

# FRIENDS OF BATTERSEA PARK REVIEW

Issue 123  
Autumn/Winter 2022



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BATTERSEA PARK

# Review

Autumn/Winter 2022

Editor Frances Radcliffe  
Production Lydia Jones



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Rijksmuseum in November. On page 11, you will find a photograph of what we tend to regard as the 'back view' of the sculpture together with two paragraphs written for the Rijksmuseum catalogue by Stephen Feeke. The former is a treat for the Friends because the lake makes it difficult to get a good view of that side of the sculpture. The latter sets Single Form in context and provides key information about the sculpture in a few particularly well-chosen words.

It is strange to look back to the summer issue of Review and to think of the scorching heat of 19 July when temperatures in London exceeded 40 degrees. All the grass areas in the Park were a sandy yellow. Now, they are a verdant green except where they are covered by the golden fallen leaves of autumn. The autumn colours in the Park this year have seemed particularly good against some beautiful blue skies.

As promised, this issue includes an interview with Councillor Judi Gasser who is the Wandsworth Council Cabinet member responsible for the Borough's parks and open spaces. Her responses to our questions are on pages 16-17.

Go Ape have sought planning permission for a 'plummet activity'. They want to run a supporting wire across the path that runs between the entrances to Go Ape and Putt in the Park to the plane tree about half way down that path. The Friends and the Battersea Society have both strongly objected to this. To add your objection, search for application 2022/3095 on the Wandsworth Council planning portal. Details are on page 5.

Barbara Hepworth's Single Form (Memorial) will return from the

Your Lunchtime Lecture Team hope to see you on Monday 14 November at the Ethelburga Community Centre for Butterfly Conservation's Simon Saville's lecture on butterflies. These ethereal creatures always bring joy when seen in the Park and many of us will be keen to know more about them.

When you are thinking of Christmas presents, don't forget that you can go online at [friendsofbatterseapark.org](http://friendsofbatterseapark.org) to buy our well-illustrated history of the Park or a bone china mug. A pack or two of postcards would also be sure to come in handy. The photograph of the Hepworth sculpture on the front cover of this issue is on one of the six different postcards in a pack for £5 (plus £1 P&P).

Enjoy the Park whatever the weather and perhaps encourage those aged between 4 and 14 years old in your family to join Junior parkrun at 9am on Sundays in 2023. You could also volunteer to help to organise these runs.

**Cover Image:** Barbara Hepworth's *Single Form (Memorial)*, 2021

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**Non-emergency incidents:** 101

**Patrolling mob:** 07500 959442

**General Enqs:** 020 8871 7532

**Wandsworth Borough Council:** 020 8871 6000

This update begins with a report by your Chairman.

‘On 27 September, I represented the Friends at the Wandsworth Greenspaces Forum which includes Friends Groups and Management Advisory Committees (MACs), Enable Leisure and Culture which runs open spaces on behalf of the Council, Council officers and Councillor Judi Gasser, Wandsworth Council Cabinet Member for the Environment.

Items most relevant to the Park were:

## Biodiversity Initiatives

Wandsworth Council is focused on biodiversity and sustainability with a variety of initiatives in place such as recycling, reassessing appropriate plants for green spaces in response to our changing climate, and ‘no mow May’ in which areas of grassland are left unmown to enhance biodiversity and habitat. Friends groups were interested to hear of these initiatives but felt that a more structured communication on all the initiatives would be of value. Enable agreed to provide a summary.

## Signage Audit

Enable have initiated an audit of signs used in green spaces in the Borough to establish what is required and where. These signs cover areas such as where cycling is permitted, how to recycle litter in parks, feeding of wildlife etc. Enable planned to conduct this audit in October and will consult Friends Groups and MACs on next steps. Signs which explained why an activity was prohibited (e.g. harmful effects of feeding bread to ducks) were thought to be more helpful.

## parkrun

parkrun for children will begin on Sunday January 8, 2023, at 9.00am and then on successive Sundays. Feedback is that these events are well

organised. In the Park, they will take place on the carriageways. A seniors parkrun is under consideration and the Council is keen to proceed but this will not happen immediately as Enable have made commitments to other events. parkrun is looking for volunteers to help run Junior parkrun in the Park. Please contact parkrun if you can help.

## Drinking Water Fountains

There was some frustration among the Friends and MACs that the drinking fountains would have to be switched off during the coldest winter months owing to the likelihood of damage to their mechanisms (solenoids). The winter months in Battersea see extensive use of the sports pitches and now Junior parkrun. Friends hope that a solution can be found.

## Permits for use of Parks by Personal Trainers

Personal trainers will now require a permit to operate in the Park. Further details of the scheme were confirmed at the Forum. The initial period of engagement and education carried out by the Parks Police began in June and 150 leaflets were issued Borough-wide to personal trainers. Parks Police will now begin issuing enforcement notices and fines.

An additional category of permits will shortly be required by schools and community groups. These will be free but the hope is that they will give Park Management the ability to offer guidance on how to use green spaces in a sustainable way, avoiding activities that are harmful to flora and fauna.

## Telephone Numbers for Parks Police

Enable believe that numbers for Parks Police have been updated on all relevant signs (if not please contact Enable). There was concern that the numbers went straight to an answer

phone. Ian Mitchell, MD of Enable, stressed that for anything serious 999 should be used and pointed out that the Parks Police was a small force covering a large number of green spaces. He agreed to investigate why the main number was not being forwarded to the mobile number automatically. For Parks Police numbers, see page 3.

## Valter Goncalves

Enable were pleased to announce that Valter has joined Enable with a brief to work with Friends groups and MACs and to enhance communication between all parties.

## Fireworks

Fireworks in the Park now take place on both Saturday and Sunday, the latter a smaller, more family-friendly event. See page 19 for details.

## Green Flag

In late July, Battersea Park was awarded a Green Flag for 2022-2023. Congratulations to all those who look after the Park!

