# FRIENDS OF BATTERSEA PARK
# REVIEW

Issue 131
Summer 2025

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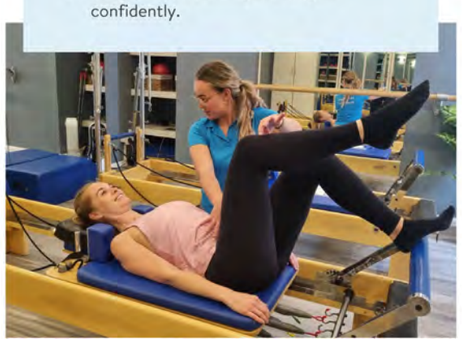



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# Review

**Summer 2025**

Editor Frances Radcliffe
Production Lydia Jones

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Registered Charity 802905
Founded in 1988



On 23 May, Councillor Paul White took over from Councillor Judi Gasser as Wandsworth Council's Cabinet Member for Envirionment.. The Friends look forward to working with Councillor White. We would also like to thank Councillor Gasser for attending our AGMs and being so consistently responsive and helpful. It's now over to Councillor White to do something about the lack of lavatories in the Park!

There has been a good deal of change in the management of the Park as a result of the Council moving in-house not only strategic policy for biodiversity and sport but also management of the ground maintenance and tree contracts. I would like to clarify that Krinkels is the new name for Continental Landscapes, not a new contractor as I said in my last editorial.

Our fundraising barbecue on 3 June was a great success! Many congratulations go to Inge Darling, Urška Grašič, Peta May Law and all their enthusiastic and hardworking helpers. They did an enormous amount of work and raised over £10,000 for the Park. See pages 12-14. They also skilfully provided those who came on the night with a thoroughly enjoyable evening. You would never have guessed that the decision to move the BBQ from the Bowling Green to the British Genius Site had been made only about 24 hours earlier. If you are visiting any of our kind donors, please make a point of thanking them for their vouchers for our wishing tree.

The Friends' contribution to Wandsworth's year as London Borough of Culture focusses on sculpture. We are paying for the War Memorial and Henry Moore's *Three Standing Figures* to be cleaned. Both are all too obviously in need of such action. There will be more information in a Mailchimp about another initiative.

Our AGM is on 14 October at All Saints Church, 101 Prince of Wales Drive. As usual, there will be an Open Forum which gives Friends a chance to discuss issues in the Park with Neil Blackley, Head of Parks and Inspector Steve Biggs from the Parks and Events Police. The Friends' Autumn Lunchtime Lecture by Joanna Barnes is entitled 'Battersea Park: an Open-air Sculpture Gallery Past and Present' is on 10 November. You will be well briefed for the lecture if you read Bob Barker's article on pages 6 and 7. Do put both dates in your diaries.

Enjoy the Park!

**Cover Image:** Our BBQ on 3 June at the British Genius Site

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parkspolice@wandsworth.gov.uk

**Non-emergency incidents:** 101

**Patrolling mob:** 07500 959442

**General Enqs:** 020 8871 7532

**Wandsworth Borough Council:** 020 8871 6000

# Parkwatch

### Change at the Top

On 23 May, Councillor Paul White replaced Councillor Judi Gasser as Wandsworth Council's Cabinet Member for Environment.

### London Borough of Culture

Wandsworth's year as Borough of Culture began with 'Strictly Wandsworth', a successful day of dance and movement on 26 April. It was a very happy occasion, helped by blue skies, and much enjoyed by families and young people, with numerous helpful volunteers. The day had been six months in preparation, with collaboration between 22 organisations and dance schools. The dance included street dance, tap, Charleston, Indian and ballet. The stage was set in front of the fountains, with a silent disco in the Russell Page Garden. , Everyone in the interactive tent with audience participation in dance movements was having a lovely time.

### Summer in the Park

'Live at the Bandstand' on 21 and 22 June was its usual mix of music enjoyed by locals, and a surprising number of non-locals, sitting at tables or on deck chairs or just passing through. It is such a pleasure to see the Bandstand used as intended.

### Sculpture cleaning

The Friends have long pressed for Eric Kennington's War Memorial and Henry Moore's *Three Standing Figures* to be cleaned. We are happy to fund the work, not least to make it happen. The good news is that at last Wandsworth Council has agreed that Rupert Harris Conservation can clean the sculptures. Rupert Harris has advised that for both sculptures 'this will be a gentle steam cleaning of the surface to remove most of the lichen, algae and loosely bound surface pollutants and then to assess the result. This process will not fully clean the sculpture to the same degree as past restorations but will provide a check point before possibly undertaking additional work. This could involve a more aggressive but selective steam cleaning or the use of water abrasion using bicarbonate of soda media under pressure'. The cost to the Friends is £ 7,640.

### Cascades Project

Early stages consultation is ongoing, along with recruitment of project managers and assessment of works to move to approval of the stage where the architectural concept is further developed and refined into a coordinated design. This must align with structural, engineering and cost considerations. The deadline is early April 2026.

The next Cascades Steering Committee meeting is in September.

### Parkrun

Individual Friends retain strong views for and against Parkrun. The Council are now reviewing the run which was introduced last October. The concerns of the Friends have been fed into the review. These are primarily problems with the overcrowded start at the Bandstand, runners failing to keep to the tarmac or give way to other Park users and the inevitable consequences of the lack of sufficient lavatories in the Park.

There is also a general feeling that there are too many runs in the Park, particularly at weekends.

### Thrive's new Sanctuary Garden

This small, beautiful and restful space behind Thrive's office on East Carriage Drive was opened on 11 June designed especially for vulnerable Londoners - including older adults,







people with disabilities, and those living with dementia. The Friends contributed £6,000.

### June Heatwave.

The Met Office confirmed on 1 July that their provisional figures revealed that England had its hottest June since records began in 1884. The colour of the cricket pitch on 25 June corroborates this finding.



