

FRIENDS OF BATTERSEA PARK REVIEW

Issue 124
Spring 2023



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BATTERSEA PARK

Review

Spring 2023

Editor Frances Radcliffe
Production Lydia Jones



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Registered Charity 802905
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'Visitors to Battersea Park cannot fail to notice the various rockworks near the lake... The impression created is of a geological fault near the lake, with strata of sandstone dipping inland... One may reflect on the ingenuity with which they have been placed' wrote Brent Elliott, Country Life 1984. As perhaps most Friends will know, the Cascades and other rocks in the Park are made from a material invented by James Pulham (1820–1898). Rubble and clinker were coated with this material and carefully sculpted to look like natural rock. There are several outcrops, including the one south of the Pear Tree Cafe. It's a big deal that a bid for funding focused on restoring the Cascades is being made to the Heritage Lottery Fund, see page 4. Let's hope that it's successful!

There's a spotlight on voluntary litter pickers in this issue. A special Friends' commendation goes to Albert and Edmund Rood aged 4 and 2 years respectively, surely the youngest litter pickers yet. A commendation too should go to those staff from Continental Landscapes who deal with the bins and pick up litter every day in the Park

Meteorological spring, if not astronomical

spring, will have begun by the time you read this. The cherry blossom will soon be out and if you turn to pages 8 - 9, you will be well prepared to enjoy it.

It was a considerable disappointment to learn that we could not hold our BBQ in the Children's Zoo this year because of building work. The Heap family has been exceedingly generous in letting us do so over many years and our thanks go to them. We hope to be back in future, but for this year, it's a new venue and a new format but still with Smart's wonderful food. Children are sure to have a good time with generous free entertainment from Sharkey and George. Please put 13 June in your diaries! For ticket and other details, see page 18.

Our party last year in the Old English Garden to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee was such a success that we thought we should hold it again, this time to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles. Another date to save is 10 May. Your invitation is enclosed.

It's a delight to see random clumps of crocuses appearing in the grass and bare soil on both sides of the Beechmore Gate. They are a reminder of the delights and surprises to be found in the Park. Take Valerie Selby's advice on pages 12 – 13 and walk slowly, using to the full your senses of sight, hearing, touch and smell.

Enjoy the Park!

Cover Image: Crocuses west of the Cricket Pavilion

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Parkwatch

Friends will be interested to learn that Enable and the Council are seeking funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for a large project costing some £1.7m to rejuvenate and restore key aspects of the Park. An Expression of Interest form was submitted to the HLF in November last year. (This process allows a preliminary assessment of proposals so that prospective bidders are not put to the expense of preparing a full bid for a project that is unlikely to be funded.) It was approved in January and a full bid is expected to go forward at the end of February.

HLF require a financial contribution from the bidder. Some of this will come from money from Formula E which was ring-fenced for Battersea Park.

The proposal includes a number of improvements to the Park but will focus on the heritage restoration of the Pulhamite structures (artificial rocks) and bringing the Cascades back into working order with 'clean' energy. There are also a number of connected projects including improvements to the Ladies Pond and signs. The aim is 'to focus on local access barriers to the Park, engaging communities that perhaps would not normally use the space and deliver a number of events around the heritage elements of Pulhamite and its place in the Park'.

The outcome of the bid is expected sometime in the summer....

Wandsworth Green Spaces Forum

The Forum met on 31 January with your Chairman representing the Friends. Enable, Council officers, other Chairs and Councillor Judi Gasser were present. Garon reports that the key issues for the Park were as follows.

Climate change and Sustainability

Neil Blackley, Head of Parks for Enable, said that work was underway to re-evaluate what types of plants and trees were planted in green spaces since species that may have thrived in the past may no longer be successful. This is likely to mean that in formal gardens there will be fewer bedding plants and more wildflowers and perennials. 'No mow May' and 'halo mowing' (leaving grass to grow under trees) will be extended. Leaf collection is being reassessed to see where leaves might be left to benefit the health of the soil. Valerie Selby, Enable's biodiversity manager, is currently working on a Trees and Woodlands Strategy with a view to planting more trees. The strategy will be published in June.

The frequency of vehicle use and consequent emissions was also an area of focus. Contractors have been encouraged to 'go electric' rather than use for example, two-stroke leaf blowers.

London has been experiencing wetter winters as well as warmer summers. Enable will be looking at better ways to avoid or manage flooding. The Park has a particular problem because the roots of our London plane trees are damaging the Victorian drains below the carriage drives. The cost of remedial work will be high.

Signage Audit

The audit of signs containing instructions such as 'no cycling' will be completed shortly. The aim is to achieve better messaging and appropriate positioning. Enable will co-ordinate with the Parks Police and have committed to consult the Friends before making changes.

