



*The Friends of Holland Park
Autumn 2010*

Photo by Rhoddy Wood



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Linley Sambourne House



Daniel Robbins

**Thursday, 10 February 2011,
7pm in the Orangery**

18 Stafford Terrace, Linley Sambourne House, is a unique surviving example of a London late-Victorian town house. Home to the *Punch* cartoonist and illustrator Edward Linley Sambourne, the house retains much of its original decoration and furniture preserved by successive generations of the family. Given a fashionable artistic makeover by the Sambournes when they moved into the house in 1875, it also doubled as Linley's studio and workplace. This illustrated talk by Senior Curator Daniel Robbins tells the fascinating story of the Sambournes and their life at 18 Stafford Terrace, one of Kensington's hidden jewels.

Tickets for this event may be purchased using the enclosed order form at £12 each to include wine and canapés, which will be served after Daniel's talk.

Crab-Apple Jelly



At the time of writing, your secretary has every intention of making crab-apple jelly again this year. The general apple crop seems good this year and we have checked that the two crab-apple trees in the park are bearing. They should be ready about the end of September, just as you are reading this. So do phone 020 7602 0304 to enquire about availability and prices and to arrange collection.

Stop Press Winners

We have just heard that in the 2010 *London in Bloom* competition Holland Park has been awarded Gold. Westfield, Cremorne, St. Luke's and Little Wormwood Scrubs gained Silver Gilt. The Royal Borough won Gold in the City category and was outright winner in Group A. RBK&C also took first place in the floral display category. Our congratulations to all concerned.



David Darrell-Lambert

Thursday, 28 October at 7pm in The Orangery

May we remind you of this forthcoming talk by David Darrell-Lambert which was trailed in the summer newsletter.

Having carried out the most recent survey of the birds in Holland Park, David is ideally placed to talk to us about them. He will cover the

importance of Holland Park as a habitat for birds, which species were present at the time of his survey and the future of the site. All the species will be illustrated by his own photography and, where

possible, by recordings of their songs.

David is the chairman of the Ornithological Section of the London Natural History Society and of the Records Committee. He has undertaken a variety of bird surveys in urban parks, coastal sites and heath lands, covering nocturnal species, winter wildfowl counts, high-tide roosts and breeding populations. In 1991 he began illustrating the London Bird Report and then became a local bird recorder. He leads groups of birdwatchers around various parts of London, Essex and Hertfordshire, and his photographs have been published in a number of specialist journals. He has travelled widely at home and abroad in pursuit of his interest.

Tickets costing £12, to include wine and canapés after the talk, may be purchased using the enclosed order form.

Christmas Concert

Sunday, 5 December is definitely a date for your diary, as this is when we will again be welcoming the Tallis Chamber Choir (TCC) and their musical director Philip Simms for their annual carol concert in the Orangery at 7.30pm.

TCC has flourished for more than a quarter of a century now. It grew out of Philip Simms' conception of a small choir to give concerts with the English Chamber Orchestra and this grew out of the Greenwich-based Thomas Tallis Society which he founded in 1965. For 36 years Philip was organist and choirmaster at the parish church of St Alfege, where Thomas Tallis is buried, and a member of the English Chamber Orchestra (ECO) for 28 years.

Since 1983 the TCC has given concerts all over Europe and the UK and made numerous recordings of works of a variety of composers and styles. The choir has not only worked with the ECO but with most other London-based orchestras, large and small. In addition it has been privileged to work with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, Israel Philharmonic and the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra together with an enviable number of great conductors including the late Charles Mackerras. TCC has also given a multitude of *a capella* concerts, with readers such as Robert Powell, Keith Michell, Margaret Tysack, Crawford Logan, and not forgetting our very own Joy Puritz.

In May of this year TCC performed Duruflé's *Requiem* at Wymondham Abbey, Norfolk in a highly successful fund-raising concert in aid of Help for Heroes, conducted by Philip Simms. In August Philip also conducted the choir and the Locrian Ensemble in Mozart's *Requiem* in a sell-out concert at St Martin-in-the-Fields. The concert also included the world premiere of *Ad Astra* for soprano, choir and orchestra by Julie Cooper. This was the choir's second concert with the Locrian Ensemble this year and they have been invited back for a further concert at St Martin's in mid-December.

