

FRIENDS OF BATTERSEA PARK REVIEW

Issue 126
Autumn/Winter 2023



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BATTERSEA PARK

Review

Autumn/Winter 2023



Editor Frances Radcliffe
Production Lydia Jones

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Hurrah for the oldest Friend of Battersea Park, Christian Lamb, taking to the air at the age of 103!

Summer weather lasted an unusually long time this year but there is no doubt now that we are in autumn. This too is a lovely time to be in the Park, especially if you can be there just as it stops raining. You will have it almost to yourself. You may even see a double rainbow, as on the cover of this issue.

A report of our AGM is on page 8. The search for a new Chair to replace Garon is expected to conclude in November. A final Council decision on Parkrun is also expected in November.

It always used to be the case that fireworks on the Saturday closest to 5 November was largest single event run by Enable. There are now two firework events. The smaller family event on Sunday, introduced two years ago, seems to work well and is much more suitable for smaller children. Extensive preparations will be underway as, or shortly before, you receive this issue.

There was another major three-day event this year first the first time. It's good to be able to report that the open air concerts over the August Bank Holiday weekend were a great success. The Friends do not want too many events in the Park but Battersea Park in Concert seems to have bought happiness to many, partly of course, because of its beautiful setting. See page 16 for more information.

Currently, there is much in the news that is deeply upsetting and unsettling. Are there some areas where things have become better? The answer must be 'yes'. Bob Barker's interesting article on page 7 is a case in point. It shines a light on Battersea Fields (which became Battersea Park) in 1847. A cock-shy man aged 21 and his young lady aged 18 were found guilty of felonious assault and robbery. They were sentenced to ten years' transportation to Australia.

The plane tree avenues in the Park are one of its glories. For more information, see pages 10-11 where you will also find the link to Clive Freedman's interactive tree map. It was described as 'brilliant' by Antony Jones, Enable's Tree Officer for the Park.

A reminder that the Autumn Lunchtime Lecture on 'Spiders in London' is on 13 November at the Ethelburga Community Centre. There are over 650 species of spider in the UK. The speaker, Edward Milner, is a leading authority on these extraordinary creatures.

Enjoy the Park!

Friends' Contacts

Enquiries: Secretary
FoBP
c/o 32 Brynmaer Rd
London SW11 4EW
07495 542399
info@friendsofbatterseapark.org
batterseapark.org

Letters: Editor
Friends' Review
32 Brynmaer Road
London
SW11 4EW

Review: media@friendsofbatterseapark.org
batterseapark.org

Advertising: 07816 460744

Membership: membership@friendsofbatterseapark.org

Twitter: @batterseapark

Park Contacts

Park Office: Staff Yard
Battersea Park
SW11 4NJ
020 3959 0076
parks@enablelc.org

Park Events: enablelc.org
020 3959 0013

Parks Police

parkspolice@wandsworth.gov.uk

Non-emergency incidents: 101

Patrolling mob: 07500 959442

General Enqs: 020 8871 7532

Wandsworth Borough Council: 020 8871 6000

Cover Image:

Double Rainbow over the Park on 14 October 2023

Parkwatch



Big Dipper Tragedy Memorial

Survivors of the crash and others affected by the tragedy are very keen to have a permanent memorial in the Park, for which they would raise funds. This is in addition to the cherry tree near the Tea Terrace Café which was planted on 30 May 2022, 50 years after the disaster which killed five children.

The Steering Group has settled on the idea of an open air theatre where children could perform and play. The current plan is to have banked, grass seating; but there are no designs to consider at this early stage. Two areas have been identified as possible sites: the south side of the mound south-west of Chelsea Gate, looking towards the tennis courts and secondly, the mound south of the Tea Terrace. The latter is the preferred site. The Bowling Green has also been considered but it is rented out and also used a great deal by Enable for various free events.

We are assuming that Historic England would need to approve any work in the Park and that planning permission would be required for any structures but until there is a clear proposal, nothing is certain.

Cascades and Ladies Pond

If successful, the proposed bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund should lead to restoring the fragile Pulhamite rocks and improving the Ladies Pond. A detailed application has been with the Council for many months and at the time of writing has still not been submitted to the Fund. There may of course be good reasons for this, but matched funding should be in place because it was intended that money from Formula E be ring-fenced for this purpose. Chairman Garon Watkins has written to Councillor Judi Gasser asking what has happened to the bid and pressing for it to go forward.

Ladies Swamp

The photograph of the Ladies Pond above was taken on 7 October. Clearly, it contains no water. The problem may have been caused by a broken borehole switch which is being repaired. By the time you read this, we hope the water will be back to normal levels. The Ladies Pond is a particularly attractive part of the Park. Treat yourself to another look at page 24 of our history of the Park to see beautifully dressed skaters on the pond in about 1880: snow,

long skirts, top hats and a fine view of the Pump House. No chance of anything similar now as a result of climate change.

Yews

Good news! Darren from Modern Mint has again clipped the topiary yews in the Russell Page Garden, funded by the Friends. The heads of the peacocks are beginning to take shape.

Winter Garden

We expect to hear shortly whether Enable's bid for £92,000 for permanent fencing in the Winter Garden has been successful. The green plastic temporary fencing is deeply unattractive but it is essential to protect the borders. It would be good to have this issue resolved.

The garden is looking better than it has since the Covid-19 lockdown when it was badly damaged. Recently, Thrive have been able to run almost weekly corporate mornings, usually weeding in the garden alongside volunteers from the Friends in their new 'Friends of Battersea Park Volunteer' shirts. On 4 October, we were joined by the charming robin above.



