

The Friends of Holland Park
Winter 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.

Worms do the work

You could be forgiven for forgetting that there had ever been grass on the strip of land between Holland House and the sports field. For a while it has been compacted earth topped with dust. Over 55 trees in the area have done well to survive in the impoverished ground, and now they have help. In early October Adam and Luke from Bartletts Tree Experts arrived with some impressive machinery to dig out cylinders of earth around every tree. Each hole was filled with nutritious biochar, compost and *Lumbricus terrestris* worms, a species indigenous to the park. Now the worms are at work. Often known as ‘ecosystem engineers’, worms spread the nutrition under the trees and increase porosity of the soil. There is still some de-compacting to be done, surface soil to be added, all followed by grass seed. Next year we should all be able to enjoy a lush green sward.



Digging out cylinders of earth

Winter coat for ‘The Melancholy Man’

In the north wall of the Dutch Garden is a statue known as ‘The Melancholy Man’. He will soon be carefully wrapped for his own protection, not, as you might expect, from the weather, but from repairs and re-pointing work to be carried out on the wall. The west end of the wall is leaning, and it is likely that the top half will have to be rebuilt and buttresses added. This sizeable project will require mobile scaffolding and will take at least until mid-January. idverde have the challenging task of removing plants where possible and storing them until they can be returned. Small trees and large shrubs will stay in place with appropriate protection. The four plants fixed to the wall (Staff Vine, Fig, Dutchman’s Pipe and the very old wisteria) will have to be very carefully detached and fixed to a special scaffold, while work is in progress. The plants in that bed were donated by The Friends.



The ‘ecosystem engineers’

A passion for historic tiles

Day after day this autumn, Alvar Maitan worked painstakingly on conservation of the Florentine tiles along the walkway above the café. Richard Rogers Conservation were commissioned to undertake the project, and Alvar was the specialist who preserved the tiles outside the café last year, so he knows the park and its decorative treasures. He also knows all about old tiles, and often works for the British Museum, so we are lucky to have benefitted from his expertise. One of his interests is how paints were made through the ages, and he created his own mixture of acrylic and powder colour to get the precise match to our tiles. He filled cracks and holes and repainted damaged bits of design, aiming for the whole to look old rather than perfect. During his time in Holland Park, he became fascinated by its history and decorative arts, and that added passion to his work. We hope to see Alvar back once we can get approval to conserve the Old Dairy tiles.

Holland House Conservation

Finally, the much needed work proposed by conservation architects Allies & Morrison has been approved by RBKC. Two phases are scheduled, with the first phase being conservation of the East Wing (youth hostel), starting this autumn if possible. Phase two will be repairs to the stone and brickwork of Holland House itself.



Alvar working on the tiles

You can expect to see substantial scaffolding on various parts of the Grade-1-listed building for some time. The house will remain on Historic England’s At Risk Register until the work is considered to have progressed sufficiently.

Text and photos: Jennie Kettlewell

The Friends' AGM was held on 21 October 2020 via Zoom. Sir Angus Stirling welcomed everyone to the meeting, and Nigel Brockmann reported that members had, by prior vote, approved the minutes of the 2019 meeting and the 2019 accounts.

The **Trustees' Report for 2019** was presented by Jennie Kettlewell, the main achievements being:

- A start made on preparation for the much needed conservation work on Grade-1-listed Holland House, following its placement on the Historic England At Risk Register.
- The Friends paid £4,782.50 for expert conservation of the Florentine tiles under the arches in front of the café.
- The Friends published a guide to 50 birds found in Holland Park. Many of the photos were provided by member, Tasso Leventis, who kindly donated the cost of production.
- £3,000 match-funding paid for restoration of the West Woodland Enclosure.
- Chestnut fencing erected around trees above the Sun Trap lawn and the margin of the North Lawn to prevent further erosion and compaction, at a cost of £7,303.
- The annual tree health programme, carried out by Bartlett's at a cost of £4,060.
- Once again, The Friends sponsored the Ecology Service walks and talks.

In all, £30,833.75 was paid in grant aid to Holland Park during 2019.

On behalf of Secretary, Rhoddy Wood, it was reported that membership had marginally increased year-on-year, being 1,100 by December 2019. Members were thanked for their loyalty and interest, and for donations large and small.

Election of trustees. Nigel Brockmann announced that all trustees had been re-elected by prior vote. Roger Foreman was re-elected as the independent examiner.

