

FRIENDS OF BATTERSEA PARK REVIEW

Issue 122
Summer 2022



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Review

Summer 2022

Editor Frances Radcliffe
Production Lydia Jones



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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.com

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, Peta 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.

Please write in your diaries our AGM on Tuesday 6 September at 6.30 for 7pm at All Saints Church, Prince of Wales Drive and our Autumn Lunchtime Lecture on butterflies on Monday 14 November, doors open 12 noon at Ethelburga Community Centre, Worfield Street. Full details of these and other events are on page 17.

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

Cover Image: Friends' Annual Barbecue 2022

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Parks Police

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Patrolling mob:	07500 959442
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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 Comerford 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

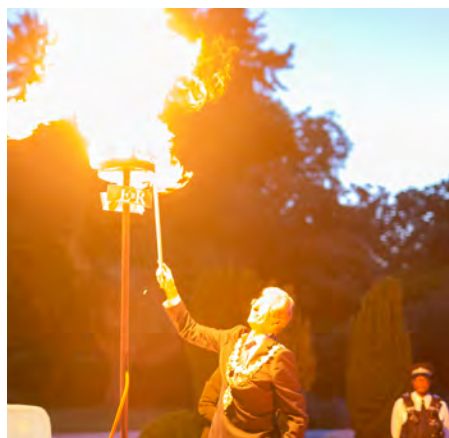
On 11 March, Mayor Richard Field planted a sweet gum to commemorate the Queen's Jubilee. This tree will be part of The Queen's Green Canopy. It is north of the topiary yews in the Russell Page Garden and is doing well. (Hooray that, funded by the Friends, the yews have at last been effectively trimmed by the specialist contractor Modern Mint.)

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.

A 'code of conduct' leaflet for dog owners is being drawn up in consultation with an animal charity. It was agreed that Friends Groups would be given the opportunity to comment before publication.

The recent trial of recycling bins in Wandsworth and Battersea Parks is being evaluated. It resulted in 52 tonnes of waste being recycled across both parks. On Wandsworth Common, in a further trial, contractors are being asked to separate recycling material as they pick up litter to establish whether it would be practicable to do this across the Borough.

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 Plenderleith, Carlota Bulgari, 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.



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Parkwatch continued



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.

Photo: 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 over-used.

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 owlets moving from tree to tree and the adults nearby. On a later occasion we saw an adult give a frog to an owlet who swallowed it whole."

I received a message on 1 April that an owlet had been found dead and

went to investigate. I found the dead owlet 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 owlets 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 owlets is an unusually large brood and in nature's terms, to lose one isn't such a bad thing as the parents would then have fewer mouths to feed'.