## Yews

In September, Darren from Modern Mint gave the topiary yews in the Russell Page Garden a second clip of the year, funded by the Friends. They now need just one annual clip. It is a delight to see these yews restored.

## RCA Sculptures

While Barbara Hepworth's sculpture has been on loan to the Rijksmuseum,



Friends and others will have enjoyed the works of five separate groups of Royal College of Art students displayed successively on its site. All have been inspired by *Single Form* and have been interesting, thought provoking and – in two cases – fun. This has been a welcome and successful project which has caused comment and given enjoyment to many.

## Parks and Events Police Service: Prizes and Platinum Jubilee Medals

On 11 October, which was a glorious autumn day, Mayor of Wandsworth Jeremy Ambache, with the sun glinting off his gold chain, presented Fenella Barber, representing the Friends, with a cheque for £1,520.65. This was the profit from the Battersea Park Dog Show organised and managed by the Parks Police who generously donated it to the Friends. The grateful Friends felt they had won the Dog Show's top prize.

In an unusual and special prize-giving, the



Mayor presented six Parks Police officers with their Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medals. These were awarded to those who had met their conditions of service for a period of five years or more. The photograph shows (left to right) PC Courtney Gordon, APS Bernard Shirley, Sergeant Sunnee Arhagba, the Mayor of Wandsworth, Chief Officer Steve Biggs, PC Jason Crawford and PC Althea Mason-Josephs. Congratulations to them all!

## Go Ape's Planning Application 2022/3095

Go Ape has sought planning permission to construct a landing site and support wires for new 'plummet activity' on its High Ropes course. The Friends recognise that many children and others have benefited from challenging and enjoyable experiences as they seek to complete Go Ape's courses. We have no objection to an exciting new plummet activity; but we object strongly to the proposed support

wire which would run to a plane tree in the open space of the Park beyond the fenced boundary of Go Ape and Putt in the Park. This would be an entirely inappropriate intrusion of a commercial activity into the open green space of the Park. The wire would cross the heavily-used path running from the Sun Gate into the Park and it would damage the view for those entering and leaving the Park at the junction between South Carriage Drive and West Carriage Drive. The support wire would encircle the trunk of the tree on batons nailed to the trunk as for other Go Ape support wires.

We have questioned whether planning guidelines have been followed because we are not aware of any of the usual signs on Park gates alerting Park users to this planning application. The application has not been, but should be, referred to Wandsworth Conservation Area Advisory Committee given that Battersea Park is Grade II listed. It should also be referred to the Planning Applications Committee.



# AGM and Open Forum Discussion - 6 September 2022

On 9 September, 46 Friends met in person for the first time since 2019, for our AGM, followed as usual by our Open Forum discussion. We were joined by Councillor Judi Gasser, Cabinet Member for the Environment; Neil Blackley, Enable's Head of Parks; and Sergeant Sunnee Arhagba from the Parks and Events Police Service

The Friends approved the minutes of the last AGM, the Trustees Report and Accounts for 2021/22 and the re-appointment of John Marsh as independent examiner for the 22/23 accounts. The Chairman, Garon Watkins, noted that there had been a delay in signing off the 21/22 accounts and said that in response to points made by our new independent examiner, there would be some enhancements next year. Garon was appointed for a further 3 years and Sara Milne (co-opted in September 2021) was appointed as a trustee.

In response to requests from Garon, Neil outlined the role of Enable, a not-for-profit charitable Trust, in managing the Park under a concession contract to Wandsworth Council. Income is generated through the services delivered on behalf of the Council. These include the provision of leisure centres, bereavement services and events in open spaces. Income is mainly circled back into community projects. Enable manage the relatively newly appointed horticulture and ground maintenance contractor, Continental Landscapes, and the tree contractors, KPS, within the Park and City Suburban elsewhere. Sunnee explained that the Parks Police Service were few in number, operated in all of Wandsworth's open spaces and did their best to enforce the byelaws. Despite limited resources, Battersea Park was one of the safest parks in London.

A Friend asked how the hottest summer on record had affected the Park and what action was taken to deal with children and dogs swimming in the Fountains Pool. Neil acknowledged the difficulties in dealing with the heat. Tree planting is being changed to species which can tolerate a Mediterranean climate and maintenance programmes are being adjusted e.g. to leave long grass under trees and generally to reduce mowing. Although the water in the Pool has been treated with chlorine and is not dangerous, new 'no swimming' and 'no dogs' signs have been put up. Enable staff and the Parks Police challenge individuals if they see them in the water and Enable post messages on social media to advise that this isn't allowed. Sunnee noted how difficult it was to stop people going into the water. Disposable BBQs were also an issue. This year so far the Police have given 1,187 verbal warnings, issued 49 fixed penalty notices and made two arrests. They have recruited 6 additional casual staff who will help monitor the Park on an 'as needed' basis.

Concern on behalf of a blind person was expressed about overgrown vegetation and rubbish just inside the railings along Prince of Wales Drive, which can make access difficult. Neil said that some significant tree work was needed in this area and that keeping pathways clear is a standing item for the maintenance team.

Cllr Gasser answered a question about a memorial for the five children who had died in the Battersea Funfair tragedy in 1972. A steering group is considering a variety of ideas and how funds can best be raised. Garon drew attention to the memorial tree planted near the Russell Page Garden on 30 May, the 50th anniversary of the Big Dipper crash.

The poor condition of horse chestnut trees was raised. This was due to both leaf miner and canker for which there were no solutions.

In response to concern about increasing numbers of joggers, Neil accepted that non-commercial groups and individual runners could be hard to manage. However, a licensing scheme has been set up for personal trainers. It was noted that a Junior parkrun would be introduced on Sunday mornings from 8 January 2023.