(photo opposite) resulting in someone being admitted to hospital for the night. She had an amazingly lucky escape. On the plus side, a number of special trees have recently been planted.

New All-weather Cricket Pitch

Over the next three years, 100 pitches will be funded across England and Wales as part of a joint collaboration between the England and Wales Cricket Board and funding partner KP Snacks. The initiative was launched in August with the new pitch in the Park.

Filming

Look out for the Fairy advertisement filmed in the Old English Garden

Sad News

Christine Fremantle, designer of the Friends' logo and saviour of the Children's Zoo, died in August and Henrietta Croker Poole, who did so much for the Battersea Summer Scheme for under-privileged children, the Battersea Crime Prevention Panel and the Panel's fund raising annual ball, died in October. Both were exceptional people.

Designer, Dan Pearson, will be making his annual visit to the Winter Garden on 14 December.

Parkrun

By the end of November, Wandsworth Council is expected to have made a formal decision on whether to allow a Saturday 9am parkrun in the Park. The Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee meets on 23 November; the key paper will be available around 9 November. If this goes ahead, Friends hope that there

will be a trial period of 6 months.

Green Flag

Following award results in July, the prestigious Green Flag continues to fly over the Park. The award is an internationally recognised quality mark for parks and green spaces.

Trees

Our famous Strawberry Tree has lost another limb. A large ash south of the drive between Chelsea Gate and the car park fell suddenly in September



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Battersea Fields in 1847

Bob Barker

Before Battersea Park was created, it was part of Battersea Common Fields, a much wilder and more lawless place. The development of the Park is quite well documented, but the history of Battersea Fields rather less so. The classic of local history *Our Lady of Batersey* (1925) stated in a footnote that 'Prize-fighting, gambling, immorality and disorders of the vilest kinds rendered the place positively disgraceful', although without providing much direct evidence. However, the records of an Old Bailey trial in 1847 do provide a distinctly Dickensian insight into the area in its last days, when the 1846 Battersea Park Act had already been passed, but just before the development began.

Battersea Fields had long been known as 'a great holiday resort', with several

inns and beer houses, including the notorious Old Red House tavern down by the river. During the trial, Police Constable V.118 testified that: *'There is a kind of fair there the whole of the summer, with horse-riding, swings, target-shooting, with nuts and all that kind of thing'.*

That kind of thing also included a 'cock-shy' tent, something like a coconut-shy, though the targets may no longer have been actual cockerels as they had once been. The proprietor of a thriving coffee stall, who lived 'on a barge in the dock in Battersea Fields', gave evidence that he often served the young man (aged 21) who ran the cock-shy, together with a particular young woman (aged 18). This pair were now in the dock: he was charged with assault and robbery,

and she with being an accessory.

There was no gas-light in Battersea Fields (and of course, no electricity), and unsurprisingly there were very different accounts of what exactly had happened one moonlit Saturday night in August, but it certainly involved threats, violence and money, either three or about five shillings (equivalent to at least £25 today). The cock-shy man's defence was that he had been unjustly accused by a possibly naive and probably drunk teenager (aged 19) who had picked up his young lady, 'treated' her at the Red House, and given her three shillings, but then turned nasty when she had not allowed him to take any 'indecent liberties', so the youth had to be firmly told to desist, although he then went and called the police,



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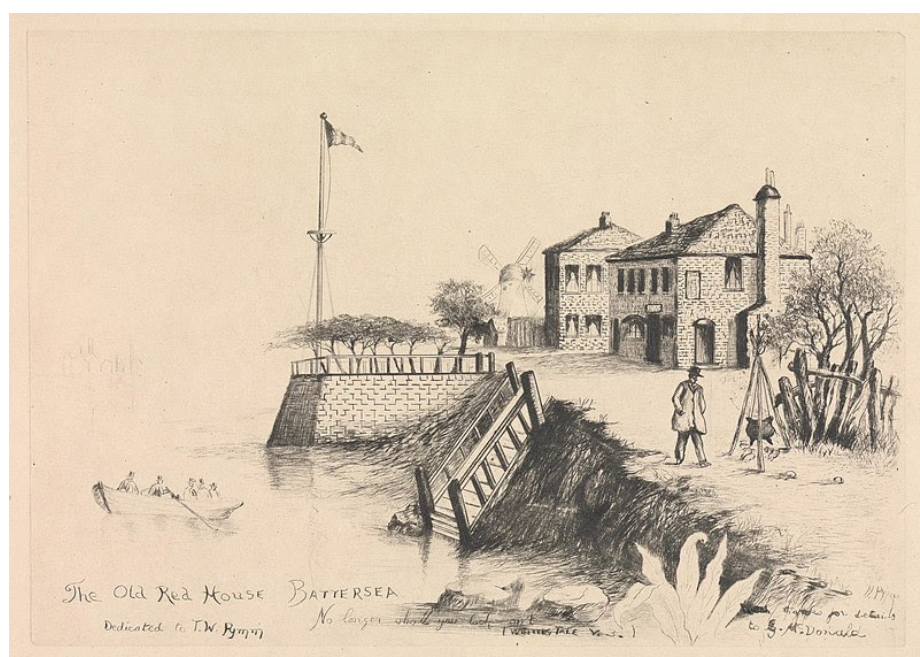




alleging assault and robbery.

This young man came from a respectable family who lived in Hanover Square; perhaps they could afford a good lawyer for their wayward son. His mother was actually a cousin of Thomas Cubitt, who was a leading figure in the current project to develop and 'civilise' the area in and around Battersea Fields; he in fact leased the Red House as part of his local property speculation, and no doubt to prevent the kind of indecorous incident in which his young cousin had become involved.

