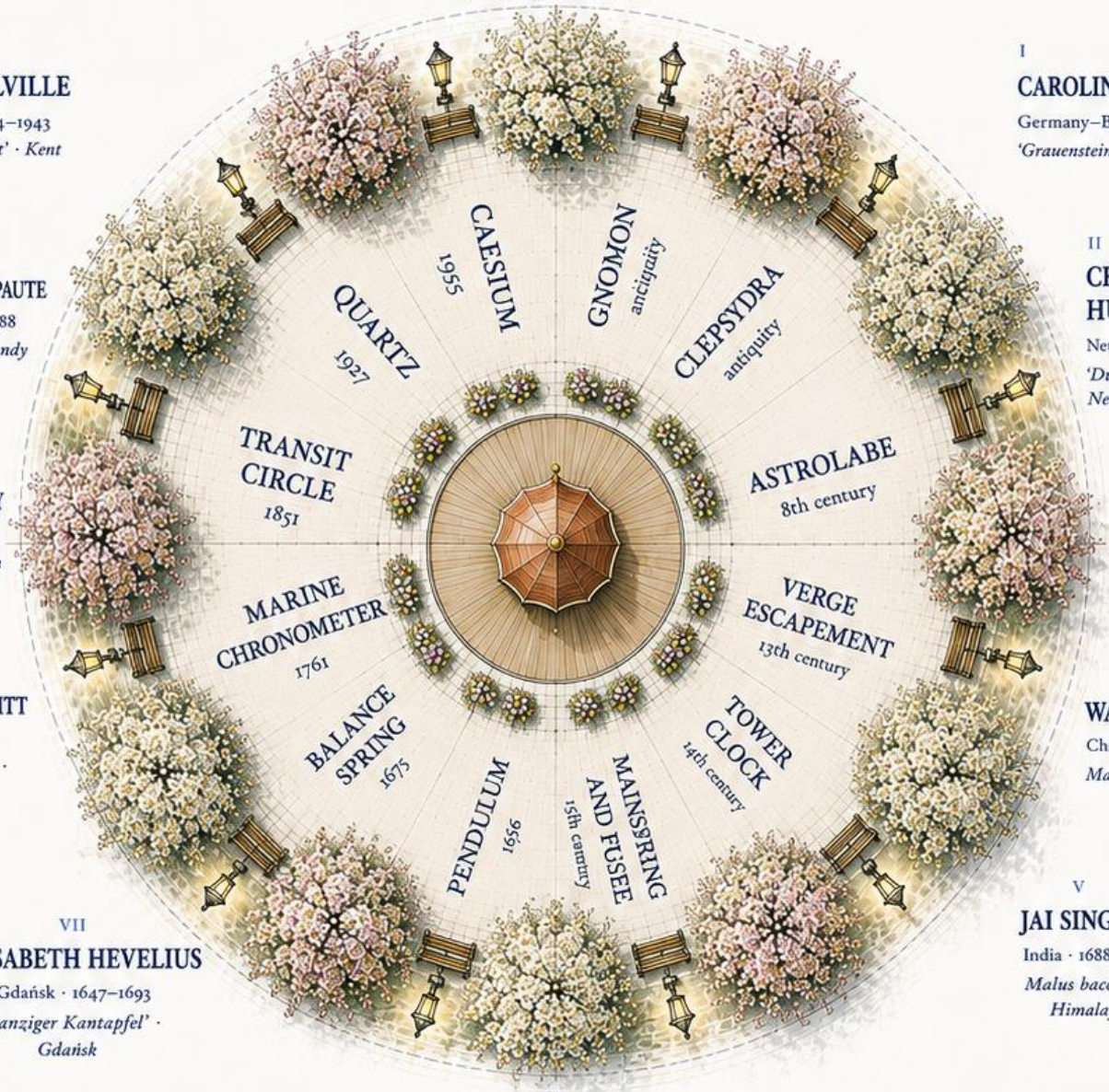
And if the Observatory should want this day for its own, it shall have it.

