



*The Friends of Holland Park
Summer 2021*



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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.



*Belvedere ballroom in 1903,
by kind permission of RBKC Local Studies Department*

We have just heard that a new company has taken on the lease for the restaurant in Holland Park. When we spoke to the directors, they had only had the keys for two days and were just beginning to explore the possibilities.

It is good news that they plan to open a classic and beautiful Italian restaurant in collaboration with a famous Sardinian chef, Achille Pinna, and to offer a high-quality menu, but not so expensive that local people will not eat there other than on special occasions. There will be a children's menu, so families can enjoy a meal in this historic setting.

The building was the old summer ballroom and it is a listed building, under the curtilage of Holland House. The interior was beautifully decorated, as many of you will know from eating at The Belvedere, but that decoration was on top of very definitely non-original plasterboard. Archer Humphreys Architects are working on the new design. The new owners have also hired a conservation architect to research the building's history and decide what the inside of the restaurant should look like. We hope the atmosphere will recognize the wonderful past life of the original ballroom. Alterations will be the subject of a planning/listed building application, which means we are unlikely to be able to dine there until autumn, or later.

The lease covers the restaurant building itself, but not The Orangery or surrounding land.

The company that owns the lease also owns Wild Tavern in Chelsea, and the two directors, George Bukhov-Weinstein and Ilya Demichev, have years of experience in running high class restaurants. George told The Friends: 'This is the most amazing restaurant project I have had a chance to work on. We will do our best to bring The Belvedere restaurant to the old glory.'

Our initial discussion included co-operation with The Friends and Park Management to improve lighting from the car park gate to the Belvedere and Orangery, something we have long wanted for our own events. But, will it still be called the Belvedere? We do not know, but a name that refers to the history of the building and the park would be welcome.



George, Ilya and general Manager Crispin Sugden

We wish the venture every success and hope that many of The Friends will enjoy some tasty meals there in the future.

Be sure to put 13 October in your diary. We do not yet know if we will be able to meet in The Orangery or if it will be a Zoom meeting as last year. The formal part of the meeting (voting) is usually over quickly and we have an opportunity to update you on what your trustees have been up to and what lies ahead. It is also an opportunity for you to ask questions.

The agenda will cover:

- Trustees' report for 2020
- Treasurer's report for 2020 and approval of the 2020 accounts. Please note that the accounts to be approved are shown in this newsletter
- Secretary's report

- Election of trustees and the Independent Examiner
- Chairman's outlook

Much has been achieved in the last 18 months and often, when it seems that things are improving, people do not feel they need to attend the AGM. **But please do attend, as there are still issues**, as there will be with any park. Challenge us with your thoughtful questions and share your ideas. The trustees need your support and want to know that we are representing you.

We do hope that the lifting of restrictions will allow us to meet in person and catch up over a glass of wine after the meeting to celebrate our return to the park. If that is not possible, we can still have a rousing discussion by Zoom, as we did last year.

Newsmail Updates

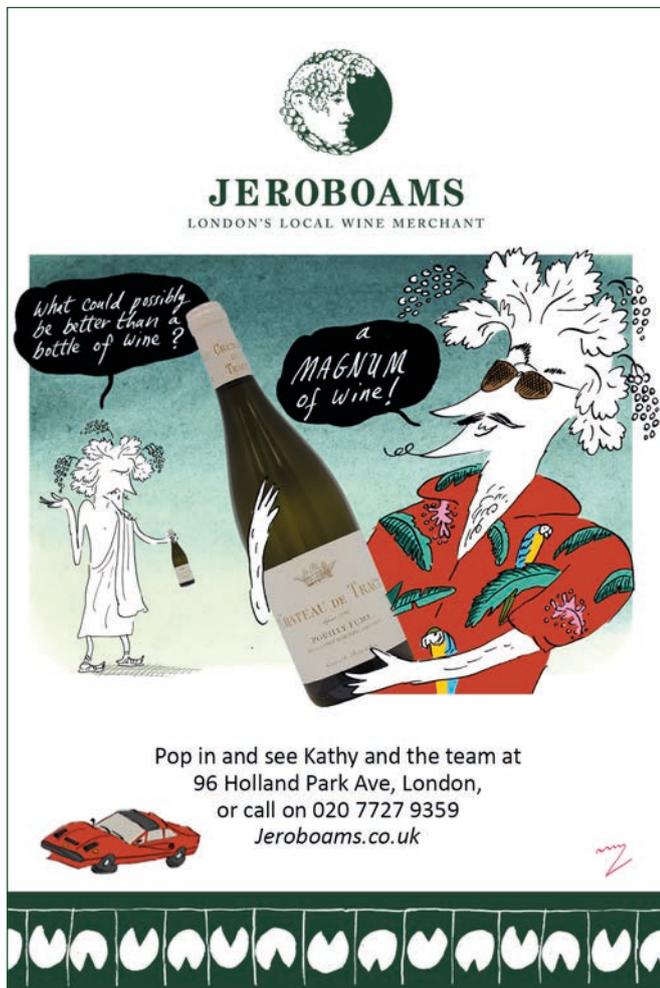
Our newsletters come out four times a year and bring you the latest news as well as articles on subjects connected with the park. A lot can happen in three months, and the process of collating articles, designing the pages, printing and hand delivering can take nearly a month, so that

