

A photograph of a tree-lined path in autumn. The path is covered in a thick layer of fallen yellow leaves. Tall trees with yellowing foliage line both sides of the path, creating a canopy effect. In the distance, three people are walking away from the camera. The sky is visible through the branches, appearing overcast.

The Friends of Holland Park
Autumn 2020



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Our website address: www.thefriendsofhollandpark.org

OUR ADVERTISERS

That we are able to produce this quarterly newsletter for members is in no small measure thanks to the continued support of our advertisers. We are most grateful to them, and would ask you to show your thanks by supporting them, please.

Green Drive

At last, Green Drive, the road that runs between the Ilchester Gate, across the front of Holland House to the Duchess of Bedford Gate, has a fine new surface, neat edging and proper drainage. It looks rather too bright, but will soon wear to a more muted colour. The next stage is to restore the adjacent dogs-off-lead area that has been worn to dust. The whole area will be decompacted to improve the health of the trees, and then be treated with 'vertical mulching'. This new technique will improve the quality of the soil without spreading mulch on the surface, as that would be far too tempting for dogs. The Friends have met the challenge of sourcing thousands of the right species of earthworm to add to the mulch holes. Finally, the surface will be seeded with tough grass, which will need to be fenced off temporarily to allow it to establish itself.



Newly surfaced Green Drive

Ireton Lodge site and Sun Trap entrance

You might have noticed work being carried out in the extreme north east of the park. Regular requests to hold inappropriately large events in Holland Park have been held at bay, but in these times of budget cuts the Council will always seek ways of gaining income from the park. This enclosed space has been chosen to meet that need, in a way that minimizes impact on the park. It is the site of Ireton Lodge, demolished some years ago when it became unstable. The area had been fenced off, but had of late been used by a few members of the public for somewhat anti-social behaviour. The space will be for hire for daytime, quiet events in summer, with no music, and access up the steps from the road, rather than through the park. There will be no hard



Curved north wall to Sun Trap entrance

landscaping, no structures, and it will remain as an area of grass, screened by trees. We would all rather not have it, but it is better than what might have been.

Sun Trap entrance

The curved north wall has been repaired, painted and looks much smarter than it has for many years. The filigree iron gate at the entrance has been beautifully restored. Next will be resurfacing of the path up into the park: not an easy task, as the whole structure of the hill tends to shift downwards, due to soil having been brought into that part of the park when the street that runs past the gate was carved out in the mid-19th century. The drainage will also be sorted out to prevent a rush of water down the path in heavy rain.

Holland House conservation

The tendering process for a conservation contractor is delayed due to complex processes, but we hope to hear the result and a time-line for the work very soon. The RBKC Property Department is keeping us in touch with proceedings and has committed to ensuring minimal disruption to Holland Park, Opera Holland Park and the Youth Hostel.

Conservation of historic tiles

Conservation of the Florentine tiles along the upper walkway, above the Holland Park café, will have started by the time you read this.

Text and photos: Jennie Kettlewell



Statement of Accounts

The Friends of Holland Park

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 December 2019

	2019 £		2018 £
Income from:			
Donations & legacies:			
Donations	18,780		38,418
Legacies	-	18,780	-
Charitable activities:			
Subscriptions		13,560	13,011
Other trading income:			
Events	20,685		19,674
Sale of merchandise	3,309		2,227
Advertising	2,104	26,098	4,119
Interest		199	137
Total incoming resources		58,637	77,585
Expenditure on:			
Raising funds:			
Fundraising	2,162		1,307
Event expenses	14,750		14,493
Cost of merchandise	3,128	20,040	1,315
Charitable activities:			
Newsletter	6,717		6,172
Grants & aims expenditure	30,834		20,379
Governance	381	37,932	346
Total resources expended		57,972	44,012
Net income/(expenditure)		665	33,573
Total funds brought forward		131,368	97,795
Total funds carried forward		132,033	131,368

Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2019

	£		£
Current assets:			
Debtors & prepayments	583		237
Deposit & current accounts	131,860	132,443	132,017
Creditors:			
Amounts falling due within one year		410	886
Net assets		132,033	131,368

Covid-19 meant we had to cancel our AGM this April, and hopes of any live meetings have faded as the pandemic limits our activities. So, we will update you at a Zoom AGM on what your trustees are doing to protect and enhance the historic and natural assets of our very special park.

