FRIENDS OF BATTERSEA PARK
REVIEW

Issue 135
Autumn/Winter 2026



AGM and Open Forum Report
Pages 6, 7 and 16

BioBlitz
Page 10

Cllr Ethan Brooks
Page 16

£1
Free to members



Review

Autumn/Winter 2026

Editor Frances Radcliffe
Production Lydia Jones

friendsofbatterseapark.org
Registered Charity 802905
Founded in 1988



The new Management and Maintenance Plan for Battersea Park is being developed to help guide future management of the Park. The Council and Enable want input from those who visit the Park and who live nearby to find out what works well and what could be improved. The survey consultation **closes on 1 December**. The link to the survey is: *https://haveyoursay.citizenspace.com/wandsworthecs/bpmmp-26/* It can be filled out by everyone. Please spread the word!

Significant concerns about a range of issues were raised by Friends at the Open Forum following our AGM on 13 October. The report of the meeting is on pages 6, 7 and 16.

The most overwhelming problem for the Park since the Summer *Review* has been this year's long period of drought. Many plants and especially young trees have not survived. Those in danger in the Winter Garden, maintained by Thrive and volunteers from the Friends, were rescued by a group of Friends who answered the call to help with watering. Thank you to everyone involved, including two generations from two families, who turned up at 7am on up to three mornings a week to help keep key plants alive.

More volunteers are needed to help with the Park's first BioBlitz, see page 10. This is an important, worthwhile community initiative. Please respond if you can help!

2026 marked the 75th anniversary of the opening of the fun side of the Festival of Britain in the Park. The Spring Review will feature an article on the impact the Festival had on the Park and how it is reflected, for example, in the current Vista Steps, Fountains Pool, Tea Terrace and Russell Page Garden.

This issue contains the charming memories of Trevor Dunford spotted by Bob Barker on Facebook, see page 18. They remind us of how much has changed since 1945.

Another gem from the 1940s was supplied by Nina Barclay de Tolly, see page 11. If you know of more Park-related poems or even limericks such as Harry Hill's quoted by Mike Bates at our lecture in March, please send them in.

A couple met by the Pagoda

Said she 'that's a rather odd odour'

It may be the river

Or this fine piece of liver

That he took from his pocket and showed her.

Enjoy the Park!

Cover Image: Swans on 4 October 2026 by Angela Roden

Parkwatch















Summer Drinks Party in the Old English Garden

Trustee Sara Milne organised another particularly enjoyable party for Friends on a lovely evening on 1 July. The sun shone and hats featured. See also page 11 for hats!

Green Flag and London in Bloom

Congratulations to Enable and Krinkels, Battersea Park's horticulture and grounds maintenance contractor! Not only did Battersea Park win a Green Flag Award in July but also a London in Bloom Gold in October.

Winter Garden update

Many thanks are due to all those Friends who responded to a call for help and arrived in the Winter Garden at 7am in July, August and beyond with watering cans and energy to help save our most significant plants. Without them, many plants would have been lost.

It is still not clear how many ground cover plants will regenerate. New plants are being ordered with the aim of planting as many as possible by Christmas. Some shrubs behaved strangely like the magnolia in flower on 28 August.

We are hoping that Dan Pearson, who designed the Winter Garden, will continue his annual advisory visits, but this is not certain now that he has closed his London office.

Burnt Palm in the Subtropical Garden

An illegal BBQ in August is thought to have caused the fire that burnt the *Washingtonia filifera* in the Subtropical Garden. Its charred form is striking. The Friends have offered to pay for a replacement.

Sculpture Walk on 9 September

Samuel Dominguez, winner of the Friends and Royal College of Art Sculpture Award 2025, led a walk for Friends on 9 September. We visited some of the trees, especially fallen trees, which had inspired his sculpture *Apparition*. At each stopping point, Samuel read a poem by a Chilean poet in harmony with his sculpture. The morning ended with a companionable cup of coffee at Putt in the Park.

World Cleanup Day 20 September

Thanks and congratulations to Alexandra Carello for organising another 'Little Litter Pick' on 20 September. Numerous black bags of litter were collected by her team of enthusiastic and energetic children led by her daughter Olimpia. Next year, we will again muster a team of Friends. Ogansational problems this year, meant that we couldn't gather adult Friends to help, but they will be back in 2027.

Millennium Arena

The running track reopened in October after a major refurbishment funded through contributions from local developments. The Park now has one of only two tracks in London with World Athletics accreditation. This allows athletes to set officially recognised records and provides the same standard of track as at major international championships.

Some of those who use the Park in the early mornings were pleased to see runners returning to the track rather than running down the carriage drives.

Hybrid Strawberry Tree

Some of the graduates of the BA Town Planning Course in Battersea who donated the tree on the west side of East Carriage Drive returned on 20 October. The tree was planted on 5 December 2024 to remember the 50th anniversary of their graduation and colleagues no longer present. Not only did this group of planners have a happy day but the tree is growing well, as is its neighbour the Sycamore Gap sapling, thanks to the Council Tree Team's watering programme for newly planted trees. Some other newly planted trees have not fared so well.

Yews

Funded by the Friends, Grant from Sussex Topiary & Hedges began trimming the topiary yews on 21 October. A team from Krinkels were also out trimming in the Russell Page Garden. Work had to be abandoned because of rain. Grant plans to return in November.

Albert Bridge Repairs

A Friend has set up a group to press for speedy repairs and solutions to the problems caused by the closure of Albert Bridge. Head to *https://reopenalbertbridge.co.uk/* to read updates and learn more about the campaign.

Kensington & Chelsea are responsible for the repairs. See also *https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/streets-and-transport/albert-bridge-repairs*



AGM and Open Forum Discussion 2026

On 13 October at All Saints Church, Prince of Wales Drive, Chairman Kate Bock, welcomed 48 Friends, representatives from Enable (see photo) and Krinkels (Tom Gregory and Lawdin Salpanha). She confirmed that the AGM would be followed, as usual, by an Open Forum discussion. Apologies were received from 18 Friends including Adrian Flook, Treasurer.



L-R: Inspector Steve Biggs and Sergeant Sunnee Arhagba (Parks Police); Catie Ferguson (Enable's Parks Stakeholder Lead); Valerie Selby (Enable's Head of Parks); Chairman, Kate Bock; and Secretary, Juliet Lyon-Smith.

