

FRIENDS OF BATTERSEA PARK REVIEW

Issue 128
Summer 2024



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and thanks**
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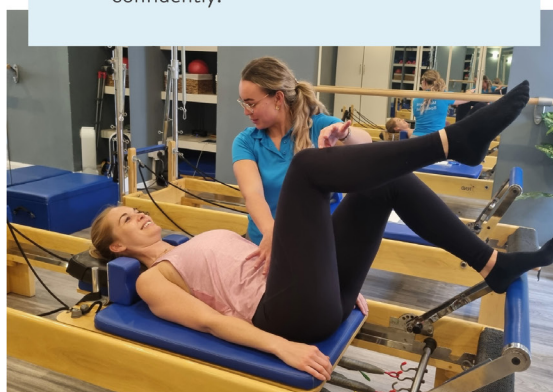
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Review

Summer 2024



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Just after the last issue of *Review* was published, boats on the lake were sinking because of heavy rainfall. More recently, new plants in the Winter Garden have been struggling in baking sunshine. We were so lucky that there were only a few insignificant spots of rain during the barbecue. Not so for our drinks party in the Old English Garden in May but it was nevertheless much enjoyed.

The stand out event for the Friends in June is of course our fundraising barbecue. Led by Inge Darling and Peta May Law, our brilliant and hard-working team this year had an outstanding success making a record £10,000 for the Friends. What an achievement!

We now need a wishlist, and to establish priorities about the best way to use our financial resources to benefit the Park. Suggestions before the AGM please to our Secretary Juliet Lyon-Smith at secretary@friendsofbatterseapark.org or c/o 32 Brynmaer Road SW11 4EW.

This year's AGM is on 10 September at All Saints Church, Prince of Wales Drive, 6.30pm for a prompt 7pm start. With this in mind, please see the Trustees Report for 2023/24 on pages 14 - 15 and an interview with Kate Bock on page

5. Kate has been our Acting Chairman since 1 April and will be up for election as Chairman at the AGM.

We need more Trustees. We need more help manning our gazebo at events in the Park like Live at the Bandstand and the Dog Show. Thrive need help with watering plants in the Herb Garden at weekends. Volunteering is good for your health! Please contact Juliet or Thrive. For Thrive, email battersea@thrive.org.uk or give your name at the Thrive Main Garden or the Herb Garden. For staffing the gazebo or watering plants at weekends, even an hour of your time once a year would be helpful. Being a Trustee involves regular meetings and other responsibilities.

Can I put in a strong plea too for more Friends to volunteer in the Winter Garden on Wednesday mornings at 10am? It's a large and difficult area to maintain and we and Thrive often feel that the weeds are getting away from us.

Another date for your diary is 11 November when the Friends will be laying a wreath at the traditional Remembrance Service held next to the War Memorial in the Park at 10.45am. Our Autumn Lunchtime lecture on Predatory Birds follows that day at St Saviours Church; doors open at 12.30pm .

Let's hope that the weather is good on all three days of the August Bank Holiday weekend so that those going to the three concerts in the Park can enjoy their picnics and the music.

Enjoy the Park indeed! We are so lucky to have it.

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Cover Image: Smoke and chimneys at the barbecue on 11 June

Parkwatch

Christian Lamb

'You have set us an example which we will not forget' said French President Emmanuel Macron when he awarded the Legion d'honneur to Friend Christian Lamb who will be 104 years old in July. Many of you will have watched the ceremony in Normandy on 6 June as part of the commemoration of the D-day landings. Review echos President Macron's words.

Fountains

At last, the fountains in the Fountains Pool are working again bringing delight to all. It has been a sad sight to see just a tangle of pipes in an empty pool. It is a corresponding joy to see the fountains working again.

Junior Parkrun

The first event took place with a 'soft launch' on 26 May. On 30 June, there were 43 runners, one of whom completed the 2k course in an astounding 7 minutes and 58 seconds. The event was marshalled by 23 cheerful volunteers. By 9.30 it was all over.

Parkrun for adults will be a very different event. How many runners attend and how they are marshalled to prevent inconvenience to other Park users will be crucial. The first event is expected to take place on 28 September

Battersea Park in Concert

Banners have gone up around the Park. After last year's successful first 3-day event, there will be a repeat this August Bank Holiday weekend. For details, see page 19.

Padel Court

A new Padel court opened on 4 April at the Millennium Arena. It remains to be seen how popular this will be but it's easier to play than its sister sports tennis and squash and has



some high-profile advocates. Slots available from Monday to Friday, 7am to 10pm and weekends 8am – 7pm. To book: <https://padelmates.se/club/batterseaparkmillenniumarenapadel> Give it a try!

Winter Garden internal fencing

The green plastic fencing and the wet spring weather have continues to work wonders for the Winter Garden to the extent that we are reviewing whether permanent metal double hooped fencing as on the boundary with South Carriage Drive is really necessary.

Butterfly signs

These are the most important signs in the Park in terms of telling people where they are and identifying key features. However, most signs are crazed and almost impossible to read. Welcome new signs are due to arrive shortly.

Ice-cream wars

For several years, Friends have

objected to the ice-cream van parked outside the Sun Gate emitting fumes. We are pleased that steps are being taken to prevent this even though the owners of the van have been fighting back, removing blocks and squeezing into an increasingly small space.

Planning

The Pear Tree Café's planning application designed to increase the number of lavatories in the Park and provide a new exterior serving hatch was refused for technical reasons. A new application is expected.

There are increasing concerns about loud music at weekends and a takeover by a certain demographic for whom the café has become a specific destination.

