The most significant development since the last issue of Review is that the Labour Party won the Wandsworth Council elections on 5 May. This means, amongst other things, that Councillor Simon Hogg has replaced Councillor Ravi Govindia as Leader of the Council and that Councillor Judi Gasser has replaced Councillor Steffi Sutters as the Council Cabinet member responsible for Wandsworth’s Parks and Open Spaces.

As Friends of Battersea Park, we look forward to working with Simon and Judi to help the Park to flourish. We would also like to thank Ravi and Steffi who were exceptionally hardworking. We know how much Steffi loves the Park and it is great to know that Judi does too. She has told me that she took her daughters to the Park many times as they were growing up and still visits when she can.

The Labour Party manifesto includes: ‘Our borough is blessed with brilliant green spaces. We will cherish them and create more pocket parks and community gardens. Parks are for people, not corporate events. The Tories turned Battersea Park into a race car track for Formula E. Labour will instead welcome a free Battersea ‘Park Run’ which everyone can enjoy. We will plant more trees and flowers, protect biodiversity and promote a plastic free Wandsworth’.

The next issue of Review will include an interview with Judi. If there are any particular Park-related questions that you would like us to ask, please let me know at media@friendsofbatterseapark.org

Recent weeks have seen much activity in the Park. Most poignant was the memorial gathering on the 50th anniversary of the Big Dipper crash when each of the five children who died were remembered and Mayor Jeremy Ambache planted a tree. Most fun were our party in the Old English Garden on 25 May to celebrate Her Majesty The Queen’s Platinum Jubilee and our annual barbecue in the Children’s Zoo on 21 June which was the best ever. Congratulations to Sara Milne, Pea May Law and their teams who organised these events. Natalia (see page 19) has now sung beautifully at our BBQ for 13 years.

It is always a pleasure to read people’s memories of the Park. Those of Tony Scherr written from the Outer Hebrides are on page 11.

We need more trustees! Please contact chairman@friendsofbatterseapark.org if you can help.

Cover Image: Friends’ Annual Barbecue 2022
Big Dipper Tragedy Memorials

On 30 May, 50 years after the Big Dipper in Battersea Park crashed killing five children and injuring a further 13, family and friends of those involved gathered to remember them. In moving tributes, someone spoke for each of the five children describing their vibrant personalities and making all too clear what had been lost. It was also abundantly clear too how greatly family and friends had been affected.

Mayor Jeremy Ambache planted a cherry tree with a memorial plaque, east of the Fountains Pool. The children who died were: Alison Cooper 15, David Sait 15, Thomas Harmer 12, Deborah Robertson 12 and Shirley Nash 8. A further permanent memorial is planned.

The Queen’s Platinum Jubilee Celebrations

On 11 March, Mayor Richard Field planted a sweet gum to commemorate the Queen’s Jubilee. This tree will be part of The Queen’s Green Canopy. It is north of the topiary yews in the Russell Page Garden and is doing well. (Hooray that, funded by the Friends, Russell Page Garden and is doing well. It is north of the topiary yews in the Garden and is doing well. (Hooray that, funded by the Friends, Russell Page Garden and is doing well.

On a glorious evening, made more glorious by heavy rain at 4pm, The Old English Garden was looking its best for our drinks party on 25 May. It was such a pleasure to meet up in this way that many Friends have suggested it become an annual event. It’s being considered!

On 3 June, Mayor Jeremy Ambache lit a beacon in the Park

Dog Show

This year’s Dog Show organised by the Council’s Parks Police took place on 3 July. It was part of a series of family and other events organised by Enable over five weekends in June and July as part of its ‘Summer in the Park’ programme. Friend Heather Knight took on the onerous task of judging the Friends’ class for the dog with the best trick.

The worthy winner, owned by Jennifer Chadney, was Dash, a 3 year old rescue dog from the Battersea Dogs and Cats Home, who is now a volunteer dog for the Home and a therapy dog at the Royal Chelsea Hospital.