The Friends approved the minutes of the last AGM, the Trustees Report and Accounts for 2025/26 and the appointment of Arabella Slinger as independent examiner of the 2025/26 and 2026/27 accounts. Adrian Flook, Treasurer and Juliet Lyon-Smith, Secretary were both re-elected for a further three-year term. Kate thanked retiring trustees Tim Donovan, Miles Kerstein and Briony Newman for their contribution to the Friends. John Bonomo and Sarah-Jane Heany were elected as trustees.

Further information would be circulated about fundraising for the Cascades Restoration Project and the opportunity to comment by 1 December on the Battersea Park Management and Maintenance Plan.

For the Open Forum discussion, Kate had prepared slides summarising key issues raised by Friends before the AGM. This helpful initiative made it easier to ensure that discussion moved forward and a large range of points were considered.

Several Friends were concerned about illegal and inconsiderate **cycling**. Inspector Steve Biggs of Parks and Events Police said that cycling in the Park had greatly increased and that nearly 800 enforcement notices had been issued for cycling in prohibited areas between 1 April and September. Targeted enforcement would continue, particularly along Riverside Walk and Cherry Tree Avenue. Valerie reported that the Council had agreed a new signage scheme, including larger signs at entrances to main routes, painted ground markings and smaller repeater signs. Enable will confirm proposed locations with the Friends' Trustees before installation. Physical barriers had been ruled out because of the difficulties they would cause for families, buggies and wheelchairs. A Friend suggested that bold written warnings about the level of fines and action against repeat offenders would be helpful.

To avoid damage to the fabric of the Park, Valerie explained that **event** sites are inspected before, during and after use, and organisers provide bonds to cover necessary remedial work. The Council's Battersea Park Events Policy limits the number of events. Friends were particularly concerned about the cumulative impact of events and especially about the increasing number of **runs and runners**. Valerie said that groups of more than 30 people, or activities requiring infrastructure, should apply through Enable's events team but unauthorised commercial and other activity remains an enforcement challenge. Event income is paid into Council funds rather than being earmarked for Battersea Park. Friends asked for greater transparency about income generated by individual open spaces and how it is spent. Valerie agreed to obtain comparative event numbers for the previous two or three years and to send them to Kate; questions about events policy and income transparency would be referred to Councillor Brooks for a fuller response.

Several Friends raised concerns about **Parkrun**, particularly in relation to use of the narrow diagonal path from the west end of Central Avenue to the Bowling Green. Valerie advised that Enable is reviewing alternative start and finishing points, drawing on earlier submissions and site observations. Enable aims to send its analysis, options and recommendations to the Council before Christmas.

Friends complained about **noise** in the Park, particularly amplified sound from major events, school sports days at the Millennium Arena, charity events and the Pear Tree Café. Valerie confirmed that major events have sound limits and monitoring arrangements and that noise from the Pear Tree Café is being discussed with the Council. She will discuss school sports-day noise with the Enable's Head of Leisure and sound monitoring at Evolution with Enable's Head of Events and feed back to Kate.

Friends reiterated concerns about **lavatories**: inadequate provision, poor condition, too short opening hours and poor signage. An update would be requested from Councillor Brooks and the need for clearer directions to lavatories would be added to the Council's signage review. A Friend suggested bringing in Portaloos during the summer.

Tom Gregory from Krinkels confirmed **litter-picking** and vehicle rounds operate seven days a week, with extra resources during busy periods. Recycling bins are emptied twice weekly under the current contract. He would raise concerns about weekend bin capacity and emptying frequency with the Council and investigate additional Eurobins.

The **Cascades Restoration Project** remains at feasibility stage, with sampling and investigations causing intermittent closure of the lakeside path. A longer closure may be required during restoration work.

In response to queries about the impact of the **drought**, Valerie confirmed that grass repairs would be assessed according to use and weather; winter sports pitches are normally repaired after the playing season. The level of water in the lake had been maintained because of access to boreholes. Enable and the Council were seeking to protect and enhance habitats in the Local Nature Reserve along the east side of the Park. Research had shown that wildlife was habituated to activities and events in the Park.

Concerns about **fishing** were raised by several Friends, particularly following two incidents where a swan and a cygnet had suffered potentially serious damage from fishing line. Friends recognised that anglers require permits from both Enable and the Environment Agency and must fish only in designated areas but they requested clearer signage to help identify unauthorised fishing and to encourage anglers to take home all

Continued on page 16

Swans and other wildlife injured by fishing tackle



This year, there have been at least two significant incidents where our swans have been injured by discarded fishing tackle.

The first involved the pen (female) whose leg appeared to have been damaged by fishing line. She continued to be able to swim and seems to have recovered.

The second incident took place on 13 September and could have killed one of the then remaining six cygnets if it had not been for the action taken by a London Wildlife Protection volunteer and a Swan Rescuer from The Swan Sanctuary. The former saw that fishing line was caught round the beak of one of the cygnets and called in the latter. The heavy weight on the line could have caused the cygnet to become exhausted and to drown had it not been expertly removed.

The volunteer has asked the Council to consider:

- providing clearly marked fishing-line and hook disposal bins

- increasing signage reminding anglers to dispose of all hooks and line safely

- Introducing more regular checks and collection of discarded fishing tackle

- reviewing whether fishing practices or permitted areas can be modified to reduce risk

- working more closely with local wildlife volunteers and other organisations to monitor and report incidents.

Fishing in the Park is permitted only in certain areas and only with a licence which requires care to be taken with fishing tackle. Anglers should report any tackle they cannot remove safely from the bank to Enable Parks. Krinkels' responsibilities include regularly removing any caught-up line from within the watery side of lakeside vegetation.

The Friends can help with this. If you see any caught-up line or tackle please contact *parks@enablelc* or telephone 020 3959 0076 as soon as possible.

If you see any water bird in trouble you can also contact The Swan Sanctuary through its online reporting tool, *Report A Bird: theswansanctuary.org.uk/report/*

Cascades Restoration Walk

Hilaire

On a cool and drizzly late September afternoon, a group of Friends of Battersea Park and Battersea Society members gathered by the bandstand in Battersea Park. We were there for a walk and talk organised by Enable as part of Sustainable September. This was an opportunity to find out more about the Cascades Restoration Project, which is being funded by a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant.