Chairman's Outlook. Much has already happened this year and been covered in the newsletter. The latest news is in this issue of the newsletter and does not need to be duplicated here.

Jennie Kettlewell thanked the trustees for their support and hard work, Sir Angus Stirling for his wise advice, and the ward councillors, Johnny Thalassites, Aarien Areti and Charles O'Connor, for supporting the park and The Friends.

Sir Angus closed the meeting and thanked all those who support The Friends and contribute in many ways to the considerable amount of work achieved.

Brugmansia Update



In the last issue, we showed you pictures of the spectacular hanging Angels' Trumpets of the Mediterranean bed. We can report that there have been flowers on the bush continuously from early July to late October, making it a very worthwhile garden plant. The article brought an invitation to see a member's plant in Earl's Court of equal stature and much older.

Interestingly, our flowers grew paler as the season advanced, while the other started pale and remained so. This could be due to varying amounts of sunshine as the sun becomes lower in the sky.

Rhoddy Wood

Brugmansia

We can all do with something to lift our spirits right now, and so many of you have told us how spending time in Holland Park has done just that.



Being immersed in the natural surroundings of makes us feel good as it releases the 'happiness' Dopamine in our brains. So much for the technical and how much more enjoyable to think about the get from seeing the branches of a tree swaying in discovering a tiny wild flower at our feet.



trees and plants c h e m i c a l explanation, pleasure we the breeze, or

Autumn in Holland Park offers us a real treat of colours. Autumn leaves in reds, golds and orange; rose hips and berries from the scarlet of hawthorn to the velvet bloom on a blackthorn fruit. Leaf mould has its own rich colour and earthy scent. Scampering squirrels hasten to store nuts in the ground, and jays furtively bury acorns for a future meal.



In nature there is always hope. We know that next spring the trees will burst into leaf once again, and flowers will turn their petalled heads towards the increasing sunlight.



Come and have your spirits lifted and don't forget to share your experience with us for future issues of the newsletter.

Text and illustrations: Jennie Kettlewell



Subscription Renewals and Membership Cards

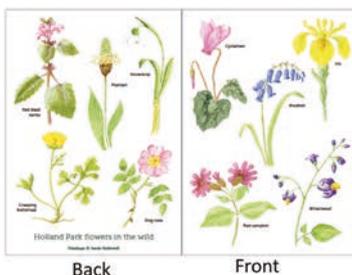
Thank you again for all your support, and we hope you will want to continue to help through these troublesome times when the park is more appreciated than ever, but also has extra strains put upon it. Your membership also gives The Friends clout when negotiating with the Borough on the Park's future.

If in doubt, check with Graham Franklin 07802 761 548 or ggfranklin3@aol.com We would like to emphasise that it is less trouble to both you and us if you pay by standing order; if you do not yet do so we are always ready to send you a form.

The Friends' subscription year runs from 1 January. Some of you have already paid for 2021, and a healthy number (about 60%) pay by bank standing order on 1 January. New members who have joined since 1 September are already covered for 2021. To the rest of you, now is the time to pay, using the order form on our website; www.thefriendsofhollandpark.org

You will know that your membership card, which entitles you to discounts under our Friends & Neighbours scheme, expires at the end of February. Those who have paid their subscriptions for 2021 will receive replacement cards with their spring newsletters, which will reach them in late February. Please be careful opening your newsletter, as the cards can easily fall out and be lost.

Rhoddy Wood



Greetings card, with paintings on both back and front, but blank inside. includes envelope. 105 x 148 mm

£2.50 each.

Available from:

- Holland Park Reception in The Stable Yard
- Rhoddy Wood on 020 7602 0304 & rhoddy.wood@virgin.net
- Order on-line on www.thefriendsofhollandpark.org +P&P

**Cotton tea towel
£6.50**



Hi there **kids!**



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



Freddie Fox says: "Did you know?"

These grand gates are decorated with real gold which you can see shining in the sunlight.



They were bought by the third Lord Holland in 1836. Eventually bits fell off but fortunately they were collected in buckets and kept safely so that they could be fixed back on when the gates were mended 3 years ago.

Flower power!

Read the description, then tick one of the 3 flower names you think is being described.