A Friend asked for an update on restoring the Cascades. Neil referred to the feasibility study carried out in 2019, which had sought to understand how to restore the sensitive Pulhamite rocks, infrastructure and pumps, all of which would require a significant amount of funding at a time when those able to fund such projects have been focusing their resources on enhancing nature. A grant application has been prepared both to bring the Cascades back to their original working condition and to restore the Ladies Pond. A larger application covering environmental and historic heritage was thought more likely to succeed. This is work in progress.

In response to other comments, Neil promised to pass on thanks to those who collect litter from 7.30am, whatever the weather and advised that an audit of signage, including in relation to cycling, was underway (an opportunity for Friends to provide feedback on content and location).

A Friend asked if something could be done about the ice cream van constantly parked outside the Sun Gate with its engine running. Neil, Sunnee and other Friends recognized this as a problem. However, the Parks Police cannot challenge those outside the Park and legally a standing vehicle can have 15 minutes at the roadside

and so it can return soon after being asked to move. It might be possible to put a 'do not block the gate' sign in front of the Sun Gate, and use that to prevent the van from parking.

Questions sent in by email were answered by Neil and Sunnee as follows:

- events in the Park are only allowed if they meet rigorous criteria and do not cause damage
- last year, the Festival Gardens loos had a refit and the Pierpoint loos (by the zoo) were redecorated
- e-scooters were proving difficult to manage but they are not allowed in the Park
- the Henry Moore sculpture is looked after by Wandsworth Council



through its facilities management team overseen by its arts team.

A Friend hoped that the Council were aware that with the increase in the local population and with such a small Parks Police force, it was a miracle that the police achieved as much as

they did. Finally, Neil suggested that when Barbara Hepworth's *Single Form* returns from the Rijksmuseum, it will be well worth a visit as it has had a complete clean and looks magnificent.

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# Ash trees in Battersea Park

Clive Freedman and Brian Livingstone

The Ash is a member of the same botanical family as olive, lilac, jasmine and forsythia.

In Battersea Park, we have a number of different kinds of ash. Most of the trees are Common Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*). The black buds on these trees open into clustered flowers with prominent mauve stamens which appear before the long compound leaves with 7-13 coarsely serrated leaflets (Fig.1). The leaves on the Common Ash trees in the Park open at different times, and in particular the leaves on the Weeping Ashes can be very late. As with the other species of ash, Common Ash are dioecious, that is to say the male and female reproductive organs are usually on separate trees but, curiously, Ashes may change flower sex from year to year.

There are two variant forms of Common Ash trees in the Park. Seven of the trees are the weeping form, which is produced by grafting weeping branches onto the trunk of a Common Ash tree. It is believed that this grafting was first done in Cambridgeshire in the middle of the 18th century.

The position of the graft can be clearly seen on some of our trees at a height of 2 or 3 metres, but in one case in 1848, at Elvaston Castle in Derbyshire, a graft was inserted at the remarkable height of 27 metres. Often the tree does not rise much above the point of grafting. There is a high graft on the Weeping Ash on the west side of the Subtropical Garden, and this is the fourth tallest Weeping Ash in England recorded by the Tree Register. In September 2022, bees were seen nesting in a hole in the trunk of this tree at a height of around 6 metres. The Weeping Ash on the grass beside East Carriage Drive (south-east of the Pear Tree Café) has the widest girth

recorded in Central London (Fig.2) but this tree is not in good shape – it has a hole at the foot of the trunk and there is bracket fungus.

In the other variant, var. *diversifolia*, only (in most cases) an undivided leaf develops. There is an example at the east end of the wooden bridge (Fig.3). This confusing form is recognisable as Ash when the winged seeds have formed.

The flowers on most of the ash species in the Park have no petals. An exception is the dense white panicles on the Manna Ash (*Fraxinus ornus*) (Fig.4). The largest of the Park's Manna Ash trees is close to the Beechmore Road gate and has a particularly fine shape; the graft at the foot of this tree is clearly visible. There are younger examples beside the east end of the lake path in the south of the Park, at the west end of the Winter Garden and in the Queenstown Road border. They flower in May. Originally from Southern Europe, this species has naturalised in the Cheviots and in Cambridgeshire, as well as being extensively planted. The name arises from allegedly medicinal sugary sap which can be obtained from a cut in the bark, but please don't try this in the Park.

The flowers on female ash trees develop into 'ash keys' (winged seeds) which hang down from the tree in bunches for much of the winter (Fig. 5).

The Park has a number of Narrow-leaved Ashes (*Fraxinus angustifolia*). There is a fine example in the Subtropical Garden. The tree on the corner north of the Thrive Garden is the *lentiscifolia* variety, with bigger leaflets which spread outwards rather than pointing forwards. The tree beside the road near Chelsea Gate is the tallest Weeping Narrow-leaved

Ash recorded in Greater London by the Tree Register. A smaller weeping tree is beside the Pump House.

The 'Raywood' variety of the Narrow-leaved Ash, Claret Ash, is noted for the colour of its leaves. In November (Fig.6), but some trees show better autumn colour than others, and the autumn leaf colour can vary from year to year. There are examples at the east end of the Rosery car park, between the river and the Zoo, and beside Albert Bridge Road south of the Sun Gate. This variety was introduced in about 1925 from Australia, where introduced Ash has become an invasive 'weed'. The leaves of European Ash species, on the other hand, are still pale green when they fall in autumn.

North of the athletics track is an Oregon Ash (*Fraxinus latifolia*). Beside the Friends' Lime tree in the east of the Park is what may be a White Ash (*Fraxinus americana*) which also has fine leaf colour in October (Fig.7).

Common Ash trees across the country are in serious danger from ash die-back disease, which is a fungus that causes leaves to discolour and cankers where branches meet the trunk. Eventually the tree dies. The disease was first recorded in the UK in 2012 from imported nursery trees, and many trees have already been lost, with most impact in the south-east. It is feared that 80% of our country's ash trees will be lost. It has destroyed populations on the continent and in turn threatens many species which rely on Ash. Weeping ash trees are particularly vulnerable to the disease. No cases have yet been identified in Battersea Park, but the risk is increasing and trees are routinely inspected.