Our guide for the afternoon was Chris Garrand, an architect and expert on restoring Pulhamite structures, such as those installed in the Park in 1873 by James Pulham & Son. Chris explained that Pulhamite is not a material per se, but something more like a technique. The rock-like structures installed in the Park created an alpine-style landscape including a waterfall, with rivulets flowing over 'rocks' that were made using this technique.

Chris led us first to an example of original Pulhamite rocks which had escaped the fate of many of the other structures in the 1980s. This was at the site of the former owl enclosure on the north side of the path which runs along the north side of the Ladies Pond. The process used by James Pulham & Son involved building up the shape of the 'rock' with rubble or other waste material, and then covering it with their own mix of cement and other materials to produce a finish that replicates the irregular surface and texture of true rocks.

In the 1980s, as part of a disastrous 'restoration', most of the Pulhamite structures in the Park were sprayed with a substance called gunnite, which Chris described as rendering a 'lumpy blancmange type surface'. This dull, uniformly grey, coating, which masks the details of the original Pulhamite finish, is unfortunately very difficult to remove.

Chris and his assistant were on site for a week, assessing the structures, and will then report back to Enable on the extent of the restoration works they deem possible and an initial outline of costs. It sounded like some of the 'rocks' may be best left as they are, while others hopefully can be restored to something like their former glory.

Peace Pagoda Update

Sophia Behling

The Friends of the London Peace Pagoda are in touch with Wandsworth Council who are starting to finalise finding the right technique and costing for a possible renovation of the Pagoda. Funding options will be explored once method and costs have been agreed.

This summer we launched 1,000 Voices for Peace, creating a London Peace Archive of memories, reflections and hopes connected with the Pagoda. We have collected our first 100 voices. People have described the Pagoda as 'an invitation to pause', 'a quiet fixed point in a busy city', and simply 'Hope. Home. Peace'. Now we would love to hear from Friends of Battersea Park with their memories of the Pagoda and what it means to them.

Help us reach 1,000 Voices and preserve the human story of the Pagoda alongside the building itself.

Use the link *forms.gle/99hfsDsYmzkEfJ9P8* or add your voice link on the London Peace Pagoda website *Peace-Pagoda.vercel.app*. There is also a QR code on the butterfly sign west of the Pagoda.

Clive's Tree Walks

Nicola Howard



Zelkova 19 September 2026

Many will know Clive Freedman from his articles in this magazine – written with Brian Livingstone – on different tree species in Battersea Park.

On my first tree walk with Clive, he took the time to open my eyes not only to the variety of trees in the Park but also to some memorable individual trees. I am grateful to him for introducing me to the majestic Zelkova – an exotic name – that stands tall over the west end of Rosery car park; such delicate small serrated leaves that cover a very lofty specimen which also has beautifully mottled and smooth bark.

Luckily, Clive is increasing the number of walks he offers, introducing more of us to the wonder of trees, showing us what details to look out for when we are trying to identify not just the genus – oak/Quercus, ash/Fraxinus, beech/Fagus but the species, for example by looking for pointers in the leaves, flowers and branches via their shape, colour and position on the stem. You will learn to notice so many details that you might previously have overlooked.

If you want to know how to identify individual trees and to be shown the wonderful variety in the Park, do join one of Clive's tree walks. He is after all the author of the amazing website *treesofbatterseapark.org/*

If you are interested in joining one of Clive's walks, please email *batterseaparktreewatchers@btinternet.com* Clive will then let you know when and where to meet him.

EVERSHED BROTHERS LIMITED
FUNERAL DIRECTORS
180 BATTERSEA PARK ROAD
BATTERSEA SW11 4ND
Tel: 020 7622 4935
24 HOUR SERVICE • PRE-PAY FUNERAL PLANS
HOME VISITS • HORSE DRAWN HEARSES
COMPLETE FUNERALS FROM £990 PLUS FEES
CARING FOR YOUR COMMUNITY SINCE 1832
ESTABLISHED 1832

Stewarding Runs in the Park

Email from Sally Orman, former Trustee and long standing Friend, to Elizabeth Elia, Enable Events Team, 13 September 2026

I tried for some time to cross South Carriage Drive to the Sun Gate on Sunday at about 11am. After my dog and I managed to get over, I spoke to one of the three stewards, who had made no attempt to help me or the others waiting, to ask if it was part of their brief to do this. He didn't seem to know.

You will appreciate that with organised runs in one direction, and individual runners from the other, plus cyclists in both, it would be reassuring to know that stewards would regard it as part of their role to escort people across the carriage drives. Unlike Parkrun, I don't believe those on charity runs or run-throughs are trying for a personal best time, so a moment's delay shouldn't bother them.

Could you assure me that if it is not already part of the briefing to the organisers, stewards could be asked to help Park users to cross the carriage drives.

Reply from Elizabeth Elia, Enable Events Team 12 October 2026

A core part of our approach to permitting running events in the Park is ensuring that we strike the right balance between the event itself and the needs of general Park users. This is something that has become increasingly difficult as running has become more popular.

One of the particular challenges is that it is not always possible to distinguish between participants in an organised run and general runners unless participants have identifiable event signage, a race number, T-shirt or other clear means of identification. This applies to both large-scale and smaller running events.

A further complication is that runners, whether participating in an organised event or running independently alongside the event, may be testing themselves or trying to achieve a personal best. Stopping someone who is actively running can therefore be challenging, and this needs to be managed carefully to avoid creating additional safety issues.

As part of our event requirements, we make clear to event organisers that the stewards should actively monitor the routes and identify appropriate gaps in the event activity to allow members of the public to cross safely or move through the Park. Where it is safe and appropriate to do so, supporting and facilitating Park users to cross the carriage drives is an expectation we communicate to organisers as part of their event planning and stewarding arrangements.

Ultimately, we aim to balance the successful delivery of events with the needs of the wider Park community. We recognise that this can be challenging but ensuring that event organisers brief and manage their stewards appropriately to facilitate access for general Park users remains an important part of our overall approach to event management.

BioBlitz Battersea Park

Fenella Barber

Saturday 1 May 2027

We are planning the first **BioBlitz Battersea Park**, bringing our community together to discover, record and celebrate the wildlife on our doorstep!

A BioBlitz is a time-limited community wildlife survey in which people work together to identify as many species of plants, animals and fungi as possible. No experience is needed - just curiosity and enthusiasm!