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Japan and cherry blossom

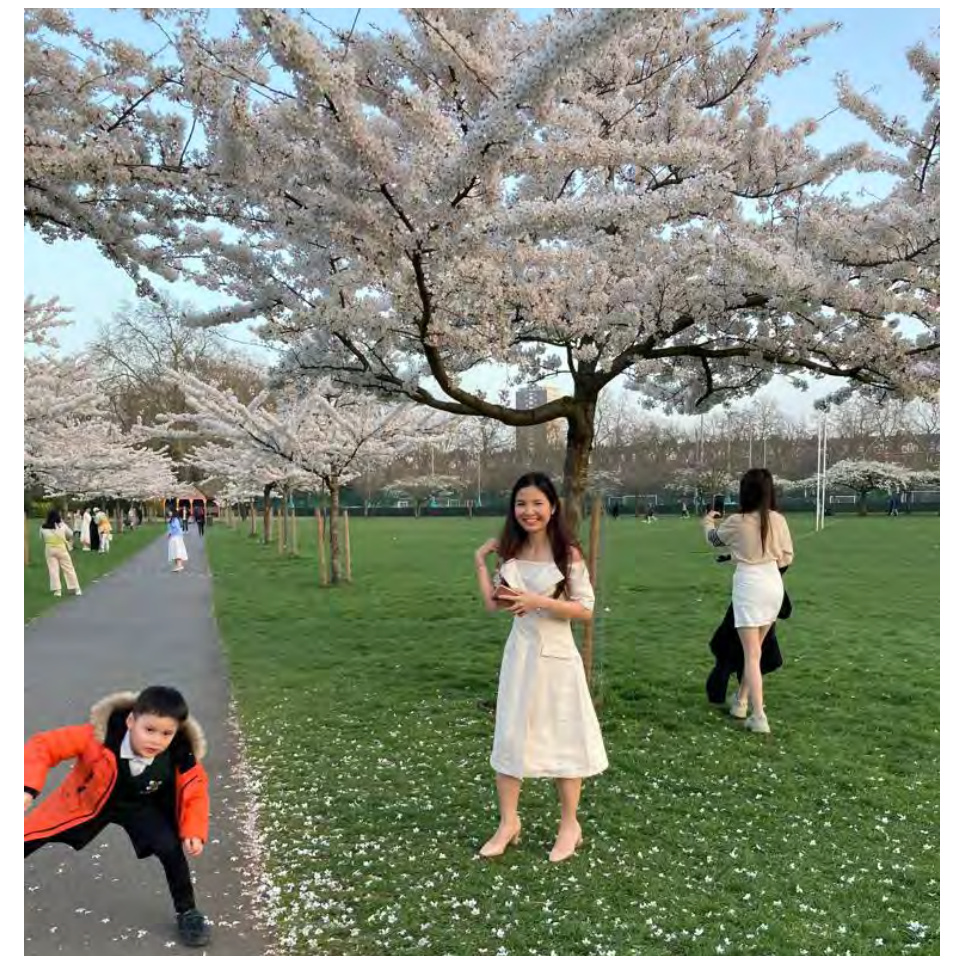
Junko Tarrant

Every year from the end of March until early April, television and newspapers across Japan report in 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 bloom 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) when it is the custom for groups of families or friends to have picnics under the trees where they eat a meal from bento boxes and drink sake. Groups of office workers will also do Hanami, sending the most junior members of the staff out early in the morning to reserve a good place for the office to meet up after work. Later in the evening you will often find jovial, drunken, businessmen singing happily together.

There are many varieties of cherry trees and each is known for the colour or size of its blossom. However, they all have one characteristic in common: their brief period of beauty lasts for only a few days. This leads to much symbolism and reminds people of how short life can be. One moment you are enjoying the beauty of the



blossom and then feel the sadness of it fading – likewise human life is temporary. We only have a short 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 his garden in Kent and began to influence his many important friends in Japan. This led to a resurgence of

interest in preserving this aspect of Japanese culture. The Englishman was Collingwood Ingram who became known as 'Cherry' Ingram and the Sakura or cherry-blossom culture was reborn. His biography by Naoko Abe won the Nikon Essayist Club Award in 2016 and several other awards.

This strong connection between the UK and Japan has continued 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 1960s 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 most 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 all 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 them (Fig. 1) and their pollen blows away, hopefully to another tree. Still inside the petals is the seed in its case and two fuzzy red stigmas protrude to catch that pollen (Fig. 2).

It's all over in a week or two. The flowers wither and in late-March and April the fertilized seeds expand out

from their protective petal sheath. The seed case expands becoming a fleshy green flattened oval structure (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*) fails 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 tall 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, on the north side close to the barrier, is a tree which Owen Johnson (joint author of the *Collins Tree Guide*) has recently identified from a photo as being likely to be a 'Plantyn' Elm. 'Plantyn' is a Dutch hybrid elm cultivar which was developed in the course of research into DED-resistant types of elms. It first became available in 1973, and has moderate resistance to DED. Hybrid cultivars developed later have a greater degree of resistance. It has a profuse amount of samaras on it from mid-April.

- On the grass beside the athletics track to the west is a very nice elm which has been harder to identify - it has some features in common with a 'Plantyn' Elm, but the leaves are smaller than would be typical.

- To the east of the path running south of the Pear Tree Cafe beside the lake is a tree which Owen Johnson has identified (also from a photo) as being probably a 'Clusius' Elm which

is a Dutch hybrid elm cultivar that first became available in 1983 and has moderate resistance to DED.