The TCC are very much looking forward to being with us again – for the eleventh time. As always we advise early booking as the concert is usually sold out. Tickets are £15, to include wine and canapés, and these can be obtained using the enclosed order form.



The choir at Wymondham Abbey

Say "lime tree" to many Londoners and they will think of a sticky mess on cars parked beneath them and trees with trunks sprouting shoots which encroach on pavement space. This is the common lime, *Tilia x europaea*, and our forebears planted it generously because of its rude health which allowed it to grow tall in poor soil and polluted air. The park has many but it also has at least four other kinds of lime, and readers might be interested to visit and identify each of them.

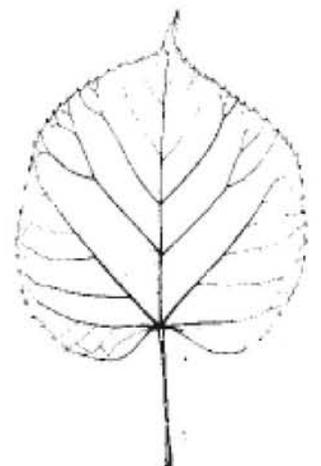
No one is sure where the common lime originated but it is a cross, probably naturally occurring, between the small-leaved lime, *Tilia cordata*, and the broad-leaved lime, *Tilia platyphyllos*, which are both native to England and much of Europe. All lime leaves are of variable shape, many inclined to be uneven at the base, and of different sizes so that it is possible to find larger leaves on a small-leaved than some on a broad-leaved. The broad-leaved (which drip as much as the common) are rough if stroked on the upper surface against the grain and, if turned over, have no tufts of hair at the stem and vein junctions. This contrasts with the common lime which has small straw-coloured tufts. Last time I looked the only broad-leaved specimen I could find in the park was a straggly sapling sticking over the east fence

into the perimeter walk between the school gate and the path to the north of the YHA. There have been other examples in that area and probably still are. We have no shortage of small-leaved limes which are not favoured by aphids and therefore do not drip.



Indeed, those in a group in the north-eastern corner are among the tallest trees in the park, though maybe not frequently noticed because of other surrounding plants. The easiest one of which to gain an overall impression is visible from the lawn above the north gate when standing at the entry to the flat oblong which has been in turn the site of the squash court, boules ground and apprentices' garden but now looks derelict. The leaves are, on the whole, smaller, smoother, lighter and shinier than the common lime's and have rusty coloured tufts on the back. In spite of the name *cordata*, which means cordate or heart-shaped, many of them are almost truncate or looking cut off (*see illustration*). They also differ from the common lime by having from five to eleven flowers in each bunch which stick out at all angles, while the common has only four to eight, all drooping and so less showy. You might still be able to see and count the fruit when you read this. Before opening, the bunches of flowers on all limes are enclosed in bracts which stay paler than the leaves and visible all season (*see illustration*).

The most famous limes in the park are in the lime-tree avenue. This was first planted by Lady Holland in the 1880s and in one hundred years grew tall but not very strong because they were too close together, so that in 1987 the storm brought them down like ninepins and the path between was impassable. The



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Friends responded immediately with a gift of £5,000, and a new avenue of small-leaved limes was planted at twice the spacing. These have flourished and we are beginning to wonder whether even this is too close. There is an avenue of small-leaved trees in Regent's Park which has used a clone called Greenspire which is an upright form. Clones are good for avenues because the trees are all of a similar shape and will grow at much the same rate. We did consider whether we might have Greenspire but if you walk slowly along the avenue, looking under the leaves, you will see that the branches go off at different angles on different trees so they are probably the simple native. There are additional trees in the extension of the path between Lord Holland's pond and the eastern boundary which look much the same age and might have been planted from the same batch.

One tree in the avenue, near the bench, was sadly lost to dog damage a few years ago. It has been replaced but the new tree is not a small-leaved lime. It is a lime and the leaves are regularly and deeply heart-shaped but, crucially, there are no rusty tufts on the back which is whitely hairy, showing well in a wind.