In his version of the incident, Cubitt's relative said he had barely spoken to the young woman, and had been the blameless victim of threatening demands for money by up to a dozen men and a dog. This version was evidently the one accepted by the court, and the cock-shy man and his young lady were duly found guilty of felonious assault and robbery. They were sentenced to ten years' transportation and, as if that was not enough, they were transported to a harsh life in Tasmania separately: she was one of 170 female convicts



shipped out on HMS Female Convict Ship Elizabeth and Henry in 1848, while he was sent with 300 other male convicts on the Rodney, three years later. If they ever came back (as not many did), they would doubtless have found their old haunts in Battersea Fields almost unrecognisable.

In an ironic postscript to the story, their alleged victim of assault and robbery himself went to Australia,

though in his case voluntarily, on an Assisted Passage in 1854, intending to start a new life. He had been married a few months after the trial and then presumably widowed, since he married again in Sydney in 1855. He was working as an engineer by 1861, went bankrupt, was a builder in 1862-9 and then died of a fever in 1870, aged 42. He still has descendants in Australia.

AGM and Open Forum Discussion – 12 September 2023



On 12 September, 41 Friends met in All Saints Church, Prince of Wales Drive for our AGM chaired by Garon Watkins, followed as usual by our Open Forum discussion. We were joined by Neil Blackley, Enable's Head of Parks and Inspector Steve Biggs from the Parks and Events Police Service

The Friends approved the Minutes of the last AGM, the Trustees Report and Accounts for 2022/23, and the appointment of George Coe as independent examiner for the 23/24 accounts. Garon explained that the process of finding a new chairman to replace him was still ongoing. Adrian Flook was re-elected as treasurer and Juliet Lyon-Smith was re-elected as secretary, both for a further period of three years. The Friends also approved the appointment of Miles Kerstein (co-opted in January) and Kate Bock as trustees.

Garon thanked Michèle Marriott who was standing down as a trustee after 15 years. He also thanked Russ Coffey for redesigning our website and Clive Freedman for developing an interactive tree map. Hallam Murray noted that Christine Fremantle, a longstanding trustee who had designed the Friends' logo

and campaigned to save the Children's Zoo, had died in August.

After a break for refreshments, Garon chaired the Open Forum where Friends put various points and questions to Neil and Steve. Neil had a Tree Team and an Operations Team of 21 people working across the Borough. Steve had a team of nine officers working two eight-hour shifts per day with two officers on duty per shift; and an additional 12 reserve constables who could be drawn in as necessary.

A Friend felt that police numbers should be increased in response to the increase in population around the Park and regretted that their office was no longer in the centre of the Park. Steve said that crime and disorder were priorities for the new Council and he'd pass the message back. He confirmed that the office in the Staff Yard is not staffed 24/7 but people could ring the Parks Police mobile on 07500 959442, email the office or alert police when they saw them in the Park. In an emergency, dial 999.

Another Friend felt that cycling was out of control, particularly with electric bikes and that 'no cycling signs' were still unclear and not always in the right places. Police

patrolling in a van could not tackle illegal cycling because cyclists would see the van and comply with the rules until it moved away. Steve said that 48 Fixed Penalty Notices had been issued for unauthorised cycling over the last year. The words 'no cycling' always accompany the sign. Neil agreed that improvements could be made and advised that Enable have just completed a signage audit across the borough to improve visibility and content. Messages needed to be clear but it was important not to have too many signs in the Park. Enable were pursuing the problem of abandoned bikes with Lime.

Several Friends raised strong objections to Wandsworth Council's proposed introduction of a Saturday 9am Parkrun and the nature of the consultation. In a lengthy discussion, particular concerns were

Friends of Battersea Park Committee

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Karen Buckle **(Events)**
Julia Camara **(Dogs)**
Russ Coffey **(Web)**
Inge Darling **(Children)**
Adrian Flook **(Treasurer)**
Miles Kerstein **(Wildlife)**
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Briony Newman
(Social Media)
Sally Orman **(Advertising)**
Frances Radcliffe
(Review/Planning)
Annabel Stein **(Membership)**
Garon Watkins **(Chairman)**

the quantities of runners likely to be involved, obstruction to regular Park users, traffic and parking problems affecting nearby streets etc. Garon confirmed that the Friends had not changed their neutral position adopted in 2018. Given the wide range of views, all Friends had been urged to respond individually to the Council consultation so that their points could be considered. Neil said that the Council and not Enable will decide whether Parkrun is comes to Battersea; the results of the consultation were not expected until November.

Neil advised that more information on Wandsworth Council's bid to become Borough of Culture 2025 and how this might affect the Park

would be provided when it became available.

Lack of lavatories and resulting antisocial behaviour was an increasing problem. Neil agreed and said that the provision of more lavatories in the Pear Tree Café was being considered.

A Friend asked about controlling the rising number of very large gatherings in the Park. Neil acknowledged that the rules were difficult to enforce. Gazebos were not permitted unless authorised by Enable's Events Team which would follow specific guidelines with designated areas and proper safety measures.


A Friend asked what had happened to the proposed Heritage Lottery Fund bid to improve the Cascades and the

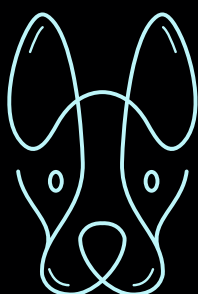
Ladies Pond and about management of the swans. Neil advised that the Heritage Lottery bid was with the Council but had stalled for a number of reasons, with no update for when the proposal will be submitted. No action would be taken to secure a new mate for our now lone male swan. Swans were wild birds which could come and go as they pleased. If there were particular issues, such as an injury to a swan, Enable would work with the Swan Sanctuary and the RSPB to determine the best way forward.