The leaves on these three trees usually come out at the end of April or in early May, a little later than on the other elms in the Park.

On the east side of the path sloping down from Chelsea Gate towards the athletics track is a Siberian Elm (*Ulmus pumila*). This has pendulous branches, and is listed by the Tree Register as being the third tallest recorded tree of this species in the British Isles.

Related to the elm tree genus are the Zelkovas. South of the South Carriage Drive car park 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 batterseaparktrewatchers@btinternet.com

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



Fig 1. Newly opened elm flower clusters. At this stage, the stamens with their dark anthers are most prominent.



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 regenerated Elm by the Alexandra Gate in April with large clusters of papery winged seeds.

Trustees Report for 2021/2022

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 Briony Newman. In addition, since the AGM, Sara Milne has been co-opted to the committee and will be put forward for election in September at the next AGM. Karen Horan left the committee with our sincere thanks having been the highly proficient and gracious producer of Review since 2015. Virginia Darbyshire stepped down as our independent financial examiner and 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 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 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 also conducted a guided walk as part of the Wandsworth Heritage Festival in June. As we did in pre-Covid years, the Friends had stands at 'Summer in the Park' events organised by Enable which have always proved useful in attracting new Friends. We are, as ever, grateful to the Parks Police who donated £900 from the proceeds of their Dog Show to the Friends.

The Friends represented by your Chairman continued to engage with the Council, Park Management and other Friends groups and Management Advisory Groups (MACs) across the Borough via the Wandsworth Green Spaces Forum and other ad hoc engagements. We were pleased to learn of the good progress of the new contractors for Trees and Grounds Maintenance which began in 2021. All Friends' groups in the borough continued to

press the Council for further detail on how the new contracts would be monitored and enforced by Enable, as this was a grey area under the previous arrangements. Wandsworth Council had committed to sharing non-commercially sensitive details but these remained outstanding at 31 March 2022.

The Friends continued to monitor planning applications in the Park and the surrounding areas and made objections to 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 the team as well as all the Friends 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. May I, as chairman, also extend my thanks to the committee for their dedication and support.

**Report subject to approval at the AGM on 6 September. The Report and Accounts will be available on the Friends' website three weeks before the AGM*

To Friends of Battersea Park

Tony Scherr Borve, Isle of Harris, November 2021

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 now considered too old to serve in the Second World War. They would sit on their stools on the edge of the lake with their rods in their hand, discussing politics in general and the war in particular. It was Battersea's own version of the Houses of Parliament. Although, in 1943, I was only eight years old, I would join them and sit on my stool next to them. I was far more 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 searchlights dotted round the Park and nearby were anti-aircraft guns and tethered barrage balloons. I also 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 siren 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 the radio when Rippy would suddenly get up, go to the peg where his lead was hanging and would bring it back to my grandfather. Usually, about fifteen minutes later, the air-raid siren would sound and we would put on Rippy's lead and take him and ourselves to the shelter. Whether Rippy could hear the far-off sound of the incoming aircraft, we will never know. Sadly all this was about to change when a nearby bomb blew in our front door and the blast from it burst the eardrums of our poor Rippy who, unfortunately, had to be put down. The flying front door also ended up in the under-stair cupboard which was our emergency protection area. Luckily, we were not sheltering there on that occasion.

On my way to school I would often see the devastation made by the previous night's bombing raids. We were told never to pick up anything from the ground or buildings, especially the small 'sticky bombs' or the 'butterfly bombs' which would often attach themselves on to the walls of buildings. These innocent looking devices could easily blow your hands off if picked up. Occasionally, we came across injured dogs or cats which we would take to the Battersea Dogs Home before going into school. Sometimes, friends who we expected to see in school, would no longer appear in the classroom.

1944 saw the start of the Flying Bombs (Buzz Bombs and Doodlebugs). They were so fast that the anti-aircraft guns around the Park could not catch up with them. It was at this time that my

grandparents decided that the time had come to leave Battersea and to head for the relative tranquillity of Bala in North Wales.