The timber of Common Ash is hard and hard-wearing. It has traditionally

been used for making chair frames, bows, tool handles (such as hammers and axes), tennis rackets and snooker cue sticks. The book *The Man who made Things out of Trees* by Robert Penn, describes how the author chose an ash tree in a wood, and then set about himself making many different things from it using traditional techniques.

To discuss ash trees, or other trees and shrubs in Battersea Park, contact [batterseaparktreetwatchers@btinternet.com](mailto:batterseaparktreetwatchers@btinternet.com)



**Fig 1.** Common Ash male flowers and a leaf. The leaf is compound and pinnate, i.e. has 6 leaflets ('pinnae') either side of the stalk and a terminal leaflet.



**Fig 2.** Weeping Ash. Note wide girth of the trunk below the grafted branches.



**Fig 3.** Common Ash *diversifolia* variety ('One leaved Ash'). This type with its single large leaves is confusing to identify until the winged seeds ('keys') have formed (centre of picture).



**Fig 4.** Manna Ash flowers open after the leaves. There are 4 white narrow petals to each flower. Some yellow stamens can be seen at the right edge of the cluster.



**Fig 5.** Common Ash winged seeds ('keys'). There is a single wing to each key. They stay on the tree all winter until March winds.



**Fig 6.** Narrow-leaved Ash are originally from Southern Europe but the Raywood variety arose amongst introduced Ash trees in Australia. It is grown for its autumn tints.



**Fig 7.** We think this is White Ash though the species is quite scarce in UK. When the leaves are green the leaf undersides are silvery white, and the buds are brown. Shown here in autumn tints.

# How to Help us to Help Biodiversity

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

The habitats we create and manage across Battersea Park are fairly resilient to most everyday activities. However, a few of these habitats are more sensitive and you can help us to look after them by bearing in mind a few simple things.

## Lakes

**Feeding Wildlife:** Feeding the ducks is so often the first way children connect with nature. However, giving them and other wildlife food that wouldn't naturally occur in their diet can cause a huge range of problems. For example, as bread decomposes it turns into nutrients that cause algal blooms and blanket weed. These are not only unsightly and smelly but also draw oxygen out of the water, making it harder for fish to breathe. Lake water quality and the ecosystem of the lake thrives when the only 'inputs' are those that might happen naturally. A better option than bread would be feeding ducks with lettuce. This replicates the natural pond weed that their digestive systems are designed to cope with and avoids putting anything into the lake apart from inert vegetative matter.

## Woodlands

**Making space for nature:** It can be tempting, particularly as autumn approaches, to help ourselves to brambles, fungi, fruits and other items favoured by foragers. However, our woodlands are so heavily used that even a small amount, just for yourself or your family, rapidly depletes supplies. This can result in the complete loss of foods such as fruits and nuts that animals may rely on to survive the winter. It can also be tempting to take dead wood, logs and brash, whether to help heat your house or to make dens for young people. This removes entire homes for species like stag beetles who rely on rotting wood being left in situ

for the 7 years of their lifecycle that they spend as grubs. Please help us by letting nature be and leaving logs, brash, fungi, fruits and nuts in place to be used by the woodland wildlife in the Park.

## Grasslands

**Trampling:** Areas where grass is left long for wildlife or where we plant wildflower mixes provide homes for a significant diversity of invertebrates, many of which burrow in the ground. We try to keep a mown pathway through it to guide movement and minimize the area affected by trampling which compacts the ground and makes it harder for wildlife to use. By keeping to the paths you can still enjoy the buzz of the grasshoppers and the flitting of the butterflies without damaging the homes of the solitary bees that also share these areas.

**Nutrient enrichment:** Certain species, notably the more delicate grass and flower species in our grasslands, actually thrive in poorer

quality soils with lower levels of nutrients. However, the more commonly found amenity grass, as on lawns and recreational fields, flourishes where there are plenty of nutrients and quickly out-competes these more delicate species for light, water and food. Nutrients in soil come from a range of sources but the most significant contribution is from our furry friends. Dog wee and excrement add large amounts of nutrients to the soil – so much so that where delicate grasslands run along paths you can clearly see where the mix of species has been totally lost and fully replaced with amenity grass. Whilst it can be hard to manage dog wee in the landscape, we would ask that you try to encourage dogs to wee away from the nature reserve areas and habitats. Of course we would expect you to be poop scooping wherever your dog goes. Hopefully this explains why reducing dog wee and removing dog poo is so crucial in sensitive grassland.



# Single Form (Memorial) by Barbara Hepworth

*Single Form (Memorial)* is expected to return to the Park in early November. It has been on loan to the Rijksmuseum for its 2022 open air exhibition of nine sculptures by Hepworth curated by Sophie Bowness, Hepworth's granddaughter. Hepworth had strong connections with the Netherlands and would have approved.

In the catalogue for the exhibition written by Sophie Bowness and Stephen Feeke, the latter writes two of the most informative paragraphs about *Single Form (Memorial)* that you are likely to read:

'There is a formal similarity between this sculpture and a number of smaller works Hepworth made in 1961, as well as with the monumental *Single Form* sited outside the United Nations headquarters in New York. This group is also associated with the friendship between Hepworth and Dag Hammarskjold (second Secretary General of the United Nations) and the sculptures are therefore redolent of both her private and her public concerns. After the Second World War, Hepworth became increasingly engaged politically. She was an avid supporter of the United Nations and felt the optimism it then heralded was personified by Hammarskjold himself. Together, they shared a belief in the positive role that art could play in society, and for him, her work represented the potential triumph of human creativity over 'sub-human chaos'.