some of the information might already be not fully up to date when you receive it. So we have been experimenting with sending those of you whose e-mail addresses we have permission to keep on our database, circulars with news updates of what is currently interesting in the park, with lots of pictures. These have been well received, and we have now decided to send a 'newsmail' in each month when there is not a newsletter. Those of you who get them will know, for instance, what the latest news is on the re-opening of the Belvedere.

If you have not been getting our newsmails (the last one went out on 2 March, and 397 members opened it) and would like to do so, please check with Graham or Rhoddy whether we have your e-mail address. If not, please give it to us along with your permission to use it for this purpose. If we already have your address, but you are not getting the newsmails, you can try checking your junk mail. Better would be to move the address susan.vannorden@FHP.org to your list of preferred senders or 'never block e-mails', or whatever your software (e.g. Outlook) calls it. The process varies for different software, so the Friends cannot tell you how to do this, but you might have a family member or techy friend who can help you. We will not send your address to anyone else or share it with third parties.

We hope you will like these newsmails and at least try them, but if you find you do not want them, it is easy to tick unsubscribe at the bottom of each message, or e-mail Graham.

Rhoddy Wood




JEROBOAMS
 LONDON'S LOCAL WINE MERCHANT

What could possibly be better than a bottle of wine?
 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

Dutch Garden wall

The work of repairing the wall along the north side of the Dutch Garden has been completed. Specialists Pierra added buttresses at the west end of the wall, which was off-straight, and repointed the brickwork. They worked carefully around the Melancholy Man who now enjoys a more secure setting. Now this is done, we very much hope attention will be given to much needed improvement of the Mediterranean Bed.



Dutch Garden wall buttress

hazel by the south fence of the Dipelta Enclosure and opposite the north wall of the youth hostel.

This wonderful shrub flowered lustily for years, but latterly it has struggled against ivy and brambles and, this year, its flowers were sparse. idverde's ace pruner, Marc Sinclair, came to the rescue, has removed the green competition, and pruned the *Dipelta* with real care. He always looks up a shrub before he starts working on it, in order to learn about it and what it likes. His work was much admired by park visitors who saw him up

New toilets in Holland Park

We hear that planning consent has been granted for relocation of the toilets in Holland Park. The benefits will be easier access for people with a pram or wheelchair, as well as much improved facilities. The entrance will be in the centre of the long wall just to the south of the entrance to the Stable Yard. Detailed design is the next stage, with the hope that works will be completed in autumn 2021.

the ladder and wielding secateurs, though one male visitor seemed much more impressed by the snazzy stepladder.



New entrance to toilets



Dipelta

Remember to look out for a happily floriferous *Dipelta* in May next year.

Special treatment for a special plant

Some of you will know the *Dipelta Yunnanensis* that gives the Dipelta Enclosure its name. You could walk past this shrub almost all year without noticing it, but come May it is usually a showstopper with its clusters of trumpet-shaped flowers. Each creamy trumpet has a startling orange throat to attract pollinators.

This shrub is a native of China and is rarely seen, not because it is tender but because it is notoriously difficult to propagate and therefore rarely found in nurseries. Look out for it next to the little twisted



Marc pruning the dipelta

Hi there **kids!**

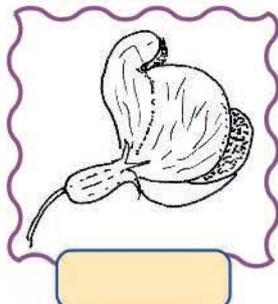
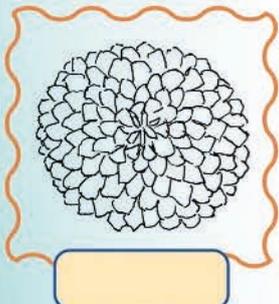
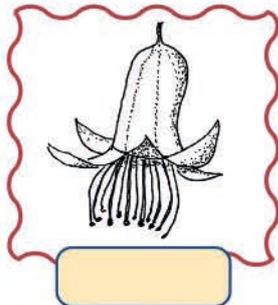
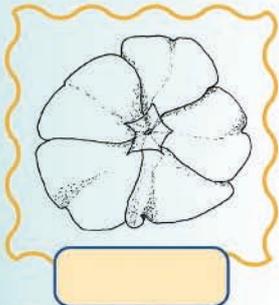
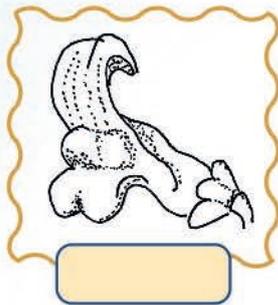
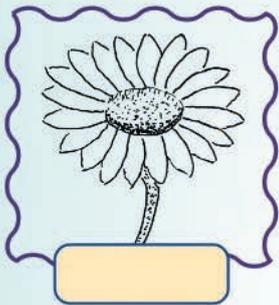