Wandsworth Green Spaces Forum

Your Chairman attended the Forum which met on 15 June. Councillor Judi Gasser, attended in her new capacity as Cabinet Lead for the Environment, which includes parks and open spaces. Enable confirmed that it was now compulsory for personal trainers to have a licence to operate commercially in the Park. Parks’ Police will be reminding them of the requirement in coming weeks; thereafter, there will be enforcement action, including fines. The aim is to minimise damage to trees and structures.

Friends Groups again asked to see the service expectations and monitoring procedures for the new Tree and Ground Maintenance contracts. Council officer Ishbel Murray said that this would be followed up and apologised for the delay.

Barbara Hepworth Single Form

Head to Amsterdam if you would like to see Single Form while it is on loan to the Rijksmuseum. Meanwhile, from June until October, a rolling programme of five works by MA Sculpture students from the Royal College of Art (RCA) is occupying its site on the south side of the Lake. Alongside the series of temporary sculptures, the five groups have organised a programme of public events. Full details of the events can be found at www.rca.ac.uk/news-and-events/events.

The sculpture planned for July is The Visible Invisible by Blythe Pledgerleith, Carlota Bulgarí, Junchao Ren, Ioana Maria Sisea, Sarra Badel & Ziwei Wang. This plays with the viewer’s perception of absence and presence using the technique of lenticular printing. It deals with ideas of memory, time and nostalgia, as images appear from one angle but become invisible from another.

Mowing

Valerie Selby writes: ‘After the successes of last year’s campaign, Enable again joined the nationwide ‘No Mow May’ and ‘Let it Bloom in June’ campaigns run by the charity Plantlife. We stopped mowing grasslands under tree drip lines along South and West Carriage Drives, in a strip immediately south of the Meadow Local Nature Reserve and in the area between Albert Gate and the pedestrian gate by Albert Bridge. The aim is to survey these areas to see what blooms from the seed bank and whether it provides a good source of nectar at a time of peak demand. The pollinators we are keen to support include butterflies, moths, hoverflies, wild bees (at least 28 species recorded for the Park), wasps (34 species recorded) and some soldierflies and their allies including bee-flies. Depending on the survey results, we may leave these areas unmown until late summer so that plants can set seed or we may mow them at the end of May or June to reduce nutrient levels if they support only early flowering species. Do let us know at biodiversity@enablelc.org if you have any suggestions for further areas to include in future years’.

Millennium Arena

The gym has been upgraded and now offers a wide range of health and fitness equipment including an assault bike, ski-erg, functional rig, bands, TRX, boxing bag, slam balls, kettlebells, core bags, battle rope, new dumbbell set, dual-use resistance machines and a Smith machine plus a new functional area.

Trained fitness staff are offering induction appointments to existing and new members to ensure that they get the most out of the new equipment and to help support them as they return to the gym following the pandemic. Personal training is also available. To find out more about what’s on offer, gym membership prices and other ways to enjoy the equipment, visit www.enablelc.org/leisure/about-us.
Owls

Michael Mac writes: “The tawny owls bred very early and produced four chicks which all fledged and had left the nest by late February as witnessed by myself and another birdwatcher. We saw four owllets moving from tree to tree and the adults nearby. On a later occasion we saw an adult give a frog to an owllet who swallowed it whole.

I received a message on 1 April that an owllet had been found dead and went to investigate. I found the dead owllet and concluded that it was the oldest of the four. It seemed to have broken a foot which would mean it would be unable to perch and to get food from its parents, as owllets have to compete with each other as part of their ‘owl survival education’ – so the cruel truth is that it starved to death.

However, four owllets is an unusually large brood and in nature’s terms, to lose one isn’t such a bad thing as their ‘owl survival education’ – so the others will then have fewer mouths to feed.”

Swans

It has been a good year for our swans. All eight eggs hatched and at the time of writing, all the cygnets are alive and well.

*Photos Anne Cheng*

Filming

In April and May, Academy Award winning director Steven Soderburgh came to the Park to film more of Warner Brothers’ ‘Magic Mike’ movie franchise. Lead actors Channing Tatum and Salma Hayek were seen being filmed along the Riverside Walk, to the delight of many Park users.