After Hammarskjold's death in a plane crash in 1961, Hepworth made *Memorial* 'in a kind of despair' and 'just to console myself'. She also included a dedication to him within the circular piercing (not visible from ground level), which on this cast reads: *To the glory of God and the memory of Dag Hammarskjold 1961.*

*Single Form (Memorial)* marks a significant moment in the continuing development of Hepworth's sculptural vocabulary. The overall silhouette is suitably simple and restrained, yet its surface texture is finely detailed and the form swells and tapers to a surprising extent. The first cast was exhibited in Sculpture in the Open Air at Battersea Park, London in 1963, one of a series of important outdoor exhibitions in which Hepworth participated between 1948 and 1966. The work was acquired by Jacob Blaustein, former president of the American Jewish Committee, industrialist, diplomat and friend of Hammarskjold's, who had funded the larger project at the United Nations, and in 2003 it was donated to John Hopkins University and subsequently sited outside the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Washington, DC. The second cast was purchased by London County Council for Battersea Park where it remains'.

The sculpture was cleaned by the specialist conservator, Tessa Jackson, before it was exhibited, and it will return on the same plinth, to the same position, looking better than ever. For the future, as recommended by Tessa,



*BH 314, Bronze (cast 2 in an edition of 2)*

*294.5 x 198 x 29.5 cm (excluding base)*

**Photo credit:** Rijksmuseum

a higher plinth is envisaged to protect it from damage from dogs. This will again require planning permission. No change is likely to be made until next year.

Friends will be particularly delighted with the splendid photograph which the Rijksmuseum has kindly allowed us to publish. We do not normally see this side of the sculpture in such detail because of the way that it faces the Lake. As Stephen describes above, 'its surface texture is finely detailed and the form swells and tapers to a surprising extent'.

For further reading, head to Jennifer Ullman's *Battersea Park* page 72 and to Historic England's website. If anyone would like to borrow the excellent Rijksmuseum catalogue, please email [media@friendsofbatterseapark.org](mailto:media@friendsofbatterseapark.org)



We've had a busy summer at the Children's Zoo. I'm just glad to see everything green again after so long without rain. Lots of the animals definitely appreciate the fresh grass too!

We've welcomed many new visitors and had a number of new births across the zoo. From our first kookaburra chick in early summer to the more recent arrival of twin meerkat pups, visitors have had their hearts stolen by the adorable new residents.

Conservation has always been at the heart of our zoo, with our mission to inspire the next generation to care for the natural world being at the forefront of all we do. As part of the European Endangered Species Programme, we are delighted that three critically endangered Bali starling chicks fledged this summer, making us one of the most successful zoos in the UK as part of this breeding programme. With fewer than 100 left in the wild, we are proud to be playing our part in saving this species from extinction.

Alongside all of the new-born animals, we've welcomed a new species to the zoo, and our most special yet! Alonso the white nosed coati moved to Battersea from a zoo in Belgium as part of a new European initiative to raise awareness of the species, one that is threatened in the wild by habitat loss and hunting. At 2 years old, Alonso is one of only three white nosed coati in the UK, putting Battersea Park Zoo on the map as a forerunner in caring for the species. It is hoped that one day soon Alonso will be joined by a girlfriend, paving the way for the pitter-patter of baby coati paws in the not-too-distant future.

Our popular birthday party packages are back for the first time since the pandemic, relaunched by our new Education and Events Manager, Jake Muskett. To find out more please visit [www.batterseaparkzoo.co.uk](http://www.batterseaparkzoo.co.uk)

We hope that you will join us at the zoo soon to discover a world of wildlife within Battersea Park.



## Friends of Battersea Park Committee

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### You love the Park, but are not yet a member?

With rates from as little as £10 a year you can join online: [friendsofbatterseapark.org](http://friendsofbatterseapark.org) or phone 07495 542399 for details

## 'Exotic and Extraordinary Plants in Battersea Park'

Bob Barker

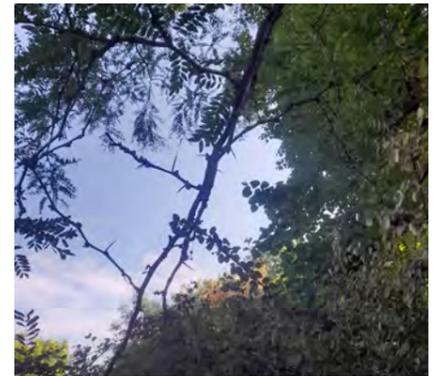
On a sunny midsummer morning (26 June), about twenty of us were lucky enough to take part in a *90 Minute World Tour: Exotic and Extraordinary Plants in Battersea Park*, organised by the Battersea Society.

Our guide was Roy Vickery, recently retired President of the South London Botanical Institute, who was for over 40 years a botanist at the Natural History Museum. We were privileged to share in Roy's lifetime experience of plants. The time went quickly and though we took a little more than the scheduled 90 minutes, we covered only the South East corner of the Park. It was a fantastic eye-opener. Without taking in the Subtropical or Winter Gardens, or any of the obvious big stars like the Strawberry Tree, Wollemi Pine or Swamp Cypress, it was astonishing to be shown that dozens of plants which we might easily have walked past without noticing are indeed "Exotic and Extraordinary".

The first, near the Rosery Gate, was a Honey Locust, with outsize thorns thought to have evolved to deter such

Pleistocene megafauna as giant sloths or mammoths which may have had a rather brusque approach to grazing. We also heard of a clever strategy of the rather less-exotic common oak, which only produces a big crop of acorns every few years, so when it is an "acorn" year it hasn't encouraged a big population of squirrels which might eat the lot. Probably our predecessors in medieval Battersea, when the Park was wetland and they could exercise their right to fatten pigs in the woods of Penge, were more aware than we are of these fluctuations?