Voting: By now, all members should have received a form, either by e-mail or by post, so that you can vote to approve the minutes of the 2019 AGM, accounts for 2019, re-election of the trustees and of the Independent Examiner. We are required to have member approval before we can file the accounts with the Charity Commission, so please do vote. The results will be announced at the virtual AGM. The documents (Minutes of the 2019 AGM, and the Accounts for 2019) are available to view on our website:
<https://www.thefriendsofhollandpark.org/index.php?page=latest-news>.

Virtual AGM: Members should register to attend the AGM by e-mailing jennie.kettlewell@thefriendsofhollandpark.org, giving your full name, by Monday 19 October 2020. You will then be sent the link.

At the AGM, we will tell you about current and planned projects: there are quite a few! We ask that you let us have questions in advance of the meeting, so that we can group subjects and answer as many as we can. Please e-mail any questions to jennie.kettlewell@thefriendsofhollandpark.org by Friday, 16 October 2020.

For any of you who do not have internet access, please ring Jennie Kettlewell on 020 7243 0804 for a copy of the documents or with your questions.

This time we will not be able to offer you a glass of wine and canapés, but we should have plenty of information and news to keep you going until we meet again in 2021.

Jennie Kettlewell

Notes on the Accounts for 2019

- The 2019 accounts have been independently examined.
- Income was healthy at £58,637, but showed a drop against 2018 due to an unusually large donation in that year.
- Grants to the park (£30,834) showed a satisfactory increase against 2018 as we realised planned projects: historic tile restoration, Guide to the Birds in Holland Park, tree health, contribution to restoration of West Woodlands Enclosure, fencing to prevent compaction, and more.
- There was little change in funds carried forward. The total of £132,033 means we have enough to pay for some significant projects in 2020.

Parks Police

Holland Park is generally a safe place, but we should never be complacent.

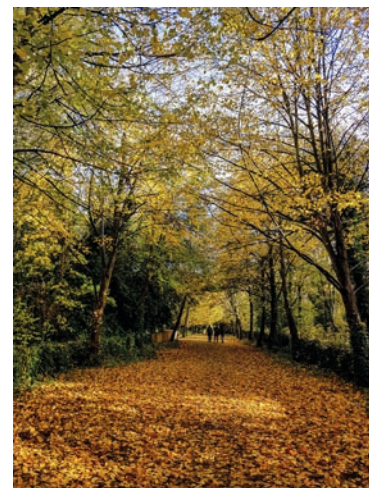
If you see any antisocial behaviour, such as vandalism, please contact the Parks Police on:

0300 3655 101

Remember three key points:

- Keep yourself out of danger
- Take a description of the person, location and exactly what they are doing
- Contact the Parks Police and report the facts.

The cover photo of Lime Tree Avenue was taken by Friend Joan Bovarnik on 10 November 2018



I first met Michael Volpe seven years ago, when someone from the Council decided it would be better for us to have a first-hand discussion. We were given a Council 'minder' in case of disagreement, but he found himself redundant as Michael and I soon discovered points on which we agreed. Of course, we didn't agree about everything, but had enough in common to kick off a productive way of working from that time until today. We have had regular conversations, some contentious, some weighty, often noisy, but highly enjoyable; and occasions to share ideas and laughter. I shall miss those talks now that Michael has decided to leave Opera Holland Park, after some 30 years, to seek new challenges.

The Friends owe particular thanks to Michael for two things: the first is the loan of his 'posh tent', otherwise



Michael Volpe

known as the Dutch Garden marquee, for our summer Pimm's Party. It is a great venue for a sunny summer's evening, has been enjoyed by our members, and we are grateful for it. The second is the real drive of Michael and the opera team to reduce the time of the opera build and strike, so that park visitors can enjoy the terrace and view of Grade-I-listed Holland House for longer each year.

We know that not every park visitor appreciates opera, and we also know that many of our members are also members of The Friends of Opera Holland Park and enjoy the performances. Whatever your view, Michael has been inspirational. Ciao. We wish you well, and please don't forget Holland Park.