This page is for you, with fabulous things to discover about Holland Park and fun activities to do.

Flower search

Keep your eyes peeled while you play in the park

Flowers come in different shapes so that different pollinators, such as bees, butterflies and moths, can reach the tasty nectar. See if you can spot the shapes of the flowers below. When you find one, put a tick in the box next to it and add a tick every time you see a flower that looks the same.



Freddie the Fox says: "Did you know?"

Roger's seat

There is a seat at the west end of the Dutch Garden, but why is it in what looks like a fireplace? It **was** a fireplace and it has been there for over 350 years. Originally this fireplace was in the end room of the very grand stables built in 1640 by the owners of Holland House. The stables were knocked down in 1812 but the fireplace remained, where it became a favourite place for Lord Holland's friend, Samuel Rogers, to sit.



A tree-mendous amount of fun!

The bark is a tough outer layer of the trunk of a tree. It helps protect the inner working part of the tree from damage.

Sometimes, the bark grows in funny shapes that look like a face, or an eye as in our photo.

Stop and look at the bark of every tree you walk past and see what hidden pictures you can discover. Draw a picture or take a photo, but be careful not to harm the tree.



Mice to meet you!

A collective noun is a word that refers to a group of animals, people, or things.

Sometimes these nouns are quite funny. A group of mice is called a 'Mischief of Mice'. This makes it seem as if they are playful, but just a little bit naughty. Does that sound like any mice you know?

The survey of the park's woodlands has been completed and we await the full report with interest. The RBKC Ecology Service commissioned Land Use Consultants (LUC) to carry out drone and on-the-ground assessments of habitat classification, structure and composition as a first stage. Based on the habitats found, LUC will consider each area's suitability for different types of flora and fauna using 'indicator' plants to determine what will grow best in the area. The survey will also tell us which invasive species need to be dealt with if they are not to outcompete everything else.



Woodland in Holland Park

This work is essential to creating and maintaining healthy and sustainable woodlands. Without it, planting would be guesswork and plants might not take at all, or might actually do damage to existing vegetation. Even 'woodland mix' might be completely inappropriate in a woodland.

Dr Mark Spencer, in his recent talk on wildflowers for the Ecology Service, warned against wildflower planting without a thorough understanding of the habitat, what already grows there and what will grow there naturally. Mark says: 'So often, the underlying problem is a huge bias in people's perception that plants are inactive, pretty backdrops to nature and not the dominant powerhouse they actually are.'

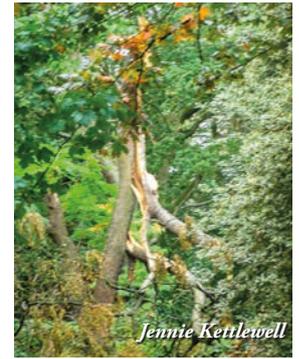
The intended output from LUC's habitat survey is a Holland Park Woodland Management Plan, and this will provide a blueprint for planting of trees, shrubs and smaller plants, as well as for habitat maintenance.



Salix caprea in the Wildlife Area

Woodland management sounds simple, but it is not. It is doubly difficult when the trees were all planted at the same time, as is the case with Holland Park's woodlands. They are not ancient, 'natural' woodlands. That means many of the trees are dying at the same time. Only this May, RBKC tree officers found more failing trees

in the woodlands and, when these are large trees, the risk of branches dropping cannot be accepted. A large poplar and a large horse chestnut will have been felled by the time you read this. More trees have been earmarked for dead wood removal. It is always sad to lose wonderful old trees, but it has to happen if safety is at stake,



Jennie Kettlewell

Casualty in the arboretum and the solution is to plant new trees. It must be said, the Council have been very slow to start this in Holland Park, and The Friends regularly chase up regarding the agreed long-term tree strategy. An assessment of trees in Arboretum 1, Arboretum 2 and the woodland space to the immediate west of the Acer Walk has been completed and there is space for some new trees. The Friends await sight of the assessment so that we can get the planting started. These Arboreta are designated as meadows, so the plan is for interesting trees, not too densely planted, so that the meadows can benefit from light between the canopies. We understand that the Arboretum 1 (East of the Acer Walk) is about to be scythed, to hold back the grass and let the resident wild flowers flourish. There used to be pignut (*Conopodium majus*) growing in this area, and it will be interesting to see whether it returns.