We saw a huge Bay-tree; a Paper Mulberry; an American Hawthorn (a tree, not much like our native bush); a big Himalayan Cotoneaster; a Himalayan Birch; a Himalayan Ash; Oregon Ash; Kentucky Coffee Tree; Norway Maple; New Zealand Flax; Chinese Viburnum; Chinese Privet; Gingkos (little changed since the Jurassic); a pendulous Japanese Pagoda Tree (actually from China); Japanese Spindle tree (apparently spreading fast: "the pest of the future"); an Almond tree bearing



fruit near the tennis courts ... It was thought-provoking to hear several times that a species which used not to thrive in England is now reproducing and spreading, probably due to our changing climate. It was also enlightening to hear that the Large Bindweed, though it behaves now as if it owns the place, was introduced only in about 1815, and that Queen Victoria may have been responsible for making the gloomy Evergreen Oak fashionable.

We hope very much that Roy can be persuaded to come back soon and start to cover the rest of the Park!

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# Palmates, Trotters and Paws

Annabel B Stein

My lack of education never ceases to amaze me. So attempting my newspaper's crossword puzzle in an endeavour to improve matters, the subject of non-human feet arose.

Q: What is 'a swan's foot' called? 7 letters, thus ruling out 'webbed'.

As I was reflecting on this, spookily the bus I was on went past **The White Swan** in Pimlico – an omen not to be ignored. Hence, a few days later a Friend who delivers Review in that area and I met for lunch, seating ourselves on a stage table in this spacious and welcoming room.

From its extensive menu, my friend who likes a good pie, chose Chicken, Ham Hock & Leek from the Handcrafted Pies selection (all £14.95) which arrived accompanied by red wine gravy, fresh greens and chips. She loved the pie's light pastry shell and found the veggies cooked to perfection. I went for the Small Plates (all £7) - which I'd read as 'Side' plates and ordered two. One was the Roast Chorizo in red wine with

chilli infused honey and the other Dry Cured Pork Coppa with cheese, tomatoes and rocket, accompanied by warm focaccia bread. Although I didn't really need both, I must say they were extremely good!

We each had a glass of dry rosé (£6.15) and later coffee (£2.90) but were too full for dessert (all £6) however tempting they looked. Before we left, I nipped upstairs to vet the Millbank Room which is available for private hire. Full marks too for its quiriness. Finally, for those who recall the song 'Ride a White Swan' by Marc Bolan of T Rex, I can't resist mentioning that a Tyrannosaurus Rex's foot is either a claw (4 letters) or talon (5).

**The White Swan**, 14 Vauxhall Bridge Road, SW1V 2SA. 020 7828 2000. Open Monday-Friday 11.00 am to 11.00 pm; Saturday from midday to midnight and Sunday from midday to 10.30 pm.

A: The most common type of webbed foot found in ducks, geese, swans, gulls, terns and other aquatic birds

is known as palmate.

Next up on non-human feet, was a trot (pun intended) across the river again to **The Chelsea Pig** (previously The Pigs Ear and in my young day The Front Page). This busy classy gastropub, where the clientele down cocktails rather than pints of bitter, is where I met my brother for supper. Skipping the starters in favour of puddings, my brother chose the Wexford Beef Burger – skinny style, aka no bun, 'blue' (£18) with a side (all £6) of fries, tenderstem broccoli & wild garlic. He declared his meal first class especially as the beef really was underdone.

To complement this establishment's name, I just had to go for the Suffolk T-Bone Pork Chop with maple syrup and rosemary yoghurt (£25) which was large and tender, plus glazed carrots with honey mustard dressing. Come dessert, my brother immediately plumped for the marmalade bread and butter pudding

whilst I, feeling rather full, picked the blackcurrant ice cream. Before departing, I ventured upstairs to take stock of the refurbished oak-panelled dining room whilst my brother went to congratulate the chef for producing such a delicious and unusual pudding.

**The Chelsea Pig**, 35 Old Church Street, SW3 5BS. 020 3026 0466. Open from Wednesday to Sunday from midday to 11.00 pm, 9.30 pm on Sunday.

There are three in our relationship: the golfer, his pug and me, and sometimes this can get a bit tricky when it comes to dining out. However, there is many a paw in riding to hounds, so I phoned the **Fox and Hounds** to ask

about their dog policy and was happy to learn they love welcoming those of a well-behaved nature. I therefore booked a table for 7.30pm.

Upon arrival and once seated, Bryan was presented with a treat and whilst he shared a bowl of water with a cocker spaniel, the golfer and I perused their menu whilst sharing a bottle of superb dry chilled rosé (£35).

We both decided to go 'Mediterranean' – he, choosing the paella with chorizo, prawns, mussels and langoustines (£21) which he highly praised, and then a de-luxe type of ice-cream (£7) which he later devoured. I favoured the whole seabass roasted with tomatoes, lemon and rosemary (£22) which was beautifully fresh,

moist and meaty, then fancied the fresh berries crumble with ice-cream (£7.50). Quite delicious especially as the crumble was so light.

All dishes were nicely presented by the friendly and efficient staff. The inside premises are fairly basic and smallish, but there is a large and pretty garden at the rear and the place, that Saturday evening, was full of happy and contented people, which included us three musketeers.

**Fox and Hounds**, 66/68 Latchmere Road, SW11 2JU. 020 7924 5483. Opening Hours, Bar: Mon-Thur 5.00–11 pm; Fri from 4.00; Sat from midday and Sun 10 am–10.30 pm. Kitchen: Mon-Fri 6.00–10pm, Sat 12pm–4pm and 6pm–1 am, Sun midday - 9pm.



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# Interview with Councillor Judi Gasser

Chairman Garon Watkins



*Councillor Judi Gasser is Wandsworth Council's Cabinet Lead for Environment. She is responsible for recycling, waste collection, street cleaning, the management and maintenance of the Borough's parks and commons as well as making sure Wandsworth 'does everything it can as a borough to tackle the climate change emergency'.*

## Can you tell us a little about yourself, your political journey and why you hold the Cabinet brief for the Environment.