1 This flower can be purple, yellow mauve, white or dark red and sounds like part of your eye.

- Pansy
- Iris
- Snapdragon

2 These flowers are usually bright yellow. Animals, such as squirrels, dig up the plants but don't eat them.

- Rose
- Lily
- Daffodil

3 These flowers were associated with Holland and became so popular that were sold for lots and lots of money.

- Tulip
- Peony
- Bluebell

4 These mauve flowers grow on the end of a long stalk and smell so lovely that a perfume is made from them.

- Crocus
- Lavender
- Foxglove

Answers below

Conker monster!

A conker is a 'fruit' from a horse chestnut tree. You can find conkers on the ground under the big horse chestnuts in Holland Park.



The game called conkers is played between two people, each with a conker threaded on a string. Each person tries to smash their rival's conker.

Or you can make conker monsters. Look on the ground for a conker which is still in its spikey case, with the conker starting to burst out of it. Paint some scary eyes on the case and some big white teeth in its mouth.



COOLCODE

Sometimes you want to write in code to keep what you have written a secret. What does this say?

Ouy nac evah nuf gnirolpxe Holland Park!

Answer: Iris, daffodil, tulip, lavender



idverde gardener Marc Sinclair sculpting the yew hedge near the armillary sphere beds so that the curves match the shape of the Belvedere tower.



A grey wagtail was spotted in the Kyoto Garden on 24th September by eagle-eyed member, Simon Grantham. We had not seen one for a while, so this visit was welcome. The bird moved too fast for a clear photo, so here is a photo of a grey wagtail taken on another occasion by Tasso Leventis.



Hop plant (*Humulus lupulus*) thriving on the wall south of tennis courts 3-6.



And last, but by no means least: Rhoddy Wood, well known to most of you, receiving a gift from the trustees on the occasion of her 90th birthday. Yes, really, 90th! The gift was a 'coat of arms' showing Rhoddy's connection with Holland Park. The Latin words mean: 'Have regard for all your friends'. Note the cup of coffee and piece of cake in the bottom left quadrant. The design was exquisitely painted by Gordon French, whom you know from our art exhibition.

Christmas Cards

Here is a reminder of Catherine Masterman's excellent depiction of the Walking Man statue, which is this year's Christmas card, already shown in the autumn newsletter. He is a natural follow-up to 2019's card of Lord Holland by the same artist. There is a distinctly chilly feel to this year's painting, even though the Walking Man has his sleeves rolled up.



The Walking Man Statue, Holland Park

These Christmas cards are already with me and ready to go. They come in two sizes, at £8.50 and £10 for ten, with free delivery within the newsletter free delivery area. I also have a great variety of past cards, mostly large, all at £6.50 for ten. I am

making up assorted packs of these, or you are welcome to come and choose your own.

Catherine Masterman's work also appears on a beautiful 250 piece wooden jigsaw puzzle, which pictures the café yard with the house in the background and snow underfoot. It is bright and joyful, a perfect Christmas present for any small child.

Please use the order form enclosed for these purchases.

Margaret Rhodes

Usually when I am preparing for the winter newsletter I write something about the year's exhibition. Not this time, as there was no 2020 art exhibition. Also we are still experiencing unsettled times as the Covid-19 pandemic continues to have a profound impact on our lives and all parts of our society. Throughout these uncertain times The Friends have tried to keep our community of members connected to the park, and I am delighted to let you know that we are planning the 2021 art exhibition, at the same time knowing that it will be a little different if there are government guidelines to work within. If this is the case, it could affect private views, browsers and the mini-market. What I do know for certain is that the orangery walls will be hung again with wonderful art and three-dimensional sculptures on the plinths and stage. To the artists who contribute to our exhibition each year and new artists who are thinking of participating, I feel that they have been creatively inspired during this time, and are eagerly anticipating submitting their works.

Let us plan to go forward as we have for the past 38 years. Friends who are artists and artists who become Friends are invited to exhibit two framed works to hang on the walls and three-dimensional objects such as ceramics, glassware and small sculptures. Details regarding exact guidelines for three-dimensional works, unframed portfolio works and the mini-market will be advised when registration forms are sent out.

Friends interested in exhibiting in the art exhibition, need to register by completing the enclosed order form and pay the £10 entry fee. Please send your completed form to Margaret Rhodes as soon as possible.

Information about The Friends of Holland Park Art Exhibition is available on our website, www.thefriendsofhollandpark.org or from me, Gordon French, 19 Kensington Court Place London W8 5BJ; tel: 020 7937 7222; e-mail: gordon.l.french@gmail.com.