The event is open to everyone. Whether you're a keen nature lover, a family looking for an outdoor adventure or simply curious about the wildlife in the Park, you're very welcome. We plan to create a basecamp at the Bowling Green, where people can share discoveries, learn from one another and enjoy celebrating Battersea Park's biodiversity. Our ambition is to grow this into an annual community event.

Could you help make it happen?

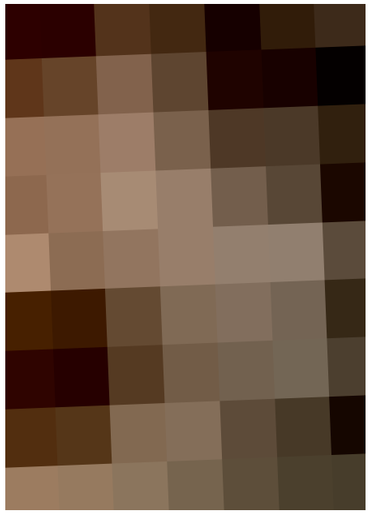
We're keen to hear from those with an interest in nature, wildlife enthusiasts and experts who could help bring the event to life. We're looking for volunteers to help identify species, support wildlife recording through the iNaturalist app, share equipment, suggest activities and lend a hand with publicity and practical arrangements.

The event will take place during the **City Nature Challenge**, a global initiative encouraging people to record wildlife using the iNaturalist app. In the UK, this happens in partnership with the **Natural History Museum**. We want to encourage local schools to take part, by supporting them a day earlier, on Friday 30 April.

To register your interest in volunteering or helping with preparations, please email *BioBlitzBattersea@gmail.com*.

From one season to another, some cuisines never falter

Jessica Bailey





Who needs warm pumpkin soup in autumn when the leaves begin to fall and conkers hit the ground? At **DanDan**'s fourth Sichuan outlet, newly opened in Battersea, you can have Shanghai pork dumplings (xialongbao) - delicate handcrafted morsels of wheat dough filled with piping hot pork broth dipped in vinegar with shredded ginger (£6.80) or BBQ pork slices and authentically hung Peking duck on perfectly steamed white rice with pak choi garnish (£13.80), grilled chicken dumplings (£7.20) or prawn & bamboo shoots dumplings (£6.80), washed down with fresh lychee juice (£3.00).

DanDan *Embassy Gardens, Unit D, Moat Street, 57 Nine Elms Lane, SW11 7EU. 020 3457 8451 Open: 7 days a week from 12 noon-10:30pm*

Over the river, nestled within the delightful Francophile corner of Sloane Square, is the opulent brasserie **Olivia** bustling with singlephiles enjoying a wholesome Parisian style lunch of escargots et beurre persille (£16.00) and steak frites Bearnaise (£22) complemented with a 250ml carafe of Saint Pourcain from the Auvergne (£15.00). Parties, families, couples and singles can dine and drink inside and outside, weather permitting, and at the Venus bar below the restaurant.

Brasserie Olivia *1 Sloane Square, SW1W 8EE. 020 7993 7464.Open: 7 days a week from 12noon-midnight.*

Olivia is part of the Nouvelle Garde group which has various establishments in Paris, Lille, Marseille, Lyon and Bordeaux. The concept is elevated traditional French-style brasserie which is always popular. Produce is seasonal and the wine is regional. Seemingly, there is a substantial appetite for gourmet Francais in Sloane Square as it has successfully joined the equally busy and buzzy Colbert and Côte.

Reasonably priced and fit for any occasion, Olivia is a restaurant, alongside DanDan, which never disappoints come winter, spring, summer or fall.



Coupon-Free

ON a bench in Battersea Park I sat
And studied the Trend of the Female Hat.

Many remarkable thoughts thought I
As I gazed amazed at the passers-by—

Many remarkable thoughts, and yet
There ran through them all the one regret:

However uncanny a hat may be,
However absurd, it is coupon-free.

From 'Just a Few Lines' – verses by A.W.B (Arthur Bird) - drawings by Fougasse (Kenneth Bird) first published 1943 Methuen &Co Ltd

The Coast Redwood and the Giant Sequoia

Brian Livingstone and Clive Freedman

Sequoia sempervirens and Sequoiadendron giganteum

The native range of the Coast Redwood and the Giant Sequoia is the Pacific coast of North America. We have specimens of both trees in Battersea Park (fig. 1(a) and (b)). These have grown fast but are young compared with trees in their native range. From study of tree rings, examples are known that are (or were before felling) hundreds, or even over 1,000, years old. They often reach more than 100m tall, and one of the common names of the Giant Sequoia in the USA is the 'Big Tree'. These trees constitute the tallest trees now living, and a Giant Sequoia in California known as 'General Sherman' is considered to be the most massive single-stem tree on Earth (by volume).





Both species are in the Cypress family of the Conifers. They do not have long needles like pines, but they do have cones. The stems of the Giant Sequoia have sharp radial scales which may either be closely appressed to the stems or spreading and awl-like, depending on the position in the canopy (figs. 2 and 3).

On the Coast Redwood, leaves spread out from the stem rather like those of Yew trees. They are in flattened ranks on each side of the stem, but careful examination will show that, like Yew, they are attached spirally around the stems. They also resemble the *Metasequoia* or Dawn Redwood and the *Taxodium* or Swamp Cypresses which we described in one of our previous articles. However, those trees are deciduous with no leaves in winter. Both the Coast Redwood ('*sempervirens*') and the Giant Sequoia are evergreen.

Both species produce small pollen cones amongst the leaves and seed cones at the shoot tips. The seed cones enlarge into ball shapes but they are not much more than a centimetre in diameter when brown and mature. They release many very small seeds with a narrow wing on each side. They reproduce quite well from seeds, but in Europe spontaneous germination is rare, so they need to be cultivated.

When cut down, Coast Redwoods will sprout from the stump. In the wild on the Pacific coast (and in some gardens in the United Kingdom) if they are broken by wind or by the effects of fire, multi-stemmed trunks develop from this sprouting. The Coast Redwood next to the Bowling Green pavilion has three stems (for reasons unknown), and there are a number of small trees growing around the trunk. The Coast Redwood may naturally shed lower branches that have become shaded in dense forests and it makes new branches higher up in the sunlight. Decayed leaf mould can then form in the area between points of such branching, and epiphytic plants can grow, as though in a garden in the sky.