Garon concluded the meeting by thanking Friends present, Neil and Steve for their contributions to the discussions.

0207 228 1268

padspawsandclawspetgrooming@gmail.com
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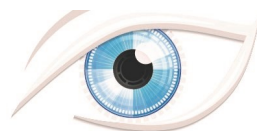


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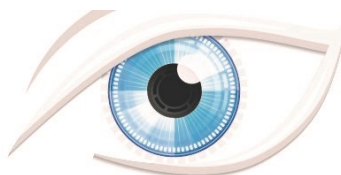
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Plane Trees in Battersea Park

Clive Freedman and Brian Livingstone

The Plane trees that line the avenues are unmistakable with their broad sycamore-like leaves and flaking bark. They are home to numerous invertebrates and the parakeets have nesting holes in some. Their seeds covering the ground in spring are perhaps, less welcome. These are London Planes – a cross-breed of the Eurasian Plane (*Platanus orientalis*) and the North American Plane (*P. occidentalis*). When and where they were first raised is uncertain. Their Latin name (*Platanus x hispanica*) reflects the view that it was in Spain around 300 – 400 years ago. One of the oldest specimens in the UK is 'Barney', planted in Barn Elms in about 1675. Planes are one of the commonest species of tree in the streets, squares and parks of London.

The trees in the Central Avenue are believed to have been planted around 1909, to replace an avenue of elms. Some of those lining the Carriage Drives are older and may have been part of the original planting in the 1860s. The 550 or so Planes are the

commonest tree species in the Park.

The tallest of our Planes is about 35 metres, and the girth of the widest exceeds 5 metres. Growth rates of trees depend on various factors such as soil conditions, proximity of other trees, light, and weather conditions.

The large leaves have 3 or 5 lobes, with 3 or more teeth on each lobe, and they are very variable. They are attached singly on alternate sides of the stem, distinguishing them from Sycamores which have them attached in opposite pairs (Fig.1).

The leaf stalk and the flower and seed heads have distinctive botanical features. Look closely where the stalk joins a twig and it is expanded like a hood. If removed, next year's bud is exposed. The flower heads are fuzzy balls in clusters of 2 to 4. Each ball is either all male or female flowers (on the same tree). A female head is illustrated (Fig.2) and the red structures are the pistils of each flower that receive the pollen blown to them from the male flowers. Those

insects which are around early in the year may help, but they are not required. The fertilized seeds stay on the cluster and mature over winter to fall in huge numbers about March. Although they have feathery hairs to aid wind dispersal they tend to fall mostly by the trees. Although the trees are hybrid, the seed is fertile so seedlings do occur – one can be seen in the embankment wall at Ransome's Dock. In the city, most seeds end up on paved surfaces and never germinate. In nurseries, Planes are grown from cuttings.

We also have a few Oriental Planes, distinguishable by their deeper lobed leaves (Fig.3). Examples can be seen outside the Old English Garden at the north-eastern and south-eastern corners.

There are some grotesque short but very wide planes (Baobab planes) (Fig.4). They are cultivated forms, once widely planted as novelties in Victorian times. It is thought (but not confirmed) that the deformity is the result of a plant virus infection.



Fig 1. Leaf of a London Plane



Fig 2. Female flower of an Oriental Plane

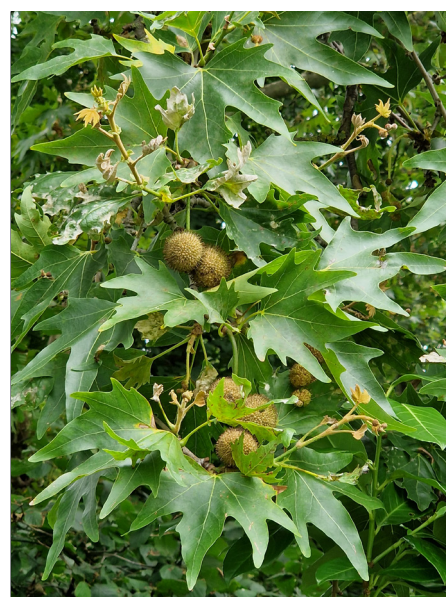


Fig 3. Leaf of an Oriental Plane (north-east of Old English Garden)

One of the reasons why so many Planes have been planted in London is their tolerance of pollution. The tree's leaves and bark function as filters absorbing pollutants such as nitrogen oxides and particles.

If you look at the trunk of an old Plane tree, you will typically see that on one side the bark has ridges and crevices, and on the other side the bark is smooth, with a mosaic-like pattern, as a result of plates of bark having fallen from the trunk. You could use this feature to navigate, as the smooth side in London is usually the south side. Differing levels of sunlight may be a factor contributing to this, but there may also be other causes.

The bark provides a home to many organisms. You can see different kinds of moss and lichen, and if you look closely you may see tiny mushrooms growing in the moss. The crevices in the bark provide a home for different kinds of spiders, and many trunks have spiders' webs on them. On

some trees you may see pear-shaped spiders' egg sacs (Fig 5). The bark is also a home to slugs, caterpillars, ants, bugs, centipedes, earwigs, barklice and silverfish. In rainy weather you may see snails of two or three species on the trunks. You may see the 7mm Plane tree bug (*Arocatus roeselii*) on the trunks both as a larva and an adult (Fig 6). In the summer you may occasionally see small moths on the bark, such as the tiny Plane tree leaf-miner (*Phyllonorycter platani*), the larvae of which leave blotches on the leaves, and the Spindle ermine moth (*Yponomeuta cagnagella*) which defoliates Spindle bushes.