Parks Police telephone 07500 959442

At the last meeting, concerns were

expressed that calls to the Parks Police were being automatically directed to an answerphone. This has now been remedied, albeit the phone line will be operational only during working hours. For anything serious, use 999.

Personal Trainers

Personal trainers in the Park now require licences. Since the programme was introduced in 2022, the Parks Police have given out 188 leaflets to inform trainers of the requirement and issued 17 licences across the Borough and two fixed penalties for non-compliance. Licenced trainers are required to wear armbands.

Other news as follows.

Recycling litter

From October, litter pickers from Continental Landscapes who collect waste left in Battersea Park, Wandsworth Common and Tooting Common began collecting recyclable items separately. The idea is that they could put paper, glass, plastic bottles and other items that can be recycled into the large publicly available recycling bins in these areas. However, it is quite shocking and depressing that if you take a look into these bins, they are clearly being used for general waste and dog poo. Update in the next issue of Review.

Meanwhile, while we'd rather they weren't necessary, some striking posters have appeared in the Park.

Chance meeting in the Winter Garden

It was a pleasure to see a group from the Battersea Women's Institute in the Winter Garden in early February. They were on their monthly walk originally planned for Richmond Park, but staying local because of train and bus strikes. After visiting some of the smaller local open spaces (Latchmere Rec, Falcon and Shillington Parks, and Christchurch, Fred Wells and Vicarage Gardens) the group returned along the Thames Path

and through Battersea Park for coffee at Putt in the Park. They reported that the walk and the coffee were both very good!

The catering contract

ECSI, also known as Colicci, who had the catering contract for over 10 years were replaced recently by EMA. As a result, the Tea Terrace Café has been repainted and the Pierpoint Cabin on North Carriage Drive and the cabin next to the All Weather Sports Pitch have a new look.

Junior parkrun

This was due to take place on Sunday 8 January but the start date has been delayed.

Funfair tragedy in 1972

Friends might like to be aware that a bench in the Subtropical Garden next to the Lake has been dedicated to Shirley Nash, one of the five children who died when the Big Dipper crashed in 1972.

Planning

Despite strong objections from the Friends and the Battersea Society, Go Ape's planning application which included running a supporting wire to a plane tree outside the boundary of Putt in the Park and Go Ape was approved by delegated authority. It was not put to the Conservation Committee or the Planning Applications Committee. It may seem a small matter but it is an unacceptable intrusion by commerce into an open space when surely we are all committed to protecting our open spaces.

Fence posts have just gone up along the path by the tree to protect the grass from being damaged by vehicles.

Filming

Magic Mike's Last Dance (Rated 15) starring Channing Tatum and Salma Hayek arrived in cinemas on 10 February. It includes some great scenes in the Park.

Filming of a major Bob Marley biopic took place recently. It is well known that he loved playing football in the Park.

Lighting on the Path past Go Ape and Putt in the Park

The lack of lighting along this path is a long-running issue. The lighting comes from lampposts beside Putt in the Park's mini golf course, possibly a hangover from when this was the outside area of the Council-run One O'Clock Club. Understandably, Putt in the Park don't want to pay for the lighting when they are closed. The path is heavily used by children going to the playgrounds and the All-Weather Pitches. It's the only small path in the Park with lighting. The plan now is to provide separate lamps on the same lampposts, powered by solar panels. A solution is long overdue.

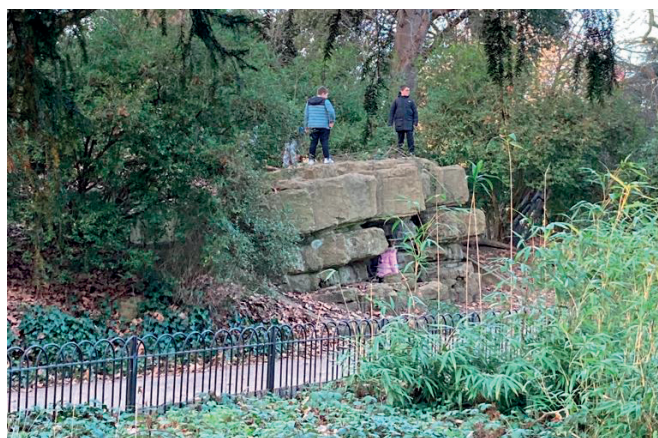
Winter Garden Plants and Fencing

The Friends have again agreed to pay for the new plants recommended by designer Dan Pearson for the Winter Garden. The cost is just over £4,000. Thrive will place the plants and Enable will again pay for them to be planted by Continental Landscapes, the Park's ground maintenance contractor. The plants have been ordered and we hope that planting can begin soon.

The Winter Garden is well worth a visit

at this time of year even if the edges of the borders are still protected by green plastic fencing.