You may still be in time to comment on the planning application (2024/1322) for a 34 storey glass tower to replace The Glassmill, 1 Battersea Bridge Road. The Friends and the Battersea Society have objected strongly to this proposal.

Interview with Kate Bock

Kate joined the Friends last Spring and was elected a trustee at last year's AGM in September. She was appointed Acting Chairman from April this year after Garon Watkins stood down following his move to Cheltenham. Kate will be standing for election as Chairman at this year's AGM on 10 September.

Can you tell us a little about yourself?

I grew up in Denver, Colorado, USA, and moved to the UK in 2018 for graduate school. Before that, I worked in education in Washington, D.C. I relocated to Battersea in 2019, and Battersea Park quickly became a significant part of my London life. You'll find me walking there every morning! During the lockdowns, the Park was a crucial refuge for me and my partner as our flat didn't have any outdoor space. I started volunteering in the Winter Garden last summer. I felt that the Park had given me so much that I wanted to give something back. I was persuaded to apply to become a trustee and subsequently responded to the call for applicants for the chair.

What are some of your goals and priorities for the Friends?

In my mind, the Park is the heart of our local community. It's been both humbling and inspiring to connect with members who have been part of the Battersea community for varying lengths of time and in many different ways. As an expat who moved to London without knowing a single person, I understand how overwhelming the city can feel and how difficult it can be to put down roots. Battersea is special because it beautifully balances the grandeur of central London with the everyday life of families having picnics and children playing football or enjoying the playground. I want to continue to foster that. Recent events like the Summer in the Park weekends and the



Friends' BBQ are great examples of what we can achieve when we come together. I would love to see our volunteers continue to find ways to connect with each other, engage with the broader Battersea community, support local businesses, and welcome visitors to the Park.

What do you see as the biggest challenges facing the Park?

The Park has never been busier, which is wonderful as more people get to know and appreciate what I believe is the best park in London. However, this increased usage brings challenges such as more rubbish, greater wear and tear, and the need to maintain a strong sense of community. The Friends work closely with the Council and Enable to address these issues, and I hope to continue growing these relationships. I'm also keen to offer more opportunities for our members to volunteer, whether it be through gardening or litter picking. One initiative I'm particularly passionate about expanding is working with local schools to develop a curriculum that involves students in learning about the Park's history and environmental science. Engaging young people in this way fosters a deeper connection to the Park and helps to secure its preservation.

How can members of the community get involved with

the Friends of Battersea Park and support your efforts?

We are always looking for new members and currently have vacancies for trustees. The best ideas come from areas where people are passionate. Several members have approached me with projects, such as restoring a sculpture or improving habitat for our swans. I'm keen to put Friends' time and resources behind these types of projects and to work with local schools. I encourage anyone interested to get in touch with me. I'm always happy to find time to meet with members, go for a walk in the Park, and brainstorm ways we can work together to take care of this wonderful space. One of my favourite sayings is "do your little perfectly," which means that even small actions can make a big impact. Whether it's picking up litter, volunteering for a few hours, or simply spreading the word about the Park's beauty and importance, every little bit helps.

What's your favourite part of the Park?

As a new gardener I'm always in awe of the Old English Garden. Currently, I'm only managing some cosmos and sweet peas in my own garden, but I aspire to be able to take care of something like the Old English Garden one day! My master's is in Art, so the Barbara Hepworth and Henry Moore sculptures are particularly special to me. Being able to see their work in situ, as they intended, is very special. I love the wildlife too, especially the herons and ring-necked parakeets. It was a shock to find so many tropical birds in southwest London! I have also had many lovely visits to the Pear Tree Café with friends and family. My father even declared their burger to be the 'best burger in Europe'.

To contact Kate, email chairman@friendsofbatterseapark.org

Friends' Barbecue

Fenella Barber

Roll up! Roll up for the Battersea BBQ! Under the pearly grey skies of an English summer evening, with clouds galore, we made our way onto the Bowling Green for the 17th Friends of Battersea Park Annual Summer BBQ with a record turnout.

For the last two years, the Bowling Green has been our maypole around which we have gathered. A wonderful location in the centre of the Park, bunting festooned around, the lawn covered in tables humming with happy conversations, between which children ran, sang and danced, and soapy bubbles billowed while BBQ smoke filled the air attracting passers-by who couldn't get in for another sold out event it was!

London has a rich history of fairs: May

Fair, Bartholomew Fair, Southwark Fair, Tottenham Court Fair, each with their varied amusements and entertainments. Our few hours in Battersea Park followed in a fine tradition with our own music, feasting and merrymaking, with fabulous contributions from Thomas's Battersea Choir, Los Soneros, Sharky & George, and a well-stocked bar.

But it didn't end there: with thanks to our superb local community, we had a spectacular silent auction and tombola with presents as varied and generous as art prints and bathrobes, concert tickets and internships. There was something for everyone at every price point. Thank you all for your magnificent generosity.

It was quite wonderful to gather and

we heard great feedback: 'it was a brilliant party'; 'the new layout and gazebos galore added to the magic'; 'everyone was so clearly enjoying themselves'; 'the layout was excellent, a good mix of old and new Friends, and a happy atmosphere'. What a triumph!

It was indeed a record breaker of an evening and brilliantly organised. Thank you so much to Inge Darling and Peta May Law and their team of volunteers including Laura Hayes on the silent auction, Lulu Bates and Nina Balfe on the tombola, Karen Buckle on the puddings and the excellent bar team. Thank you to all who showed up and made it such a happy evening. We hope you enjoyed it too!



Kate Bock, Marsha de Cordova MP and Peta May Law



Barbecue Thanks

We are very grateful to all our generous supporters, Friends and friends, who made our 17th annual BBQ on 11 June such a success. For a second year, it took place at the Bowling Green. Many thanks to Enable's Gemma Bechervaise and Mayar Elessar and their team who made this possible.