Jennie Kettlewell

Pandemic Puts Events on Hold

The pandemic continues to prevent us running our usual events, and we have sadly had to cancel our very popular Christmas concert planned for 6 December. Philip Simms and the Tallis Chamber Choir have entertained us every Christmas for the past 20 years. We always enjoyed it and, very evidently, so did they. We wish all of them a safe end to the year and look forward to their being 'on song' in 2021.

We are also very sad that the concert by Ancora has had to be cancelled; however, if you would like

to buy any of the duo's CDs at £10 plus postage (flute with guitar or with harp), have a look at the website <https://www.anne-allen.com/recordings>. Anne is offering a special pre-Christmas deal for the Friends: two CDs for £15. You can order directly via Anne's e-mail: contact@anne-allen.com.

Your trustees are working on what we can do virtually to get events going again. It will, however, mean 'events' with no glass of wine or canapés!

Who Does What for The Friends

Most of you know the ten trustees. What each does is listed in every newsletter. There are many unmentioned tasks and fortunately many helpers, for whom we are most grateful.

Liz Merica has decided not to stand for re-election, and trustee Graham Franklin has kindly stepped in to look after the members' database. He keeps names and contact details up to date, all compliant with data protection laws. Each year some of you omit to renew your membership, then wonder why you have not received a membership card, which you need if you want to take advantage of discounts with local businesses. If you do forget, Graham will write to you, but he will be saved this task if you arrange to pay annually by standing order. Thank you, Graham, for

taking this on, and you say you enjoy working with databases and the satisfaction of getting them right.

Another task is sending out event tickets (when we are again allowed to run events) and merchandise purchased either via our website or directly. Filled order forms are now sent to Margaret Rhodes, who is cheerfully dispatching guides, tea towels and other goodies once the money has been received. We know she is appreciated, and one purchaser commented: 'That beats Amazon Prime!' She has joined our Friends of Holland Park 'Ambassadors': a small team of members who help us run The Friends as efficiently as we can.

Contact details for Graham and Margaret are at the front of this newsletter.

Catherine Masterman has again painted a view of Holland Park for us. This is a bit of a triumph as she had started on the design and taken photographs when Covid-19 struck and she was not able to get back to the park. I think you will agree that she has made the picture both accurate and cheerful. Last year she painted Lord Holland, so this is the second in a series of views of our sculptures. Perhaps the tortoises next time?



The Walking Man Statue, Holland Park

We will hold a ready supply of these cards in both the standard 152 mm x 197 mm format at £10 the pack of ten, and the small 118 mm x 168 mm at £8.50. We will also make up mixed packs of old designs of

Holland Park at £6.50, which will be very largely of big ones in at least three or four different designs. These can all be very quickly delivered. And then there is a broad range of other views in the enclosed brochure. It would be a great help if you could order early, even the new design, so that the publisher knows what initial printing he needs. If your newsletter is hand delivered (no stamp), our delivery is

free, but beyond that we have to charge an additional £1.40 per 10 cards. Please note that sending the order to us instead of directly to Mountbatten gets The Friends an extra discount, unless overprinting is required.

Rhoddy Wood

The Clever Crow

Crows are reckoned to be clever. When there is something they want, they have been known to work out how to overcome obstacles and even to use tools.

One of these clever crows stood on the rim of a litter bin in Holland Park's café yard, puzzling how to reach the tasty food at the very bottom of the black bin liner. It could not reach the food without falling into the bin and risking getting stuck there, so it had to hatch a plan. And it did.

It reached into the bin and firmly grabbed the bin liner in its beak, before hauling it up a couple of inches and then standing on the bit it had hauled up so that it would not slip back again. After doing this several times, the bottom of the bin liner was pulled up to the top of the bin and the food was there to be taken. Job done.

These corvids can be secretive, often checking that no other crow is watching before stashing away food finds. So our crow probably had a quick glance around before it raided the bin. Could all this skill be put to some use for the park? A French theme park reputedly trained six crows to pick up cigarette ends and other small rubbish. That is a new challenge for our Council.



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or call on 020 7727 9359
Jeroboams.co.uk









Tasso Leventis

Walking in the Park in the early morning one sees and experiences little acts of nature and is grateful for such an opportunity in the heart of London. This photo shows a goldcrest preparing a beakful of aphids to take back to the nest.

Tasso Leventis

We asked for contributions from people who felt Holland Park had benefitted them during Covid-19 and are delighted at the response. This is what you told us. Some contributions had to be shortened so we could fit everything in.