There are at least three different limes which could fit that description; this is probably new to the park and the rarest of the three, Oliver's lime, *Tilia oliveri*. It is distinguished by its very flat, soft green leaf with tiny, widely spaced teeth and its apple-green stalk.

The last of our limes is the silver pendent lime, *Tilia petiolaris*. We have one tree, crowded between others, near the east boundary beyond Lord Holland's pond. This again has silver backing to the leaves which uniquely have a stalk more than half as long as the blade. Also, as you might expect, its branches hang downwards like other weeping trees. It has been grafted a few feet above the ground onto rootstock of common lime which is sprouting in its accustomed way, so to examine a silver pendent leaf you must be sure to look above the graft line. It is always safer to ignore leaves on shoots emerging from or near the ground in case the tree has been grafted, and even when this is not so, low leaves are often not typical.

Do take a walk to see these trees and understand better the wealth of the Holland Park collection.

Rhoddy Wood



John Wilcox & Co.

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When I first visited the London Wetland Centre (LWC) in Barnes it had only recently opened. The lakes, ponds, meadows, reed beds, walkways and hides were in place, but the reeds, wild flowers and bushes had hardly begun to grow. Nevertheless I felt that this was an oasis. In some directions you could see buildings in the distance, but looking in others you could have been in the countryside. The water birds had wasted no time discovering the Centre and taking it over as if there were nothing out of the ordinary in having such a place a mere ten minutes' bicycle ride from Hammersmith Broadway.

This had been the site of four Victorian reservoirs, made defunct by the opening of the ring main. The whole area was bulldozed, during which activity an unexploded American World War II shell was discovered, and a pair of little ringed plovers decided to nest right in the way of the bulldozers. A protective fence was placed around the nest site, which was not disturbed until the young had fledged.

This summer the Centre has been celebrating its first decade, with a series of special events between May and July. As far back as the 1980s it was the



The Peacock Tower (far right)

dream of Sir Peter Scott, the founder of the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT), to set up an urban wetland centre. Although he drew up plans for the site in Barnes he sadly did not live to see his idea come to fruition. Sir David Attenborough, who opened the Centre in May 2000, returned to launch the anniversary activities on 26 May this year.

By creating a broad range of habitats, which even sustain a handful of grazing sheep and Highland cattle to promote biodiversity, the Centre now attracts a huge variety of water birds, amphibians and small mammals. Bitterns have been visiting for several years now, and rarities such as the ring ouzel, bearded tit and Blyth's reed warbler have been seen. Water voles, grass snakes and common lizards have been released into the area, and dragonflies and butterflies abound. Sir David Attenborough has described the Centre as "the ideal model for how humankind and the natural world may live side by side in the 21st century"; and Chris Packham, BBC Springwatch presenter, maintains that it is "one of the most important conservation projects of the past century".

Walking from the car park, or the 283 bus stop, the entrance to the Centre is across a wooden bridge



The Berkeley Bat House

leading into the Peter Scott Visitor Centre which consists of a gift shop, selling anything from ice creams to binoculars, a café, a "discovery centre", observatory and theatre, these buildings surrounding a courtyard listing activities on offer and interesting bird sightings.

Difficult Problems Solved

We are not much good around the garden but...

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Barnacle geese in the "World Wetlands"

The Centre covers 42 hectares. These are now filled with lush, dense vegetation as well as breathtakingly beautiful beds of wild flowers in such places as the "Fritillary Meadow" and "Sustainable Gardens". A small part of the west side of the site is reserved for the fenced "World Wetlands" where exotic ducks and geese can be seen at close range. The rest of the site consists of four lagoons of various sizes with many hides from which to watch birds, often with the help of a professional LWC bird-watcher. The tallest hide is the Peacock Tower with fine views in all directions. Notices in the hides encourage one to keep noise down: "Quiet. Birds have ears." Gradually more features have been added such as the "Explore Adventure Area", the "Pond Zone" for pond dipping, the Berkeley Bat House (sponsored by The Berkeley Group) – a work of art as well as a perfect home for pipistrelles and Daubenton's bats; opening in September this year is the RBC (Royal Bank of Canada) Rain Garden, in which one will be able to "relax among the streams, meadow and lush vegetation" and learn how best to use rain water in one's own garden.