Following Dan Pearson's advice last November and increasing realisation that the only way to prevent people and dogs trampling over the plants is to provide a permanent fence, Enable have investigated the cost. The most harmonious option is to use the same double bow topped fencing as used round the outside of the Garden. Enable have received a quote for a £94,000, an enormous sum. Single bow topped fencing would cost £85,000. The Friends would be happy to contribute but funding would obviously also have to come from elsewhere. Discussions continue.



All Hail to Voluntary Litter Pickers!

Fenella Barber

Everyone complains about the litter, but Lisa, a long term resident of Prince of Wales Drive, had had enough. Tired of talking about it with other residents, she decided to act. Hurrah for Lisa!

Alerted to a sign on the Macduff Gate, I showed up at 11am on a Sunday morning to join a group for an hour of litter picking. Lisa gave me a high viz jacket, some disposable gloves, a bin liner and some litter pickers, and off we set.

It is amazing how much rubbish one picks up in an hour: the bottles, cans and food wrappers probably the least surprising. I filled a bin liner quite easily. But the single most depressing thing was the sheer quantity of full dog poo bags. Why do people pick

up dog poo with those special bags, tie them up and just discard them by the path? It makes no sense.

While litter picking, I felt virtuous and community-minded and I was thanked by a few who passed. I too had been one of those that thanked others. Lisa said that often happened; lots of thanks, lots of promises to help, but few show up.

Let's grow the community of voluntary litter pickers. Meet 11am on a Sunday at the Macduff Pedestrian Gate on Prince of Wales Drive opposite York Mansions, and Lisa or I will see you there!

Fenella ready for action; Albert and Edmund hard at work



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From Braemar to Battersea

Juliet Rood



When the first murmurs of London going into lockdown were starting, I was walking in Battersea Park. I had uploaded a picture of beautiful blossom onto my social media and I had a flurry of messages from friends alerting me to 'get out of London!' with threats of the M25 being shut down to allow no one in or out of the city for months. I rushed home to pack up everything and head for the highlands where my family live. At the time it seemed very dramatic but with Covid-19 being such an unknown force, the stakes seemed too high to stay in a city, especially with a small child to entertain, who was not yet of nursery age.

So, to Scotland we fled before any restrictions had been put into place. We ended up staying for 3 months, idyllic for the most part but at times testing for myself with a toddler and a husband working full time remotely. We embarked on many things to keep ourselves busy: we threw rocks from the side of the river into the water to see how big a splash we could make, we played pooh sticks thousands of

times and we started running a mile a day to raise money for the NHS, buggy in tow. It was on this stunning route with breath-taking views that we noticed the endless trails of litter from the scores of visitors that this part of the world attracts. We decided that we would arm ourselves with rubber gloves and bin bags and pick it all up. We would walk on one side of the road for a mile picking up litter then frantically wave at my grandmother through her window as we couldn't go inside her house, and then walk the return mile on the other side of the road collecting yet more rubbish. Litter picking became addictive and turns out it is really fun for children.

With lockdown lifted, we headed back to London and soon had another little boy to keep us busy, but with the announcement of the second lockdown we found ourselves stuck in London with a tiny newborn and a now much bigger toddler. We would walk daily in Battersea Park and it occurred to us that we could start litter picking again. Only this time we decided to ramp it up. Albert (our

son) was bought a brand new litter picker which of course brought a new set of excitement to the task at hand. He has a firm love for wildlife and all animals and the thought that the litter could harm any of the animals sparked a furious attempt to collect all litter from the grounds of Battersea Park. With the playgrounds shut at this point it was the perfect excuse to be outside and doing something of value.

To this day, we still litter pick in the Park. Our boys love it and look at it as a fun weekend activity. We always get a smile whilst litter picking which is lovely as usually in London everyone has their heads down looking at their phones. And we hope that when people see us it might inspire their children to do the same. One click on the internet for a little litter picker equals hours of enjoyment and benefit for all.

Hopefully we will see more of you out there, especially as the weather warms up!

Cherry Trees in Battersea Park

Clive Freedman and Brian Livingstone

There are around 200 cherry trees in the Park, and around 24 different varieties which we have identified. In this article, we will describe each variety roughly following the sequence in which they come into flower each year.

The most observant of our readers will have already seen the winter-flowering cherry trees in the Winter Garden (*Prunus x subhirtella 'Autumnalis'*). These have been showing a few flowers since November and they put on a particularly good display in January this year.

During January, a few flowers of Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) can be seen. Like other early flowering species of cherry, this is before the leaves come out. Blackthorns continue in flower until April, and in the summer they develop sloes, the small dark blue fruit which is used to make sloe gin. Last summer, there was plenty of fruit on the trees south of the Bowling Green, and most years the tree north of the cricket nets has plenty of fruit (Fig.1). Some Blackthorns have thorns on the twigs.