Rhoddy Wood

Heartwood

Holland Park has stabilised the roots of my soul during this period of lockdown, thanks to the thousands of trees that populate it. From the UK's mightiest Burr Oak, to a cedar tree donated by the American University of Beirut, to a humble but meaningful Ginkgo biloba, the park's trees are diverse and beautiful, and grow together to create a festival of green and quiet grandeur. Whenever I walk through the park in the morning, I am struck by the sense of serenity that emanates from them, making one feel truly at peace in these turbulent times. I feel as if Holland Park's trees symbolise what our community can do to recover from this pandemic. After all, the wonderful landscape that they constitute has survived for several hundred years to provide a sanctuary not just for me and other people, but also for its beloved wildlife. These trees demonstrate how fulfilling, long-lasting and powerful life can be when faced with the test of time.

Thus, I am grateful to them, and to the people who care for them so passionately, for planting in me a sense of hope that has supported me with the strength of healthy bark.

Andrew Lee

A Stroll in the Kyoto Garden

Near the end of lockdown, the Kyoto Garden reopened after a period of a few months. While looking at the calm flow of the water on a dewy summer morning, I found that the Kyoto Garden was much more than a pool of water, fish, birds and green trees. The waterfall that I stood above seemed like the cycle of life. The fresh water, flowing down high, was like birth: the beginning of new life. The foamy sector in the middle, near the bridge, was like life: where we do all the deeds, good and bad, of our life. The biggest pool beyond that was like death: where the water is clear, and unseen fish lurk beneath it. With these hidden messages encrypted in nature, Holland Park gives me the chance to reflect more on the beauty of this world, and recognise the meaning that they convey. Furthermore, these remind me of the violin, the gem that will shine next to me for life. The dynamic strength of the waterfall reminds me of the Wieniawski Legende for violin, that I adore. The Kyoto Garden is another face for so many pleasantries, and it allures me towards it whenever I pass.

Jane Lee Age 10



Holland Park has been my delight since I first pushed a pram up Holland Walk with my first-born in 1961, ignorant of what would await me at the top. I knew little then of babies and children and didn't realise how important open spaces were for their play and exercise. I'd been brought up in the country which I missed but could again watch the changing seasons and hear birds sing. During lock-down I've been to the park almost daily so have delighted as spring and summer came, even if I've been a little daunted at understandably having to share the park with so many others.

Sarah Curtis



Richard Kulczycki

Holland Park through New Eyes

While London shut down for Covid Holland Park stayed resolutely open. My first trip there after the enforced break was more exhilarating than a foreign holiday. The sense of space was extraordinary and this was so close to my home. As time went on, many thousands of people were discovering the Park in new ways. Many families and friends were meeting up in the fresh air. My special memory will be the magnificence of the Acer Walk at the height of spring – the hellebores were still flowering at the bottom, the decorative maples were coming into leaf above them, and between them native wild flowers such as red campion, Queen Anne's lace and garlic mustard, were in full bloom. Above all this the mature oaks and other arboretum trees were providing dappled shade. No garden designer can create such multi-layered beauty.

Richard Kulczycki



To draw is to capture an emotion from within, a physical act of that forges this Moment to me. To capture these moments in this beautiful Park, I am eternally grateful. To know its personality and embrace it inside my mind. We become entwined forever.

During a time of loss and sadness, when a shadow swept over us and took many lives. Separated from my family during the months of March, April, May and June 2020. Holland Park became my consistent daily experience and interaction with life and Nature. Every day I studied her, watched and listened to her sounds. Rain or shine, she gave me freedom to walk, breathe and to stretch my body and mind.

110 days later we are a family united again, in the Park.

Sarah Howatson

Like so many others I'm 'shielding', with no garden, so my early morning walks to Holland Park have helped me greatly in terms of exercise and lifting my spirits. How lucky I am to be able to enjoy all that the park offers!

Judith Adams

I get enormous pleasure from Strolling in our wonderful park, especially the magical wooded bits where there could so easily be unicorns.