I've been a member of the Labour Party for about thirty years, starting as a local activist and taking on various roles within the local party. I stood for Wandsworth Council first in 2006, because I was so angry about the Council cutting funding to the voluntary sector at that time. I served from 2006-2010, but my children were young then and needed me at home more, so I didn't stand again. They are all grown up now, so I have plenty of time to be a councillor.

I became aware of the environmental crisis through my work at the Zoological Society of London, where I was a fundraiser for 7 years and raised money for conservation projects around the world (and to restore the iconic Snowdon Aviary). The projects at ZSL were mainly focused on animals, but it was clear that by destroying the habitats for

animals, we are destroying the planet we all share to the huge detriment of mankind as well. I became passionate about the need for us all to do what we can, whether through campaigning or through changing our own lifestyles, to mitigate the destruction ahead.

## What is your experience of Battersea Park and what is your favourite part of it?

I used to take my three children very often to Battersea Park. When they were little and I didn't have much money, we could have a wonderful free day out at the One O' Clock Club and adventure playground; we also loved going to the Zoo for a treat, which was affordable back then. I was very sad when these were all privatised; I think lots of families are missing out now.

When I had a little more money later on, we had lots of fun on the 'banana bikes' and going to the café for an ice cream.

I'm not sure I have a favourite part of the Park; I love it all.

## The Labour Party manifesto said that Labour would welcome a free Battersea 'parkrun'. Could you update the Friends on your plans and what measures might be taken to safeguard the Park and other Park users?

We've had so many requests for parkrun, which has been very successful on Tooting Common, but I'm conscious that Battersea Park is already busy so this needs to be considered carefully. We are going to start by trialling Junior parkrun on a Sunday morning (starting January 8 2023) and will be keen to hear the Friends' - and all Park users' - views before moving onto the much bigger proposition of an adult parkrun.

I do think parkrun is a great concept

- a free community run that anyone can enjoy.

## There were also plans to 'plant more trees and flowers, protect biodiversity and promote a plastic free Wandsworth'. How will this play out in Battersea Park?

I have asked the biodiversity team from Enable to join the next Green Spaces Forum so that we can all talk about this together. I look forward to hearing ideas from Enable and residents.

Regarding plastic, I am keen that our hospitality contractors stop using single use plastic bottles and cups, something I have raised with Enable.

## We are all worried about climate change. In relation to Parks and open spaces, the green lungs of Wandsworth, what changes would you like to see?

I'm not sure I want to change the existing green spaces; I think our parks and commons are beautiful. We need to ensure they are well cared for by our contractors and I am very aware of the vital role volunteers, such as the Friends and Tree Wardens, play too.

I would like to see more green spaces around Wandsworth, such as pocket parks and community gardens. I hope to move on to this element of our manifesto soon.

## You have a wide portfolio. How have you found your first 6 months in post and have you been surprised by any of the issues that you have had to address?

The first six months have been busy as we have ambitious plans we want to achieve. Some things will take time, but we have already started working on some important issues, such as introducing food waste collection and improving the waste collection

service on our streets and estates.

On climate change, the officers I work with are as passionate as I am, but we really need substantial government funding if we are to make meaningful changes.

The most surprising issue: the misunderstanding after the Queen's death about whether children's rugby training was allowed - it took all weekend to sort out.

## There are some perpetual problems such as dealing with litter, dogs and unauthorised cycling. Any ideas as to how to tackle them?

I share residents' frustration when our green spaces are not treated with the respect they deserve.

We have inherited limited parks policing resources, so we need to use those enforcement resources as smartly as we can. We really need the support of our community to keep our parks in great condition. If I see a piece of litter, I will pick it up and put it in the nearest bin, and I have been known to reprimand people who don't. Some very community minded souls pick up dogs' mess when they are picking after their own pet, but this is above and beyond!

Regarding cycling, we have the same limited enforcement opportunities. We need some cycling permitted paths and some not, and to make sure those are clearly marked.

I welcome suggestions from Friends and all residents if you have ideas about how to tackle these perennial problems

## The Council has developed an interesting means of funding the maintenance of Battersea Park and the Wandsworth green spaces by granting a concession to Enable. Do you have any views on how Enable can generate funds without too many commercial events in the Park?

We have beautiful parks and green spaces in Wandsworth and it is our responsibility to make sure that these spaces remain a free place for residents to rest, exercise and play. It's tricky to get the right balance; the Council's budget is so tight that we desperately need commercial income, but obviously we don't want to over-use the Park.

Our focus has to be to make sure, where we can, that we make events available to the whole community.

For example, 5,000 free tickets have been made available to schools and charities for the fireworks in Battersea Park this year.

I know Enable raises external funds from other organisations and would encourage them to pursue this. They ran a successful summer programme for low income families, to provide fun and food through that long summer holiday.

## How do you see the role of Friends groups?

I think the Friends are vital in representing the views of park users and letting me and Enable know about any problems and opportunities. All the Friends I've met around the borough have been so committed to their green spaces and some contribute many hours of their time; we are very lucky to have you all.

## In the distant future when you step down, what would you want your legacy to be?

I hope I will have helped Wandsworth move towards our net zero carbon target and reduce air pollution and helped keep the Borough green and beautiful.



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Dear Editor

Up to 2001, goats and, as I remember, peacocks were kept in the enclosure near the café. Then came foot and mouth disease, and all occupants disappeared, I know not where. They never returned but the enclosure remains, guarding only a wilderness. Now, after twenty years is it not time that something was done, either to replace the animals, or to pull the enclosure down? The site could then be converted e.g. to a wild meadow or simply opened to visitors.

So what are the Park's management plans for the enclosure?

Best wishes, Bill Emmett

5 March 2022

*Editor: this issue has been raised with Enable and Council officials. Any update will be reported in Review*

Dear Friends of Battersea Park

I found the letter from Tony Scherr in the recent magazine quite moving. His words read like a poem and take me back to my own childhood in what seemed a simpler time after the war when a fishing rod was a prized possession. In those days, before technology and mobile phones, I remember visiting the funfair in Battersea Park and boating on the lake. The funfair now gone but the lake still gracing the Park and as popular as ever, the men with rods still gather to fish.