If you look above you, in particular on North Carriage Drive, on a number of trees you can see the dark fruit bodies of the Shaggy Bracket fungus.

This summer, a powdery mildew has caused leaves on Plane trees to wilt, and the trees are showing very few flower-balls. This may be the result of the trees being in a weakened state after the drought in summer 2022.

The Oriental Planes seem to have been less badly affected.

In the last 10-15 years some Plane trees in London have been affected by the fungus infection, Massaria Disease. This breaks into the wood on the upper surface of older branches where they join the trunk. Other fungi may have paved the way and take advantage to grow and destroy more wood. This cannot easily be seen from the ground, so the trees are now periodically inspected from a platform to be diagnosed before enough damage occurs for the branch to fall.

At www.treesofbatterseapark.org you can access an interactive map which shows the location of some of the trees mentioned here, and also shows trees and shrubs of interest in particular months of the year.

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



Fig 4. Over-sized trunk of a London Plane beside South Carriage Drive



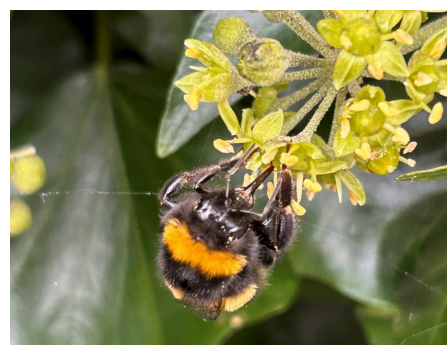
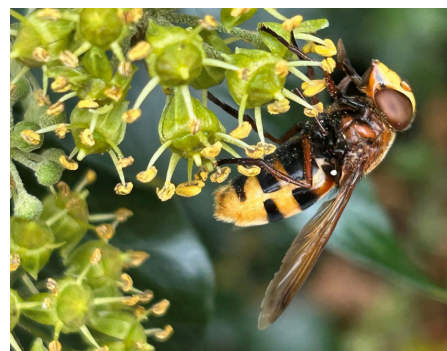
Fig 5. Spider egg



Fig 6. Plane tree bug

Autumn Wildlife

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



First and top right images: hoverbees; Middle image: ivy bees; Bottom right image: a bumblebee

As we head towards autumn once again (is it me or are the years moving past ever quicker these days?) many visitors may assume that there is less wildlife to be spotted in the Park. This is far from the case. There is still a wide variety of species to see. To begin with, why not visit one of the wooded areas, particularly where we have ivy, which is alive with pollinators at this time of the year. Ivy begins to flower around now, and the flowering period lasts until February providing vital nectar and pollen right through the winter. This is increasingly valuable as the persistent warmer winter temperatures mean that many pollinators remain productive all year round and might otherwise struggle for a food source. Not only will you spot various bumblebees and wasps but there are also many species of hoverfly and solitary bee to be seen too.

Any permanent planting is also host to significant numbers of spiders who are easily spotted at this time of year

as their webs hold onto the dew in the early mornings. The imaginatively named garden spider is perhaps the most obvious with a white cross mark on its back. The silk used to make their webs is amazingly lightweight: a strand of silk long enough to go all the way around the Earth would weigh less than 500 grams.

This prevalence of invertebrates means we have a continuous food source within the Park for predators such as bats. We are currently working with a PhD student who is undertaking a study of the species diversity and abundance of bats in London parks, including Battersea Park. Using bat detectors to detect the species and numbers of bats in certain parts of the Park, the plan is to gather data for an extended period. Early indications are that bats remain periodically active throughout the whole year in the darker parts of the Park.

In order to get a better up-to-date baseline of all the biodiversity

in the Park, this autumn we will also be working with Greengage Environmental to undertake a preliminary ecological appraisal (PEA) alongside a study of a range of species including bats, birds and terrestrial mammals. We will be using a variety of detectors over a 6-week period to give us a clear picture of animal behaviour during this time, in addition to presence or absence information. This may also begin to help us understand if there are any significant impacts on biodiversity e.g. from the Fireworks. This will be the first comprehensive study of biodiversity in the Park for a significant period of time and I will be interested to see what 'fresh eyes' can tell us about somewhere where we work and visit daily.

I look forward to updating you on the survey results in a future issue of Review.

As always, if you have any questions do drop us a line at biodiversity@enablelc.org

Greg Packman's 'Trees and Biodiversity' Walk on 23 September

Clive Freedman

Greg Packman has been leading tree walks since 2016. He was originally a tree officer but now works in the Royal Parks. Some Friends had been on his excellent walks elsewhere, and were keen to invite him to our Park.

A group of 17 people met at Chelsea Gate, and went first to examine the Common Walnut which is close by (not to be confused with the Black Walnuts which grow around the Cricket Pavilion). The Romans used to take walnuts with them as these trees grow fast and produce at a young age nuts which are easy to store and transport. Fruit can usually be seen on this tree in June and July. Greg invited us to identify the smell when we crushed a leaf, and then revealed that we were smelling a natural insect repellent, a volatile oil which walnuts and some other trees produce to reduce depredation by insects which eat the leaves. He pointed out galls on the leaves produced by a kind of mite (Fig 1) – these do no lasting damage to the tree.

We then looked at a Shaggy Bracket fungus on a London Plane – these grow high up the trunk on a number of the London Planes in the avenues (we later looked at another on the Ornamental Apple tree in the Thrive Garden on East Carriage Drive). These fungi start orange and then go black as they get older. The many crevices and fissure in the bark of a London Plane and the decay caused in the immediate vicinity of the fungus

enable these trees to provide a habitat for other species such as spiders. Stag beetles may live beneath the bark at the base of a tree for 5 years or more before they reach the adult stage. We also looked at the powdery mildew which this year is disfiguring the leaves on the London Planes, possibly indirectly caused by last year's summer drought.