Marina Camrose

Tranquil green space

Quiet in the Kyoto Garden. Just the reassuring sound of Eddie mowing, and the smell of cut grass. A heron looked at the carp, hopefully, hopelessly. Water splashed down the rocks into the pond, on its journey to the swirl of leaves round the drain. All around was green. Different shades and textures, but green. A photographer sat, waiting - for what? A young couple crossed the bridge, then stopped. He went down on one knee and proffered a ring. She smiled, accepted and the photographer snapped away. Upstaged, the heron flew off into a tree and sulked. All was tranquil again. Just the steady summer sound of mowing.

Anon



Lock Down was not Lock Up!

The hour's daily exercise allowed during severe Covid-19 lock down became a joyful release and relaxation. Holland Park, in its more tranquil moments, became an especial refuge and solace, from the damp and verdant woodlands so rightly encouraged to grow and decay in endless natural cycle, richly scented by new green leaves, and shielded from the evening cacophony of Holland Park Avenue traffic, to the minutely maintained glimpse of landscape, seascape and eternity in the Kyoto Garden, and to the subsequent sensitively designed Neo-Victorian plantings of the Dutch Garden – all is so well managed by the gardeners, unobtrusively. All this says nothing of cheerful (in late lockdown mode) use by many of the North Lawn for some (socially distanced) gatherings and sunbathing, nor to the use of the south field for sport. With all this, how could lock down be lock up? It was much more, for many a release into another and truly joyous dimension. How fortunate we are to have so varied and so inspirational a resource in our midst. Thank you to Covid, gardeners and, of course, the Friends!

Robin Price

A visit to the park at about 7.30am became an almost daily routine. Quite a busy time, even at that hour, and also busy for the birds whose breeding season coincided with lockdown. Blackbirds and song thrushes were regularly vocal, mistle thrushes at the beginning of the period. Jays could often be seen and stock doves sometimes in the Wildlife area. A heron was often perched on Lord Holland's bridge. Green, as well as the commoner great spotted woodpecker may have nested. It was heartening to hear chaffinches singing regularly after a lengthy absence from the Park. Goldfinches nearly every day. I saw a house sparrow – a rarity these days – on 1 April and heard a greenfinch (another rare visitor) on 4 April. Our "star species", the nuthatch, was often heard as were goldcrests. Parakeets were particularly noisy and annoying. Most pleasing of all, our migrant blackcaps and chiff-chaffs seem to have done better than ever. Lockdown has some compensations. I even became quite tolerant of that other annoying species – the (human) jogger.

David Jeffreys

I visited Holland Park on several occasions during Lockdown. I was there on the day it was announced and hurried home masked before the sirens sounded! I returned twice since. The first-time lockdown was at its height. People circled suspiciously around each other. We shunned all contact yet around us nature was in full bloom. The trees and flowers were flourishing and the birds and squirrels busily at play. Nature had taken the upper hand. The skies were clear and the air was fresh and the park as it must have been when it was still the grounds of Holland House. I went again a month or so later. Lockdown was easing and mankind regaining ground lost to nature. I was glad of the prospect of a new normality but regretted the natural peace I enjoyed the time before. I will cherish that and I will appreciate all the more the sustaining power of the natural cycle more marked this momentous year than ever.

Simon Grantham



Simon Grantham

Hi there kids!



This page is for you, with fabulous things to discover about Holland Park and fun activities to do.



Sounds like fun!

Most birds and animals make some sort of sound to communicate with others of the same type. They may be saying what a good mate they would make or warning of danger.

Have a go at matching the creatures below to the sound they make. Choose one of the sounds from the column on the right, then write it in column two next to the creature you think makes that sound. So, if you think a pigeon goes 'squeak' write squeak in column two next to the pigeon. But I don't think that's the right answer and you know what sound a pigeon makes. The answers are at the bottom of the page.

Fox			Squeak
Wood Pigeon			Hoot
Frog			Bark
Bee			Caw
Owl			Croak
Mouse			Buzz
Crow			Coo

Answer: Fox = bark, Wood pigeon = coo, Frog = croak, Bee = buzz, Owl = hoot, Mouse = squeak, Crow = Caw



Freddie Fox says:
"Did you know?"



In the Dutch Garden, at the centre of the formal flower beds, is a statue made of bronze.