Pignut

In anticipation of the LUC report, The Friends are assisting the Ecology Service by creating a list of possible trees for planting in the woodlands. The intention is that our native trees are represented, but not all of them are likely to survive the expected change in climate. We can already see that birches are struggling in London parks. Some native trees simply will not cope, so we are adding appropriate species that will be Britain's trees of the future. The advice is to look at what species of tree currently thrive in southern France and in Spain, on the assumption they will like the climate coming to our shores. Do not look at trees from northern climes.

It is worth making the effort to ensure our wildflower and tree planting is sustainable, and that future generations can enjoy Holland Park's woodlands as much as we do. Done correctly, this will ensure the park enjoys healthy woodlands for years to come.



Statement of Accounts

The Friends of Holland Park

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 December 2020

	2020		2019	
	£		£	
Income from:				
Donations & legacies:				
Donations	39,495		18,780	
Legacies	-	39,495	-	18,780
Charitable activities:				
Subscriptions		12,856		13,560
Other trading income:				
Events	1,258		20,685	
Sale of merchandise	2,038		3,309	
Advertising	1,811	5,107	2,104	26,098
Interest		173		199
Total incoming resources		57,631		58,637
Expenditure on:				
Raising funds:				
Fundraising	2,611		2,162	
Event expenses	1,344		14,750	
Cost of merchandise	516	4,471	3,128	20,040
Charitable activities:				
Newsletter	7,378		6,717	
Grants & aims expenditure	21,378		30,834	
Governance	3,024	31,780	381	37,932
Total resources expended		36,251		57,972
Net income/(expenditure)		21,380		665
Total funds brought forward		132,033		131,368
Total funds carried forward		153,413		132,033

Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2020

	£		£	
Current assets:				
Debtors & prepayments	262		583	
Deposit & current accounts	153,232	153,494	131,860	132,443
Creditors:				
Amounts falling due within one year		81		410
Net assets		153,413		132,033

It is important to support our local community and here are two great new offers so that we can do just that:



The Design Museum.

224-238 Kensington High Street, London W8 6AG.

The Design Museum, with its wonderful parabolic roof, is a familiar sight to all Holland Park visitors. Since its re-opening in 2018, the stunning new interior gives a sense of anticipation as soon as you enter the building. There is a permanent exhibition from the Museum's collection, temporary exhibitions, talks, workshops and events. The Design Museum is devoted to contemporary design in every form, from architecture and fashion to graphics, product and industrial design. The main atrium is a wonderful place to sit and reflect on your experience.

Offer: 10% discount on sales from the shop, and on ticketed exhibitions.

bookings@designmuseum.org. Tel. 020 3862 5900

For more information on the Design Museum, visit www.designmuseum.org

Bloom House

Flowers

2B Ladbroke Grove,
London, W11 3BG

Bloom House really care about the quality of flowers they sell. They come directly from grower to shop, so they stay fresher for longer. The boutique stocks an elegant array of flowers, which you can buy as a simple bunch, or they make up a bouquet upon request. A selection of plants is available in the boutique or you can place an order directly for any specific plants. Bloom House also offer flower décor for the home, commercials or any special occasions. Do pop in to discuss any aspect of their flowers, including explaining some of their attractive but less common stems.



Offer: 10% off purchases in person or by phone (excluding online orders).

For more information, visit www.bloomhouse.co.uk, call 020 7792 5079 or WhatsApp 07584 845040

Notes on the accounts for 2020

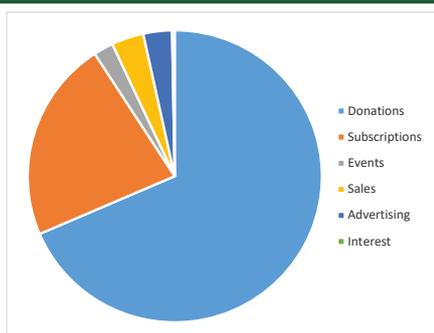
2020 was challenging as a result of Covid-19, and the accounts reflect this.