At the beginning of February, dark pink flowers start to show on the small Japanese Apricots (*Prunus mume*) on the north-west side of the Winter Garden, though at least one of these has died in the last few months. We hope that it will be replaced.

In February, the Cherry Plums (*Prunus cerasifera*) start to flower. The Park has two kinds. One has white flowers, green leaves and pale orange-yellow fruit. The other ('Pissardii') has pink flowers and copper-coloured leaves. Nice examples of the latter can be seen at the north-west side of the Winter Garden and beside the path north of the War Memorial at the east end of Central Avenue. The fruit of these trees is red.

In the second half of February, big

pink flowers can be seen on the two Almond trees (*Prunus dulcis*) – one outside the northern wall of the Old English Garden and the other on the corner opposite the Millennium Arena. These produce a few fruit each year.

In the middle of March, flowers appear on the nicely shaped tree on the grass west of the Children's Zoo. This may be the cultivated 'Pandora' variety.

In the second half of March, the Yoshino Cherries (*Prunus x yedoensis*) on the diagonal avenue running from the Albert car park to the Subtropical Garden are in flower. The flowers have a pale pink tint when they first come out. These are not the hardiest of trees and some have had to be replaced. In 2004, forty trees were planted thanks to a donation from the Governor of Nara Province in Japan and the order of monks responsible for the upkeep of the Peace Pagoda.

As the flowers in the diagonal avenue start to die, the flowers in the neighbouring east-west avenue running to the playground come into their own. There are at least four varieties here.

- The trees with big pink flowers of over 20 petals are 'Kanzan' (Fig.2). Two of the Kanzans also show white flowers on one or two branches. These branches have reverted to a different variety in the tree's parentage (possibly *Prunus avium*). There are more Kanzans south of the lake and near the Bowling Green - one east of the Bowling Green was blown down last year.
- The Mt. Fuji cherry (*Prunus 'Shirotae'*) (Fig.3) has attractive white flowers with between 6 and 11 petals, and the branches spread out horizontally.
- The smaller trees are Great White

Cherries (*Prunus 'Tai-haku'*). These have white flowers with bigger petals.

- An unusual variety is 'Shibayama' (Fig.4). The tips of the white petals have a tattered edge, and the centre of the flower turns crimson after pollination. One of these is the third tallest which has been recorded in England by the Tree Register (www.treeregister.org).

At the end of March there are pink flowers on the Sargent's Cherry (*Prunus sargentii*) north of the cricket nets. This tree has small black fruit and copper-coloured leaves in autumn (Fig.5).

Also in the last few days of March, the Wild Cherries (*Prunus avium*) start to flower. A number of these have dense flowers – the 'Plena' variety. Look out for these in April at the entrance to the Children's Zoo. Wild Cherries are more bitter than cultivated cherries, but can be cooked or used to make jam. Best avoided if they are very bitter, as the bitterness comes from hydrogen cyanide. The trees between the tennis courts and the athletics track have particularly attractive flowers. The Wild Cherries are the tallest cherry trees in the Park.

North of the Bandstand behind the railing is a small Flowering Almond (*Prunus triloba*). This has dense pink flowers in late March and the first half of April.

There are small Tibetan Cherries (*Prunus serrula*) on the north side of the Winter Garden and west of the Pagoda. These have small white flowers in the second half of April and attractive reddish-brown bark.

In the second half of April, the long white flowers of the Bird Cherries (*Prunus padus*, not *Prunus avium* despite the Latin name) can be seen (Fig.6). Flowers of this shape are known as 'tails'. Look out for these

north-east of the cricket nets and east of the Tea Terrace.

There are also some small cultivated varieties of cherry tree around the Park.

Two kinds of *Prunus* which look very different are the Cherry Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*) and the Portuguese Laurel (*Prunus lusitanica*). These are usually grown as glossy dark green-leaved evergreen shrubs. They have upright 4”-6” tails of white flowers which are followed by small black berries. The Cherry Laurel’s flowers appear in spring, but some have flowers at other times of the year. The Portuguese Laurel has fragrant white tails mainly in May and June.

There are hundreds of different varieties of cherry tree, and correctly identifying individual trees is challenging. We believe we have identified the trees correctly. Contact the authors using the email address at the end of this article if you would like to meet in the Park to explore the trees together.

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



Fig 1.



Fig 2.



Fig 3.



Fig 4.



Fig 5.



Fig 6.

Dogs in Battersea Park



In the wake of the tragic death in January of Natasha Johnston who was walking eight dogs in Surrey, Friends may have felt some unease at the large number of dogs that some professional dog walkers seem to walk in the Park. This seems a good moment to remind ourselves of the rules:

- all professional dog walkers must have a licence from the Parks Police;
- the maximum number of dogs one professional dog walker is allowed is six (43 registered dog walkers in the Borough) but a special licence can be acquired to walk up to eight dogs registered in the Borough (the latter is under review);
- the maximum number of dogs a private individual can walk is four.