Thanks also go to Savills, led by Mayow Short and Sammi Enderby, who generously sponsored the event, donated prizes and gave us their invaluable help on the night and to Inspector Steve Biggs, Lisa Endell and Graham Alder from Wandsworth Council Police & Events Service.

Smart Hospitality, led by Kim Laley, served us a delicious choice of burgers, hot dogs and salads (their panzanella salad is not to be missed). Thrive and Savills provided posies and flowers to decorate the tables.

Thomas's Battersea Music department brought their whole choir which was a wonderful introduction to the evening, and included a surprise performance by their teachers. Los Soneros's Victor Garcia and Natalia Pelaez followed with their toe tapping Latin rhythms.

The Sharky & George team were brilliant at ensuring that all the children were kept happily entertained. A big thank you to George Whitefield for offering their party expertise, and to Emilie Horsley who made sure all arrangements ran smoothly.

The **Silent Auction** lots were magnificent. As well as thanking the kind donors of the Bruce Springsteen package and the Versace bathrobe, we would like to thank the Battersea Park Clinic, Pullman Prints, Battersea Park Children's Zoo, Core by Clare Smyth, The Fencing School, Lauren Edwards yoga, Katie Bullivant for National, Old Vic and Royal Court Theatre tickets, Lorne Balfé for the

London Premier of Our Planet Score with dinner for two, Melissa Couple Wellness Clinic, Mosimann's, Enable, Phene Cakes, Power of Boxing, Royal College of Surgeons, Sharky & George, Shire and Wold Domestic Staffing, Smart Hospitality Group, Woolfe Pack and Archer Franklin.

Gifts to the **tombola** were outstanding (quickly reflected in long queues). Many thanks to all our generous donors listed below.

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For contact details for any of the above email info@friendsofbatterseapark.org or call 07495 5422399

Hawthorns and Whitebeams

All readers will recognize a Hawthorn. Common names tell you a lot about it. Hawthorn itself refers to the fruits (Haws) and of course the thorns which are mostly sharp-pointed straight stems. 'May' refers to when they flowered in cooler centuries. 'Quickthorn' refers to the ease with which cuttings strike, making it ideal to use when establishing a new hedge on the cheap. 'Whitethorn', of course, refers to the flowers (Fig. 1). The vast majority of hedging Hawthorn is the common species, *Crataegus monogyna*. The specific epithet means each Haw has only a single pip. Less frequently found in the South is the Midland Hawthorn *Crataegus laevigata*. This name means smooth or polished and refers to the shiny surface of the leaves which are hairless. By comparison the Common Hawthorn has tufts of hairs on the underside where the veins intersect. Another difference is the lobing of the leaves with Common having deeply-cut leaves (beyond halfway to the midline vein) (Fig. 1). For Midland, the clefts are less than halfway (Fig. 2). Finally, Midland Hawthorn haws have 1, 2 or 3 pips. The species hybridise so intermediate degrees of leaf lobing are seen.

Many of the ornamental 'thorns' are hybrids (*C. x media*) with red or white and single or double flowers. 'Paul's Scarlet' is a double flowered red, only found in cultivation. It is derived from a pink form of *C. laevigata*. It can be grown from cuttings but is more often propagated by grafting onto *monogyna* stock. One in the Russell Page Garden has white flowers from shoots below the graft (Fig. 2). Several other pink-flowered Hawthorns (varieties of *C. x media*) can also be seen.

We think of Hawthorns as an English plant but there are species throughout the Northern Hemisphere. The North American 'thorns', some of which

are grouped loosely under the term 'Cockspur', are scattered around the Park. *Crataegus x lavalleyi* has copious white flowers and dark green leaves - look beside Prince of Wales Drive and between the North Carriage Drive and the tennis courts. *Crataegus persimilis* ('Plumleaf' thorn) and *Crataegus crus-galli* ('Cockspur' thorn) have seriously long thorns and the leaves are mainly unlobed oval-shaped (Fig. 3). Both these species have good autumn tints. East of the Hepworth statue is an old *Crataegus submollis* (a Canadian species) which is possibly mentioned in Walter Johnson's 1910 book (see the last issue of *Review*) - this is one of the first to flower each year. It is also from Canada and Eastern USA. All these species look similar to that pictured in Figure 3. Between the cricket nets and the Bowling Green are two very attractive old *Crataegus punctata* ('Dotted Hawthorn') which flower a little later.

We also have specimens of Medlar (*Mespilus germanica*), which is possibly Hawthorn's closest relative (one north of the cricket nets, one by the Tea Terrace kiosk and one east of the Pear Tree Café).

Other members of the Rose family which have white flowers and berries like Hawthorn are in the genus *Sorbus* (Whitebeams, Service and Rowans). Our native Common Whitebeam *S. aria* prefers the chalk downs but is widely cultivated and seen in London streets. We have not found any in the Park but Figure 4 illustrates *Sorbus croceocarpa*, which is similar. Note the oval leaves with toothed margin. A tree beside West Carriage Drive is this species' Tree Register Girth and Height County Champion for Greater London. The white of Whitebeams refers to the leaves' silvery-haired underside but that is not a strong feature of *S. croceocarpa*. *Sorbus* flowers and fruits look very

like those of Hawthorn.

One of the prides of the Park is our 'Wild Service' tree (*Sorbus torminalis*) which can be seen just inside the railings along Albert Bridge Road (opposite no 53). It has large lobed leaves with the lobes having pointed tips. The flowers are in white clusters like the other whitebeams but the fruits (the 'chequers') are brown or bronze (Fig. 5). The leaves can be good colours in autumn.