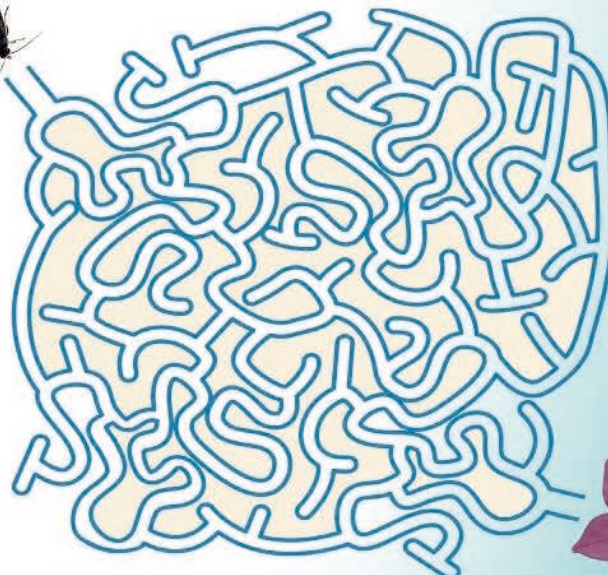
This is a statue of Milo, a legendary athlete known for his strength. He lived in Croton, a Greek settlement in the south of Italy in the 6th century BC. He is said to have seen an oak tree, split and wedged open. He tried to force it apart but the wedge fell out and the split closed, trapping his hands.

Amazing moths!

Moths need energy for flying and they have to refuel with nectar from flowers to give them that energy.

Most moths fly at night and many plants create a night-time perfume to attract moths that help them pollinate their flowers.

Can you help the moth through the maze to get to the flower with nectar?



Holland Park's trees are taking a battering. Successive years of drought have resulted in quite a few dead trees. We are not alone and understand that all parks are suffering, with birch trees being particularly badly affected. We must renew efforts to implement the long-term tree strategy.



Red horse chestnuts

This strategy takes each area of the park, defines its characteristics, then fast forwards 50 years to imagine what it will look like if we do nothing. Next, we define what needs to be done now if we want to retain those characteristics. This is essential if we are to act as stewards of the land for our descendants. We need to work fast, because the



Damaged eucalyptus

effect of climate change is accelerating. But this is not all bad news. It offers the opportunity of exciting new trees. Many of these trees will be non-natives, selected for our future climate, as our poor native species will not be able to survive, and we need trees that now grow in Spain and the South of France.

One place for renewal is the north boundary of the sports field where a line of red horse chestnuts has had its day. They are diseased, frail and have had some severe remedial pruning, which has resulted in rather misshapen trees. The decision has been made to remove them before they fall apart, and

to replace them with some splendid new species. In years to come our children and grandchildren will enjoy green canopies of leaves, rustling in the breeze.

It is not only drought that is causing tree loss in our park: sadly, there has lately been quite a bit of damage by humans. Some people hang from branches, which are just not able to cope

with their body weight, so the branches crack and then die. Some, especially children who do not seem to be supervised, just tear off small branches, for what purpose is unclear. The trees and shrubs along the west edge of the North Lawn are being treated very badly and whole branches are left lying on the grass. The bed has become a rat-run of compacted paths. Some of those trees, especially the eucalyptus, are now looking very ragged. One tree on the sports field has been repeatedly stabbed with something sharp! We will lose much of our greenery if folk do not respect it. Increasing areas will have to be fenced off, or we will end up with more erosion and grey dust.

On the whole, Holland Park still looks better than many parks. We want to keep it that way, and greatly look forward to the day when we plant more trees.

Text and photos: Jennie Kettlewell



Tree stabbed with sharp object

In spring 2018, an *Acer freemani*, 'Autumn Blaze', was planted in the café yard, paid for by The Friends. You might have noticed that it is looking splendidly healthy, and we thank idverde for watering it regularly throughout this hot summer. The tree benefits from an intricate underground-chambered metal construction that prevents compaction, allows space for the roots to grow and the water to reach them: very clever.



The café yard

We do, however, miss the two trees that shaded people enjoying their coffee on the café terrace. They were removed during the landscaping, and we are still waiting for replacements. These are to be one or two small trees in planters, placed so that they add a patch of shade for those who want to be shielded from the midday sun. A shade study has been carried out, and this will help us decide on the size and position of the trees.