# Trustees report

## Kate Bock, Chairman

The year ending 31 March 2025 marked a period of significant transition and continued engagement for the Friends of Battersea Park. Garon Watkins stood down as Chairman on 31 March 2024 and Kate Bock took over as Acting Chairman on 1 April 2024. Parkrun launched in the Park on 12 October, Wandsworth Council significantly revised its parks and open spaces contract with Enable, Leisure and Culture (the new contract came into effect on 1 April 2025) and the Council agreed a revised ground maintenance contract with the same contractor, Krinkels, previously known as Continental Landscapes, which came into effect in February 2025.

The Annual General Meeting took place on 8 October 2024 at All Saints Church. Kate Bock was elected as Chairman, Martin Graham was elected as a Trustee and George Coe ACCA was reappointed as Independent Financial Examiner. After formal business, Councillor Judi Gasser (Wandsworth's Cabinet Member for Environment), Neil Blackley (Head of Parks, Enable) and Inspector Steve Biggs (Parks & Events Police) responded to questions and comments from some of the 43 Friends present. On 31 March 2025, the Friends had 716 members, including family members.

Kate Bock represented the Friends on the Wandsworth Green Spaces Forum which brings together representatives from Friends groups and Management Advisory Committees, Councillor Gasser, senior Council officers and Enable. The Forum meets to address strategic issues relating to the management, use and preservation of parks and open spaces. It continues to be an important avenue for voicing shared concerns and identifying opportunities for collaboration. Among the most significant topics addressed this year was the implementation of the new park management and ground maintenance contracts. The Friends have maintained regular dialogue with both Enable and Council officers throughout this period of change.

In parallel, the Friends have focused attention on the increased pressures placed on the Park by visitor numbers, particularly as Battersea Power Station continues to grow as a destination. This ongoing concern has informed conversations about wear and tear, litter management, and the adequacy of toilet and visitor facilities.

The Friends formally adopted a neutral stance on Parkrun, encouraging individual members to contribute their views to the Council consultation. We have since provided feedback to the Council, Enable and the organisers of Parkrun on the impact of Parkrun particularly in relation to problems with the overcrowded start at the Bandstand, runners failing to keep to the tarmac or give way to other Park users and the inevitable consequences of the lack of sufficient lavatories in the Park.

In May, the Friends held a third informal evening party in the Old English Garden. Despite the rain, it was thoroughly enjoyable and gave members an opportunity to meet each other and trustees. Thanks go to Sara Milne who organised this event.

The annual Friends' Summer BBQ was once again a highlight of the calendar and was held in June for a second time at the Bowling Green. In addition to bringing the community together, the event raised over £12,000 which will support FoBP's charitable aims and upcoming project commitments. Thanks go to Peta May Law and Inge Darling who organised the BBQ with their usual skill and enthusiasm. Thanks are also due to the many local residents and businesses who contributed to the silent auction or donated raffle prizes.

The Friends' bi-annual lecture series continued under the stewardship of Annabel Stein, who curated two excellent and well-attended events: a lecture on mosses by Friend Clive Freedman in November and one on birds of prey in March. The Friends contributed to the Wandsworth Heritage Festival with a walk led by Frances Radcliffe and also organised a tree walk for Friends led by Greg Packman. A small group of Friends collected a lot of litter on our first formal Park Litter Picking Day on 22 September.

As usual, the Friends had a stall at 'Summer at the Bandstand' and the Battersea Park Dog Show. These provided a valuable opportunity to recruit new members and engage directly with Park users.

Having funded educational projects for schools in previous years, this year the Friends donated £2,000 to the Katherine Low Settlement to enable their Elders to visit the Park.

The Friends continued their long-standing support of the Winter Garden, funding new plants and designer Dan Pearson's annual visit. Thanks go to the small group of Friends who volunteer in the garden on Wednesday mornings. The Friends also worked with Enable on the redesign of part of the Russell Page Garden.

The Friends remained active in responding to planning and development proposals with potential impact on the Park, including making formal objections to the Glassmill Tower proposal at 1 Battersea Bridge Road. We welcomed the temporary portaloos at the Pear Tree Café but

***continued on page 7***

# The International Open Air Sculpture Exhibition 1951

Bob Barker

In the summer of 1951, the year of the Festival of Britain, Battersea Park was home not only to the Funfair and the Oyster Creek and Far Tottering Railway, but also to an international open air exhibition of modern sculpture. More than forty works by artists including Jean Arp, Alexander Calder, Eric Gill, Jacob Epstein, Alberto Giacometti, Marino Marini, Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth and Auguste Rodin were displayed in the Subtropical Garden. Over a hundred thousand people paid a shilling each to see it (something like £5 in modern money). It had been organised by the London County Council (LCC) and the Arts Council and was perhaps the highlight of a series of such exhibitions held in 1948, 1951, 1960, 1963, 1966 and 1977. Nikolaus Pevsner wrote in the Introduction to the exhibition catalogue (price five shillings): 'what a bewildering variety of styles they display'; Ben Nicholson wrote: 'this is the way sculpture ought to be seen, from a flattering distance on a spring day, accompanied by a song of birds'.

The intention of being 'modern' was interpreted generally as meaning work of the last fifty years; Rodin's *Orpheus* dated from 1892, but was included since he had lived until 1917. Even earlier was *Docker* (1884) by Constantin Meurnier (d. 1905), which Nikolaus Pevsner described as:

'more remarkable for its subject than for its form. To represent the workman in his working clothes was a revolutionary thing in an age used to seeing hardly any sculpture other than nudes of impeccable physique'.