GREENWICH WEATHER BEACON

The Circle of Time

Plan of the clearing · seen from above
Twelve trees — the names · twelve lanterns between them — the instruments
Twelve benches facing the beacon · twenty-four points = twenty-four hours

N



XII
JOHN HARRISON
Britain · 1693–1776
'Ribston Pippin' · Yorkshire

I
CAROLINE HERSCHEL
Germany–Britain · 1750–1848
'Grauenstein' · Schleswig

II
CHRISTIAAN HUYGENS
Netherlands · 1629–1695
'Dutch Mignonne' · Netherlands

III
SU SONG
China · 1020–1101
Malus hupehensis · Fujian

IV
WANG ZHENYI
China · 1768–1797
Malus prunifolia · China

V
JAI SINGH II
India · 1688–1743
Malus baccata · Himalaya

VI
AL-JAZARI
Al-Jazira · 1136–1206
Malus orientalis · Caucasus

VII
ELISABETH HEVELIUS
Gdańsk · 1647–1693
'Danziger Kantapfel' · Gdańsk

VIII
HENRIETTA LEAVITT
USA · 1868–1921
'Roxbury Russet' · Massachusetts

IX
GEORGE BIDDELL AIRY
Britain · 1801–1892
Malus sylvestris · Britain

X
NICOLE-REINE LEPAUTE
France · 1723–1788
'Michelin' · Normandy

XI
RUTH BELVILLE
Britain · 1854–1943
'Flower of Kent' · Kent

10. THE TWELVE NAMES

Each tree carries a name, and holds the memory of the work done under it. One test applies to all twelve: each of them changed what we can measure in time, or what time itself proved able to measure. Six women and six men from nine lands, and around the circle the famous and the forgotten stand side by side.

— XII · John Harrison, Britain, 1693–1776 — the sea clocks and the timekeeper H4, which settled longitude at sea.

— I · Caroline Herschel, Hanover and Britain, 1750–1848 — eight comets found by eye, and the first woman in Britain paid for scientific work.

— II · Christiaan Huygens, the Netherlands, 1629–1695 — the pendulum clock of 1656 and the balance spring of 1675.

— III · Su Song, China, 1020–1101 — the astronomical clock tower at Kaifeng, with its water-driven escapement.

— IV · Wang Zhenyi, China, 1768–1797 — eclipses explained plainly, and observation carried to a new exactness.

— V · Jai Singh II, India, 1688–1743 — the great masonry instruments of the Jantar Mantar observatories.

— VI · al-Jazari, Al-Jazira, 1136–1206 — the water clocks and moving figures of the Book of Knowledge of Ingenious Mechanical Devices.

— VII · Elisabeth Hevelius, Gdańsk, 1647–1693 — the star catalogue completed and published as the Prodromus Astronomiae.

— VIII · Henrietta Swan Leavitt, USA, 1868–1921 — the period-luminosity law of the Cepheids, which gave astronomy a clock for the universe.

— IX · George Biddell Airy, Britain, 1801–1892 — the transit circle of 1851, whose line became the prime meridian of the world.

— X · Nicole-Reine Lepaute, France, 1723–1788 — the computed return of Halley's comet, and ephemerides for navigation.

— XI · Ruth Belville, Britain, 1854–1943 — Greenwich time carried round London by hand for half a century.

11. THE TWELVE LANTERNS

Between the trees will stand twelve lanterns, and on them twelve instruments to be read round the circle in the order of time: the gnomon, the clepsydra, the astrolabe, the verge escapement, the tower clock, the mainspring and fusee, the pendulum, the balance spring, the marine chronometer, the transit circle, quartz and the caesium standard. Twenty-four points — twenty-four hours. One turn of the circle is the whole history of the measurement of time, from shadow to atom.

12. THE TWELVE APPLE TREES

Every tree in the circle is intended to be an apple tree. One genus, twelve different trees: each with its own name and its own land, and all twelve flowering within the same few weeks of spring.