Professional dog walkers are encouraged, but not required, to walk their dogs separately to avoid too many dogs gathering together.

The byelaws are also relevant. Byelaw

21 requires dogs to be 'under proper control and effectually restrained from injuring, annoying or disturbing any person or animal or from running on any flower bed or injuring any tree, shrub or plant'. Byelaw 23 says dogs must be on leads or excluded from areas where there is a notice to that effect. Byelaw 33 says that you can't wash your dog or do anything that might pollute any water in the Park.

Recently, Enable held three drop-in 'dog engagement' sessions to gain a better understanding of the views of dog owners and walkers and how they used open spaces. Some 20 people came to the session in Battersea Park (40 Tooting Common; 30 Wandsworth Common). In the Park, safety was a key concern, mainly related to cyclists, e-bikes and other vehicles, but also to other dog owners with out of control dogs and the public. The areas in the Park where dogs are excluded e.g. The Old English Garden, or should be on a lead e.g. near the Lake or

in the Winter Garden, were felt to be reasonable. Litter, as ever, was identified as a problem for dogs as well as people who did not pick up 'their' dog poo.

The social benefits of exercising dogs in the Park for both people and dogs were emphasised. There was no significant demand for commercial services such as dog training classes although some would welcome the chance to buy dog treats and poo bags.

Enable will discuss their findings with those who provided their contact details and will invite them to a focus group meeting in late March or early April. They will produce a draft leaflet setting out key information for dog owners and walkers for discussion at that meeting. The Friends would like the chance to consider the draft leaflet too!

Dogs and owners enjoying the Subtropical Garden in February

Letter from Christine Fremantle



Dear Editor

In reply to Bill Emmet's enquiry about the goats in the former deer enclosure, herewith a short history.

The deer were sent away and the goats brought from a forested area of Cumbria because of Forestry Commission works. Alas, within days, the visitors turned them into beggars and they lined the fence waiting for handouts instead of eating the weeds.

When foot and mouth disease arrived, an extra barrier was set up, about a metre from the fencing, and the goats had to take on the weeds and forgo the Mars bars.

They were soon moved on to join a herd of the same species on one of

the Frisian Islands in the North Sea.

That 'deer enclosure' was split in half when the Park was reorganised. I don't know what happened to the peacocks.

All the best

Christine Sapieha Fremantle

November 2022

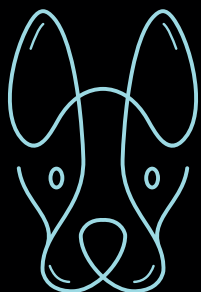
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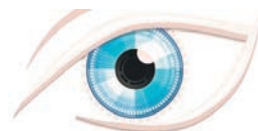
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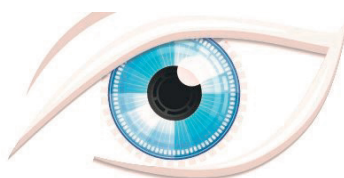
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Start the year walking slowly

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

I am writing this on my first day back at work in 2023. The pause over the Christmas and New Year holiday was a good time to reflect on what I do to engage with nature when left to my own devices. It turns out that what is key for me is what some people are now calling 'slow walking' or 'good walking', something I have done instinctively for as long as I can remember. It is about giving yourself the chance to make a connection with the environment by paying attention to the tiny details as well as the much wider view of the place you are in. As I walk, I look, listen and sometimes even feel the landscape I am moving through. It may be something you can try next time you are in the Park – it may even give you a refreshed experience of this familiar landscape.

Looking: one thing we often fail to do is consciously to look around as we walk. Firstly, look up and see what the sky is like. What is flying above and around you? Can you see insects moving around? If you need to put a name to what you see, there are helpful bird identification books that give silhouettes of birds in flight. A ten-year study that culminated in

a report in 2016 discovered that 3.5 trillion invertebrates annually migrate across the south of England at heights of between 150m and 1,200m above the ground. Then of course, in Battersea Park we are blessed with a huge diversity of trees, their canopies often filling the space above our heads. The leaf shapes and seasonally changing colours as well as their gentle movement can offer a different perspective on the space we are in. Then, looking down, take the opportunity to stop to look in detail at the smaller things such as ants or woodlice crossing the ground beneath us, or that small determined "weed" pushing through at the path edges. This past autumn has been exceptional for the wide range of fungi growing through the soil, and closer inspection allows you to see the wide range of colours and shapes they come in. And this isn't just a chance to tick off a list of things that you have done or seen; give yourself the time to stop and watch as that bumblebee moves from one individual flower to the next, or just allow yourself to sit or stand and stare absentmindedly as all of nature surrounds you.