The photo was taken from the west side of the Subtropical Garden, looking towards the Lake. Starting with Marini's *Horseman* (1949) in the centre, and then proceeding clockwise, the other identifiable sculptures are:



Giacomo Manzu's *Child On A Chair* (1949);

Gerhard Henning's *Standing Girl* (1928-9);

? Sir Charles Wheeler's bronze *Adam* (date uncertain);

? Max Bill's *Rhythm in Space* (1948-9);

Maurice Lambert's P*egasus and Bellerophon* 1943);

? - in the distance- Aristide Maillol's *Mediterranean* (1901);

Epstein's *Lazarus* (1947-9);

and (at the edge of the picture) Siegfried Charoux's *Evensong* (1944), 'a charming depiction of three nude male choristers' which may not have been to everybody's taste, as it was 'hurled to the ground' during a vandalous attack on the exhibition (August 1951), though it was 'not substantially damaged'.

The exhibition was intended to be international. The majority of the sculptors were from Western Europe, about a third were British and a handful were from North America.

The comic, and obviously staged, photo of a Park Keeper puzzling over Hepworth's *Biolith* (1950) was perhaps intended for the less serious sections of the media. Nevertheless, *Biolith* can be seen as an early member of a family of important Hepworth works leading from *Bicentric Form* (1949) and *Single Form (September)*, which was in wood, with an indentation rather than a complete perforation - and culminating in *Single Form (Memorial)* of which we are lucky to have one (1961-2; cast 1963) next to the Lake. The first *Single Form (Memorial)* to be cast was included in the 1963 Battersea Open Air Sculpture Exhibition and is now in Washington DC; ours is the second to be cast and was bought by the LCC in 1964. A monumental version stands outside the UN Secretariat Building in New York. *Biolith* was in Blue Ancaster Stone, considerably smaller, and not entirely abstract, incorporating two stylised faces, but it prefigured our Single Form (Memorial)'s approximately oval general shape and the same carefully placed 'eye', like the characteristic disc in many paintings by Hepworth's husband Ben Nicholson (1951 was in fact the year they divorced). *Biolith* is today at the Yale Centre for British Art.

There was also a Henry Moore in the 1951 exhibition: *Standing Figure* (1950) in bronze, which stood near the Lake, like Moore's slightly earlier *Three Standing Figures* 1947-8) in stone which we have today. However, the *Standing Figure* in the 1951 exhibition was much less lifelike than *Three Standing Figures*, with a mixture of organic and angular forms (scarcely of traditional 'impeccable physique') and with eyes apparently snail-like on stalks.






Returning to the photograph, one of the more prominent exhibits (on top of the slight mound and about ten feet tall) was Maurice Lambert's etiolated *Pegasus and Bellerophon* (1943) in 'reinforced plaster aggregate'. A "ferro-concrete" version had followed in 1948 and there was also a bronze version. Lambert (brother of the composer Constant Lambert), though born in Paris, was almost a local lad, having attended Manor House school in Clapham and Chelsea College of Art in the Twenties. He became one of the pre-war '7 and 5 Group', to which Nicholson, Moore and Hepworth had all belonged. Later he was Professor of Sculpture at the Royal Academy.

Jacob Epstein's *Lazarus* (1949) has been described as 'ungainly but powerful', 'his last great carving' and 'a masterpiece'. 'The figure stands erect and stiff having just been called from the tomb. The head is twisted halfway around so that the chin touches the shoulder. The wrists are bound tightly to the thighs, but the arms and elbows project away from the body (*http://davidmcfall.co.uk/On Epstein.html*)'. Lazarus was bought by New College, Oxford not long after the exhibition and installed in the College Ante-chapel in 1952.

*Left to right:*
*View of Subtropical Garden with sculptures.*
*Park keeper with Barbara Hepworth's Biolith*
*Jacob Epstein's Lazarus*

# Trustees' report, continued

***continued from page 5***

continue to press for new permanent, purpose-built lavatories, as proposed by the café in a planning application submitted in late 2023. This would require funding by Wandsworth Council.

I would particularly like to thank Trustees Peta May Law and Inge Darling who stood down on 31 March; all those who work in the Park for their continued commitment to maintaining and enhancing this much-loved green space under increasingly challenging conditions and Enable for their continued partnership and generosity in donating proceeds from the Dog Show to the Friends.

We also thank our members, whose continued support, enthusiasm, and participation in events and consultations ensure that the Friends remain a strong, independent voice advocating for the long-term health, heritage, and enjoyment of Battersea Park.

This year marked a period of leadership transition, and I would like personally to thank the Trustees for their support and dedication during this time.

*This report is subject to approval at the AGM on 14 October.*

# Yew Trees in the Park

Brian Livingstone and Clive Freedman

Yew trees (*Taxus baccata*) are plentiful in the Park. Some will be over 100 years old but they are all young, at least by Yew tree standards. The age mostly taken for a Yew tree to be 'mature' is 200 years, so none of ours have reached maturity. The older ones that you see in churchyards (**fig. 1**) often exceed 500 years old at which age the heart wood begins to degenerate, and eventually they take on the hollowed-out shape of the 1000+ years old national veterans. A Yew with a diameter of 10 feet or more is likely to be at least 100 years old. This long life-cycle and the dark, rather sinister, atmosphere under the spreading foliage of Common Yew result in their mystical status. That is less obvious in the Park because many of ours are the variety 'Hibernica' which has a fastigiate or upright, almost conical shape, more suitable for an urban park. You can see examples of the upright Yews in the corners of the beds either side of the Pagoda, and some large Common Yews along North Carriage Drive on the west corner of the Vista Steps.

The poisonous properties of Yew trees are not mystical. Just rubbing the leaves between your fingers is dangerous. You might not lick your fingers but think how often your hands touch around your mouth. Yews were eradicated from farmland because of the danger to browsing stock. Cutting them down to make longbows nearly eradicated them elsewhere. But birds can eat the berries and excrete the seeds intact. That is because the red fleshy coat around the seed is one of the few safe parts. If you bit into the seed, you would become very ill. Nonetheless some bird species crack open the seeds without harm.