The wild crab apple is a native British tree, and the genus occurs in almost every land of the circle. Four of the twelve are wild species, and a fifth, *Malus prunifolia*, is taken to be of cultivated origin, no wild population of it having been established with any certainty. Seven are historic cultivars with a documented pedigree. All twelve can be grafted on to rootstock of the same vigorous type and grown as standards, with the wild species held to size by formative pruning, so that the ring stands at a height of about six metres.

— XII · Harrison, Yorkshire — 'Ribston Pippin', raised at Ribston Hall around 1707. The tree and the man were contemporaries, and Yorkshire was his birthplace. It was long held to be a parent of 'Cox's Orange Pippin', though DNA excludes it, and makes 'Margil' a parent of both.

— I · Herschel, Hanover and Britain — 'Gravenstein', recorded in Denmark from about 1669 and long associated with the Danish-German borderland at Gråsten in Schleswig. It reached English collections in the 1820s and has grown here ever since, which is her own double life exactly.

— II · Huygens, the Netherlands — 'Dutch Mignonne', brought to England about 1771 by Thomas Harvey of Catton near Norwich and given that name around 1820 by the nurseryman George Lindley, its original name unknown.

— III · Su Song, Fujian — *Malus hupehensis*, the wild Chinese apple. Su Song was born at Tong'an, in Quanzhou prefecture, and the species is native to his province of Fujian.

— IV · Wang Zhenyi, China — *Malus prunifolia*, the plum-leaved apple, for a woman remembered as a poet and as a calculator alike: the Chinese apple of the northern provinces, where the years of her girlhood passed.

— V · Jai Singh II, Rajasthan — *Malus baccata*, the Siberian crab apple, whose range reaches the Himalayas: the first in the whole circle to flower and the most generous in bloom.

— VI · al-Jazari, Al-Jazira — *Malus orientalis*, the Caucasian apple: the nearest wild apple to his country, since Al-Jazira, hot and dry between two rivers, has none of its own. The general nursery trade here does not list it, and the trees would be grafted from a collection.

— VII · Elisabeth Hevelius, Gdańsk — 'Danziger Kantapfel', known under this name by 1760, with some German sources tracing it back to 1703, and a great many recorded synonyms in German, Polish, Danish, Swedish, Dutch, Czech, Hungarian, Russian and French — a biography of the Hanseatic city in itself.

— VIII · Leavitt, Massachusetts — 'Roxbury Russet', raised at Roxbury, with scions known from 1649: held to be the oldest named cultivar of American origin, and grown about four miles from the Harvard Observatory where she worked.

— IX · Airy, Britain — *Malus sylvestris*, the native wild crab apple. The orchard apple came out of Central Asia, and this European tree later mixed its blood into that of the orchard apple on the way west.

— X · Lepaute, France — 'Michelin', raised from seed at Yvetot in Normandy and first fruiting in 1872. She was a Parisian, and this tree comes from her country. Genetic fingerprinting of English orchards by fruitID, checked against the French INRAE reference collection, has shown that much of what England has called 'Michelin' for a century and more is the older French cultivar 'Bisquet'. A circle about the measurement of time now holds a tree that carried the wrong name for so many years and was set right by a better instrument. That belongs on the plaque.

— XI · Belville, Kent — 'Flower of Kent', described by Parkinson in 1629. Greenwich lay within the county of Kent until 1889. 'Flower of Kent' is traditionally identified with the cultivar that grew at Woolsthorpe — Newton's apple tree.

The flowering will go round the circle. The twelve come into flower in turn over about four weeks, from the Siberian crab in the first half of April to the latest of the named cultivars in early May, so that the ring would light up piece by piece, with the greater part of it standing in flower together for a week and a little more in the middle. The positions in the circle are set by the hours, so the flowering opens at one

point and then at another in turn, leaping from one part of the ring to the next. The exact sequence would be confirmed by the nursery and by specialists in this country.