Further along North Carriage Drive we stopped at an unhealthy Rowan, with leaves falling prematurely and no red berries. The Rowan belongs to the Rose family, along with cherry trees, apple and blackberry. The nectar of the white flowers in spring is enjoyed by insect pollinators. The Rowan is used as a street tree, but may only live for about 20 years. We saw wasps feeding on sap bleeding from the trunk of the tree.

Further west was a Holly which had spines on the lower leaves but not the upper leaves. The spines are a defence against depredation. The leaves of Holly and other trees contain gravity-sensing cells.

Next we looked at a Hazel with numerous stems, west of the entrance to the Zoo. This tree had been coppiced some years ago. Coppicing is a traditional form of woodland management where trees or shrubs are repeatedly cut at the base and allowed to regrow. The cut stems can be used for fencing or for making baskets and tool handles. Cutting the stems allows

light to reach the soil, so new plants can grow from dormant seeds.

We paused in East Carriage Drive to look at the impressive Shaggy Bracket fungus on the ornamental Apple tree in Thrive's garden (Fig 2).

In Central Avenue, we looked at eggs of Ero spiders hanging from a tiny thread in a crevice in the bark of a London Plane before stopping at the Catalpa, or Indian Bean Tree, north of the Pump House. It has long seeds which look like beans but are not edible. There was a narrow crack in one of its branches, which would be wide enough to provide a home for bats.

South of the athletics track is a very large Eucalyptus. These trees grow fast but are bad for biodiversity as their roots deplete the soil, and the tree's highly flammable oils can cause forest fires. The smoke can trigger germination of dormant seeds lying in the soil.

We then walked north to a Silver Birch, a pioneer species which is one of the first to grow when an area has been cleared of vegetation, but they do less well when slower maturing trees grow up beside them.

Greg commended those managing trees in the Park for leaving some trunks of dead trees standing in order to provide a habitat for insects and fungi. Greg Packman's website is at <https://www.gregtalkstrees.com/>.

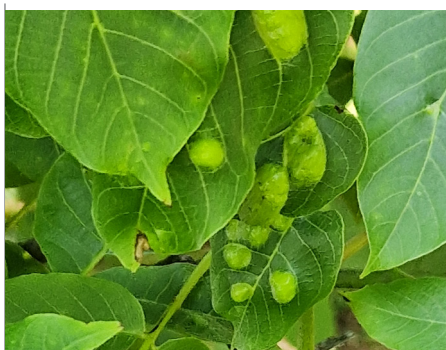


Fig 1.



Fig 2.



Eating By Numbers

Annabel B Stein



In bygone days, once settled in a restaurant, a three-course meal was a given: starter, main course and pudding. Now when the menu arrives, two courses seem to be the norm with each diner deciding on either the starter or pudding to accompany their main. I've noticed too how many more restaurants offer separate two or three course prix fixe menus. Whether this started as a cost cutting or weight watching exercise now there is a legal requirement to display calorie counts, a need to cut back on waste food, or the all-day grazing trend is difficult to say: perhaps a mix of all four? Thus, with numbers in mind, I decided to try a few of the restaurants within easy reach of Battersea Park which have opted to be defined by a number instead of a name.

Where to go for a traditional Sunday Roast, with a pug, which wasn't a pub? **No 29** (Power Station West) was one answer. This behemoth of a room with a mixture of tables, armchairs, sofas, central bar, and an open kitchen at the back, is extremely friendly, popular and efficiently run, with a menu and wine list to suit all tastes. As Sunday brunch is served until 4pm we weren't sure whether to Roast or Brunch. After deliberation, the golfer chose the 28-day aged topside of beef roast

(£21) followed by the cheese board (three choices) (£14); and I the free range roast chicken (£21) followed by the pear & blackberry crumble (£6). We were very happy with our tasty and generous portions and certainly intend to return to try other things on their menu from dips, salads, burgers, pies, fish etc. No 29 also has a large downstairs lounge which can be hired for private events including conferences and office meetings.

No 29 Power Station West, 29 Circus West Village, Battersea Power Station, SW11 8NN. 020 3857 9872. Open Monday – Thursday and Sunday 9am – midnight; Friday and Saturday, 9am – 1am.

After my recent visit to the luxurious Everyman Cinema in the Kings Road, I peeped into **28-50** (Kings Road) opposite and liking the look of the elegant interior with its courtyard at the rear, booked a table for lunch the following day. The premises, which were first a bank and then Byron, have a sophisticated central wine area surrounded by spacious tables and my younger daughter and I sat at a comfortable table by the window. From the special lunch menu (two courses for £19.95 or three for £22.95 though a la carte menu is also offered) she chose the tomato and olive salad followed by the corn fed chicken breast which came with hispi cabbage and pomme boulangère. I'm a great lover of raw fish, so sea bass ceviche it had to be, followed by sea bass with chermoula, jersey royals and herb salad. This version of chermoula (a middle eastern type of flavouring made up of garlic, citrus and spices) really lifted the slightly bland flavour of sea bass. Another lovely touch was the way our bread arrived with a little dish of whipped butter and the unexpected pleasure of a complimentary glass of house white or red wine, paired by the sommelier,

which comes with the lunch menu. We stayed with the two courses but whilst having coffee, reflected on the beautifully presented good sized portions and the immaculate service. NB Non-wine buffs may not realize that 28-50 refers to degrees, as in the latitude in the world in which wine is grown. There are two other branches in London (Kings Road photo opposite).