- The 2020 accounts have been independently examined.
- Income remained healthy at £57,631, largely due to donations amounting to £39,495 from generous members. This included one donation of £5,000 and one of £25,000.
- The Gift Aid refund for 2020 was £4,979.24.
- Cancellation of events meant no surplus, compared with a surplus on events of £5,935 in 2019.
- Grants to the park were down from £38,834 in 2019 to £21,378 in 2020, as many projects could not be realised. Grants included conservation of the upper causeway tiles, Ecology Centre's talks, and proactive healthcare for over 60 trees.
- A one-off payment of £1,926 was made for voting services in lieu of a live AGM.
- Net income was £21,380 and total funds carried forward stood at £153,413.

Statement of Accounts (contd)

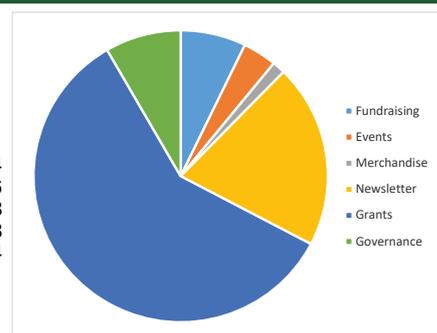
Income from:

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Subscriptions	12,856
Events	1,258
Sales	2,038
Advertising	1,811
Interest	173



Expenditure on:

Fundraising	2,611
Events	1,344
Merchandise	516
Newsletter	7,378
Grants	21,378
Governance	3,024





Wasurena-gusa

Yoshio Mitsuyama

During April, the Kyoto Garden was closed for three days for essential repairs to the pond and to improve the planting alongside it. First the Koi carp were carefully transferred to a holding tank in the Holland Park nursery and then the pond was drained.

A surprising amount of sticky black mud was removed and the coins that had been thrown in extracted, before the pond's lining was jet-washed and leaks were repaired. It looked a very messy job for the *idverde* team, who were joined by Scott and Louis, and all worked extremely hard to get the job done quickly and minimise the time the garden was closed to the public. The *Iris ensata* (Japanese water iris) rhizomes on the margin of the pond were replaced, and we look forward to seeing the beautiful mauve flowers again this year.

Refilling the pond has to be done so that the water is just how the carp like it: too clean and it will lack the good bacteria which provide nourishment for the fish. Tap water cannot be used as it contains chlorine that kill the good bacteria. So, some of the water that was drained from the pond was mixed with fresh water, and the carp will be monitored to check their health and make sure they thrive.

The original garden on this site was built during the summer of 1991. Designed by Shoji Nakahara, it was opened that September by HRH The Prince of Wales and His Imperial Highness The Crown Prince of Japan. The concept was inspired by an earlier Japanese garden in Holland Park and was

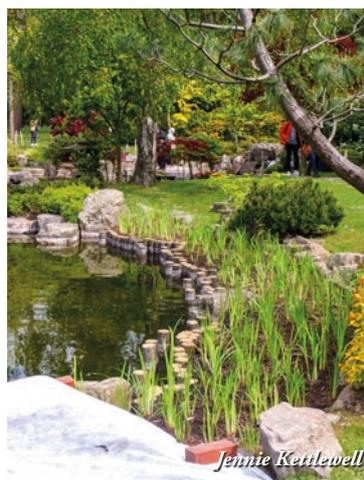


Jennie Kettlewell

Iris ensata

timed to coincide with the 1991 Japan Festival that marked the centenary of the Anglo-Japanese Society. Between 1991 and 2011, the Kyoto Chamber of Commerce funded visits by teams of gardeners from the Kyoto Gardens Association to ensure the

garden stayed true to the original intent: designed for strolling slowly and mindfully along the path past symbolic features and shrubs pruned in the Japanese style. The path should be followed in a clockwise direction, based on the Yi theory of Japanese garden design, which allows the features to be revealed in the intended sequence. Visitors are encouraged to let others enjoy the garden by observing quietly and peacefully so that others can do the same.



Jennie Kettlewell

New planting

In 2011, the agreement with the Kyoto Chamber of Commerce was concluded with a gift of a specialist team, led by Yasuo Kitayama, to develop the next phase of the garden. The original structure was kept, but the cascade was remodelled and new features added. Scott

and Louis were again part of the team working under Kitayama-san, as was *idverde*'s Marc Sinclair, who has been trained in the art of Japanese pruning. At that time, Barrie Maclaurin was RBKC's Parks Manager, and he had, and has, a passion for Japanese gardens, many of which he has visited in their homeland.

A team of Japanese gardeners visited again in 2020 to assess the garden and work on the plants. They expressed their appreciation that the garden has been well tended and has kept to the intended concept. So, the Kyoto Garden is being well cared for, and what remains to be done is to convey to the many visitors that it is a place for quiet observation and respect.