Gordon French

Art Exhibition Timetable

| | |
|--|---|
| Friday, 19 March | Final date for completed artist exhibit details forms to be received to allow catalogue listing |
| Friday, 9 April | Artists deliver artworks to the Orangery, Holland Park, 8.30-11am. All artists will be required to sign the catalogue to certify that all details shown are correct |
| Friday, 9 April | Hanging and judging, 11am-6pm |
| Saturday, 10 – Sunday, 18 April | Exhibition open to the public 10.30am-6pm. Entry free of charge |
| Sunday, 18 April | Artists and buyers collect works, 6.30-7.30pm |
| Monday, 19 April | Artists and buyers collect works, 9-11am |

Artists are particularly asked **not to collect their works before 6pm on SUNDAY, 18 April**

Parks Police

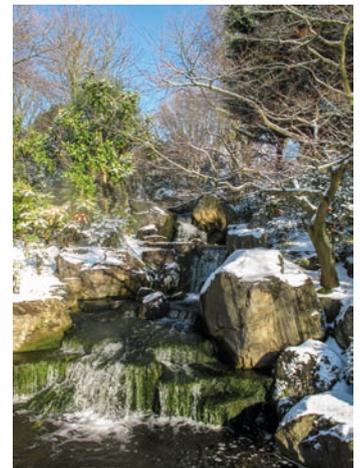
Holland Park is generally a safe place, but we should never be complacent.

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 the Kyoto Garden cascade was taken by Friend Edward Hill on 27 February 2018.

Just to start with, what we are not talking about, *Robinia pseudoacacia*, i.e. False Acacia, which is unfortunately sometimes abbreviated to Acacia: this is a tree from North America, which grows commonly throughout London and much of Europe, and is inclined to spread invasively by seed and sucker as in some of the park's woodlands. It has plentiful hanging bunches of white flowers in May, shaped a bit like a wisteria's (they are in the same family). It also has romantically rugged bark, peeling in strips and giving an oriental air.



Oven's Wattle

UK they are on the edge of their range, so can be safely planted singly to enhance our gardens.

Holland Park currently has one specimen each of four species. Their flowers are all similar, consisting of small yellow balls or bottlebrushes of stamens without petals. They are produced in large quantities so that the bushes are spectacularly yellow all

over when in bloom. The yellow balls are carried in slightly differently arranged clusters, but the easy way to tell the species apart is by their foliage. Some species have bi-pinnate (feathery) leaves, while in others some of the stems have modified into phyllodes, which look like, and function as, leaves. Holland Park has both. The various species flower at different times, thus prolonging the period when at least one is in bloom.

(Contd on page 10)



Mimosa

The true Acacias are also members of the pea family, but look very different from the False Acacia. There are over 1,000 species, sometimes called Wattles, mostly from dry places in Australia and Africa, and many incline to be invasive outside their area of origin. They have been usefully used to stabilise sand dunes in the Mediterranean, but grown for forestry in the wrong places can be destructive of native biodiversity. In the



Oven's Wattle



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a **MAGNUM** of wine!

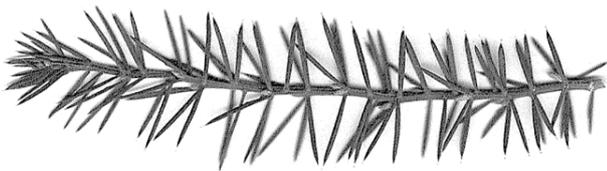
Pop in and see Kathy and the team at
96 Holland Park Ave, London,
or call on 020 7727 9359
Jeroboams.co.uk

First to open, January-February, is the florists' Mimosa, *Acacia dealbata*. This used to be imported as cut flowers from the Riviera, but has grown in central London for a number of years, blooming ever earlier as the climate warms. Our own can be found at the foot of the lime tree immediately to the east of the Belvedere.



Prickly Moses

It is only a few years old, growing well as a multi-stemmed bush like most in London. (For contrast, behind St Mary Abbots Church, is an elegant pyramidal tree.) Its feathery leaves open pale green and darken as they age. In October our scan shows the flowering spikes already covered with tiny buds. It would be easy to examine on your next walk in the park.