28-50 (Wine Workshop & Kitchen), 300 Kings Road, SW3 5UH. 020 7499 1076. Bar and Restaurant opens every day from noon and on Mon-Wed until 11.30 pm, Thur-Sat until midnight and until 11pm on Sunday.

PS No 50 Cheyne, 020 7376 8787, is an elegant Chelsea restaurant where head chef Iain Smith weaves his magic.

Every time I pass **No 166** (Battersea Park Road) either on foot or by bus, this small newish café bar is packed. Intrigued to know why it was so popular, I ventured in, sat down at one of the mish-mash tables and Parisian flea market type vintage chairs and ordered a coffee and slice of white chocolate cheesecake (£6.50). I was the only one not reading, or behind a computer, or tucking into a Korean fried chicken burger (£12.50), or devouring tacos (£7 a pair) or a plate of pan fried salmon (£14). I was royally looked after all the same by the two friendly staffers and owner and made to feel very welcome. Incidentally, No 166 plays host to lectures, poetry and jazz evenings. Check their website for 'what's on', go along and you'll also have a lovely time.

166 Café Bar, Battersea Park Road, SW11 4ND. 07305 057211. Open Monday, Wed, Thur from 7.30am to 5pm, Friday and Saturday until 11pm and Sunday from 9am to 5pm. Closed Tuesdays.

Christian Lamb – A Highlight in a Busy Year!

Christian Lamb celebrated her 103rd birthday in July, then topped it off by taking to the air in August, repeating a similar experience as a Wren, 84 years earlier. She must surely be the oldest Friend of Battersea Park. (Please would any runners-up let us know – 07495 542399).

Christian looked absolutely delighted when she arrived in a vintage Rolls Royce at the Shuttleworth Museum in Biggleswade and sat at the front in the cockpit of a Miles Magister training plane for a short flight watched by her family. On landing, her words were 'lovely, beautiful, great fun, splendid, wonderful! A little colder than her previous experience, but then, as she said, she was younger then. The Rolls Royce, champagne and a birthday cake were provided by Searcys who made Christian's wedding cake in 1943 and have made her last four birthday cakes.

Her original flight took place in 1939. She did a course in Bath but missed



her train to Portsmouth. She records in her book *Beyond the Sea – a Wren at War* published in 2021 that it was 'a despairing moment'. She was saved by a 'delightful Polish officer' who she had met at a party the night before and who offered to take her back 'in the old crate'. She describes how the pilot tried to make the trip extra thrilling by dive-bombing cows or anything else that took his fancy and how 'flying in an open plane, low down over the River Tamar and seeing the whole estuary and coast as on a map,

was an experience I'd like to relive even today'.

This year holds other pleasures. A suite at the Raffles Hotel in what used to be the Old War Office in Whitehall has been named after Christian. The hotel opened on 29 September. The staff were apparently thrilled by her visit.

Look out for Christian on television at the Albert Hall Service of Remembrance on Saturday 11 November.



Rosanna Falconer, brand consultant, creative and lover of all things colourful, featured in the *Country Life* *In the hot seat* interview on 2 August. Her response to the question 'what is the best place in London that nobody goes to?' was 'The Old English Garden in Battersea Park'. Full marks to Rosanna!

Battersea Park in Concert



The inaugural *Battersea Park in Concert* was made up of three live performances over the August Bank Holiday weekend – *A Night at the Musicals and Proms in the Park* with the Royal Philharmonic Concert Orchestra and *Soul and Jazz on a Summer's Day* headlined by singer-songwriter Gabrielle. Our two enthusiastic reviewers both went to the classical concert, so missed the dancing, notably to Abba on Saturday evening and to Yolanda Brown on Monday. Both strongly recommend that Friends who missed out this year should buy tickets next year if there is a repeat performance.

The View from the Seat – Sara Milne

Proms in the Park – the Sunday event – was a truly magical evening. Sitting in the Park listening to classical music surrounded by majestic London plane trees and watching the sun go down was a wonderful experience.

Billed as 'A Symphony under the

Stars' we were entertained to a vibrant evening of classical music full of contrasting shades that reflected the season and the setting, with conductor (and host) Pete Harrison. The programme included some of my favourites: Jupiter from Holst's Planets Suite, the Swan Theme from Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake and the first movement of Beethoven's Symphony No 5. The spectacular finale with fireworks was Elgar's Pomp and Circumstance (with free flags for waving!) which was a fabulous end to the evening.

I would like to say a big 'thank you' to Enable for their organisational skills – access to the al fresco venue (the orchestra was under cover) was seamless and all the marshalling staff were really helpful and happy. We took our own picnic and refreshments, but you could have bought food and drink on site, and although dark clouds rolled in halfway through the evening, we managed to escape the rain.

The View from the Ground - Pamela Kelly

One of the highlights of my summer was *Proms in the Park*, the two-hour programme of classical masterpieces played by the 60-piece Royal Philharmonic Concert Orchestra. Two open-air viewing options were offered: one seated inside an informal open enclosure and the other on the grass for those bringing their own seating. This report describes the event experienced from the comfort of a blanket, a couple of pillows and a picnic hamper full of food and drink from a home-based larder.

On the evening of 27 August, the grass east of the Boules Area was pulsing with excitement about the evening ahead. Everyone was enjoying food and drink offered by vendors at the site or assembled at home. The mood was buoyant and the setting welcoming and relaxed. Surrounding us were young families, visitors from countries outside of the UK, and friends gathered visiting and sharing



stories of summer holidays.