One of the best times to bird-watch is during the coldest weather when there are a number of winter visitors escaping from the colder continent, such as the bittern. The latter is famous for hiding in reeds during daylight. By stretching its bill to the sky it reveals a breast striped to look like surrounding reeds. If the reeds are swaying in the wind the bittern cleverly sways with them to maximise its camouflage. One of my most exciting experiences at the Centre was in January this year when the lakes were largely frozen over. In order to find food the bitterns were having to venture out onto the open ice, and I had a long look at one from the small window by the servery in the café. Soon I had a line of other binocular twitches behind me. Another memorable experience was watching for several minutes a green woodpecker just yards away pecking around in the ground.

That is a lovely thing about the Centre: the birds are so used to people that they are relatively tame; the ubiquitous moorhen is not in the least fazed by sharing a footpath with you, and even the exotic geese sit happily beside the path as you walk inches from their beaks. In the spring I was completely flummoxed by a guttural bird call quite new to me. "What on earth is that, making that racket?" I asked the nearest twitcher. The perpetrator turned out to be a marsh frog. Another time someone had spotted water voles in a small pond, and a group of us were able to watch their antics, including a little spat, for several minutes.

It is wonderful that in Holland Park we have our own little wetland centre in the form of the wild-life pond. Now that the predating terrapin has been caught and relocated, perhaps we will one day be able to see water voles there.

*Joy Puritz, in collaboration with Kathleen Hall
Photos by Joy Puritz*

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Holland Park School Playground Site

The new owners of the playground site, to the south of the school buildings and immediately to the east of Holland Walk and the Park boundary, have been consulting with interested parties during the course of the summer. The Friends, local residents' groups and The Kensington Society have all been included in these discussions and you might well have seen the proposed plans at an exhibition at The Royal Garden Hotel.

You will recall that when planning permission was approved for the new school, consent was also granted for a residential block of high specification apartments to be built on the school's playground to pay for the school's redevelopment. We always expected that the eventual owner/developer would want to make changes to the consented building, and that is exactly what is happening. Depending upon one's viewpoint the changes now being proposed will either be seen as improving the original plan, or making a bad decision even worse.

The developers have listened to The Friends' case that maintaining the integrity and tranquillity of the Park, in particular the North Lawn, is of paramount importance to people's continuing pleasure in, and

enjoyment of, the Park. Looking at the revised proposals purely from the Park's perspective (which is all we can do as The Friends), we are optimistic that the Park will not be overlooked and that the outline of the new building will only be visible through the trees during the winter months, and then only very slightly.

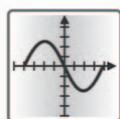
A planning application is anticipated during September. As soon as we hear of it we will ensure notification is posted on our website. Please take the time to study the details, and if you are not happy with what is being proposed, from whatever your particular standpoint might be, register your concerns with the Planning Department at RBK&C during the consultation period.

Holland Park Honey

The bees of Holland park have been busy this summer and have produced over a hundred jars of honey which we have sampled and can affirm is of top quality and extraordinarily tasty. Hurry to get yours while it is still available. It is obtainable at £5 a jar in Park Reception and all the takings will go to support the aviary next year.

Moorhens and Mallards

This year it is probable that two of our fledgling moorhens from last year stayed on, moving between the Dutch Garden, North Lawn and possibly the YHA garden as well as the Kyoto Garden. Much as the increase in numbers is welcome, this has not made it any easier to obtain an accurate picture of breeding, particularly as they might themselves have bred, although how many of their chicks survived is questionable. Our three long-standing resident pairs (on the Kyoto, Lord Holland's and Wildlife ponds) all produced young but with very mixed fortunes. By mid-June there were two juveniles with the pair of adults on Kyoto and three considerably younger chicks. Although a pair might have two or even three broods in a year, in this case their apparent closeness in age rather suggested broods from different parents. The total of five young had by the end of July been reduced to four (by now roughly the same size) which were in turn joined by another brood of three new chicks. The chicks, sadly, did not seem to survive for long but the more mature juveniles grew until, at the time of writing (early September), they were becoming almost indistinguishable from their parents.