Contd on p.11



idverde

idverde's Marc working in the Kyoto Garden

Adjacent to, but separate from the Kyoto Garden, is the Fukushima Memorial Garden. It was created in 2012 in recognition of the support the British gave to the Prefecture of Fukushima at the time of the 2011 tsunami. Yasuo Kitayama returned to oversee the work, and the opening of the new garden attracted the interest of London's Japanese community and the Japanese media, who were in London to cover the Olympic Games. Mr Yoshio Mitsuyama is chairman of the Fukushima Prefectural Association in the UK, has been greatly involved with the development of Holland Park's Fukushima Garden, and is a member of The Friends. He has arranged countless visits to the garden by school children from Fukushima, and his

energy and persuasive influence have helped to raise funds. We are delighted to tell you that Mitsuyama-san has recently been recognised by the Japanese Government by being awarded the Order of the Rising Sun for his work to restore the fortunes of Fukushima (northeast Japan) and the wider Tohoku region. This is a prestigious award and well deserved. Our congratulations to Mr Mitsuyama.

The Kyoto and Fukushima gardens are both beautiful. It is only with time and proper care that the true beauty of the skilfully designed gardens will manifest itself.

Jennie Kettlewell



The rose garden in summer



The Friends would like to express their heartfelt thanks to the Parks Police for working even harder than usual to help keep park visitors safe during the challenge of the pandemic. You are appreciated.

The cover photo of the arcade was taken last year by Rhoddy Wood.

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.



Summer 2021

The pandemic continues to make event organisation uncertain. Please check to see if events will take place.

Kensington Gardeners' Club

Check details on www.kensingtongardeners.co.uk.

To book, email susan.vannoorden@ntlworld.com or call 020 7727 3897.

Tues. 22 June, 2.30pm: Zoom lecture by Nancy Stevens on "Scottish Gardens". A contribution of £5 would be welcome from non-members of Club. Please book to obtain link.

Wed. 7 July: Visit to Parham House and Gardens, West Sussex, a superb Elizabethan family house with award-winning gardens. Travel on coach from Notting Hill Gate. Gardeners' Club members £38, non-members £45. Booking essential.

Sundays 18 July and 1 Aug 2.00-5.30pm: KG Club member Harvey Groffman's garden opening, as part of National Gardens Scheme. 57 St Quintin Avenue, W10 6NZ. Booking essential.

Opera Holland Park

Safety is a priority and performances will be staged within government guidelines, which means limited audience numbers and adapted theatre space.

Further information from www.operahollandpark.com. Tickets available from 0300 999 1000

1, 4, 10, 12, 16, 18, 22, 24, 26 & 28 June at 7.15pm, **The Marriage of Figaro** by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

14 June at 7.15pm, Young Artist performances

26 June at 2pm, Young Artist performances

20 June at 2pm, Discovery Matinee and Relaxed Performance

16 & 22 June at 12pm, Schools Matinee Performances

Limited availability! Book soon.

5, 7, 9, 11, 15, 17, 19, 23, 25 & 29 June at 7.30pm, 27 June at 5pm, **La Traviata** by Giuseppe Verdi

19 June at 2pm, Discovery Matinee and Relaxed Performance

Limited availability! Book soon.

13, 15, 17, 21, 23, 28 & 30 July at 7.30pm, **The Cunning Little Vixen** by Leoš Janáček

25 July at 2pm, Discovery Matinee and Relaxed Performance

16, 20, 22, 24, 27, 29 & 31 July at 8pm, **L'amico Fritz** by Pietro Mascagni

18 July at 2pm, Discovery Matinee and Relaxed Performance

3, 4, 5 & 6 August at 7.30pm, 7 August at 2pm & 7.30pm, **The Pirates of Penzance** by Gilbert and Sullivan

Co-production with Charles Court Opera

Limited availability! Book soon.

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/sport-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 am Meet at the Holland Park Café, then share a leisurely walk in the park.

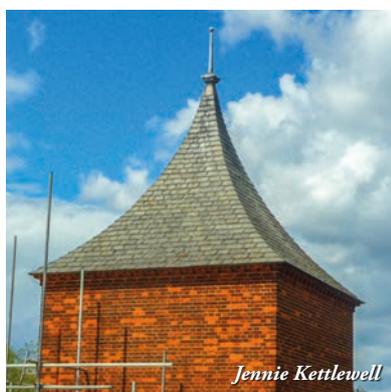


Repaired window

It is great news that stage 1 of the conservation work is going according to plan and is also on schedule. Your chairman can attest to this being a real achievement because she had the benefit of a first-hand view of just how intricate working with old brickwork and grouting can be. One sunny morning in early May, she joined

RBKC conservation team leader, Sarah Buckingham, RBKC senior project manager Kerine De Freitas, and conservation architect Anna Joynt from Allies and Morrison, on a tour of the East Wing and tower via the scaffolding. Nick McGrath, site officer from Borrás, the contractor carrying out the work, was there to explain how the work had been undertaken.