At the appointed time, the lights dimmed and the music began. The programme, from Brahms to Vivaldi, via Grieg and Holst, plus arias by Bizet and Puccini was diverse and appealing to all ages and levels of musical knowledge. The conductor, Pete Harrison, provided a lively narrative about the composers, the guest opera singers, and his orchestra members. Finishing with traditional Albert Hall favourites, the speedy Jack's the Lad from the Fantasia on British Sea Songs, followed by Pomp and Circumstance with the audience and soloists in fine voice, the evening culminated in a startling and invigorating fireworks display that lit up the night sky and the enchanting space that was Proms in the Park 2023.

Feedback from Gemma Bechervaise, Enable's Head of Events

Battersea Park in Concert was a great

success, with 13,261 people enjoying spine-tingling live music on three days. Post-event surveys suggest that the overwhelming majority of guests would look forward to returning next year. *The Night at the Musicals* was the most popular in terms of ticket sales and there was lots of dancing - the Abba Medley in particular was a hit. Yolanda Brown was outstanding and she also had lots of people dancing, including my 70 year old parents.

The event had strong giving-back elements which saw us deliver a special series of creative learning opportunities for children in Wandsworth for a wider educational benefit, all based around the orchestral, soul, and jazz music performed at the Concerts. RPO Resound, the educational branch of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, spent the summer visiting St George's Primary School, St Mary's RC Primary School, Sacred Heart RC Primary School and Falconbrook School. The workshops, led by Aga Serugo-Lugo, explored traditional

instruments and classical music as he guided pupils through some of the concert repertoire and then helped them respond by creating their own composition as a group.

Alongside the Battersea schools' outreach programme, Enable also hosted workshops at Wandsworth's Big Play Out to explore music from the concert series through the visual arts. Local Wandsworth children created bespoke artwork which was displayed during the Concert.

All participants and their families were offered the chance to attend the concert series with complimentary tickets; 1,500 tickets were given to local charities, community groups, school outreach programme participants and emergency services.

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Battersea Park Dog Show



The hugely popular annual Battersea Park Dog Show was organised this year by Enable. It took place on 9 July by the Bowling Green. The weather was perfect: dry and not too hot. The whole area was abuzz with anticipation, by owners and

dogs alike. The atmosphere was extremely friendly and everyone was obviously enjoying themselves in a super-relaxed way.

As usual, the Friends had the onerous task of judging the last class for 'best trick'. The 'trick' for the judges is how

to distinguish between obedience and a genuine trick. Amongst numerous participants, Friends Committee member, Julia Camara, awarded first place to the eager dog above.

Enable generously gave all their profits of £776 to the Friends.

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Events

NOV	Saturday 4 PARK CLOSURES AT 4pm Gates open 6pm, close 8pm Pre-show 6.30pm. Display at 8.10 Bars and music finish 11pm	Fireworks in the Park Advance tickets only from batterseaparkfireworks.com Adults: £13.32. Children 5 to 15: £8.87 Children under 5 free but need tickets. Children under 18 must be accompanied. Queries to fireworks@enablelc.org
	Sunday 5 PARK CLOSURES AT 3pm Gates open 5pm, close at 7pm Event closes at 8pm	Sunday Family Night Fireworks Light Illustration Show, no bonfire Advance tickets only from batterseaparkfireworks.com Adults £13.32. Children 5 to 15 £8.87 Children under 5 free but need tickets. Children under 18 must be accompanied.
	Friday 10 War Memorial at east end of Central Avenue at 10.45am	Wandsworth Council's Act of Remembrance Service Followed by refreshments and exhibition in the Pump House
	Saturday 11 & Sunday 12 Battersea Evolution	Independent Schools Show
	Monday 13 Lunch from 12.15. Lecture 1 to 2 Ethelburga Community Centre 60 Worfield Street, SW11 4RA	The Friends' Autumn Lunchtime Lecture Spiders in London by Edward Milner, Spider Recorder for London Buy Tickets @ £7.00 and a pre-ordered lunch @ £6.00 from friendsofbatterseapark.org/events . Further information from info@friendsofbatterseapark.org or 020 7622 5199
	Wednesday 15 8pm	Run in the Dark Charity Walk/Run 1,750 people expected
	Wednesday 15 to Saturday 23 Dec Chelsea Car Park	Pines and Needles Christmas trees for sale
	Friday 24 Battersea Evolution	Battersea Ball in aid of the Battersea Crime Prevention Panel raising funds for Sport in the Park Ticket information on batterseaball.org.uk or ball@bcpp.co.uk
DEC	Thursdays 30 Thrive Main Garden 11am to 2.30pm	Thrive Christmas Open Day Sale of Christmas cards, wreaths, calendars, cakes etc
	Weekends before Christmas Children's Zoo	Christmas Activities tba Info from 020 7924 5826
	Sunday 18 Bandstand from 10am	Runna Santa Run
JAN	Friday 31 Battersea Evolution 7:30pm to 3am	New Year's Eve Ball Tickets from £190
	Tuesday 23 to Sunday 28 January British Genius Site 11am to 8pm	Decorative Arts Fair
MAR	Wednesday 6 to Sunday 10 British Genius Site 11am to 8pm	Affordable Art Fair
	Monday 25 Ethelburga Community Centre	The Friends' Spring Lunchtime Lecture Clive Freedman on Moss in Battersea Park. Details on enclosed flier
REGULAR EVENTS	Sundays from 11am – 12 noon	Litter Picking Meet at Macduff pedestrian gate to Park opposite York Mansions.
	Wednesday 10am	Free Walk open to all – Meet at Albert Gate. For more information contact activelifestyles@enablelc.com
	Wednesdays from 9.30am	Volunteer gardening in the Winter Garden Contact fhradcliffe@gmail.com to check it's happening.




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