Also in May, Peleton filmed scenery around the Park. This will feature in a new Peleton virtual cycling world alongside scenery from the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, Wick Woodland and Hackney Marshes.

“The Friends understand the need for filming in the Park but are concerned that it and the car parks should not be overused.”

Japan and cherry blossom

Every year from the end of March until early April, television and newspapers across Japan report on their weather forecasts on the state of the cherry blossom across the country. This begins when the buds first open, then when they are in three-quarter blossom and finally when they are in full blossom. The cherry trees are in full blossom for only a few days, but because of the different weather patterns across the country, it is possible to follow this short blossom period as it moves from south to north.

It is magnificent to see millions of pink flowers in full bloom against the blue sky and equally so at night when the moon is shining. For the whole year, the people of Japan look forward to this fleeting event. During this time, many of the temples remain open all night and in Kyoto, which used to be the capital city of Japan, you will still find musicians in ancient costumes playing court music.

The coming of the cherry blossom marks the time of the Hanami (‘hana’ means flower and ‘mi’ means seeing) period to live and should enjoy it to the full. That is why Japanese people cherish the cherry blossom and see it as a reflection of their own lives and as a promise of rebirth in the future.

There was a period in the late 1800s when changes in the structure of Japanese society led to the loss of many of the older varieties of cherry trees due to the time and attention they needed to reach maturity. This was noticed with alarm by an English horticulturist who was fascinated by the beauty of cherry blossom, and frequently visited Japan. He re-established many varieties in Japanese culture. The Englishman was Collingwood Ingram who became known as ‘Cherry’ Ingram and the Sakura Cherry Tree Project was set up to celebrate a new era of Japan-UK friendship by making a gift of over 7,000 trees from Japan to schools and parks across the UK. This project began by planting 125 trees in the Royal Parks in London in November 2019 and will continue until the end of 2022.

“Cherries were noticed by an English horticulturist who was fascinated by the beauty of cherry blossom, and frequently visited Japan. He re-established many varieties in Japanese culture. The Englishman was Collingwood Ingram who became known as ‘Cherry’ Ingram and the Sakura Cherry Tree Project was set up to celebrate a new era of Japan-UK friendship by making a gift of over 7,000 trees from Japan to schools and parks across the UK. This project began by planting 125 trees in the Royal Parks in London in November 2019 and will continue until the end of 2022.”

*Photo: Cherry Tree Walk in March*
Elm trees in Battersea Park

Clive Freedman and Brian Livingstone

The elm used to be one of the commonest trees in the English landscape, but millions have been lost since the 1950s to Dutch Elm Disease (DED). This disease is caused by a fungus which is spread by two species of elm bark beetle (Scolytus). Trees which have been attacked and then cut down can still be found, as the roots are not killed and the tree can re-grow from suckers. The beetles ignore elm saplings and small elm trees, but often these regenerated trees suffer another attack of the disease when they reach a height of around 5 metres. Extensive research has taken place into identifying the elm species which are resistant to DED and into the development of disease resistant hybrids.

The time to pick out elms from the rest of the trees in the Park is March and April when there are still no leaves. Elms flower and produce seed at this time. Large flower buds open into clusters of 20 or more miniature flowers. In the native species, these are red-tinted (yellow-green in the Siberian or White Elm). The flowers are wind-pollinated and the winged seeds (“samaras”) are also dispersed by the wind. It is an advantage if this can occur before leafy branches get in the way of dispersal.

Each individual flower produces pollen and seeds. The petals and sepals are just to protect these as they develop. They don’t produce nectar or attract insects, so they are papery, almost transparent. The male stamens and anthers protrude above papery, almost transparent. The male stamens and anthers protrude above. The female flowers have a papery disc in the centre which is the seed in its case (Fig. 2) which soon matures into a papery disc. In the centre is the seed itself, only 2-3mm long, while the rest forms the two wings joined down the middle. Spring winds can disperse these before the emerging leaves get in the way, but a very large number just fall below the parent tree (Fig. 3). Only the “English” elm variety of Small-leaved Elm (Ulmus minor), also known as procera falls in all this. It is a clone in which the pollen is mostly sterile and it very rarely produces seeds. It makes up for that by growing relatively rapidly, which is why it was planted from cuttings in so many hedgerows.