I have lived in Battersea for some forty eight years, for the last forty two years with my wife in Brynmaer Road not far from Cupar Road where Tony Scherr started life. As a family we have enjoyed all the facilities the Park has to offer. Over the decades, I have seen Battersea Park transformed from a rather scruffy green area to a well-cared for and much loved local park.

The old wooden picket fence now gone and replaced with iron railings similar to those removed in the war to meet the demand for essential metals. The thirties café facing the Thames replaced by the beautifully kept Peace Pagoda while the café at the lake, now named the Pear Tree, is a busy, popular destination. The great avenues of trees magnificent in summer, the ancient rose garden sadly bereft of box tree hedges, the walled herb garden and the subtropical garden all well-kept. The path under Chelsea Bridge into the newly renovated Power Station adding to the route along the Thames south of the River and the winter garden at the Sun Gate replanted, the trees clinging on in the dry weather.

The sports facilities expanded and enhanced with the adventure playground now offering an expedition around the high tree tops.

As with the Park so with Battersea itself. In the area behind Prince of Wales Drive at least, it would seem all of the old neighbours are now mainly gone, replaced by new urbanites with different expectations. I wonder what Tony would make of it all. One thing we have in common, our front door was also blown off in the war and replaced with a twelve pane glass door, attractive enough but a little

out of keeping with the rest of the road, glorious though, as the sun light floods into the hallway. Yet the soft red bricks around the entrance remain undamaged, only the marks scoured by children using copper pennies remain from that distant era, something Tony would have known as a child, the old coppers now all gone replaced by smaller, less significant coins.

Thank you Tony for such a beautiful reminiscence and thank you Friends of Battersea Park for all your good work.

Sincerely, Gerard Connolly

26 July 2022

**Secrets**

*Paul Albrecht*

I've searched for Nature's secrets and, in awe of life and strife in her bewildering scene, exulted as I watched an eagle soar, the wings of circling stingrays' sunlit sheen, starlight, the tenacity of bees, an osprey's plunge from hover to the burn, storm petrels skimming in a freshening breeze, swallows that gather as the geese return.

Nature's not vibrant Earth and arid Mars, not fruitful autumns and abundant seas, not life, not death, not silent distant stars, nor Ayers Rock crouched under galaxies.

Nature is surging energy; she's quarks, elusive particles and flowing streams of protons and chaotic photon sparks.

I've not found Nature's secrets, just her dreams.

NOV	<b>Saturday 5 PARK CLOSSES AT 4pm</b> Gates open 6pm, close 8pm Pre-show 6.30pm Bonfire lit 7.30pm Display at 8pm. 8.30pm to midnight Battersea Evolution	<b>Fireworks in the Park</b> Advance tickets only. £12.65 from batterseaparkfireworks.com Children under 10 free but need tickets. Children under 18 must be accompanied. Queries to batterseaparkfireworks@kaboodle.co.uk <b>Afterparty, Bierkeller Experience</b> , for over 18s – buy £16.50 tickets with Fireworks tickets
	<b>Sunday 6 PARK CLOSSES AT 3pm</b> Gates open 5pm, close at 7pm Event closes at 8pm	<b>Sunday Family Night Fireworks</b> Visual volcano and singalong, no bonfire. Advance tickets only. £12.65 from batterseaparkfireworks.com. Children under 10 free but need tickets. Children under 18 must be accompanied
	<b>Friday 11 War Memorial 10.45am</b> Pump House Gallery	<b>Wandsworth Council's annual Act of Remembrance Service</b> Followed by refreshments in the Pump House Gallery
	<b>Saturday 12</b> 9.30am – 12.30pm from Bandstand	<b>Half Marathon</b> in aid of Alzheimer's Research UK
	<b>Saturday 12 &amp; Sunday 13</b> Battersea Evolution	<b>Independent Schools Show</b>
	<b>Monday 14</b> Lunch from 12.15. Lecture from 1 - 2pm Ethelburga Community Centre 60 Worfield Street, SW11 4RA	<b>The Friends' Autumn Lunchtime Lecture</b> Simon Saville on butterflies that can be seen in the Park, with tips on when and where to look for them. Buy Tickets @ £7.00 and a pre-ordered lunch @ £6.00 from friendsobatterseapark.org/events. Further information from info@friendsobatterseapark.org or 020 7622 5199
	<b>Wednesday 16</b> Winter Garden from 10.30am – 3.30pm	<b>Friends' volunteer gardening day, led by Thrive</b> Come for as long as you can. Register with Francesca.Hills@thrive.org.uk
	<b>Friday 25</b> Battersea Evolution	<b>Battersea Ball in aid of the Battersea Crime Prevention Panel raising funds for Sport in the Park</b> Ticket information on batterseaball.org.uk or ball@bcpp.co.uk
	<b>Saturday 26 to Friday 23 December</b> Chelsea Gate Car Park	<b>Pines and Needles</b> Christmas trees for sale
	DEC	<b>Sunday 18</b> Bandstand from 10am
<b>Friday 31</b> Battersea Evolution 7:30pm to 3 am		<b>New Year's Eve Ball</b> Tickets from £190
2023	<b>Sunday 8 January</b>	<b>Junior Park Run</b> Info from parkrun.org.uk
	<b>Tuesday 24 to Sunday 29 January</b> 11am to 8pm British Genius Site	<b>Decorative Arts Fair</b>
	<b>Wednesday 9 to Sunday 13 March</b> 11am - 8pm British Genius Site	<b>Affordable Art Fair</b>
	<b>Monday 20 March</b> Ethelburga Community Centre Details on enclosed leaflet	<b>The Friends' Spring Lunchtime Lecture</b> Tom Davis from the British Waterfowl Association on the behaviour and habits of waterfowl



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