Seven hundred suitable bricks had to be sourced to replace some old bricks that were fatally damaged. It is now not possible to buy bricks at the size originally used on the house, so each of the seven hundred had to be cut down to the correct size. Then they had to be inserted into the walls of the building, so that it was not obvious which were new and which were old. There is a bit of a mixture, as some of the bricks date back to the repairs in the 1950s, some are very old and some are probably Victorian. The brick repair work done by Borrás has been carried out with such great care that one really cannot tell which bricks are the new ones. Quite an achievement.



Delabole tiles on the lower roof

Then there is the grouting, a more interesting subject than you might imagine. The new grouting is hydraulic lime, which is more permeable than cement and allows trapped moisture to escape the structure. We were told that the grouting is in 'bird beak' style. That means the lime mortar is carefully

shaped so that the top and bottom of the narrow strip are recessed and the middle stands proud and is pointed like a bird's beak (see the illustration). The benefit is reduced damage to the brickwork.



Jennie Kettlewell

Bird beak grouting

The much needed window repairs are finished and look robust, without looking too new. Those windows that are metal have been finished in a colour to replicate the old lead windows.

As the group reached the top of the scaffolding, there was a fine view of the re-tiled tower. How to match the old tiles was a bit of a puzzle, until someone noticed that the green tinge was typical of tiles from the Delabole slate mines in Cornwall, claimed to be the oldest working slate quarry in the world. So, the tiles on the roof of the tower are pretty special.

Safestay, who hold the lease to the East Wing of Holland House, plan to return to the building in June. It is probably fortunate that work on their building could be done while the hostel was unable to function, due to Covid.

Conservation of the main Holland House building will be carried out as phase 2, commencing in September 2021. We understand that provision has been made for conservation of the low basement walls that edge the north terrace. They are original and fall under Holland House's Grade-I listing, but are now disintegrating. Holland House will remain on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register until the work is considered to have progressed sufficiently. We hope that will not be too long now.



Allies & Morrison

On the scaffolding (L-R): Sarah Buckingham, Jennie Kettlewell, Nick McGrath, Kerine De Freitas, Anna Joynt

In our spring issue, we mentioned that idverde had created a new post for a Training and Community Manager and will run an enhanced volunteer programme. That post has been taken by Gerry Kelsey, who is not only an experienced horticulturist, but has a reputation for building strong relationships with the community and with friends groups.



Gerry Kelsey

Gerry studied at Merrist Wood College of Horticulture, then worked for the Duke and Duchess of Norfolk in the grounds of Arundel Castle, before joining idverde to become head gardener at Dulwich Park. His most recent challenge was as head gardener at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.

We are delighted that we now have the benefit of his experience and skills in Holland Park. On meeting him, it was immediately evident that he loves plants of every type and is very enthusiastic about all aspects of what grows in Holland Park. He knows his wild flowers too. His new role is to raise horticulture standards further and to increase community engagement activities through effective communication and the creation of a Community Nursery for local groups to

use, with community training sessions and workshops.