Despite the damage done by DED, there are still a number of mature elms to be found in Battersea Park. However, identifying the species of individual trees is difficult, as the leaves visible at low level may not be a reliable indicator of the species.

The best known is probably the Weeping Wych Elm (Ulmus glabra var. pendula) on the river bank between the car park and Chelsea Gate (Figs 4&5). This has a fine show of seeds after it has flowered in the spring. There are smaller elms in the belt of trees on the river bank towards Chelsea Gate, possibly regenerated English Elms. There are two tall elms on the east and west sides of the depot between Albert Bridge Road and the car park south of Albert Gate, and a group of smaller elms to the south of the depot next to the big cherry laurel. There is a fine mature elm at the west end of the Winter Garden. This is probably a Huntingdon Elm (Ulmus x hollandica ‘Vegeta’) (Fig. 6), judging by its asymmetric leaf bottoms and longer leaf stalks. Huntingdon Elms do have some resistance to DED and this tree may not have been attacked. A smaller Huntingdon Elm can be seen a few metres east of the weeping Sophora, north-west of the athletics track at the south-east corner of the meadow area.

The elm beside Alexandra Gate (Fig. 7) (probably an English Elm or a Huntingdon Elm) is interesting as it has 12 stems – a typical sign of an elm which has regenerated after DED. The elm just north of Albert Gate is a similar tree, with 2 stems, and may also be a tree which has regenerated. There are smaller elms in the belt of trees to the west, south and east of the meadow area in the north-east corner of the Park, one of those on the east side being a tree with 8 stems.

Three of the elms in Battersea Park appear to be DED-resistant hybrids planted in the last 50 years.

• At the east end of South Carriage Drive car park south of Albert Gate (Figs 4&5). There is a very large Caucasian Elm (Zelkova carpinifolia). There is a Japanese Elm (Zelkova serrata) on the west side of the path running south from the bowling green and another on the grass north of Putt in the Park. In October the leaves are an interesting mixture of green and brown.

To discuss elm trees, or other trees and shrubs in Battersea Park, contact batterseaparktreewatchers@btinternet.com

You can see more illustrations and a map showing approximate locations of the elms in Battersea Park at http://www.fircone.org.uk/trees/locations/batterseaparkelmlocations.htm

Fig. 2. Fertilised flowers in the cluster developing into the winged seeds. Here, topped with the fuzzy red stigmas.

Fig. 3. The clusters of winged seeds.

Fig. 4. The weeping Wych Elm on the embankment.

Fig. 5. Wych Elm leaves. They are large and have toothed margins with secondary smaller teeth on the larger ones.

Fig. 6. Huntingdon Elm from the Winter Garden. Note the very asymmetric base of the leaf blade where it joins the stem.

Fig. 7. The multi-stemmed, possibly Huntingdon Elm by the Alexandra Gate in April with large clusters of papery winged seeds.
The year ending March 2022 saw a gradual return of something approaching normality for the Friends as Covid-19 related restrictions were incrementally lifted although not in time for our annual BBQ. Your committee held nine meetings as well as the Annual General Meeting on 6 July which was conducted by Zoom. Most committee meetings were also attended by Neil Blackley, Head of Parks at Enable Leisure and Culture, who run Battersea Park on behalf of Wandsworth Council. At the AGM we were also joined by Acting Inspector Laurie Black of the Council’s Parks and Events Police Service. Membership at the end of March 2022 stood at 624 (including family and corporate members).

In terms of governance, a number of new Trustees were elected at the AGM. These were: Fenella Barber (previously co-opted), Karen Buckle and Brianna Betts. In addition, since the AGM, Sara Milne has been co-opted to the committee and will be put forward for election in September. Karen Horan left the committee with our sincere thanks having been the highly proficient and gracious producer of Review since 2015. Virginia Darbishire stepped down as our independent financial examiner. John Marsh was elected to that role.