A Service Tree of Fontainebleau (*Sorbus latifolia*) stands east of the Hepworth statue (Fig. 6). It has large wide leaves with shallow lobes and brown/bronze fruit. This hybrid of the Wild Service has a very limited natural distribution in the île-de-France.

The well-known Rowan (*S. aucuparia*) has pinnate leaves with 6-7 pairs of leaflets. Flowers and fruit are typical *Sorbus* (Fig. 4). Look for them near the Hybrid Strawberry Tree and the Rosery Gate.

Sorbus intermedia, the 'Swedish Whitebeam' should also be well-known. Its moderate size, the green oval leaves with lobulated margin and small teeth at the very edge of the leaf, together with its white flowerheads followed by copious red berries and its general toughness make it a popular street and garden tree. Cross Prince of Wales Drive to Forfar Road to see some of these.

Calling the *Sorbus* fruits 'berries' is botanically incorrect. They are more like Haws. In fact, both Hawthorn and *Sorbus* fruits have similar structure to apples ('pomes'). A quick way to distinguish Haws from *Sorbus* fruits is to try cutting transversely across the fruit with a pocket-knife. This is noticeably more difficult with Haws because the coat of the pip(s) inside a Haw is stony-hard while those of *Sorbus* are much softer.

(Crataegus and Sorbus)

Clive Freedman and Brian Livingstone

At <https://www.treesofbatterseapark.org> you can access an interactive map which shows the locations in Battersea Park of trees and shrubs of interest in particular months of the year. To discuss these trees or other trees and shrubs in Battersea Park, contact batterseaparktreewatchers@btinternet.com.

The genus *Sorbus* has recently been systematically revised better to reflect the genetic relationships of the species. Many Latin names have changed but we have retained the old ones here because it will be some time before the new names appear in books and catalogues.

See internet page <https://www.treesandshrubsonline.org/articles/sorbus/>



Fig 1.

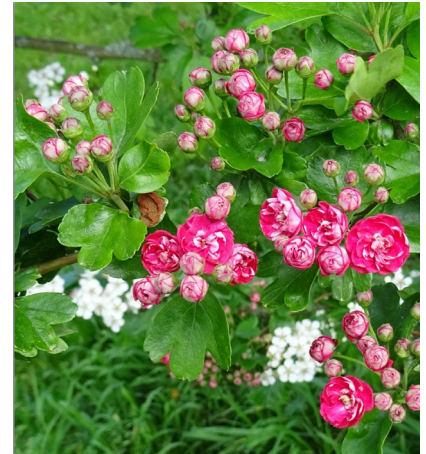


Fig 2.



Fig 3.



Fig 4.

Figure 1. Common Hawthorn. Note deeply-cut leaf lobes and single pistil in each flower.

Figure 2. Midland Hawthorn ‘Paul’s Scarlet’. Leaves have shallower lobes than Common Hawthorn.

The white flower sprout from below the graft onto Common Hawthorn

Figure 3. Plumleaf Thorn. Note the long recurved thorns and the oval unlobed leaves.

Figure 4. A Whitebeam. Flowers are similar to Hawthorns but leaves are unlobed and there are no thorns.

Figure 5. Wild Service Tree. Note the large pointed leaf lobes almost like Sycamore.

Figure 6. Service Tree of Fontainebleau. The leaves (inset) are a different shape from Wild Service.



Fig 5.



Fig 6.

The GenePools Project

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



Last year, as part of our wider work to support citizen science, the Parks teams were involved in a project to analyse the environmental DNA (eDNA) of our lakes better to understand the biodiversity they support and the species that have affected them. Water samples were collected using a specially provided kit and wearing gloves to avoid contaminating the sample. 20 samples of 30ml were gathered from around the lake and then mixed together. The water was filtered to extract the eDNA. The kit included tests for pH (alkalinity or acidity of the water), phosphorous, carbonate hardness and nitrite, and there was a survey form to provide information about the lake, vegetation cover etc.

DNA is shed in the environment by living creatures all the time as a result of normal day to day activities. So although species are identified as being 'present' in the eDNA, if a bird defecates over the lake, we will see evidence of the creatures it has recently eaten. Sometimes the 'closest' match species is listed because currently less than 1% of all life on earth has been described and represented in DNA sequence libraries. eDNA stays in the environment only for a period of days or weeks before degrading, so there

may also be species missing from the lists, particularly if they are seasonal visitors.

In the main lake in Battersea Park, 221 different species were identified from the GenePool survey. The results were categorised into animals, fungi, plant and algae, and protists. 38 animal species were identified including carp, perch and eel, coot, people, six types of water flea, mayflies, midges, flatworms, and water mould (which is helpful as they feed on dead and decaying matter in the lake). Seven species of fungi were identified including plant parasites. 88 plants and algae were identified, ranging from trees such as oak, lime, maple, willow, alder ash, beech, Robinia, aspen, elder, horse chestnut, hawthorn, holly, and Tree of Heaven through to 44 different species of green algae. The largest group were the 92 protists. These are predominantly unicellular organisms that are not animal, land plant or fungus. This group is extremely large in terms of genetic and ecological diversity, thriving in all environments including extreme habitats. Their diversity has only recently been discovered through eDNA and they are not yet fully understood.

In the Ladies' Pond, 221 species were also identified. As the two water bodies are connected it is no surprise that what was identified was similar in number, but interestingly it differed in species. Here 48 mammal species were identified including people, dogs, eel, carp, perch, coot, seven types of water flea, mayflies, midges, flatworms and water mould. Also heron, chafer beetle, the water veneer moth and pig! We may assume that the pig eDNA is the result of people dropping food into the lake (unless anyone has seen a pig wandering around). Six fungi species and 95 protists (including the wonderful sounding golden algae and diatoms which are a fascinatingly beautiful group) were also identified. The 72 plant species included purple loosestrife and hornwort (which is a great oxygenator), both of which perhaps indicate the more naturalised wetland planting in this area.