Listening: obviously in the middle of a busy city the range of sounds that we hear won't all be natural but it can be surprising just how much you can differentiate if you allow yourself the time to focus. Now, in the earliest part of the year, it can be the best time to hear robins and blackbirds, especially as dusk is falling. There will doubtless be the rustle of squirrels dashing about through fallen leaves as they begin their courtships and mating rituals; you may even hear their bizarre hissing and squeaking noise if they are alarmed or cross. As well as the sounds of individual animals there will be varied noises made by the landscapes themselves. This is more noticeable perhaps if you are beside the lake and pools where the water flowing in or out or being moved by the wind, fountains and the aerators, makes a familiar sound. In the woodland, the sounds of leaves underfoot as you walk through, or the creaking of trees as they bend can help to remind you of where you are and how it differs from the surrounding streets. If you are able to pause, close your eyes to listen; the experience will be more immediate and the



sounds clearer to distinguish. It can help to restore your attention and concentration for when you return home or back to the office.

Feeling: now this aspect comes with the advice to be mindful when reaching out to touch natural things in the environment as some of them can scratch, sting or cause irritation and it's important when we touch not to pick or remove the thing itself. The diversity of ornamental planting in Battersea Park affords the chance to experience many varied leaf types, and bark textures but how many of you notice the variety of surfaces beneath your feet as you go? Being determined to go out for just 15 minutes every day will allow you to feel the sun on your face, the wind in your hair and even the rain in all its various forms

(and yes if you concentrate hard, the rain does feel different day to day). There is a reason the Inuit have a dozen words to refer to snow and a further ten for different types of ice (but please don't try to feel the ice that forms on lakes and ponds as you may fall in and get dangerously cold extremely quickly).

Smelling: the last sense I would advocate you use when exploring in the Park is your sense of smell. The Winter Garden by Sun Gate is a good place to test out this sense during the early part of the year as the planting here is specifically designed to offer scent as well as colour and interest. Many of the most fragrant flowers are apparent in the depths of winter – my favourites include the winter flowering honeysuckle which to me

smells how sherbet tastes and the wintersweet, sometimes called 'Japan all-spice'. I've planted one of these on my doorstep so even if I leave for work and return in the dark, I can still experience my small front garden through this wonderful scent.

However slow you can allow yourself to go, being in a more nature-filled landscape will help to improve your wellbeing. If you want to walk with others and to focus more on the physical benefits (which I haven't covered here) then the Enable Wellbeing Team runs a weekly volunteer led walk around the Park – you can find more details and book a place at www.enablelc.org/walkwandsworth



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Palettes, Palates and Feelings

Annabel B Stein



Where would we be without colour? It reflects our tastes, moods, clothes, politics and food, and of course forms glorious rainbows. I understand that people who are colour blind still see some form of colour. Intrigued, I thought I'd attempt to bring together some of these factors in a Nature to Nurture sort of way.

My SE1 friend and his bike are inseparable; he is also prone to the

black dog. Hence meeting up for a refuelling light lunch had to be two-wheeler friendly and raise his spirits. **The Black Cab** fitted the bill. It has its own cycle station so cyclists can keep a watchful eye on their treasure whilst sitting outside, overlooking the river and a real black cab! Once the three of us were settled, my friend went inside to order lunch leaving me to guard his Raleigh. As ever the Black Cab sandwich filled with bacon (pink), smashed avocado (green) and tomato (red) in their homemade sourdough bread (white) is a must for me, whilst he went for the same but with sliced chicken added. Both were wholesome and tasty, and it was particularly satisfying watching the dough being kneaded. Later, as we were both frozen and in need of a hot drink, he was impressed by the fact that the coffee beans were ground individually for each order. A while later, fearing his legs were turning into stalagmites, he decided to leave, though first declaring what an unexpectedly great find this outpost was. Apart from being bike friendly, it served such fresh good food, and

alcohol too which he'd declined earlier for fear of being caught drinking and cycling. He then pedalled away at great speed whilst I simply crossed the road and sauntered into Waitrose.

The Black Cab Coffee Co, 1 Riverlight Quay, Nine Elms, SW11 8AU. 020 7498 8760. Open daily from 7.00 am – 7.00 pm. Sandwiches £9.99. Breakfast and or Brunch from £13. Coffee from £3.