Our Giant Sequoias should have had a good year with the dry summer since they naturally grow inland on higher drier ground in the Sierra Nevada. The Coast Redwoods, on the other hand, may show signs of stress. Their range extends further north to the border with Canada, and they are found on the lower ground towards the coast. This area is also quite dry, but is regularly misty for several hours most days. It seems that this mist is an important source of water for them, being absorbed by the leaves. The mist belt does not extend more than about 60 kilometres inland and therefore that is the limit of the Coast Redwoods' range. A few hot dry summers like 2026 may damage trees growing in the UK.

As noted, the Giant Sequoia copes with drier conditions but it is still vulnerable in its home range. Populations were reduced in the past by logging. While the seeds of surviving trees germinate well, the open land is also re-populated by quicker growing species which crowd out the Redwoods. Those new trees are also species preferred by loggers. Thus, 'Old Growth' forests are only on public land like national parks. At one time these were re-populated with Firs (*Abies*). The 'Big Trees' bark is resistant to light or moderate fires but the Fir trees burn up more fiercely and enough to badly damage the Giants.

The Coast Redwoods may suffer this too, but a more serious worry for them is global warming diminishing the mist belt that provides their water. This has led to the controversial idea of 'assisted migration' in the USA. As global warming affects their historic range, it has been proposed that groves of Coast Redwood be planted in cooler areas further north along the coast to replace populations that could be lost in the south. As noted, their seeds can germinate well in cultivation, so that the resulting trees can become the basis of a new population. However, there are strong arguments against this proposal. We *think* we know what we would be doing, but our record of introducing species into environments which are not already adapted to them has not been encouraging. Can we be sure about the ecological effect of planting groves of redwoods on land where they have never grown? If they survive, they will be there for centuries. Their effect may be quite subtle, such as effects on the soil ecology which, in turn, *could* have very detrimental results. Think of the experience with rabbits and ash trees in Australia.

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, or for help in identifying species of trees in the Park, contact batterseaparktreewatchers@btinternet.com.



Fig. 1(a) A group of three Giant Sequoias south of Rosery car park. **(b)** The Coast Redwood between South Carriage Drive and the Hepworth sculpture. The shape of these trees is somewhat similar, but examination of the leaves will distinguish between them.

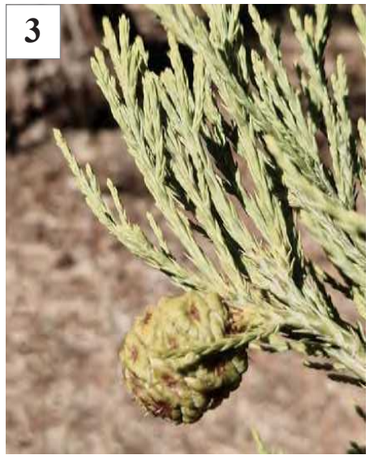


Fig. 2 The dense foliage of a young Giant Sequoia on the grass near the East Carriage Drive playground.

Fig. 3 The sharp radial scales on the leafy stems of the Giant Sequoia. The seed cones form at the tips of the stems. The small pollen cones are formed further up the stems.



Fig. 4 The Yew-like leafy stems of the Coast Redwood growing west of the Bowling Green pavilion. Again, the seed cones (still young in this picture) are at the tips, while the pollen cones are further up the stems.

All photos are © Clive Freedman.

Friends of Battersea Park Trustees

Fenella Barber ***(Schools)***
Kate Bock ***(Chairman)***
John Bonomo
Adrian Flook ***(Treasurer)***
Martin Graham ***(Arts)***
Sara-Jane Heany
Juliet Lyon-Smith ***(Secretary)***
Kayt Little ***(Admin)***
Sara Milne ***(Horticulture)***
Frances Radcliffe ***(Review/Planning)***
Annabel Stein ***(Membership)***



Work on Prince of Wales Drive on 5 November 2026

Winter Works in the Park

Enable Parks Team



Brambles south west of Subtropical Garden

As the days get shorter and temperatures drop, Battersea Park enters a quieter visitor period. However, behind the scenes, our parks and grounds maintenance teams at Enable, Wandsworth Council and Krinkels are busy preparing the Park for the year ahead.

Works are carefully timed to minimise disturbance to wildlife and to coincide with the dormant period, when many plants and trees are no longer actively growing. Drier or frozen ground also allows volunteers to access sensitive wetland and grassland with less risk of damaging the soil through compaction.

Winter is also an important time to carry out vegetation management ahead of the main bird nesting season. Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, wild birds' nests are protected while they are in use or being built. Although many birds nest between March and September, nesting can occur at other times of year, so checks for active nests are essential before work that could disturb them takes place.

Winter works include bramble management, tree thinning, and the planting of new trees, shrubs and bulbs. These activities help maintain a variety of habitats, prevent individual species from becoming too dominant and create opportunities for new vegetation to establish.

Bramble management

Bramble is an important part of the Park's ecosystem. It provides food, shelter and nesting opportunities for birds, mammals and invertebrates within the wooded areas and at the lake edge. It can also act as a physical barrier to deter visitors from trampling and compacting the soil in vulnerable areas but, if left unmanaged, it can spread into grassland and other habitats, reducing the variety of plants able to grow there.

Rotational cutting helps maintain bramble at different stages of growth, supporting wildlife while preventing it from becoming too dominant. Cutting can also allow more light to reach the ground, encouraging a wider variety of flowering plants and benefiting pollinators.

While management can look quite drastic, bramble regenerates quickly. By managing different areas at different times, the team can retain valuable habitat while maintaining a diverse landscape.

Tree thinning and woodland management

Tree thinning involves selectively removing trees to reduce competition for light, water and space, helping improve conditions for the remaining trees and other woodland plants.

Recent works have included the removal of selected non-native trees, such as Robinia (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) and Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) to help prevent them from spreading too vigorously and outcompeting native species, such as English oak. Their removal allows more opportunities for native species to regenerate. Native species evolved alongside other wildlife, which means they can support far more biodiversity than non-native alternatives, making this practice vital for preserving the Park's biodiversity.

Tree work can also create valuable habitats. Where appropriate, selected trees are retained or managed to provide deadwood, cavities and other features that can support insects, birds and bats.