Yew trees are either female or male. Females are preferred for planting because they have the attractive red-coated seeds, while males just produce lots of allergy-inducing pollen. **Figure 2** shows the ovule enclosed in tiny leaf-like scales. In the spring, fertilising pollen is wind-borne straight to the pore at the ovule tip. By autumn, this has matured into the seed with a thick red outer coating or "aril" (**fig. 3**), inviting birds to eat and distribute it for germination at a new site. Lots of pollen is required for wind pollination, and male yew trees produce a large quantity from the copious but tiny pollen producing structures (**fig. 4**).

The leaves are spread out in two ranks along each side of the twig, but if you look closely, you can see that in fact the leaves are attached to the twig spirally. The stems of Yew are green and leafy over a good length. Thus, they cut back nicely without exposing bare wood. This makes them ideal for topiary (**fig. 5**). Also, their slow growth means they may not need cutting more than once a year.

Cultivation for gardens has produced several varieties. The Irish yew ('Hibernica') was cultivated first in the 18th Century and has a gold-coloured leaf variety. There are yews with yellow-edged leaves, for example on the western edge of the British Genius Site (**fig. 3**), or with very short leaves, or with yellow fruits. One form grows into a ground-hugging clump ('Westfelton Yew').

**Figure 6** shows the artichoke gall formed when a midge (*Taxomyia taxi*) lays its egg on a shoot tip. Like many such infestations, the midge adds chemicals that stimulate plant overgrowth, creating a safer environment for the eggs within the abnormal leaflet cluster. These are easiest to find on some of the largest Yews, for example on the corner of the boating pond next to the Pump House.

Readers may have heard of Taxol, the anti-cancer drug which was first derived from the bark of the Pacific Yew (*Taxus brevifolia*) from the West Coast of North America. This was discovered in a research programme in the1960s that specifically screened many plants for production of potential drugs. It took another 30 years before there was any Taxol in clinical use. 'Poisonous' plants have often been a source of medicines, and Taxol was extracted from the tree bark. The trouble is that you need a lot of bark to produce enough Taxol to treat a single patient and a lot of trees were cut down. Nowadays the emphasis is on developing ways of using leaves or developing fungal cultures that produce the drug, before we run out of trees.

The Park also has a number of plants, around 8 feet tall, which look rather like Irish Yew, but are another species in the Yew family, Plum Yew (*Cepholotaxus harringtonia*), with examples in the north-east corner of the Subtropical Garden. The leaves of these curl over more than the leaves of Irish Yew. Close to the Hepworth sculpture is a taller tree with leaves like the leaves of Yew. This is the Coast Redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*), from the coast of California.

*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.*

**Fig. 1** Mature yew in churchyard

**Fig. 2a** Ovule enclosed in tiny leaf-like scales on female tree

**Fig. 2b** Micropyles for the entry of pollen (indicated by the arrows)

**Fig. 3** Seed with a thick red outer coating or 'aril'

**Fig. 4** Tiny pollen producing structures on male tree

**Fig. 5** Topiary yews in the Russell Page Garden

**Fig. 6** Artichoke gall caused by midge laying eggs






















**Friends of Battersea Park Committee**

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# Embedding Ecology

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

The role of the Enable Parks Team changed in April. We are no longer responsible for the direct management of the horticultural grounds maintenance contract nor are we responsible for biodiversity policy. Now we are contractually responsible for:

• providing a parks development and strategic management service;

• appreciating and managing the cultural asset that parks, green spaces and allotments represent; and

• understanding and enhancing visitors' experience of parks and green spaces.

Alongside this sits the ethos of Enable, a not-for-profit organisation, placing people and communities at the heart of everything we do, responding to what you tell us and addressing the things that matter to you.

This means that our Parks Team now has scope to develop and deliver improvement projects in all of the Borough's parks and green spaces in response to community suggestions while continuing to maintain the quality and diversity of all the sites in accordance with management plans and Green Flag standards. We are able to collaborate within the team more closely to ensure our projects address the needs of both people and places in a holistic way.

A recent example was this spring's toad survey coordinated by Brieannah Mollison-Read, our Community Science Officer, sparked by correspondence from a Park visitor and email exchanges with Clive Freedman, one of the regular volunteers who survey and record wildlife in the Park. Since 2022, we've had incidental records of toads crossing South Carriage Drive in the south-east of the Park with additional observations from Clive, but we wanted to start a systematic survey that will be repeated every year. Brieannah, accompanied by Kat Lund-Yates, our Heritage Programme Manager, undertook evening surveys in March and April in line with the methods and protocols devised by Amphibian and Reptile Conservation. These included visual surveys in daytime as well as nighttime surveys using torches – methodically searching around the edge of the waterbody for an hour and noting all individuals and making estimate counts of any spawn strings seen and any tadpoles. Brieannah and Kat also took this opportunity to survey newts, particularly in The Ladies Pond, with both surveys contributing to the baseline data that is required to inform the Cascades Restoration Project. Torches were used in the same way as for the toad survey to confirm the presence or absence of breeding activity.