This project has provided us with a fascinating snapshot of the biodiversity of our lakes and we will be commissioning ecological consultants to undertake further eDNA analysis this year to help build the bigger picture. They will be sampling the soils within the Park, as well as extending the monitoring of birds and bats.

Advice from Valerie Selby on the Swans

This advice was given to a Friend on 17 June in response to his email of 13 June. Before then, it was clear that the pair of swans had abandoned the nest and its five eggs. However, they were still together as shown in the photograph right taken on 14 June

Failure to breed successfully can happen for many reasons, however it is likely that this nest was unsuccessful as they often are in the first year a pair get together, especially if the pen is young. For a time this spring, we had a new pair and the old male but new birds can quickly learn habits such as approaching people so until we have cause to ask the bird ringer to attend for any cygnets (whether that is this year or in the future) we won't be certain whether the current male is the 'old' one or a 'new' one. However the pen is definitely new and likely young which is the simplest explanation for no breeding this year.

The birds on the lake including the swans are all wild animals and we do not interfere unless there is a significant welfare issue and so we will not be finding them a new nest. Our job is to create and maintain

sufficient areas of good habitat to allow them a choice of locations for nesting. Swans are a very successful species with no population declines nationally or regionally, in fact overall there has been a population increase across the UK and they are considered as being of "least concern" across Europe. A few years without successful breeding at this site will not have any long-term implications for the swan population and in fact is a perfectly natural part of lifecycles and population fluctuations.

Just on a more general note, we advise against feeding the swans for several reasons. When they are on the nest it is natural for the female to lose about a quarter of her body weight during nesting and this allows her to judge when the eggs should hatch

– feeding her can interfere with this natural process. Throughout the year, encouraging swans to come to the water's edge for food can make them feel confident to approach all visitors and this can lead to them being put at high risk of harm from dogs, fishing lines etc



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Old English Garden Party on 11 May

Fenella Barber



It poured with rain! Of course it did, but still we gathered and had a splendid evening in the Old English Garden.

It was wetter than last year, much wetter. Occasional glimmers of sunshine hurried by in haste. Last year, a bevy of brollies kept the intermittent showers at bay. This year, a merry gathering huddled under the Friends' gazebo and stayed dry, the sandwiches too, as the rain came down. The two bars and those who manned them were decidedly soggy and the guest lists were almost illegible.

However, plumage of an English spring was out and in fine form. The mandarin ducks, resplendent in their best feathers, came looking for canapés and fine conversation; the parakeets too had their own riotous party, pleased to see us all, with our raincoats and umbrellas in an array of colours.

The Old English Garden did not disappoint. She was the star of the show. Many guests compared her favourably with the gardens across the river at Chelsea. Spectacular in her lush green with her bounty of

flowers, even on such a wet evening
'Then came faire May, the fairest mayd on ground,

Deckt all with dainties of her seasons pryde,

And throwing flowres out of her lap around.'

Edmund Spenser

With thanks to Sara Milne for organising the evening, to members of the committee who helped in proceedings and to the merry gang of Friends who gathered. A happy evening indeed. Next year we may well be in wellies, but we will gather. It's a tradition. Umbrellas at the ready.



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Spring Lunchtime Lecture on Mosses in Battersea Park

Bob Barker

On 25 March, Clive Freedman gave a talk on 'Mosses in Battersea Park'. Clive, a local resident and Friend, shared his knowledge and enthusiasm with a large audience, who went home with their eyes opened to the astonishing range of mosses sometimes literally beneath our feet.

Mosses (bryophytes) were probably the earliest land plants, hundreds of millions of years ago and are still among the first colonisers of bare ground. They are a very successful group, today numbering at least twelve thousand species, found on every continent, with about one thousand in Britain, dozens of them in Battersea Park.

Mosses are rarely more than an inch or two in height, have green leaves but do not have roots or flowers as such and reproduce from spores not seeds (often dispersed from capsules on an upright stalk), or else asexually, forming clones. They are notable for their remarkable powers of survival in dry conditions, rapidly absorbing several times their own weight of water and reviving when moistened, even a year later. Although individual mosses are small, collectively they play important parts in global and local ecology, locking away carbon dioxide in peat bogs for example. They also support their own thriving and diverse ecosystems, almost miniature forests, including many insects such as springtails, and small flowering plants and fungi.

Clive showed us close-up photographs of about 30 species which he had taken in and around the Park, some taken *in situ* with his portable microscope, and told us where they can be found, from the riverside embankment to the concrete entrance to the wartime air-raid shelter near Prince of Wales Drive and on trees, grassy areas and pavements. He also brought samples for us to see,



Capillary Thread-moss on Thames embankment wall

together with liverworts, another type of bryophyte. The species included examples from the thread-mosses, feather-mosses, bristle-mosses and beard-mosses. To name just a few of the more eye-catching species, there were the beautiful Silvery Bryum (on the embankment wall), drooping Bonfire Moss, delicate Clustered Feather-moss, Pointed Spear-moss (like a miniature fern), the more colourful Red Beard-moss, Golden Thread-moss, Red Shank (sometimes known as Purple Fork Moss), and Crimson Tuber Thread-moss with its tiny tubers.

For further information, Clive recommended the British Bryological Society, iNaturalist and the Woodland Trust, which all have useful websites. We are grateful to him for a memorable introduction to this important subject.