Mayor Awards Chairman of The Friends

Each year the current Mayor of Kensington and Chelsea recognises people who have made a significant contribution to the local community. One of the 2020 awards was made to the Chairman of The Friends, Jennie Kettlewell. There was to have been a presentation ceremony and reception at the end of March, but Covid-19 put a stop to that. Since it is now clear that no events will happen any time soon, the certificates are to be posted.

Monica Castelino, Parks Manager for the Borough, who has worked closely with Jennie on both strategy and projects for Holland Park, commented: 'I am



delighted that Jennie has received a Mayor's Award recognising her hard work and dedication to The Friends of Holland Park, and the benefits this work, coupled with her genuine enthusiasm and enjoyment of the natural environment, has had on Holland Park now and for the future.'

Jennie said she was thrilled and felt quite emotional when she got the news: 'It means a great deal to me to know that the work of The Friends of Holland Park is noticed, and I am proud to have played a role in that. I thank all those considerate people who found time to support the nomination that resulted in the Award.'

New Sculpture in the Napoleon Garden

A giant, wizened apple sculpture will be installed in the Napoleon Garden this autumn. Called 'This earth of majesty, this seat of mars', it is the creation of Barnaby Barford, a London-based, British artist, best known for his sculptural work.



New Sculpture for the Napoleon Garden

Kensington and Chelsea Art Week 2020 received over 100 submissions to their call for artwork on the theme of *Transformation*, to be installed in a variety of public spaces in the Borough. Seven were short-listed, and Barnaby's apple was chosen for Holland Park.

In recent years, Barford has become obsessed with the apple and has been pondering on the fruit to explore fundamental questions driving human nature. Through decay this apple is transforming, at a time when the sculptor sees life on the edge of an inevitable precipice of change. He believes that this work will provide an opportunity to reflect

on the transformation the neighbourhood has gone through in the past few decades.

Understanding the name of the work requires a large stretch of the imagination.

The south-facing wall in the formal garden provides one of the warmest places in the park. Two years ago we realised that, due to natural losses, there were no longer many tender species there, their places filled hurriedly with very common plants that could grow anywhere. To increase biodiversity and provide botanical interest, The Friends funded a major replanting, using species from anywhere in the world which had a Mediterranean climate.

New plants were arranged to give space for growth. For immediate impact, the then head gardener found a few further plants which looked appropriate, but he did not believe they could survive the winter, so he dug holes large enough to sink the plants in their pots, leaving the rims barely showing, so that come autumn they could be sheltered in the greenhouses. But then he left, and no one moved them. By now they have survived two winters, and most are flourishing.

There are several proteas, but your author was shielding this spring and did not see whether they flowered. *Streletzia regina*, the Bird of Paradise Flower, looks truly tropical though; like the protea it also comes from South Africa, of which it is the national flower. That flowered this year, though my



*Angel Trumpets bush
and Romneya leaves*



Angel Trumpets, open flowers

camera only caught it when it was past its best. The best surprise was the Angel's Trumpet. Last year I found the tatty remains of two flowers on the ground, just enough to think it looked like a *Datura*, a member of the widespread *Solanum* or potato family, but it was a larger bush than I would have

expected. This year it had grown as tall as the wall and was covered in what appeared to be long, tightly-closed, greenish yellow flowers: or were they buds? I counted about thirty.

I knew at once it was a *Brugmansia*. Once considered part of the *Datura* genus, the *Brugmansias* are now a genus of their own. Which species? I

searched for ones with narrow tubes and no fragrance, but nothing fitted. Then a clue: *Brugmansias* are bat pollinated, so open in the evening and then emit a powerful perfume to attract the bats. I doubt whether Holland Park bats recognise their duty, but repeat visits showed that the tubes did indeed open



Bird of Paradise Flower

at dusk, emitting a strong fragrance. The flowers close at varying times during the day, but some re-open each evening with a new burst of perfume. This species was *Brugmansia suaveolens* with pinkish yellow flowers. It is the most widely grown of the family, but in London I had previously seen only one outdoors, and that a tiny plant sheltering under a thick bush and very close to the river. I have now been told of some more bushes in Vauxhall, which I must check out. By the time you read this the flowers will have finished for this year, but do see if you can find the bush with its large mid-green, slightly floppy leaves growing next to the grey leaves of the *Romneya californica* at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Bed.

Text and photos: Rhoddy Wood



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