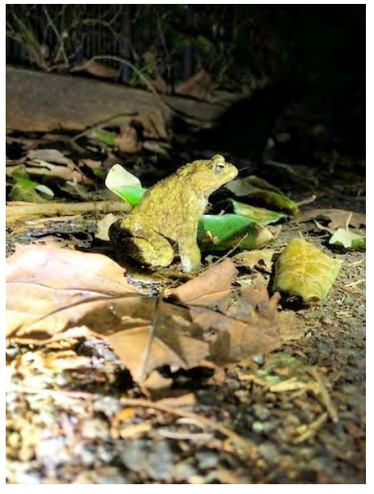
The results of these surveys will inform the development of the Cascades Restoration Project and are one of the ways we are ensuring that biodiversity considerations are embedded from the beginning. As these surveys are repeatable, we will be able to use them to monitor any impact on amphibians throughout the project delivery phase and beyond. The intention is that the aquatic habitats in the Park are improved for biodiversity through increased oxygenation of the water and perhaps additional planting in some locations; this would better support the existing amphibian populations and possibly even allow them to grow,

Another way in which we are able to demonstrate our revised role is through our work to improve planting schemes across the Park being mindful of ecological considerations when we make proposals. Awareness of ecological considerations is another aspect of our contractual obligations to which each one of our team is committed. The mix of wildflowers in the circle beds by the Vista upper steps has not done well so is being changed to permanent planting. The species used have been specially chosen for their wildlife and pollinator friendly properties whilst also being visually attractive.

In similar vein, the Bull Ring beds are now planted to trial pictorial flower mixes replacing the seasonal bedding. These flowers will be attractive visually yet support a range of pollinators. If this is successful, we shall consider the use of similar mixes elsewhere in the Park. These flower mixes are not native species and don't replace the natural meadow and grassland habitats but they provide an opportunity to improve the wildlife value of the wider Park, expanding the forage available and creating a more resilient landscape.

Lastly, throughout 2024 we ran the 'On Your Street' survey that asked Wandsworth residents about the food, shelter, water and the networks their gardens provide for wildlife. Using the results, we have worked with GiGL to identify biodiversity corridors connecting similar areas and the role that private gardens play in supporting biodiversity across the Borough. You can view the results on an interactive map (best viewed on a laptop) *https://enablelc.org/on-your-street/*







*Bed at top of Vista Steps (photo: Ling Moran); Toad (photo: Brieannah Mollison-Read); Bull Ring beds (photo: Owen Dodgson)*

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# Friends' Barbecue, 3 June 2025

Peta-May Law

Our 18th BBQ proved - against the odds - to be most successful. The forecast threatened heavy rain on Tuesday. On Monday evening, Enable suggested moving the BBQ to the British Genius Site under the canopy in front of the Evolution building. We had an hour to decide if it was a good idea, and then to let all 500 odd ticket holders know not to turn up at the Bowling Green. Thanks to the excellent teams at Enable and Smart Catering, we pulled it off.






Guests arrived to a barrow full of plants at the gate, donated by Thrive – Petersham Nurseries move over! They then made their way to the tables, all under cover, where they sipped rosé and ate burgers, homemade puds and ice cream cones. The tables were attractively adorned with jars of flowers donated by Savills. Thanks go to Katie Bullivant and her brilliant bar team, Karen Smith for running the puds and the Savills team for generally helping out.

The Sacred Heart School choir gave an excellent and charming performance. Following this, the inimitable Los Soneros once again created a lively atmosphere.

Sharky & George entertained the children and the new venue provided space for football games. 'Magic Mikey' treated the children to a magic show too.

The Wishing Tree proved to be great fun. Thanks to the generosity of the local community and the tireless work of the Tree Committee (thank you Maggie Thornton, Annabel Stein and Tim Donovan) we were able to offer some excellent prizes.

The Silent Auction, ably run by Laura Hayes, offered popular lots: the proceeds will go towards educating local children in the Park.

However, for us the most important aspect of the evening was the wonderful atmosphere and the positive feedback we received. A Friend messaged: 'aren't we all incredibly lucky to live in this community'. I believe that this year's BBQ achieved the best balance between making a profit and providing a community event, our dual objectives. We truly are fortunate to be able to enjoy life based around our special Park.

A big thank you goes to Inge Darling and particularly to Urška Grašič, who organised such a wonderful event. Urška: we can't thank you enough for your enthusiasm, your initiative and your warm approach. And thank you to all the Friends who supported a very happy evening.

*Editor's note: Urška was helped by Peta May as well as Inge. Both worked extremely hard to ensure that this year's BBQ was as successful as the ones they have run for many years.*



# BBQ Thanks











*Urška, Inge and Peta May*

We are very grateful to all our generous supporters, Friends and friends, who made our 18th annual BBQ on 3 June such a success.

Many thanks to:

Enable's Esther Famurewa and Cleo Taylor for help before the event, Anna Mabbott Botonakis and her amazing team on the day and for prizes for the wishing tree.

Savills' Mayow Short, Aileen McCarthy and team for administrative support, sourcing and sponsoring desserts and prizes, helping out on the day, wine and the lovely flower arrangements

Parks Police Stephen Biggs, Polly Beale, Courtney Gordon

Smart's wonderful Kim Laley for once again keeping everyone fed and happy.

Thrive for flowers

Sacred Heart RC Primary School led by Head Jared Brading for bringing their lovely choir and guitarists who made the evening even more special.

Los Soneros's Victor Garcia and Natalia Pelaez for the upbeat and catchy Latin rhythms.

Sharky & George for keeping the children happy and entertained while the parents were catching up with their neighbours.

Pear Tree Cafe for helping out with prizes, sound equipment and desserts;

# BBQ Thanks, continued

Majorelle Supermarket and Parker Café also for desserts.

The **Silent Auction** lots were much in demand. Thanks go to Core by Clare Smyth, Guild of Fighters, Katie Bullivant for Theatre Tickets, Life Coaching by Laura Hayes, Mestizo, Mosimann's, Pet Portrait by Monica Brufton, Phene Cakes, Power of Boxing, Riverside Radio, Sharky & George, Vivienne Westwood, Wallace Chess Camp

Gifts to the **Wishing Tree** were outstanding. Many thanks to all our generous donors listed below.