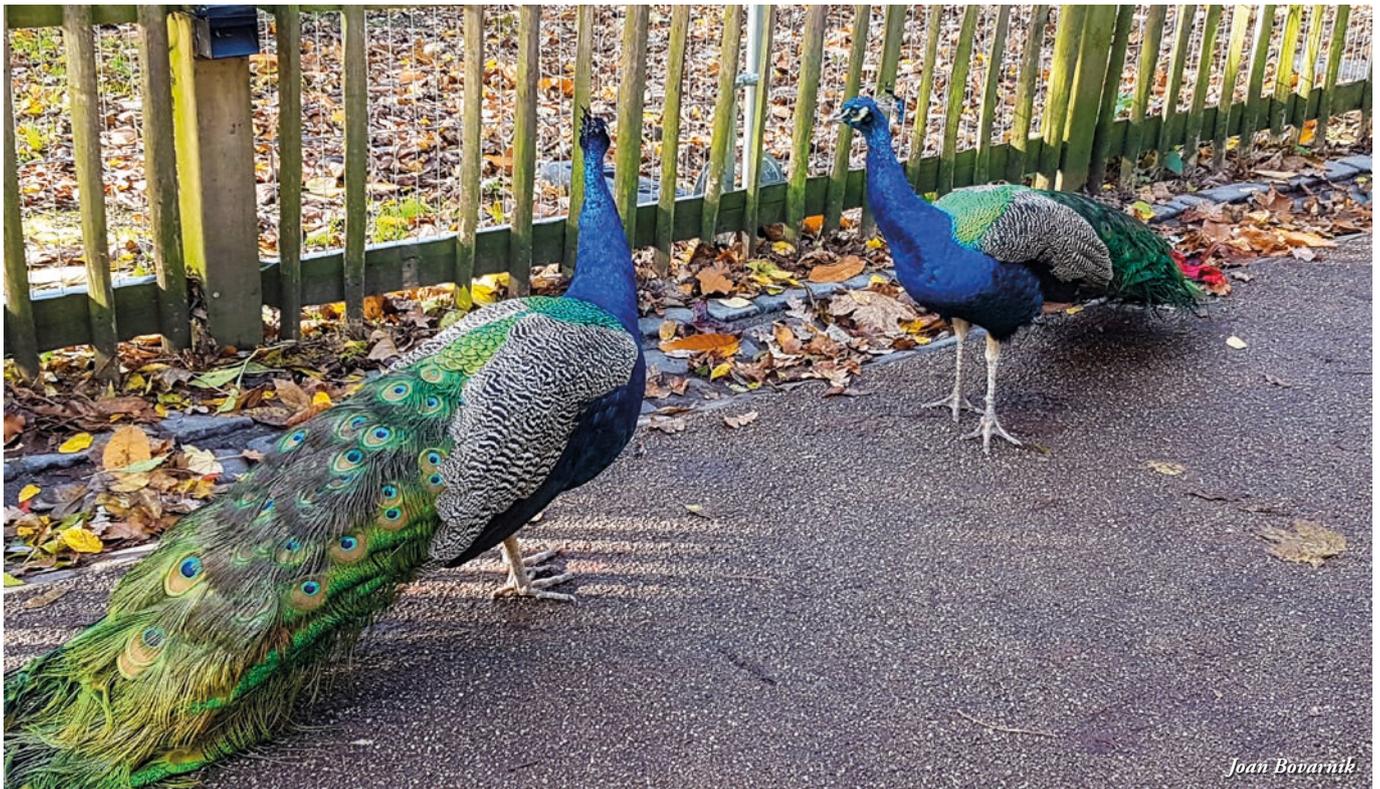
Many of you ask about the opportunity to volunteer, and an important task for Gerry is to create a more focused volunteer programme, so that all work is linked to park strategy. Work in the woodlands will be informed by the Woodland Management Plan, currently being developed. Dates for volunteering are currently being

scheduled, and anyone interested should contact ecologycentre@rbkc.gov.uk.

Gerry commented: 'Although I have only just arrived, I have been made to feel very welcome. I am looking forward to getting to know the rest of the borough and lifting the standards with the help of volunteers.'

Gerry's enthusiasm for plants is infectious, and walking round the park with him is a constant discovery of green things hiding in plain sight. It is early days yet and we will keep you updated with opportunities for community activities. These are going to be popular, so book up early when you hear about them.

Jennie Kettlewell



Peacocks in Holland Park



Moorhens' nest observed by two grey herons

You might have wondered what those wire cages are that float in the middle of the pond behind Lord Holland's statue. According to the Ecology Centre they are to protect vegetation from browsing birds. Recently they have served another purpose: as a nesting site for moorhens.

I was never able to see how many eggs the resident pair had, but three chicks hatched successfully in mid-April. While they were still nest-bound, a heron would sometimes come and stand at the edge of the pond; it stood absolutely motionless for long periods, always watching the nest intently. It seemed that it was trying to weigh up its chances of having a tasty meal of moorhen chicks, something which herons are certainly not averse to. The adult moorhens would undoubtedly have put up a huge fight. After a few more days I saw that one of the chicks had made it into the water: a tiny ball of black fluff paddling eagerly around, sometimes finding its own food and occasionally fed morsels by the adult in the water with it. The other adult stayed in the nest guarding the other chicks. The adults took it in turns to do

duty in the nest and duty in the water. They were careful not to leave any chick alone for long when changing places.

I was privileged to see the second chick take the plunge: it just plopped off the cage and started paddling rapidly without a moment's hesitation. A couple of days later the third chick was in the water.

Oh woe! After another few days there was no sign of any chicks, one of the moorhens was squawking horribly, and two grey herons were standing on either side of the pool looking smug, but also watchful in case another ball of fluff suddenly appeared that they had missed at their last meal.

I suppose we must now hope that the moorhens on the pond in the Wild Life Area have had better luck with their chicks; and the Lord Holland moorhens are likely to breed again once or even twice: the male is already showing interest.

Text and photo: Joy Puritz



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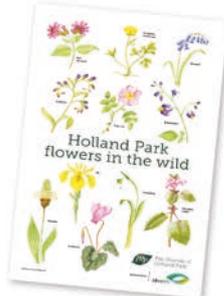
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