The negative effects of the Covid restrictions prompted the Friends to make a variety of financial contributions in line with our charitable objectives. The two most significant in terms of funds committed were a continuation of volunteer days run by Thrive to assist with the restoration of the Winter Garden which had become severely damaged. Following visits by Dan Pearson, the original designer of the Winter Garden, the Friends also committed to funding new plants to assist in its restoration. Secondly, the Friends funded five local state primary schools to develop programmes to take pupils on Park visits of an educational nature. This programme was run on our behalf by the Sir Walter St John Educational Charity. The results of the programme were very encouraging and we were published in Review. The Friends are now working on a secondary school project with St John Bosco College.

The Friends were pleased to be able to resume our popular lunchtime lecture series during the year with well-attended lectures on small mammals and fungi in November and March respectively. The Friends continued to monitor planning applications in the Park and the surrounding areas and made objections in two proposals to increase the height of buildings in the vicinity because of the impact on views from the Park: our objections were unsuccessful.

The Review team produced and distributed three issues of this magazine which remains very popular with Friends. Our thanks go to Frances Radcliffe, the editor, and all the team of people who distribute it by hand thus saving substantial postal costs.

The Trustees would like to express their thanks to all who work in the Park and to Friends for their support during the year, particularly those volunteering in the restoration and maintenance of the Winter Garden.

I saw with interest your notice in the Daily Telegraph of 9 November 2021 that ‘The Friends of Battersea Park were holding a lecture. I am an 86 year old retired Sporting Estate Manager living on the Isle of Harris in the Outer Hebrides and have so many memories of Battersea and Battersea Park which evoke many different emotions.

I lived with my grandparents in Cupar Road during the war. After school, I would wander into the Park and watch the fishermen catching roach in the lake. They were generally older gentlemen who had been veterans of the First World War and who were often very interested in their fishing than I was in their discussions about the war. Eventually it was suggested by them that I obtain a long cane and that they would make it into a fishing rod for me. This I duly did and I was then able to become a fellow fisherman and a fellow member of the Battersea Parliament – albeit, a very junior one! If I remember rightly, there were quite a number of sea anglers dotted round the Park and nearby were anti-aircraft guns and tethered barrage balloons. I did seem to remember that there were wallabies roaming around the Park. As the Power Station was a prime target for incoming bombers, Battersea had more than its fair share of air-raids. We, in Cupar Road, had a large communal brick-built air-raid shelter to dash into when the air-raid sirens sounded, but if there was a sudden air-raid attack, we rushed into a small cupboard under the stairs which we were told would give us limited protection from falling debris.

At that time, we had a small mongrel dog called Rippy who had a remarkable sense of hearing. We would be sitting beside the fire in the evening listening to local lad fishing who was not much older than myself. I watched in awe as he cast his fly with perfect accuracy. To me, it was poetry in motion. I asked him whether he would teach me the art of fly-fishing and this he agreed to do. He also threw in some lessons about how to catch rabbits! These chance meetings, firstly, with the local community of Battersea Park and secondly, with the young lad by the river, were to define the majority of my working life.

After some years in the Fleet Air Arm, I spent time in Wales fly-fishing the River Dee and representing Wales in the National Fly-Fishing Competitions. Eventually, I became an Estate Manager on the Isle of Harris. Seventy-seven years later, Battersea with its Park and Lake, seem a long way off and a lifetime away. However, I think I would be able to remember sitting by the lake in the 1940s and enjoying my boyhood fishing pleasures rather than the dark side of London at that time.

To mis-quote an old Asyrian proverb: ‘The Gods do not subtract from the allotted span of men’s lives, the hours they have spent by the water’.