**Art, Tours & Culture:** Annabel Pope Prints, Battersea Dogs and Cats Home, Battersea Power Station - Communities Team, Creative Music Academy, Theatre 503, World Heart Beat

**Family Activities:** Battersea Park Boat Hire, Latchmere Leisure Centre, London Recumbents, Putt in the Park, Swim with Noon Etienne

**Food, Drink & Cafés:** Avenue Cookery School, Borough Kitchen Cooking School, District Battersea, Eden Court (wine), Gail's Bakery, Holy Cow (Battersea), Jack and Beyond, Jeroboams, Oddono's Gelati, Radstock Property (champagne), Suzette

**Hair & Beauty:** Elegance Nails & Spa, Lux Nails & Beauty, Skin Rules, Teamwork Hair

**Health & Wellbeing:** Aneugene Health Centre, Bliss Pilates, Body Logic, Embody Wellness, Fitness for the Over 50s with Suzy Mills, Georgina Jackson Synter, More Yoga Victoria, Nuffield Health Battersea, Pilates with Wendy Jardine, Queen Mother Sports Centre, Royal Academy of Dance, Stars Gym Battersea, Thai Charms

**Horticulture:** Battersea Flower Station, Freddie's Flowers

**Household & Specialists:** Alligator Pear, Barker & Stonehouse, Diptyque Candles, Fantasy Cleaners, Studio Pottery, Sue B Tarot Reading, T1-Paw Designs

**Pets:** Chatty Cats Care, Medivet Battersea, Pads, Paws & Claws, Pet Pavilion Ltd Chelsea, Smooch my Pooch

**Restaurants & Gastropubs:** Battersea Brothers, Duke of Cambridge, Holy Cow (Battersea), L'Antipasto, The Lighthouse Battersea, The Lost Society, The Mason's Arms, The Victoria Battersea, The Woodman

**Young & Early Teens:** Battersea Park Children's Zoo, Create Thinkers, Creative Music Academy, Dakoda's Dance Academy, Flying Fantastic (Peckham), La Sylvaine & Wendy Bell School of Dance, Messy Time Tales, Nile Wilson Gymnastics Academy, PoP School and Stage Academy, Urban Studio Sessions, Vauxhall City Farm

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


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# Friends' Party in the Old English Garden, 25 June





There were Friends wearing sun hats and pretty summer clothes! Not an umbrella in sight. This was our fourth Summer Party, and after the rain last year and the year before, it was perhaps the most successful since the Queens Platinum Jubilee in 2022.

Everyone was thoroughly enjoying themselves as they mingled happily in the Old English Garden. The garden itself was looking beautiful beyond words, thanks to the efforts of Thrive who maintain it so carefully and imaginatively. It is a gem within the Park where many people find peace and solace.

There was more chatter and laughter than peace and solace at the time of our party. Over a hundred Friends had gathered including three generations of one family. Sara Milne and Harry Lyon-Smith were kept cheerfully busy on the bar. The canapés were delicious. The evening was delightful

Congratulations and thanks to Sara who again organised the whole event.

# Greg Packman's Tree Walk

Bob Barker

On 5 April, about twenty Friends and one well-behaved dog were treated to another of Greg Packman's fascinating tree walks, focusing this time on 'Interesting and Unusual Trees'. Greg in fact managed to make every tree interesting, and showed us that there are many more unusual or historic specimens than the casual walker would suspect. He encouraged us to use all of our senses when appreciating a tree, for example by noting their smell or feeling the thick, almost spongy layer of bark which can allow redwoods to survive cyclical forest fires. He also pointed out the great diversity of species within such familiar genera as oaks, hollies and hawthorns, and showed us some surprising relations such as the Pawlonia and the foxglove; the Fatsia and the common ivy.

Among the more interesting and unusual individual trees to which Greg drew our attention along the northern edge of the Lake were a Persian Ironwood and a pair of splendid Swamp-cypresses. He also showed us an American Ash which produces a particularly colourful and variable display of autumn leaves. Nor did he omit paying tribute to our notable if ageing Hybrid Strawberry Tree, which although it has lost some branches lower down, still seems to be flourishing up top. (Encouraging for some of us senior citizens?)

Greg reminded us that relatively soon within the potentially centuries-long life of trees that are being planned and planted today, the climate in London is expected to become much more Mediterranean. By coincidence, the sunshine on the day of his much-appreciated walk was Mediterranean already.

# Spring Lunchtime Lecture 2025

## Dr Nicholas Moore

A group of about 35 Friends gathered in St Saviour's Church on 17 April for the Spring Lunchtime Lecture on 'Herbs and Spices and Their Uses' by Alex Laird. We enjoyed a good selection of sandwiches and sweet treats, along with soft drinks and wine from the bar. Given how cold the weather was that day, I treated myself to a restorative glass of red wine!

The sense of anticipation built quite considerably whilst the audience was assembling and taking their seats, as Alex Laird came ably equipped with numerous plant specimens to illustrate her talk. There were murmurs of recognition as various plants were laid out on the table. Some of us were sure we knew most of them, at least by sight, but putting even the correct common name, let alone the correct Latin name, to each specimen proved to be a much more elusive goal. The wine indubitably fuelled the confidence, if not the accuracy, of our guesses!

Alex Laird BSc FCPP is a medical herbalist based in London who has worked with Breast Cancer Haven UK for 20 years. She is also the tutor-practitioner at the UK's first herbal clinic in hospital dermatology at Whipps Cross Hospital. She is a fellow and council member of the College of Practitioners of Phytotherapy (CPP), and formerly of the Aromatherapy Organisations Council.

What made the lecture so enjoyable was Alex's innate ability as a communicator both to educate an audience and to engage and excite people with her own infectious sense of joy with regard to her subject matter.

Alex explained that cookery, food and traditional medicine exist as a single continuum, and that if we as humans eat a wide variety of plants and also meat from animals that themselves ate a large variety of plants, this would be highly beneficial for the health of our entire bodies. Sadly, mass-produced food from the global industrial vegetable, fruit and meat industries rarely scores highly with regard to this set of metrics.