If you missed the talk, or would like to see the illustrations again, go to www.treesofbatterseapark.org/moss

Friends of Battersea Park Committee

Fenella Barber (**Recruitment**)
Kate Bock (**Acting Chairman**)
Karen Buckle (**Advertising**)
Russ Coffey (**Web**)
Inge Darling (**Children**)
Adrian Flook (**Treasurer**)
Miles Kerstein (**Wildlife**)
Peta May Law (**BBQ**)
Juliet Lyon-Smith (**Secretary**)
Sara Milne (**Horticulture**)
Briony Newman (**Social Media**)
Sally Orman (**Admin**)
Frances Radcliffe (**Review/Planning**)
Annabel Stein (**Membership**)
Garon Watkins

Trustees Report 2023/24

The year ending 31 March 2024 was, as ever, eventful for Battersea Park and the Friends' community. Your committee met 10 times, principally via Zoom but also, on occasion in person which we value as an opportunity for better interaction and for newer members to form a stronger connection with colleagues. Our meetings were also attended by Neil Blackley, Head of Parks, at Enable Culture and Leisure who manage Wandsworth open spaces on behalf of the Council, and his colleague Valter Goncalves who fulfils a valuable liaison role for Friends' groups and Management Advisory Committees (MACs) across the Borough. As of year-end, Friends' membership stood at 676.

Your Annual General meeting was held at All Saints Church on 12 September 2023 and was attended by 41 Friends. Following the formal business of approving the Trustees Report and Accounts, there was an open forum session with Neil Blackley and Inspector Steve Biggs of the Parks Police answering Friends' questions.

In terms of governance, Adrian Flook, your Treasurer, and Juliet Lyon Smith, Secretary, were both re-elected for a further three year term and George Coe ACCA was appointed as our Independent Financial Examiner. Miles Kerstein, previously co-opted, and Kate Bock were elected as Trustees, while long standing and valued trustee Michèle Marriot left the committee after her move out of London. Following the committee's announcement of a search for a new chairman in the summer of 2023, Kate Bock has been appointed Acting Chairman from 1 April 2024 pending Friends' approval at the Annual General Meeting.

I continued to represent the Friends on the Wandsworth Greenspaces Forum where Friends' Groups and MACs from across the borough meet with

Councillor Judi Gasser, the Executive Cabinet member responsible for greenspaces, Council officers and Enable to address concerns and issues facing our parks. Particular focus this year has been on illegal cycling which is a perennial problem. There is now an initiative, nearing completion, to review and replace signage in open spaces to leave no doubt as to where cycling is prohibited. There are also plans to establish periodic police focus points in key areas to enforce the law.

The Friends' BBQ was again a highlight of the summer and for the first time was held at the Bowling Green. As well as being our main fundraising event, it has always been a lovely opportunity for the Friends' community to enjoy an evening together. My thanks as ever to Peta May Law and Inge Darling and the great team of volunteers and sponsors who made this event possible while also raising over £7,000 for the Friends to invest in the Park.

Following the popularity of the party in the Old English Garden to mark Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee, a Friends' team led by Sara Milne organised another party to mark the coronation of King Charles which was also very popular, despite wet weather. Our lunchtime lecture series organised by Annabel Stein delivered two well attended events in November and March on spiders and mosses in the Park. As usual, the Friends contributed to the Wandsworth Heritage Festival with a walk in the Park led by Frances Radcliffe. We also organised a tree walk led by ex-tree warden Greg Packman.

The Friends had stands in the Park at Summer at the Bandstand and the Police Dog Show: these are valuable opportunities to recruit new members and hear from Park users. We are very grateful to the Parks Police for kindly donating to the Friends the profits of the Dog Show which were over £740.

The Friends continued to support the restoration of the Winter Garden following the damage it suffered during the Covid lockdowns. The Friends covered the costs of Dan Pearson's annual visit to advise on appropriate future planting as well as the cost of the plants themselves. As Friends will be aware, the Garden was temporarily fenced off to allow for unhindered regrowth. The full cost of proper fencing in keeping with other areas of the Park is too much for the Friends alone to bear, but we are prepared to make a significant donation and have been actively seeking further funds from other sources. The temporary plastic fencing, removed at the end of January and the subsequent wet weather have greatly improved matters and it is possible that permanent fencing may not be needed. Outcome awaited.

The Friends have also engaged with Enable over the poor condition of the roses in the Russell Page Garden and plans are in place to make improvements in the spirit of the original design.

As part of our remit to educate, we contributed £3,600 last year to fund the development of Park-based science lessons for primary schools. This teaching material is now available. We have also agreed to fund visits from more elderly residents through a programme run with the Katherine Low Settlement.

As Friends will have read in Review, the 50th Anniversary of the Big Dipper tragedy was in 2022 and the families of those involved have been campaigning for a permanent memorial in the form of an environmentally sustainable children's theatre in the Park. The Friends have extended their support in principle to this project, but are awaiting further details before a full endorsement.

Wandsworth Council held a

This report by Chairman Garon Watkins is subject to approval at the AGM on 10 September

consultation on Parkrun in May and June. Your committee urged all Friends to make individual submissions as views vary within the membership. The committee took a neutral position and wrote to the Council to say that should it take place we would want a trial period, a limitation on the numbers taking part and satisfactory arrangements in place to ensure access during the runs to playgrounds and All Weather Pitches which are popular on Saturday mornings. The committee continues to engage with the Council as we have yet to hear of how these issues are to be managed.