You love the Park, but are not yet a member? With rates from as little as £10 a year you can join online: friendsatbatterseapark.org or phone 07495542399 for details
Battersea Park Review

The Hidden Kingdom on your Doorstep: Fungi in Parks and Gardens

Lecture by Geoffrey Kibby

A beautiful spring day for the Luncheon Lecture at St. Saviour’s Church in Battersea Park Road on 21 March. Geoffrey Kibby’s illustrated talk, rich in detail, highlighted species of fungi most likely to be found in Battersea Park and in Southern England. Open land, trees and water are the three essential requirements for the 4,000 known British species larger than 1 cm at the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew. Previously, he specialized in beetles at the Natural History Museum and for 20 years taught ballroom-dancing, so an expert in various fields? The Senior Editor of the journal Field Mycology, published by the British Mycological Society, Geoffrey is the author of 20 books and is working on Volume 4 of his field guide to British fungi. Earlier volumes contain his exquisite watercolour illustrations (Summerfield Books).

We learnt there is no difference between mushrooms and toadstools, terms peculiar to Britain, and never to describe 24 fungi beginning with ‘Agaric’. Mushrooms are scaly on top, 12”-15” across, zig-zag pattern on stems, open grassland, edible. The Death Cap is the most poisonous in Britain. Distinguished from the Horse Mushroom by the band at the base of the stem, it is deadly. Fly Agaric, also poisonous, expands its red cap to expose white spots, 6”-7” across. Nothing else is like it. Peeled skin, soaked in sweetened milk, red cap to expose white spots, 6”-7” across. Nothing else is like it. Peeled skin, soaked in sweetened milk, might kill male, not female, flies. It is slightly hallucinogenic and was used by Viking Berserkers and Siberian Shamans, the latter drinking the urine of women who’d eaten it. Field Mushroom, 3”-4” across, gills a bright rose pink, open fields, delicious. Yellow Stainer ubiquitous in parks and gardens but makes you sick. The base is yellow when scratched and smells like old school ink. Honey Fungus kills potatoes, rhubarb, trees, shrubs and more. Its ‘bootlace’ threads found under the bark of dead trees, travel underground up to 100 yards from tree to tree preferring untended soil and drying trees. Edible, it is pickled in Eastern Europe. The same fungus nicknamed the ‘Humongous Fungus’, spreading over 2,200 acres in the Blue Mountains, USA is estimated to weigh 7,500 tons and to be the largest living organism in the world. Colourful Waxcaps found from October to December include Flower of the Meadow, scarlet; Parrot Waxcap, slimy green, found in unfertilized grassland; Pink Waxcap or Balerina 3”-6” tall. Britain has the most Salter Ly in Europe, populating old churchyards as does Crimson Waxcap, the size of a teacup. Field Bird’s Nest resembles a tiny bird’s nest complete with eggs, in woods and on wood chips. Some fungi such as Redland Roundhead and Cucumber Cap (previously rare, reddish-brown, smells of sardines and cucumber) are imported on woodchip. The effect on indigenous fungi as these interlopers continue to flourish on woodchip mulch is unknown.

Nuts: when gathering, cutting rather than pulling helps to protect fungal networks.

With many thanks to Morley College for sponsoring the lecture leaflets.

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Karen Buckle (Events)
Russ Coffey (Web)
Inge Darling (Children)
Chris Davies (Dogs)
Claire Black (Thrive)
Adrian Flook (Thrive)
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Battersea Park Review

The Hidden Kingdom on your Doorstep: Fungi in Parks and Gardens

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We learnt there is no difference between mushrooms and toadstools, terms peculiar to Britain, and never to eat anything unless you are absolutely sure what it is. Spores from all species are 1/6,000 mm long. Geoffrey described 24 fungi beginning with two colourful species Scarlet Elfcap found on mossy branches and Green Elfcap which stains its host, oak, green and is used in Turbridge Ware. There followed aliens from Eastern Europe. The same fungus spreading over 2,200 acres in the Blue Mountains, USA is estimated to weigh 7,500 tons and to be the largest living organism in the world. Colourful Waxcaps found from October to December include Flower of the Meadow, scarlet; Parrot Waxcap, slimy green, found in unfertilized grassland; Pink Waxcap or Balerina 3”-6” tall. Britain has the most Salter Ly in Europe, populating old churchyards as does Crimson Waxcap, the size of a teacup. Field Bird’s Nest resembles a tiny bird’s nest complete with eggs, in woods and on wood chips. Some fungi such as Redland Roundhead and Cucumber Cap (previously rare, reddish-brown, smells of sardines and cucumber) are imported on woodchip. The effect on indigenous fungi as these interlopers continue to flourish on woodchip mulch is unknown.