In the Local Nature Reserve, we are developing plans to work with volunteers to use felled material to create loggeries and dead hedges. Loggeries are piles of logs that provide habitat for decomposers and other invertebrates, while dead hedges are structures made from branches and woody material that offer shelter and nesting opportunities for wildlife.

New planting

Winter is an important season for planting trees and shrubs. Planting during the dormant period allows plants to establish their roots before the demands of spring and summer growth.

Autumn is also a popular time for planting spring-flowering bulbs. Many benefit from a period of cooler temperatures, while autumn soil moisture can help them establish before flowering in the new year. The Vista Steps will undergo significant new planting as we head into winter this year, featuring a range of spring-flowering bulbs including narcissi, camassias and alliums.

Elsewhere, new planting to complement the previous 2025 renovations* to the Russell Page Beds will be completed this autumn, including alliums, salvia and verbena, all of which are pollinator-friendly and will support pollinating insects such as butterflies and bees. Tulips will be planted for blooming in mid-late spring, so expect to see some colourful additions to these beds in the months to come.

Looking ahead

Winter works are an important part of looking after Battersea Park for the long term. By managing vegetation, supporting habitat diversity and planting for the future, the Park will remain a welcoming place for people while continuing to provide valuable habitats for wildlife.

To find out more about biodiversity and habitat management across Wandsworth's parks, contact *biodiversity@enablelc.org*.

**The Friends pushed for the redesign of these beds in 2025. Thanks go to Trustee Sara Milne for her planting plan and plant selection!*

OPTIQUE OPTICIANS
INDEPENDENT OPTICIANS

Optique of Battersea is an independent Opticians with over 30 years of expertise in providing friendly and caring Ophthalmic Eyecare services using the most up to date and advanced technology.

Our services:

- Comprehensive Eye Examinations—NHS and Private
- Optomap Ultra Widefield Retinal Imaging
- Glaucoma Screening
- Macular Degeneration Screening
- Visual Field Analysis
- Contact Lenses
- Children's Eye Care and specialist frames available
- Specialist Myopia Control Spectacle Lenses and Contact Lenses
- Wide Range of Spectacle Frames and Sunglasses
- Prescription Sunglasses/ Sports Active Wear

276 Battersea Park Road
London SW11 3BS
020 7228 2754
info@optiquebattersea.co.uk
www.optiquebattersea.co.uk



FRIENDS OF BATTERSEA PARK

Our local community means the world to us.
We're honoured to be lending our support to
Friends of Battersea Park to help with their incredible work.

PROUD SPONSORS OF FRIENDS OF BATTERSEA PARK



Catching Up with Battersea Park

Ethan Brooks, *Wandsworth Council's Cabinet Member for Environment*



I'm really pleased to have this opportunity to introduce myself to the Friends of Battersea Park, and want to begin with a thank you.

The Friends do an extraordinary amount for the Park, not simply through your practical work, fundraising and initiatives, but through your advocacy and the care you take in speaking up for the jewel in the crown of our Borough's green spaces. It is a remarkable expression of public spirit, and one which I greatly value.

I'm conscious that the Park has changed enormously in recent years. What was already one of London's busiest and best-loved parks has become one of the capital's premier destinations, attracting visitors from across London and around the world. It is increasingly a landmark of international standing.

My ambition is to ensure our stewardship keeps pace with the Park's growing stature, which means recognising that expectations placed upon the Park, and the demands made of those who look after it, have changed. We need to be as ambitious in our management as we are for the Park itself.

There are some important balances to strike.

We must find ways for the growing number of visitors and organised activities to coexist happily with the people who have used and loved the Park for decades. A great destination park must, first and foremost, remain a great local park.

We should embrace the opportunities to host events worthy of the Park's growing reputation, while ensuring that they respect its landscape, ecology and the lives of neighbouring residents. The Park should work as beautifully on an ordinary Tuesday morning as it does on its most spectacular Saturday afternoon.

And I want to make it easier for the Friends, local organisations and the wider community to bring their own ideas to life. There is no shortage of imagination or enthusiasm among those who love the Park. The Council should be a willing accomplice to good ideas, not an obstacle course standing in their way.

Alongside these bigger questions, we must get the basics right.

Looking after somewhere as complex and busy as Battersea Park requires every part of the orchestra to be in sync. The Council, our parks operator Enable, our grounds maintenance and cleansing contractor Krinkels, the Friends, local businesses and the many volunteer groups all have their parts to play. We need to make sure that every element is in tune with the others.

The ducks on the Lake are leading by example. Beneath the waterline there is furious paddling, while above it all is a serenity befitting the surroundings. That's the sort of experience I want for the people enjoying Battersea Park, however much effort and coordination it takes to deliver it.

I don't pretend to arrive with all the answers. The people who know the Park best, and who have cared for it longest, have a great deal to teach me. I'm looking forward to listening, learning and working with you. The Park is already an extraordinary place. Together, I hope we can make sure that the care, imagination and ambition we bring to its future are every bit extraordinary.

Continued from page 7

fishing line or to report any they were themselves unable to retrieve. Valerie would investigate improved signage.

Valerie confirmed that Albert Bridge repair and reopening is a matter for the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea who have a dedicated webpage showing updates.

A Friend raised concerns about the new InPost lockers next to the Millennium Arena and said that two emails sent to the Friends had gone unanswered. Valerie said that the lockers had been a mistake by a new member of staff and that she would press for their removal to be speeded up. Kate apologised for any lack of response but said that correspondence may not have been received because of current technical problems with the Friends' website.

A Friend reminded those present to remember all the good things about the Park which can be forgotten when considering problems at an AGM. In response, Kate asked Valerie and Catie for their 'stand out' good moments of the year. Valerie said that hers had been the successful fledging of three tawny owlets despite the sudden loss of the tree where they usually nest. Catie cited the exhibition at the Pump House of historic photographs taken in the Park

Kate closed the meeting with thanks to Enable, the Parks Police, Krinkels and all Friends present. She would send questions for the Council to Councillor Ethan Brooks and will circulate his replies to members.

Battersea Park In Concert 2026

Sara Milne





As clouds gathered in the sky, people were gathering in the Park for this year's *Battersea Park in Concert*. The lineup included the Sounds of South Africa on Friday, Pop Symphonic on Saturday and Movies & Musicals on Sunday with the Royal Philharmonic Concert Orchestra (RPO).