The Friends continue to monitor planning applications that may impact the Park. We supported the proposal to allow the temporary

Evolution Building on the British Genius Site to remain for a further four years without being taken down because of the environmental costs involved, but our support was on the understanding that the building would remain defined as temporary and that there will be another planning application in 2027 if it is to be retained. We also supported a proposal to extend the Pear Tree Café to provide additional lavatories. We objected to the proposed 38 storey tower next to Battersea Bridge in the context of an application about the scope of the Environment Impact Assessment. This would be visible from large parts of the Park.

The Review team have once again produced and distributed three issues of the magazine which remains

popular with Friends. Our thanks go to Frances Radcliffe, the Editor, and her team as well as all those Friends who help to distribute it by hand thus saving on ever increasing postal costs.

Particular thanks this year go to Russ Coffey for all his work on upgrading our website.

The Trustees would like to thank sincerely all those who work to maintain and enhance the Park and also to the Friends' community for their support, particularly the Winter Garden volunteers. May I, as your retiring chairman, also express my thanks to the Trustees for their support, dedication, and passion for our Park during my tenure and offer my heartfelt good wishes for the future.

Doggy Daycare Launch!

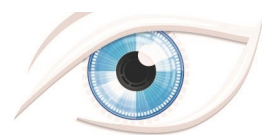
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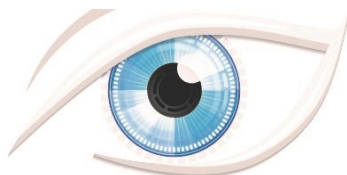
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Roy Vickery's 'Healing Hedgerows' walk

Bob Barker

On a sunny 6 June, as part of the Wandsworth Heritage Festival, the botanist and expert on plant-lore, Roy Vickery, led a walk on the theme of 'Healing Hedgerows'.

Roy skilfully guided us round the North East corner of the Park where almost every species, large or small, seemed to have been used to meet some need, from washing to weather forecasting, in pre-industrial times. Some were even quite effective; in any case there were few alternatives. Before

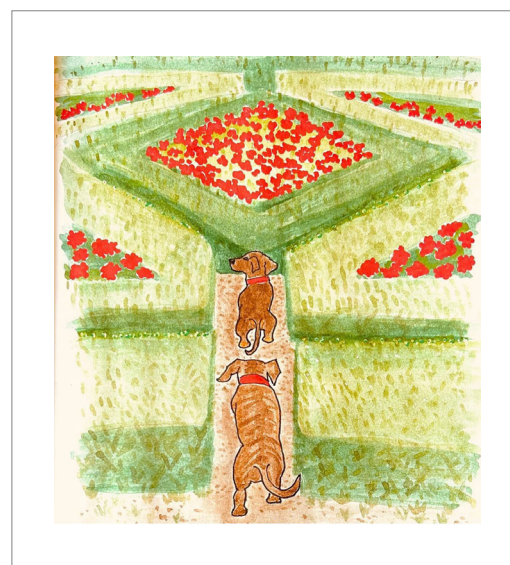
there were online supermarkets, some (e.g. nettles and dandelions) provided food and drink; before computer games, some were used in children's play; before online dating, some were even used to predict one's future partner; and many were used in various folk remedies or prophylactics before and even after there was a National Health Service.

There were remedies for both human and animal illnesses, including for warts, corns and rheumatism, as

well as for simple cuts and bruises. Many of the plants we saw still have names which clearly date back to a more agricultural economy such as chickweed, coltsfoot, sow thistle, goosegrass, cow parsley and shepherd's purse.

Vickery's Folk Flora: An A-Z of the Folklore of British and Irish Plants (2019) is available either in hardback or on Kindle, or see Roy's website, www.plant-lore.com.

Illustrations of Battersea Park by Vivien Minto



Near and Far

Annabel B Stein



My brief, when taking over as Review's restaurant scribbler, was to include places which were 'local' to members and a stone's throw from the periphery of Battersea Park. It could be argued, I have to admit, that sometimes a stone-hurling catapult or a shot putter's physique might be needed to meet the latter requirement. So forgive.

No forgiveness is needed at this point because **Tashas** – the South African chain – when deciding to open its first restaurant outside its natural environment of South Africa and the UAE, chose Battersea. What's more it has successfully managed to inject the warmth of these countries' sun, the helpful and friendly staff, the ambiance and unusual menu, into a large welcoming and airy room. I wanted to get the take on this newcomer from a couple of friends who regularly go to SA so arranged to meet them separately for a latish lunch. Friend A chose the Breakfast Royale (£15) which consisted of two poached eggs, asparagus and lemon sauce on toasted sourdough and she

included the smoked salmon option. With it she had a glass of Petit Rosé (£7), followed by passion fruit sorbet (£5). I chose the mille-feuille beer battered eggplant, with spiced lentil ragu, feta cheese and pea shoot salad (£17), a glass of Whispering Angel rosé (£12), followed by a mocha slice (£12). We both then had an Americano coffee (£4). With Friend B and a mutual buddy, I repeated the eggplant whilst the others chose the creamy avocado on toast with almond dressing (£16). This time we shared a bottle of Whispering Angel (£58) and later we all enjoyed a coffee. Altogether Tashas had five extremely satisfied diners and a special thumbs up from the SA travellers for authenticity.

Tashas, Battersea Power Station, 3 Prospect Way, SW11 8BH. 020 3011 1989. Open Monday–Wednesday 08.30–22.00, Thursday–Saturday until 23.00 and Sunday 09.00–22.00.