I missed Battersea Park Lake and I used to wander along the banks of the River Dee and the River Tryweryn. One day I came across a young 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 old gentlemen in 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 International 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 still have the evocative pleasure of remembering sitting by the lake in the 1940's and enjoying my boyhood fishing pleasures rather than the dark side of London at that time.

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

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

Lecture by Geoffrey Kibby

A beautiful spring day for the Lunchtime 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 1cm to flourish. The Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew add 40-50 to this list annually. Geoffrey Kibby, interested in fungi for 57 years, is a Research Associate in Mycology 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 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 Tunbridge Ware. There followed aliens from Australasia, **Red Cage** (flies eat its slime) and **Devil's Fingers** found from October in undergrowth of bamboo, attracting slugs and snails; the foul-smelling 'egg' at its base, put in a covered glass jar should develop.

At the base of old oaks, rare, found only in Southern England (Red Data List) is **Zoned Rozette**, large, 8"-9" across. **Common Blewit** prolific in beech woods is delicious. From late

October **Field Blewit** is edible, 4"-5" across. **St. George's Mushroom** in spring, smells of cucumber and newly-ground flour, edible. **Fairy Ring Champignon**, the colour of Manila envelopes has wide-spread, white gills. The 'ring' is formed by grass that is enriched by the dead fungus left behind as the ring continues to expand. The diameter of a 'ring' divided by 2" gives its age: one on Salisbury Plain is 2,000 years old.

The **Giant Puffball** can grow to a foot in diameter and its solid white flesh is not only edible but again delicious. It can have a billion spores. **Parasol** 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, 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 dying 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 **Ballerina** 5"-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.

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

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

Friends of Battersea Park Committee

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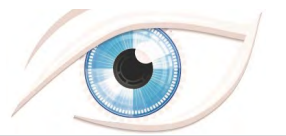
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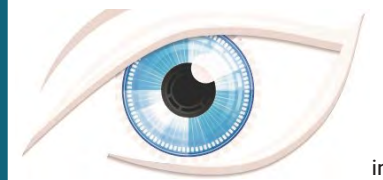
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Integrated Lakes Management Part Two

Valerie Selby, *Enable, Biodiversity & Parks Development Manager*

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, and to measure populations 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 visually 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. This work is carried out under an Environment Agency licence. We also 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

Whilst 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 Briannah 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.

Where Beauty Lies

Nina Barclay de Tolly

Great and glorious countryside
Bounteous and beautiful
Delight of the day, blitzed green
And catkin budded.
Deep depths of wooded glades
With pools of light on forest floor;
Mossed trunks of fallen trees
And pebbled riverbeds fast flowing
Wending weeds their tendrilled way.
Warm breezes over wheatfields rustling,
Flaming tunnels of autumn leaves
And in the green and dusky gloaming
Unfathomable beauty lies.

It's all about Men!

Annabel B Stein

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 Square, and his Street Pizza in Battersea Power Station seems to be healthy. I'm also glad to note that other SW11 manly establishments rock on with the likes of the Farmer's Mistress, Jimmy's Griddle, Papa John, Tonis Amalfi, Capitan Corelli, Pizza Guys, The Mason's Arms, BrewDog and The Candlemaker, not to mention royalty: The Dukes of Cambridge and Battersea, Prince Albert, and King William 1V in Grosvenor Gardens. All have their own niche menus and clientele, maybe including children who spoil their fathers in June?

We're aware of Oliver Cromwell and Oliver Twist, but what about **Oliver's Café** which opened its doors in February this year? I know a couple of Ollies and wanted to welcome it to this area with its plethora of cafés. My brother was flat hunting in Smugglers Way (I wonder if John Carter ever traded there from Cornwall in the 17th century?) so we arranged to meet for lunch. The café was light and airy with plates of ham-filled croissants (£3), hot dishes (£7), side orders (£4) and pastries (£4). My brother settled on beef meatballs with a side order of pasta whilst I went for a brace of beef stuffed aubergines with a side order of rice. Later, we couldn't resist a slice of red velvet cake (him) and a slice of biscoff-topped cheesecake drizzled with treacle (me) to go with our coffee. The mains could have been slightly hotter but our servings were tasty and so generous that I opted for their ready to go/take home doggy bag service for my second aubergine.