The Monday programme was headlined by Ronnie Scott's Jazz Orchestra supported by The Amy Winehouse Band, Toby Lee, Ineza and Jazz Dynamos. It was a great mix of live jazz, soul and blues which I thoroughly enjoyed and, more importantly, the rain held off and we danced and swayed our way through some laidback sounds without getting wet.

Some 40 primary school pupils have explored classical music through workshops delivered by RPO Resound, in partnership with Battersea Park in Concert and Enable. At Falconbrook Primary School and St George's C of E Primary School pupils worked alongside RPO musicians, discovering orchestral music and creating their own compositions inspired by repertoire from the concert programme.

Battersea Park in Concert has become a great music event that caters for all tastes and it is in the perfect space for al fresco entertainment. As *Time Out* says, 'This charming August bank holiday festival is back for a fourth time, transforming Battersea Park into a serene space to take in some majestic orchestral renditions of your favourite tunes'.

Double the Reptile House joy!

Jamie Baker, *Zoo Manager*

We've had another flurry of excitement in our Reptile House! A second critically endangered pancake tortoise hatched on 24 August. This species is on the brink of extinction in the wild due to habitat loss and illegal pet trade collection, so every hatch matters.

We've also welcomed a second prehensile-tailed skink, born on 20 September to our second adult female. It's the first time we've bred from both females since the species arrived over six years ago.



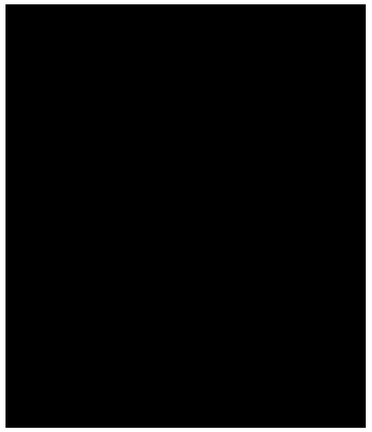
These births are a testament to our animal team's care and expertise, and we couldn't be prouder.



Both youngsters are growing well, and we hope you'll spot them soon in our Reptile House!

Days of childhood in broken London 1945-55

Trevor Dunford



Bob Barker spotted Trevor's memories on Facebook and obtained his permission to publish extracts relating to Battersea Park. His home was a third floor flat in Warriner Gardens.

My Battersea Park, which I thought of as my very own garden so near was it to my little home, provided some joy as I walked with my father and sister on Sunday mornings, visiting the friendly pigs who were penned close to the bandstand and before the Funfair and Pleasure Gardens were opened in 1951 for the Festival of Britain when the bright eyed pigs were transformed into bacon for the last time. Regrettably, they have not returned. The boating lake lay still as glass, often with a surface wafer of very thin ice, and the pleasure boats were pulled up onto the hard to endure the winter with me. Sad ducks would stand on the ice wondering where their lake had gone. Water dripped from trees and black iron railings even when it was not raining and smoke from bonfires burning the leaves of autumn drifted over my playing fields, the Indian camp sites and forts of Confederate cavalry of summer and the now dead and untended flower beds, the earth as solid as rock. The river at the embankment was hostile and angry at high tide, especially if had been raining, and fallen branches from trees upstream would rush by on the ebb like wild monsters fighting with another, and larger wild monster which they would never overcome, and towards an unknown end at the distant sea.

Every spare moment would be full of adventure, climbing in the areas in the Park where we were not allowed to go and being chased off by one of the uniformed keepers shouting 'Keep off the grass' or 'Oi! Get down from there' only for us to return when he had gone. Then fishing in the fishless lake with a homemade bamboo rod with a string line and cotton reel float, and going home without a meal for the cat. I experienced my first jealousy when my friend, Christopher, displayed his new bike and me borrowing it and falling off three times before cycling eventually around the Park in triumph, bruised and bleeding.

I sweated around the Belgrave Harriers cinder track in the Park, running clock-wise and the wrong way with my new summer sandals and in glorious sunshine and passing Chris Chataway twice but with nobody offended enough to complain of it. He who had come second to the collapsing Roger Banister in the first sub four-minute mile, but then asking for an immediate light for his cigarette while a breathless Roger staggered off to heroic fame.

Then mother would sit on her usual bench in a summer dress and close to the lake in the Park with her knitting and gossiping with her friends, the mothers of other children, and all waiting for our return from school while flocks of starlings would gather in the tallest trees across the water. There would be warm lemonade and almost stale sandwiches which had warmed and dried out too much in the sun. Small dogs would be panting in the shade after chasing hopeful ducks waiting for bread, and somewhere nearby, the sound of a tennis match played by people who could not play tennis, and I would watch the white billowing smoke from the chimneys of the Power Station, the other side of the road that led to the foreign, unknown land of Chelsea across its river moat.

In 1951, about the time of the Festival of Britain, some statues began to appear in the Park. I think they were by Henry Moore. We young lads were indignant for not only were the modern interpretations of women not understood, one was set on an area of grass where we played cricket. Undaunted, I just chalked stumps and bales on the statue and played the game. Years later, and on the way to an award ceremony in London one of my then colleagues suggested a brief stop at the V&A Museum. Imagine my surprise when some of these same statues were on display, one of which still showed the then fading chalk stumps of fifty years before. Presumably nobody had cleaned them off believing they may have been the artists guide lines. I bet nobody else knew them to be a small boy's cricket stumps.

Those early years are far away now, and I find myself at the opposite end of my allotted span on this planet. I think of that wonderful time often, and far more than I used to. Perhaps the ageing citizen, burdened with a lifetime of cares, has a longing to return to those innocent childhood days. I am sometimes physically drawn back, and very infrequently I drive by, and am tempted to call and tell the owners of my first home how it all used to be. But I don't, I drive by and make my way to wherever I am going, but just for a second, I think to glimpse a little skinny boy running towards the Park, looking for his friends.