Alex further explained that plants produce phytochemicals (plant chemicals) as they grow and will only produce those that they need to survive and thrive. These protective phytochemicals are most highly concentrated in the skins, seeds and leaves of plants, so those elements are not just beneficial to humans when consumed because of their fibre content. Furthermore, a plant that has been grown in mixed culture near many other plants of different varieties and therefore grown and developed in a more challenging environment, will have a much stronger and more distinct phytochemical fingerprint than an industrially produced plant grown in monoculture in a large field full of identical plants. So growing your own vegetables has obvious advantages versus large-scale industrial farming.

Alex then gave us a 'tasting tour' of the various plants and herbs that she had brought with her. She made several practical suggestions as to how we might improve our health through our diet. Three of these that I have managed to use in my daily life are set out below:

1. Try to eat the largest possible variety of plants including herbs, spices and seeds. Herbs, spices and seeds are great 'quick wins' because they can be added to almost every dish to give extra flavour

2. Consider making your own homebrewed herbal teas with a wide selection of plants. Simply add boiling water to the leaves in a cafetiere or thiere. The use of a covered vessel is important as it prevents essential



oils from evaporating, maximising the goodness retained in the herbal tea itself

3. Try to include as wide a range of beans and pulses in your diet as possible as they are an excellent source of fibre, protein and phytochemicals

Alex was as generous with her time as she was with her knowledge, staying at the end to answer numerous questions from our highly engaged audience. There was unanimous acclamation that the event had been a great success, and everyone stayed on for some time to discuss the subject further both with Alex and with our friends and neighbours in the audience.

I must close by thanking Alex Laird most warmly on behalf of the Friends for giving up her valuable time to deliver such a fascinating, educational and engaging talk.

Everyone left much better-placed to make wiser dietary decisions in the future thanks to the abundance of practical tips that Alex shared with us.



# Then and now

## Jessica Bailey









Having grown up in the vicinity, I have extremely fond memories of walking off a delicious Italian lunch at the much-cherished Chelsea institution, **Carrafini**, on the way back to our flat in Park Mansions. Hence, it was only natural that I would revisit this ever-popular haunt for my lead review.

Packed with local stalwarts, old and young alike, my 13-year-old daughter and I went in for our usual faultless fare of Spaghetti Alio e Olio (available to order £20.50) for Sophie, and Linguini Alla Vongole (£20.50/£22.50) for me. A shared side plate of crisp and juicy Zucchini Fritte (£6.25) is always a must.

To drink, I had a spritely glass of Prosecco Della Vite Valdobbiadene Superiore (£12.00 a glass), and Sophie, the teen-approved Coke Zero (£5.25).

For dessert, I had Tiramisu (£9.50), which Carrafini does spectacularly well, whilst Sophie had their sinful chocolate mousse (£9.50). To top off the most consistently delicious lunch, I had the perfect froth-whipped Cappuccino (£4.50). It is no wonder this Chelsea establishment, started by two friends in 1994, has long-standing staff and family members at the helm. And such a loyal following to boot.

***Carrafini*** *(61-63 Lower Sloane Street, London SW1W 8DH, 020 7259 0235. Open Monday-Saturday, Lunch12:15-2:45pm, Dinner 6:30pm-10:30pm)*

Moving a little deeper into Chelsea, we spent a lovely Saturday afternoon having lunch at the UK outpost of the International chain, **Le Petit Beefbar** On the former site of revered British chef, Tom Aikens'sTom's Kitchen, Riccardo Giraudi, known as the Beefboy for his renowned importing of the finest meat in the world, is the new incumbent. From Kobe beef (a rare type of Wagyu) to Black Angus beef from the US, Creekstone, 150 days grain-fed, this is without a doubt the place to go for mouth-watering steak-frites (£29.00). With a trio of sauces to choose from, my daughter, her Godmother and I all opted for the all-time classic, Bearnaise.

The brasserie-style restaurant, with outside tables equipped with blankets to keep the chill away and a prominent horse-shoe bar by the entrance, is a relaxed yet glamorous spot to while away the afternoon over lunch, for weekend brunch, for a cocktail at 6 pm, or to settle in for the evening.

The steak-frites is equally glamorous. Each order is served on an individual platter, with separate individual servings of frites and the most mouth-watering Bearnaise you will ever eat outside of Paris. The beef, naturally cooked to order by the chefs in the open kitchen, was served with subtle herb trimmings on each faultlessly sliced piece.

With an amazing wine list which hosts a fine Malbec Norton (£16.00 per glass) to comforting sharing desserts like French Toast (£18.00), you can see why this is an international sensation.

***Le Petit Beefbar*** *(27 Cale Street, London SW3 3QP, Tel: 020 4580 1219, Lunch Friday 12:00pm to 3:00pm, Brunch Saturday and Sunday 12:00pm to 5:00pm, Dinner Monday to Thursday & Sunday 6:00pm to 10:00pm and Friday and Saturday, 6:00pm -11:00pm).*

Floating back over the Thames, I headed to my favourite stomping ground, Battersea Power Station.

Here I took my sushi-loving daughter to the recently opened branch of **Sticks 'n' Sushi**. We tried the ever-inventive maki rolls such as Hell's Kitchen tempura shrimp, avocado & spicy sauce, topped with tuna & barbecue 8 pieces per roll (£16.90), Hiramasa Sashimi, Yellowtail Kingfish (£14.20), super-tender and melt-in-the-mouth, to sticks – with which you are encouraged to finish, Guy Habu, Beef Filet with Miso Herb Butter (£15.60) and the obligatory side order of Edamame Beans with sea salt and lemon (£5.00).