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Battersea Park Review
We monitor water quality and fish health regularly. Ben Goldsmith, an aquatic ecology specialist with a long-standing knowledge of our lake, comes here twice a year. Surveying from a boat, he collects samples to understand water chemistry and clarity, to map the distribution of algae, zooplankton (mainly microscopic water organisms), aquatic macro invertebrates (such as dragonfly larvae) and submerged aquatic vegetation. The resulting overview of species-richness gives us a way to assess habitat quality and acts as a monitoring mechanism to check that our management and maintenance actions are having the intended effects.

Once every three years, we work with the Fisheries Management Department at Hadlow College to survey all the fish in the lake. This involves partitioning the lake with large nets and then passing a small electric current through the water, parcel by parcel, to stun the fish for a short time. The fish can then easily be scooped into a net, placed into a floating tank and visibly assessed. They are weighed, measured and checked for parasites and diseases before being released back into the lake. It also allows us to assess the biomass of the fish population to ensure that the lake is not overstocked. It also allows us to assess the biomass of the fish population to ensure that the lake is not overstocked. This work is carried out under an Environment Agency licence. We operate a close season when fishing is prohibited in order to reduce pressure on fish and other wildlife during the breeding season. For the rest of the year (16 June to 15 March inclusive) annual permits to fish can be obtained by emailing parks@enablelc.org

While we know a fair amount about the birds we see regularly on the lake, we would like to improve our monitoring of waterfowl. One way to do this would be to support one or two volunteers to undertake regular wetland bird survey counts following the methodology laid out by British Trust for Ornithology, then sharing the results with us. Better regular recording of water birds would help us understand whether our actions to maintain lakeside and emergent vegetation are working to provide good nesting sites and adequate cover. Starting this summer, my colleague Sarah Mollison-Read is leading a Biodiversity Activity Programme to promote and support wildlife recording across the Borough. If you are keen to find out more do contact her via biodiversity@enablelc.org

One of the most problematic issues that affects the lake is that of dogs entering the water. Legally, by Public Spaces Protection Order, we require dogs to be excluded from all our lakes and to be on the lead around lakeside paths. Dogs in the water cause a wide range of concerns from direct disturbance of water birds (unfortunately we have had a number of cases of dogs directly attacking wildlife) through to the introduction of insecticides into the water from flea and mite prevention treatments. Dogs can also cause direct physical damage by trampling lakeside vegetation and disturbing silts and sediments from the lake bottom. This harms aquatic invertebrates and also reduces the ability of submerged plants to photosynthesise effectively, in turn reducing the amount of oxygen that they can put into the water.

Another activity that has perhaps unimagined consequences for lake health is feeding the birds, something we have probably all done at one time or another. This can artificially raise the number of birds that the lake can support which leads to increased battles for nesting territory and higher incidence of disease. Food that isn’t eaten by the birds adds to the nutrients in the water increasing the proliferation of blanket weed and blue-green algae. Often, our food choices such as bread are extremely bad for the birds causing them to become physically weaker. If birds are enticed from the water onto land, they are also very vulnerable to harm from dogs and foxes.

In the next issue I will explain more about how you can help us to help enhance biodiversity in the lake and elsewhere in the Park.

And a very happy belated Father’s Day to you all! Father of five, Gordon Ramsay, has recently refurbished his London House Restaurant in Battersea, and his Street Pizza in Battersea, and we’re keen to find out more do contact him via biodiversity@enablelc.org

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enable's biodiversity team recently started working with butterfly conservation on their exciting big city butterflies project. this aims to help londoners discover and engage with butterflies and moths, promoting connection with nature and greenspaces. the project involves educational workshops and events, the recording and monitoring of butterflies, and working with councils and landowners to make habitat improvements throughout their green spaces and parks.