Feeling down? Just managing? In need of a culinary boost? Then wear something smartish and head for the **Bluebird Restaurant** which is guaranteed to blow away any cobwebs. Many may recall when this building was a garage with ambulances parked in the courtyard. This courtyard is now a large outdoor terrace adjacent to the café. Upstairs, under a structural red steel-framed ceiling, is a smart dining area set in a spacious interior of trees and flowers with a pretty bar running down the centre. I had planned to dine there with a friend at one of the widely separated tables

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in this sympathetic and uplifting room, but sadly a health issue meant I had to cancel. I had planned to order the venison en croute with pine nut puree, marinated beetroot, mushroom farci (£34) and I suspect my friend would have gone for one of the fish dishes, perhaps the roasted cod with leek fondue and champagne velouté (£23.50). Having eaten there last year I feel extremely confident that I can recommend their food as being first class and complemented by great service in a delightful setting. As Judy Garland sang in *The Wizard of Oz* and Vera Lynn in *The White Cliffs of Dover* and as various WW2 'Bluebird' books depicting airmen and women illustrated, these birds are true symbols of hope, peace and happiness. NB Bluebird of Happiness Day is on 24 September!

Bluebird Chelsea, 350 Kings Road, SW3 5UU. 020 7559 1000. *Restaurant open for dinner daily from 5.30 pm – 10.00 pm. They also serve lunch, brunch and afternoon tea.*

The golfer and I decided to spend a cosy evening catching up on a special box set. So, nothing better than to order a Chinese home-delivery to consume with our planned marathon. On occasions like this, **Golden City**, specialising in Cantonese cooking, comes into its own. All I had to do was extract its leaflet from my 'take-away' collection and phone. We usually plump for one of their Special Set Dinners for 2. This time it was 'D' (£49) which included crispy duck, barbecued spareribs, sweet & sour chicken, beef, spring rolls, fried

rice and stir-fried vegetables. My favourite was the crispy duck with all its accompaniments. The duck was as juicy and succulent as ever, the pancakes nicely skinny and the spring onions slender, green and young. The golfer specially loved the tender spareribs with their liberal brown thick and slightly spicy sauce. It was truly a sunshine evening thanks to the generously portioned delicious feast, which arrived piping hot, a splendid 3-hour streaming movie and a glass or two of wine!

Golden City, 162 Battersea Park Road, SW11 4ND. 020 7627 0342/020 8425 1124. *Open from 5.00 pm to 12 midnight, closed Tuesdays. Free local deliveries and a bag of prawn crackers for orders over £25.*

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Friends Autumn Lunchtime Lecture

Sandy Copland



Marbled White

With a welcome return to the Ethelburga Community Centre (despite the difficulties in getting in!) Friends were treated to a fascinating lecture on Butterflies of Battersea Park and South-West London by Simon Saville. Simon is Chairman of the local branch of Butterfly Conservation, is a Ranger for National Park City and is involved with many aspects of wildlife conservation in south-west London.

He told us that Burgess Park in Camberwell is good place for monitoring butterflies; in 1986 21 different species were observed. There are now more than 25 species, which fall into seven different categories, many of which can also be seen in Battersea Park. They include:

- hibernators, such as the familiar Red Admiral, which spend the winter as adults and are usually the first to emerge on sunny days in the spring
- whites, which include the well-known Cabbage White
- canopy species such as White-letter Hairstreak, which live at the

top of elm and oak trees and are best observed on a calm evening in July or August

- migrants such as Painted Lady which fly at a height of several hundred metres to North Africa in the autumn before they (or their recently born children) return in the spring to exactly the same place.

Other species to look out for are the Marbled White, which particularly likes wildflowers, and the very small Brown Argus.

Less welcome visitors are box tree moths which come from Asia and oak processionary moths from Europe: in both cases, their caterpillars devastate the foliage of the host plant.

Climate change means that, some butterflies, particularly Comma and Brown Argus, are now found further north, but in smaller numbers than in the south.

Contrary to what one might expect, Simon explained that London, and urban areas generally, are more attractive to butterflies than the countryside. Of Greater London, 47% including 22% Green Belt, is considered to be 'green'. This figure includes private gardens. There are 143 local nature reserves and three national nature reserves in the city. Butterflies prefer urban areas as they tend to be warmer, wildflowers are plentiful on brownfield sites and there are numerous ponds and lakes. In contrast, the countryside has intensive agriculture, with a greater use of fertiliser and pesticides, resulting in the loss and fragmentation of suitable habitat.

Battersea Park provides a good environment for butterflies, particularly on the east side adjacent to Queenstown Road and near the Rosery Gate where several elm trees have regenerated.

Simon recommended cut and collect mowing, coppicing the ash in the south of the Park and cutting nettles to refresh them. A wildlife meadow could be created near the Tea Terrace Café using a native flower mix and cutting late in the season. The open area adjacent to North Carriage Drive, north-west of the cricket pavilion, could be planted with annuals to provide flowers in year one but perennials are better for wildlife in year two and after. In the banks and pond glades in the east, he suggested scraping off the topsoil and seeding with meadow mix, cutting and clearing for planting alder and buckthorn in winter,

The environment for butterflies could be further improved if local gardens and allotments could provide the following:

- flowers that produce nectar for adult butterflies
- food for caterpillars such as nettles, thistles, ivy and nasturtiums
- shelter for overnight and in poor weather
- no chemicals
- a pond - however small: 'build it and they will come!' he said.