We had been longing to try this Danish foodie chain for several years now. We sat in the lovely airy dining room, served by the sweetest staff. You couldn't fault the imaginative super-fresh food, and we wondered why it had taken us so long to eat here. It was definitely worth the wait.

***Sticks 'n' Sushi*** *(Battersea Power Station, 6 Electric Boulevard, SW11 8AL. 020 3343 8646. Sunday-Thursday 12:00-22:00 and Friday-Saturday 12:00-23:00)*

# Philp Wright OBE 1941-2025

Jimmy Burns

Many of you who stroll or run through the Winter Garden will not need reminding of the roundel plaque telling the story of one of the great achievements in the history of the Friends of Battersea Park. The transformation of an area of semi-abandoned wasteland into a beautifully designed tapestry of plants, trees and meditative spaces was made possible thanks to generous donations, including a legacy from Elaine Hodges, co-founder of the Friends. The Winter Garden was opened in 2011 by the then Mayor of London, Boris Johnson. The project was brought to fruition thanks to the inspiring chairmanship of Philip Wright who died in March.

The first 22 years of Philip's working life were spent in the Grenadier Guards, then 'exchanging my boots and breeches for lace and black tights' as Deputy Assistant Serjeant at Arms in the House of Commons for a further 22 years, before he became Chair of the Friends in 1999. In all of this, Philip was loyally supported by his wife Henrietta.

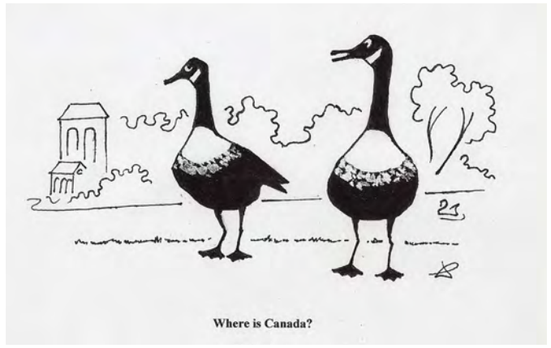
During his chairmanship, the Friends successfully fought the Council's proposal to close the Children's Zoo and in 2004 he toured the Park in a buggy with the Duke of Edinburgh who had re-opened it after the Restoration. In the same year, the Friends embarked on the Winter Garden project.

The thanksgiving service in his memory at St Mary's Battersea was packed to the gunnels with many long-standing friends including colleagues from the Grenadier Guards, the Houses of Parliament and the Friends. It was a celebration of Philip's life and a moving military pageant on an intimate scale. We were also reminded of Philip's wit and talent for observation. His cartoons were a regular feature in Review. They are much missed.

As a co-founder of the Friends, it was my real privilege and pleasure to have known and worked with Philip during his chairmanship. Philip loved the Park and always had time for a genial conversation with other Park users, when not barking the occasional disciplinary order to his beloved terrier Archie.







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# Events

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| AUG | **Wednesday 6, 13, 20, 27** Children's Zoo | **Wild Wednesdays!** Dancing, stories and games every Wednesday in August |
| | **Saturday 9 at sunset** Peace Pagoda | **Nagasaki Day Peace Walk** from Westminster Cathedral at 7.45pm to the Park for Floating Lantern Ceremony |
| | **Saturday 23**<br>Gates open 4.30. Ends 9.30<br><br>**Sunday 25**<br>Gates open 4.30. 7.15 to 10<br><br>**Monday 26**<br>Gates open 1.30, ends 9<br>**All on rugby pitch area** | **5.45 Natalia Williams** and her Band<br>**7.15 Symphonic Disco** Royal Philharmonic Concert Orchestra<br>**5.45 Matt Ford** and his Band<br>**7.30 A Night at the Movies with Fireworks Finale** Royal Philharmonic Concert Orchestra<br>**Jazz artistes** on stage throughout afternoon<br>**7.30 Jools Holland** with Rhythm & Blues Orchestra<br>All tickets including weekend: *batterseaparkinconcert.seetickets* |
| SEP | **Saturday 20** View from Chelsea Bridge 80 minutes from start | **Great River Race** *greatriverrace.org.uk/observation-points* |
| | **Tuesday 30 to Sunday 6 Oct**<br>11am to 6pm Battersea Evolution | **Autumn Decorative Antiques and Textiles Fair** |
| OCT | **Tuesday 14** 6.30pm for 7pm<br>All Saints Church, 100 Prince of Wales Drive SW11 4BD | **Friends Annual General Meeting** |
| | **Thursday 15 to Sunday 19**<br>11am to 8pm. Battersea Evolution | **Affordable Art Fair** |
| | **Monday 27 to Sunday 2 Nov** Children's Zoo | **Halloween Spook-tacular events** |
| NOV | **Saturday 1 and Sunday 2** | **Fireworks in the Park** Ticketed event *enablelc.org* |
| | **Monday 10** Lunch from 12.30 onwards. Lecture from 1.15 to 2.15 pm (approx 45 mins with 15 mins Q&A). St Saviour's Church, 351 Battersea Park Road, SW11 4LH | **The Friends' Autumn Lunchtime Lecture** Joanna Barnes, Co-Chair, Public Statues & Sculpture Association will talk about 'Battersea Park: an open-air sculpture gallery past and present' Full details on enclosed leaflet |
| | **Tuesday 11** War Memorial 10.45am | **Wandsworth Council's Act of Remembrance Service** Followed by refreshments & exhibition in the Pump House |
| REGULAR EVENTS | **Wednesdays** 10am – 11 | **Free Walk** open to all. Meet at Albert Bridge Gate Info: *activelifestyles@enable.com* |
| | **Wednesdays** from 10am | **Volunteer Gardening in the Winter Garden** Contact *fhradcliffe@gmail.com* to check it's happening |
| | **Saturdays** 9am | **Parkrun** |
| | **Sundays** 9am | **Junior Parkrun** |

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