Returning to Battersea from Chelsea on the 319, I noticed that the empty space next to the Everyman cinema on the King's Road, was now occupied by another London branch of **Le Deli Robuchon** – an import from the original Paris establishment. Thinking of the Friends' SW3 members, I immediately hopped off the bus to investigate. The selection was mouth-watering. I went from counter to counter trying to decide whether to have a hot (lasagne etc) or a cold salad offering. In the end I chose a 100g portion of spicy chicken (£7) and 100g of roasted vegetables (£4.50), a fresh raspberry tarte (£5) and coffee, and ate my tasty choices from one of the high stools at the window watching the world go by. It's a buzzy place with customers breezing in and out seemingly knowing exactly what to buy, a wine tasting section and an elegant and comfortable smallish eating area – perfect for those

eating in, by themselves, without a computer or book for company.

Le Deli Robuchon, 279 King's Road, SW3 5EW. 020 4581 8300. Open Monday–Thursday 07.30–19.00, Friday – Sunday 08.00 – 19.00.

Gothique by name and (mock) gothic by age, with creepy vibes lingering on from the building's original use as an orphanage, **Le Gothique**, tucked inside the Royal Victoria Patriotic Building, is not easy to find. But find it we did and the golfer and I were warmly welcomed before being encouraged to dine outside in the large garden, even though it was a cold evening. We accepted when assured that the heater would soon see us removing our coats. The golfer had the Starter Special – which that evening was a mixture of vegetables including baby onions and button mushrooms (£11) followed by entrecôte & frites (£29) which was as rare as he'd requested, so he was delighted. I chose the caponata – a mix of Mediterranean vegetables (£9) – followed by confit de canard, dauphinoise potatoes and red cabbage (£23). We had a bottle of house rosé (£28) and were well looked after by an efficient, attentive and kind member of staff. As there is nothing faux-medieval about the French menu, garden or bar, an al fresco meal or just a glass of wine or beer consumed in the garden on a hot summer's evening might well see our return though I'm sure our Wandsworth members will get there first.

PS My venture to Le Gothique was due to a Friend who suggested I dine there as it was owned by one of his colleagues. I'm glad he did!

Le Gothique, The Royal Victoria Patriotic Building, John Archer Way, SW18 3SX. 020 8870 6567. Opening hours Wednesdays-Saturdays 12.00 noon – 12.00am. Sundays times vary.

Litter Collections

If only, as apparently in some parks in New Zealand, all litter bins could be removed and the message 'leave nothing but your footprint' strike home. However, it seems highly unlikely that the British public would do the decent thing and take all their litter home.

With thanks to Sam Morgan, Enable's Parks Operations Manager, below is some information about litter collection in the Park.

There are 25 extra 1100 litre Euro bins this summer. These wheelie bins were routinely emptied on Friday and Monday mornings, but there is now (from end June) an extra collection on Sunday mornings.

The smaller bins are emptied every morning by a minimum of two people. This may increase to three people at weekends when the last collection is between 3.30pm and 5pm. The number of people fluctuates depending on the need.

Enable would like to see more resources, not just on litter, and is in discussions with Continental Landscapes, the horticulture and ground maintenance contractor.

Litter and illegal cycling are the two issues most frequently raised at our AGMs. The way in which uncollected litter is spread about overnight by foxes and birds compounds the problem. The additional Sunday morning wheelie bin collections are clearly highly necessary and welcome.



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More photographs from the Friends' Barbecue



Events

JUL	Monday 29 to Friday 2 August Battersea Evolution	Big Play Out Free School Holiday Programme - part of the Battersea Summer Scheme
AUG	Saturday 3 Children's Zoo	Savvy Saturday Learn all about animals and social media and what you can do to help through games, crafts and workshops
	Friday 9 at sunset Peace Pagoda	Nagasaki Day Peace Walk from Westminster Cathedral at 7.45pm to the Park for Floating Lantern Ceremony
	Saturday 24 Gates open 4.30. 7.15 to 10 Sunday 25 Gates open 4.30. 7.15 to 10 Monday 26 Gates open 2, ends 9.30 All on rugby pitch area	Proms in the Park with a Fireworks Finale Royal Philharmonic Concert Orchestra with Myleen Klass A Night at the Musicals Royal Philharmonic Concert Orchestra Ronnie Scott's Jazz Orchestra Tickets for individual concerts or the whole weekend: batterseaparkinconcert.seetickets
SEP	Tuesday 10 6.30pm for 7pm All Saints Church, 100 Prince of Wales Drive SW11 4BD	Friends Annual General Meeting
	Saturday 21 View from Chelsea Bridge 80 minutes from start	Great River Race greatriverrace.org.uk/observation-points
OCT	Tuesday 1 to Sunday 6 11am to 6pm Battersea Evolution	Autumn Decorative Antiques and Textiles Fair
	Thursday 16 to Sunday 20 11am to 8pm Battersea Evolution	Affordable Art Fair
NOV	Saturday 2 & Sunday 3	Fireworks in the Park – ticketed event enablelc.org
	Monday 11 12.30 Doors open and lunch Lecture 1.15 to 2.15 including Q&A St Saviour's Church, 351 Battersea Park Road SW11 4LR	The Friends' Autumn Lunchtime Lecture John Birkett on Predatory Birds, including raptors and owls £7.00 tickets & pre-ordered lunch @ £6.00 from friendsofbatterseapark.org/events or via the enclosed leaflet. Further information from info@friendsofbatterseapark.org or 020 7622 5199
REGULAR EVENTS	Wednesdays 10am – 11 Wednesdays from 10am Saturdays from 28 Sept tbc Sundays 9am start	Free Walk open to all - meet at Albert Bridge Gate. Info: activelifestyles@enable.com Volunteer gardening in the Winter Garden Contact fhradcliffe@gmail.com to check it's happening Parkrun from bandstand Junior Parkrun – parkrun.org.uk/battersea-juniors/ begins from shelter NE of All Weather Pitches



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