Battersea Park Review 18

Events

NOV	**Thursday 19 to Thursday 24 Dec** Chelsea Bridge Car Park	**Pines and Needles** Christmas trees for sale
	Friday 27 Thrive Main Office, Carriage Drive East. 10am to 1pm	**Wreath Making Workshop** Make wreath to take home, or donate to Thrive to sell. Cost £50. Book on *friendsofbatterseapark.org/events.* Limited spaces.
	Saturday 28 Battersea Evolution	**Battersea Ball in aid of the Battersea Crime Prevention Panel** raising funds for Battersea Summer Scheme. Ticket information on *batterseaball.org.uk* or *ball@bcpp.co.uk*
DEC	**Tuesday 8** Thrive Main Garden 11am 3pm	**Thrive Christmas Open Day** Sale of Christmas cards, wreaths, calendars, cakes, jams and chutney
	Monday 21 to Thursday 24 Children's Zoo 11.30	**Dusty & Smokey's Christmas Cosy-Up** Snuggle up and listen to a Christmas tale before helping to feed the lovely donkeys, Dusty & Smokey! Free with entry ticket/membership
	Friday 25 Battersea Evolution	**Rotary Club Christmas Luncheon** *rotarychristmasday.org.uk* for guest tickets or to volunteer
2027		
JAN	**Tuesday 19 to Sunday 24** Battersea Evolution 11-8; 7 on Fri, Sat; Sun 11-6	**The Decorative Fair** Free entry after 4pm
MAR	**Wednesday 3 to Sunday 7** Battersea Evolution Thurs, Fri:11- 8: Sat, Sun: 10 -6	**The Affordable Art Fair**
	Monday 22 12.30 lunch 1.15 – 2.15 Lecture St Saviour's Church 351 Battersea Park Road. SW11 4LH	**Friends' Spring Lunchtime Lecture** Friends Spring Lunchtime Lecture by Simon Inglis on 'Parks for Play – how sport won its place in Britain's public parks'. Details in the enclosed flier, or from *info@friendsofbatterseapark.org* or 020 7031 8067. Tickets from *friendsofbatterseapark.org/events*
REGULAR EVENTS	**Wednesdays 10.30 – 11.30** **Wednesdays from 10am** **Saturdays 9am** **Sundays 9am**	**Free Walk** open to all. Meet at Albert Gate (opposite Prince Albert Pub) Info: *activelifestyles@enable.com* **Friends Volunteer Gardening in the Winter Garden**. Contact *fhradcliffe@gmail.com* to check it's happening. **Parkrun** Updates and cancellations on *www.parkrun.org.uk/battersea* **Junior Park Run** from hut at All Weather Pitches

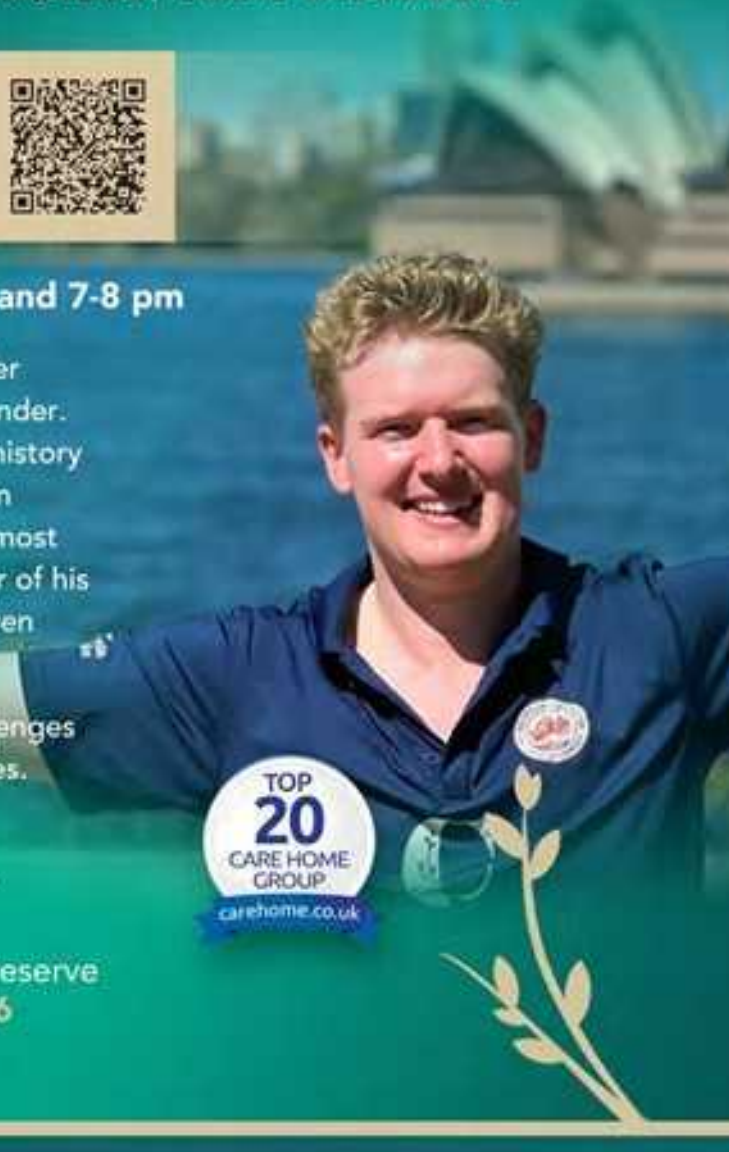
EDEN COURT

CINNAMON CARE COLLECTION

An Audience

WITH ADVENTURER & WORLD RECORD HOLDER, LOUIS ALEXANDER

Discover the challenges and triumphs behind record breaking feats



Thursday 3rd December, with talks at 4-5 pm and 7-8 pm

Eden Court is delighted to welcome World Record Holder and Cinnamon Care Collection Ambassador, Louis Alexander. At just 26 years old, Louis is the first and only person in history to complete marathons on all Seven Continents and swim marathons in all Seven Seas. Louis' next challenge is his most ambitious yet as he is now preparing for the final chapter of his "Trilogy of the Seven" a world-first attempt to kayak seven of the world's most challenging ocean crossings.

During his talk, Louis will share his experiences and challenges as well as what motivated him to take on these challenges.

Guests are invited to enjoy light refreshments, with guided tours of the home available after the talk.

This is a **FREE** event, but booking is essential. To reserve your place, please call the team on **020 4638 5166** or email **edencourt.enquiries@cinnamoncc.com**

RESIDENTIAL CARE | DEMENTIA CARE | RESPITE CARE | RETIREMENT APARTMENTS

Eden Court 313 Battersea Park Road, London SW11 4LU

www.cinnamoncc.com/edencourt Our What3Words location: **Bike.Curving.Robots**