Simon emphasised that what is good for insects is good for all wildlife. He concluded that, perhaps surprisingly, London is good for wildlife. He recommended the work of Big City Butterflies, through the website Butterfly Conservation, and the app iRecord Butterflies.

Notes and illustrations for the lecture can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/SimonSavilleTalk>

Jean Orr, a Friend, has agreed to do a regular transect (butterfly monitoring) walk. This will begin in April and should be done weekly until September, repeated every year.

A few words...



A few words from our new trustee, Miles Kerstein: 'I have lived in Battersea for only a few years but already it feels like home. I have a passion for nature and wildlife and feel blessed to have

both on our doorstep thanks to Battersea Park. I am looking forward to getting stuck in and working with the Friends to help make the best park in London even more wonderful!'

Friends of Battersea Park Committee

- Fenella Barber **(Review)**
- Karen Buckle **(Events)**
- Russ Coffey **(Web)**
- Inge Darling **(Children)**
- Adrian Flook **(Treasurer)**
- Miles Kerstein **(Wildlife)**
- Peta May Law **(BBQ)**
- Juliet Lyon-Smith **(Secretary)**
- Michèle Marriott JP **(Events)**
- Sara Milne **(Horticulture)**
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Events

MAR	Thursday 9 to Sunday 12 Battersea Evolution	Affordable Art Fair See ad on page 15
	Saturday 19 & Sunday 20 Chelsea Car Park	Bungee Jump From £99
	Monday 20 Lunch from 12.15. Lecture from 1.00 to 2.00pm Ethelburga Community Centre, 60 Worfield Street, SW11 4RA Important – venue may be changed. Check website.	The Friends' Spring Lunchtime Lecture Tom Davis on British Waterfowl. Tickets @ £7.00 and a pre-ordered lunch @ £6.00 from friendsofbatterseapark.org/events . Info from info@friendsofbatterseapark.org or 020 7622 5199
APR	Saturday 29 & Sunday 30 Battersea Evolution	London Comic Con and Gaming Festival
	Saturday 29 & Sunday 30 Chelsea Bridge Car Park	Bungee Jump From £99
MAY	Saturday 6 & Sunday 7 Chelsea Bridge Car Park	Bungee Jump From £99
	Tuesday 9 to Sunday 14 Battersea Evolution	The Decorative Fair See advertisement on back page
	Wednesday 10 Old English Garden 6pm to 7.30pm	Drinks Party for Friends to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III See separate invitation. RSVP friendsofbatterseapark.org
	Monday 23 to Saturday 27	Chelsea Flower Show week so car parks busy
JUNE	Wednesday 7 4pm to 10pm from Bandstand	Race for Life for Cancer Research 1,000 runners
	Sunday 11 Meet at Albert Gate at 2pm. £5 on the day	Guided Walk as part of Wandsworth Heritage Festival Email fhradcliffe@gmail.com to book
	Tuesday 13 Bowling Green 6pm to 9pm	Friends' 16th Annual Barbecue Live music and free children's activities. Tickets £20 per person, £10 for children aged 5-16, children under 5 free. Family ticket (2 adults, 2 children) £55. Enquiries: secretary@friendsofbatterseapark.org or 07495 542399
	Saturday 17 Peace Pagoda 2pm – 5pm	Annual ceremony with Buddhist traditions Messages, speeches, devotional music, tea
	Saturday 24 and Sunday 25 Bandstand 10.30 to 8.30pm	Summer in Battersea Park Live Music
	Wednesday 26 Bandstand 3.30 – 9pm	Run Through 500 runners
	Wednesday 26 Bandstand 3.30 – 9pm	Run Through 500 runners
JULY	Saturday 1 Bowling Green	Summer in Battersea Park
	Sunday 2 Date tbc (may be Sunday 9) Bowling Green - register from 10.30am; judging from noon to approx. 4.30pm	Wandsworth Parks Police Dog Show All dogs welcome. The Friends' prize for the best trick
	Wednesday 5 & Thursday 6 Car Parks close at 5pm Race begins 6.45pm	J P Morgan Challenge Beware 10,000 runners each night
	Saturday 8 and Sunday 9 Bowling Green 10.30am to 8.30pm	Summer in Battersea Park
NOV	Monday 13 Ethelburga Community Centre Full details in Review 125	The Friends' Autumn Lunchtime Lecture Edward Milner on Spiders in London



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