Oliver's Café, 312-314 Battersea Park Road, SW11 3HG (corner Bullen Street). Open seven days a week from 8.00 am to 5.00 pm. Prices are approx.



'Mike' always seems a manly sort of name, so when the golfer arrived one evening feeling hungry and me, lazy, we decided to give **Mike's Kitchen** a whirl and to use its free home delivery service. We were familiar with their 'Traditional British Favourite' i.e. fish and chips or kebabs but went onto their website to check the full extent of their menu and to see what was available that evening. From a wonderful variety of fish, I selected plaice (£8.50), a small portion of chips (£2.90) and mushy peas (£2.10). The golfer chose the homemade lamb kebab (large portion!) which arrived in the sheerest of slivers ready to slip into the accompanying pitta bread. It was teamed with a healthy salad of red and white sliced cabbage and an optional portion of chilli pickle. The chilli quite took his breath away – or kickass – as rodeo cowboys might say (£9.40). We were well pleased with our fresh, tasty, large, unpretentious and exceptionally reasonably priced choices which arrived, hot, within the given 45 minutes. Mike did us proud.

Mike's Kitchen, 165 Battersea Park Road, SW8 4BU. 020 7627 5665. Opening/ordering hours: Mon, Tue, Wed, 11.30am-10.00pm; Thur, Fri until 1.00am, and Sat 1.00am-1.00pm. Sunday closed.

Finally, where would we be without dear faithful Peter Jones & Partners. It opened in 1877 as a draper's shop



but later Mr Jones introduced a restaurant. It now has two. I'm sure we're all familiar with the Top Floor Restaurant with its various self-service options and wonderful views, but the other day, midst a dress shopping spree, it could only be to **Benugo Café & Bar** (2nd floor by the windows) where I and my credit card turned. Brothers Ben and Hugo Warner opened the first of this British chain in 1988 and although its mantra is 'baristas, bakers & sandwich makers' they also offer other items. I chose the salmon frittata (£6.00) and a side salad of broccoli, red peppers and edamame peas (£4.50). I wasn't quite sure why, as cold frittata and blandish salmon, though healthy, aren't quite my thing, but the salad jazzed it up. I followed this with a slice of lemon drizzle cake and coffee, then feeling suitably revived, went merrily back to continue shopping. Must end by saying how much I like the overall modernisation taking place within the store and feel sure Mr Jones would have approved.

Benugo Café & Bar @ Peter Jones & Partners, Sloane Square, SW1W 8EL. Breakfast: Mon-Sat 9.30am-11.00am; Lunch: Mon-Sat 11.00am-3.00pm, Sunday Midday-4.00pm; Afternoon Tea: Mon-Sun 2.00pm-close; Cream Tea: Mon-Sat 11.00am-close, Sunday Midday-close.