13. THE GREENWICH TRADITION OF TRYSTS

The Beacon could take its place in a tradition that runs from the Tudor court at Placentia through Greenwich Fair to our own day.

— The Tudor oak. Queen Elizabeth's Oak lies fallen in the park, an ancient trunk around which, by tradition, Henry VIII danced with Anne Boleyn and in whose shade Elizabeth I rested. A named tree of love and remembrance is already part of this place.

— Le Nôtre's avenues. The avenues were laid out in the 1660s to a plan drawn up for Charles II and attributed to André Le Nôtre, who is not known ever to have crossed the Channel to see this ground. Sir William Boreman had charge of the planting. In the eighteenth century the park was opened to the pensioners of Greenwich Hospital, and in the years that followed to the general public, and the great avenue became a place where people walked arm in arm, as they walk today.

— Dickens's fair. For a century and a half, from the early 1700s until it was banned in 1857, Greenwich Fair was the place where London went to flirt, and Dickens described it in *Sketches by Boz*. There they played 'kiss in the ring' — a kiss given inside a circle of hands.

— Lovers' Walk. A path in the park still officially bears the name Lovers' Walk: the tryst here has become a place name on the map.

— Astride the line. Couples photograph each other astride the steel line in the Observatory courtyard, with a foot in each hemisphere.

— The Victorian outing. The steamer and the railway made Greenwich an easy day's outing: a walk in the park, and in the evening a dinner of whitebait, the small Thames fish, at the Trafalgar Tavern hard by the water's edge. The tavern opened in 1837, ministers came down from Westminster by barge for the famous ministerial dinners, and Dickens set a wedding breakfast in its rooms in *Our Mutual Friend*.

London has a long tradition of memorial benches, each with a small plaque. At the Beacon the thought is to carry that tradition on: twelve wooden benches would stand beneath the twelve lanterns, facing the Beacon, so that tree, lantern and bench read together around the dial. The plaque could be a carved nameplate on the back of the bench. Benches of this kind come under the park's own memorial programme, and nothing is proposed until the land is agreed. "Meet me at the Herschel tree", "I'm on

the Harrison bench" — phrases that could in time pass into the everyday speech of Londoners.

14. POSTSCRIPT



My name is Alex Skarshelg.
I am a carpenter.

For fifteen years I have worked wood by hand, in the old Norwegian tradition, taught the carpenter's craft and planted a pine forest of my own that will go on growing after us.

The idea set out above grew out of that practice. I have written it with care, as one who works with his hands writes to another. Such a connection seems to me the rarest and the most precious of all.

The Beacon and the Garden live for now in drawings, in ideas, in letters and in conversations with makers, composers, musicians, artists, photographers and institutions.

What the project wants is allies — people who will take part and feel a share in it. If my idea has moved you, I should be glad to carry this conversation on quietly, at whatever pace suits you.

With warmth and respect,

Alex Skarshelg

A working note on an idea at the stage before design. Design work is planned from January 2027. The location in Greenwich Park remains a working hypothesis, and the list of names, the tree species and the artistic choices are a first curatorial direction only, and are subject to permissions, rights clearance and ethical review.

Sources. Greenwich Park and its layout: Historic England, Register of Historic Parks and Gardens, entry 1000174. The name of Greenwich: the Domesday Book of 1086 and standard English place-name reference works.

The Greenwich trials: Royal Observatory Greenwich, "Rates of chronometers and watches on trial, 1766–1915". The Kew certificate and its end: National Physical Laboratory records, the forty-five-day trial in five positions and at three temperatures, Class A closed in 1951, the last craftsmanship trial in 1978. Airy's trial number: the published rules of the Admiralty trial. The prime meridian: the proceedings of the International Meridian Conference, Washington, October 1884, the distribution of votes as generally recorded.

Apple trees: the National Fruit Collection and the RHS pollination groups by flowering time, fruitID and the French INRAE reference collection for the identification of 'Michelin' and 'Bisquet'. Beacon Hill and the Cromer Ridge: the standard geological description of the North Norfolk terminal moraine.