in early may, representatives from enable and the friends met steve, butterfly conservation’s conservation officer, to learn more about recording and monitoring butterflies in battersea park. using the irecord butterflies app, he explained how to record butterflies on casual walks around the park. the app helps with identification and will keep track of the number and type of butterflies you’ve seen, while also displaying those that are flying in your current area. during the walk around the park, we recorded a common blue (pictured), green-veined white, a small white and a comma butterfly. while this type of recording is

informal, enable and butterfly conservation encourage anyone who is interested in regularly monitoring butterflies in the park to get in touch about participating in a proposed weekly butterfly transect. butterfly transects follow fixed routes which will need to be walked weekly from april to september between 11am and 3pm. if you are interested or have further questions, please email me at biodiversity@enablelc.org

battersea park review
The Friends’ Sizzling Barbecue!

Fenella Barber

‘It was lovely to see you all again’ said the lemurs as we left. The sun shone, the BBQ sizzled, helpers helped, people gathered, the bar opened, the music began and the animals were visited. Didn’t we have a lovely time?

The annual Friends’ barbecue at the Children’s Zoo was one of the best ever I heard people say, and the food a triumph! Congratulations to all who helped make it happen; the evening was roundly enjoyed. Gathering after a hiatus of two years seemed to make it an even more enjoyable evening, and the weather played its part too.

Manning the front gate with Juliet and Annabel, I had a grand time sitting in the evening sun greeting all as they arrived. The joy of a free toy always a hit, along with the beckoning zoo and BBQ treats inside. So it wasn’t until the evening was in full swing that I joined the open air party and what a gorgeous sight it was to behold, with a murmuring of happy guests.

Happily fed, guests were sitting around, catching up with each other, taking in the music and the atmosphere. The bar was in full flow which meant bids were trumping other bids at the silent auction, prizes were flying off the tombola, while the sweets were under constant deft raids by the children. Not a sweater went up and the weather gods smiled kindly on us all on nor an umbrella went up and the evening was in full swing that I joined the open air party and what a gorgeous sight it was to behold, with a murmuring of happy guests.

We are very grateful to our supporters below who made our 15th annual barbecue on 21 June such a success.


For the Barbecue: Kim Laley of Smart Hospitality for organising the barbecue food, bar supplies and a team of cheerful and helpful office staff led by Smart’s boss Greg Lawson. The food was better than ever this year!

For Music: Victor Garcia and Natalia Polaz of Los Soneros, sponsored by Hodders Law, and Thomas’s Battersea Jazz Band.

For Puddings: Stephanie Braun, Claire Jolie, The Masons Arms, and Henrietta Wright.

For Generous Donations:

Arts, Tours & Culture: FoBP Autumn Lecture & an Annual Subscription, Battersea Dogs & Cats Home, Theatre503.

Children: Fencing School, My Gym Battersea, Teddy Tennis, Urban Studio Sessions.

Drink, Food and Restaurants: Bayley & Sage, the Clack Family, Holy Cow Indian Food, L’Antipasto, The Mason’s Arms, Oddono’s Italian Ice Cream, Pear Tree Café, Prince Albert, Sambrook’s Brewery, San Gennaro, Savills Battersea, Suzette Battersea.


Health: Barking Fit, Battersea Back Clinic, Body Logic Health, Embody Wellness, Thai Charms & Spa.


Mayar Elasari from Enable, Inspector Steve Biggs and Constable Sunnee Arhagba from Wandsworth Council Police and Events Service, and Jamie Baker and his colleagues from the Zoo, for all their friendly and willing help.

Finally, special thanks to the barbecue planners, Committee, family, friends and Friends who helped on the night.

For contact details for any of the above, e-mail info@friendsofbatterseapark.org or phone 07495 542399

The Friends of Battersea Park would like to thank the Heap family for once again so generously allowing us to hold our fundraising barbecue in the Children’s Zoo, for their tombola prizes of a Family ticket to Battersea Park Children’s Zoo and their sister New Forest Wildlife Park, and their Silent Auction lots of an opportunity to bid for a junior Silver or Gold Keeper Experience for the day. We are also grateful for the zookeeper talks on the capuchin monkeys and meerkats and the opportunity to feed the pigs.

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