Prickly Moses

Next to bloom, about April, is *Acacia pravissima*, Oven's Wattle. This has triangular phyllodes with tiny spines at their tip. They should be blue grey and look succulent. In 2018 most of the trees in London had their phyllodes turn yellow, thought to be due to drought making magnesium in the soil unavailable. Ours was treated, and the phyllodes have become greener again, but not yet the original colour. Ours is at the bottom of the rose garden on the corner of the stable block. Our photo (see p.9) shows that nearly six months before flowering, the buds are already formed along the twigs.



Purple Cootamundra Wattle

Later in the spring comes *Acacia verticillata*, Prickly Moses, the dark shrub that hangs over the path near the niche in the Dutch Garden. Its prickly phyllodes explain its name: a clump is quite impenetrable. This is one with bottlebrushes.

I cannot guide you to the fourth species, *Acacia baileyana*

Purpurea, Cootamundra Wattle, because I hope it is being cared for in the greenhouses. The tree was planted in the Mediterranean bed as part of a major refurbishment, but did not flourish, and was taken out for special tlc. It has the same yellow balls as the others; its usp is the blue feathery foliage, and in our cultivar, *Purpurea*, the young leaves are purple. The photo catches some leaves mid colour, mainly blue but with a purple flush. I took the photo 3,000 metres up in the Andes but with the altitude ameliorated by being on the equator and beside a hot spring; a *Brugmansia* bloomed across the pool. It is not common in London, but there are enough examples to show it can be happy here. We will persist in getting one on show.

Rhoddy Wood

(photos by Rhoddy Wood and Jennie Kettlewell)

Crab Apple Jelly

The seasons roll round independently of Covid-19, and your secretary was pleased to be able to follow routine to the extent of gathering crab apples in September. Not quite so many as in some years, but more from lessening energy than lack of fruit. So at the time of writing, there are a few jars for sale, strictly

first come first served. Please give Rhoddy a call on 020 7602 0304 to check prices and availability. As always, buyers will have to come to my flat to collect and pay with cash or cheque. For safety's sake it will be arranged so that there is no need to enter my flat.

Rhoddy Wood



Fox Project

Fox

The Ecology Service nicely filled the gap of walks and talks in the park, with a series of talks on line, all sponsored by The Friends. Specialists braved the internet and told us about wild flowers, swifts, worms, frogs, moths and foxes. Who knew that foxes wagged their tails when they got to know a human, or that swifts sleep in flight?

None of us can guess yet what will be permitted next year, due to the pandemic, but the on-line talks have been so successful in terms of increased attendance, that it is likely they will be continued, alongside expert-led walks, once they are allowed.

Next year's programme is currently being planned, so keep an eye on www.rbkc.gov.uk/ecology

Jennie Kettlewell



Swift Conservation

Swift

Local Events Run by Neighbouring Organisations

The pandemic continues to make the organisation of events uncertain and we do not yet know if we will be able to run live events at the start of 2021.

Kensington Gardeners' Club

The club has offered an interesting programme of talks by Zoom during the pandemic and will continue to do so until restrictions are lifted.

Further information from www.kensingtongardeners.co.uk or please contact 07949 769702.

Opera Holland Park

The 2021 Season, with resident orchestra City of London Sinfonia, will open on 1 June with new productions of Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen* and Mascagni's *L'Amico Fritz*, and a revival of the company's celebrated 2018 staging of Verdi's *La Traviata*. Safety is a priority, and performances will be staged within government guidelines, which might mean limited audience numbers and adapted theatre space. Further information from www.operahollandpark.com. Tickets will be available from 0300 999 1000.

The Kensington Society

Events are currently on hold, until pandemic restrictions are lifted.

Further information on www.kensingtonsociety.org/events

RBKC Active for Life

Full details on www.rbkc.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/sports-and-leisure, or ring 020 7938 8182

A varied programme of physical activities in Kensington, from gentle walks to sport.

Thursdays 10.30-11.30 a.m. Meet inside the Holland Park Café, then share a leisurely walk in the park.

Defibrillators in Holland Park

We have been asked to let our members know about the availability of defibrillators in Holland Park. All Parks Police vehicles are equipped with a defibrillator and there is also one in the Holland Park Police Office in the Stable Yard. If you find someone in Holland Park in need of a defibrillator (not breathing or appears to be

suffering a heart attack), please call 999. This will alert the London Ambulance Service. Any call made to the London Ambulance Service concerning someone in our parks and open spaces is automatically forwarded to the Parks Police duty phone. This is to ensure the fastest possible response until an ambulance arrives.



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