Photos: Oliver's Café; Mike's Kitchen

Butterfly recording in Battersea Park

Brieannah Mollison-Read *Enable, Biodiversity Activity Coordinator*

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

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Events

JUL	Friday 22 to Sunday 24 Battersea Evolution	Hyper Japan Festival Diversity of contemporary Japan
AUG	Thursday 4 Millennium Arena	Battersea Summer Scheme A day of sport for young people
	Saturday 6 to Sunday 7 Chelsea Bridge Car Park	Bungee Jump from £99
	Tuesday 9 at sunset Peace Pagoda	Nagasaki Day Peace Walk from Westminster Cathedral at 7.45pm to the Park for Floating Lantern Ceremony
	Saturday 20 to Sunday 29 Battersea Evolution	Bricklive Interactive fun and educational day out for the whole family Tickets from brickliveinthepark.com
SEP	Tuesday 6 6.30pm for 7pm All Saints Church 100 Prince of Wales Drive SW11 4BD	Friends Annual General Meeting
	Friday 9 to Sunday 11 Boules Area	Segway Experience
	Saturday 10 Passes Chelsea Bridge from 10.45	Great River Race
	Thursday 29 to 1 October Pump House, Bowling Green	Capital Crime Festival Tickets from £85
OCT	Tuesday 4 to Sunday 9 11am to 6pm Battersea Evolution	Autumn Decorative Antiques and Textiles Fair
	Saturday 15 to Sunday 16 Chelsea Bridge Car Park	Bungee Jump from £99
	Thursday 20 to Sunday 23 11am to 8pm Battersea Evolution	Affordable Art Fair
NOV	Saturday 5 Gates open at 6pm, display at 8pm	Fireworks in the Park – ticketed event
	Sunday 6	Second Fireworks Event Details tbc, see enablelc.org
	Monday 14 Lunch from 12.15 onwards. Lecture from 1.00 to 2.00 pm (approx 45 mins with 15 mins Q&A). Ethelburga Community Centre 60 Worfield Street, SW11 4RA	The Friends' Autumn Lunchtime Lecture Simon Saville, the Chair of the local volunteer branch of Butterfly Conservation, a Ranger for London National Park City, a member and trustee of London Beekeepers' Association and manages the apiary at Walworth Garden, will talk about 'Butterflies that can be seen in the Park, with tips on when and where to look for them'. Lecture @ £7.00 and a pre-ordered lunch @ £6.00 can be bought online @ friendsofbatterseapark.org/events or via the enclosed leaflet. Further information from info@friendsofbatterseapark.org or 020 7622 5199.
2023	Monday 20 March Lunch from 12.15 onwards. Lecture from 1.00 to 2.00 pm (approx 45 mins with 15 mins Q&A). Ethelburga Community Centre 60 Worfield Street, SW11 4RA	The Friends' Spring Lunchtime Lecture Tom Davis, from the British Waterfowl Association will talk about some of the waterfowl found in Battersea Park's lake. Full details will be included with Autumn/ Winter 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 from the children. Not a sweater went on nor an umbrella went up and the weather gods smiled kindly on us all evening. It was a fine community event and fundraiser to boot. 'Come again soon!' said the animals, 'it was a grand party'.

We couldn't have had such a happy evening without a huge collective effort. Thank you to the Heap family who let us come to the Zoo and to all who helped, contributed and donated, as well of course to those who came, often bringing family and friends with them.



Barbecue Thanks



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

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

For the Silent Auction: Tour of the House of Lords, Private tour of Battersea Power Station, The Power of Boxing, artist Michael Warren, Private Tour of Lambeth Palace, Made by Met Kaftan, Mosimann's Belgravia, Phene Bespoke Cakes, Riverside Radio, Savills Battersea and Vivienne Westwood

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 Pelaez 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.

Horticulture: Battersea Flower Station, Peta May Garden Design, Pines & Needles, Rocco Flowers, Thrive.

Hair and Beauty: Eighty-8 Nail Bar, Daniel Gavin Jnr, Elegance Nails & Spa, Hari's Hair & Beauty, Lux Nails, Ramey Barber, Teamwork Hair & Beauty Salon, 31st State, Uffizi Hair Gallery.

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Fantasy Cleaners, Junk Monkey, M&G Autos, New Vintage Furniture, Phoenix Cycles, Tolstoy Edit, Ward Thomas Removals.

Leisure and Recreation: Bluebird Battersea Boats, Boom Cycle (Battersea), Dance School RAD, Enable for Fireworks in the Park, Go Ape, Latchmere Leisure Centre, Mum-Dance, My Gym, Pi Studios, Pilates with Wendy Jardine, Putt in the Park,

Pets: Ella & Co (James Middleton) Dog Treats, Medivet Battersea, Pads Paws & Claws.

On the Night: The Savills' team, led by Mayow Short: Aileen McCarthy, Cassia Rowsell, Peter McCosh, Tessa Cobb, Ollie Brooks-Ward, Ollie Sloggett-Taylor, Kitty Ballantine, Ben Sibbons, and Sammi Enderby.

Mayar Elassar 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



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