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Kyoto moorhen

A total therefore of six on Kyoto, but still something of a puzzle as to whether they represent two adults and four young from this year or four adults (including two born in the park last year) and two young.

On Lord Holland's Pond one of the pair of adults was sitting on a nest as early as mid-May and was still sitting in July without any sign of chicks having hatched. This was strange behaviour because the incubation period is no more than about three weeks. However by 11 July the sitting parent had moved to another nest, and a single chick appeared. Another sad story: it survived for only a few days and Lord Holland's pair had no further success.

The Wildlife Pond pair had a rather happier season. By 5 July there were two juveniles and two very young

chicks almost certainly from the same parents. All four survived until the younger pair virtually caught up their elder siblings in appearance. In mid-August a new pair of chicks joined them, one of which survived and was by 10 September looking reasonably sturdy.

So, overall, by no means a total success story but, considering the dangers the moorhens face from predators, not that bad either.

The mallard story has been similar to previous years. Eight tiny ducklings appeared with their parents at the beginning of July on Lord Holland's pond. Within a week one had been lost, and father had left, but the seven grew until by the beginning of September they were adult size but not mature enough for plumage to indicate sex. They have been moving between the Lord Holland's and Wildlife ponds. Towards the end of August another mother duck with a single duckling was seen on Lord Holland's, and by the second week in September the duckling had grown considerably. Mother, however, seemed to have left it, preferring the Wildlife pond. Let us hope the duckling can cope on its own.

David Jeffreys

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The Alcove, Holland Park

How many readers have noticed that the long shrub border in the Dutch Garden, though it has a straight front edge, has one section some 18 inches narrower than the rest? This is because the back wall comes forward under the evergreen oak and then, going west, goes back again after the aedicule or alcove. The first of these corners has the statue of the melancholy old man sheltered beneath a small roof that is of a yellower brick than the surrounding ones and looks thoroughly stuck on. The second corner is more comprehensively disguised by the alcove with its surmounting ogee arch and adjacent curved wall. Our first instinct was to consider that the alcove was built at the same time as the walls but its bricks are yellowy brown compared with the redder ones in both walls. Your secretary can remember coming into the park in February 1958 and finding a large section of the wall lying in a crumbled heap on the flower bed but, fifty years on, she cannot remember which side of the alcove was affected. The park manager at that time wrote: "To insure future safety it was decided to rebuild another section of the wall and to erect a number of buttresses in various places." So it might be that substantial portions were rebuilt on both sides of the alcove, and the brick for them chosen to match the existing red ones, as I can distinguish no further joins. Whenever it was built, the alcove forms a conspicuous feature in the wall with its six-sided bench given ten years ago by the Friends. (We did wonder whether to paint the ceiling blue with stars but settled for a plain cream which is easy to re-paint; just as well, as the bench has survived a couple of small fires.)

Our new Christmas card (above) is focussed on the alcove and makes a truly seasonal view. You can see a small reproduction of it in colour in the enclosed brochure, on the middle spread and again on the back cover. Also illustrated are several designs of Holland

Park from previous years and nearly fifty other winter views of London. In addition we have small supplies of the three designs below which are not in the brochure.

The standard greeting is "With best wishes for Christmas and the New Year" but many also come in a blank version. All cost 75p each, £7.50 for a pack of ten with quantity discounts of 5% on 100 cards, 10% on 200 and 15% on 300. Or you can choose mixed packs of ten Holland Park views for £6.00. We prefer you to order on the Friends' order form as we get an additional discount as compared with your ordering direct from Mountbatten on the brochure form. In either case, delivery is free within our hand delivery area but we have to ask £1.15 per pack if outside that. You can nominate any charity of your choice to receive the publisher's donation, but we hope you will choose FHP. Do order in good time: it saves you a last minute rush and helps us order print runs.



Stable Yard, Holland Park



The Dutch Garden, Holland Park



Collage of Holland Park

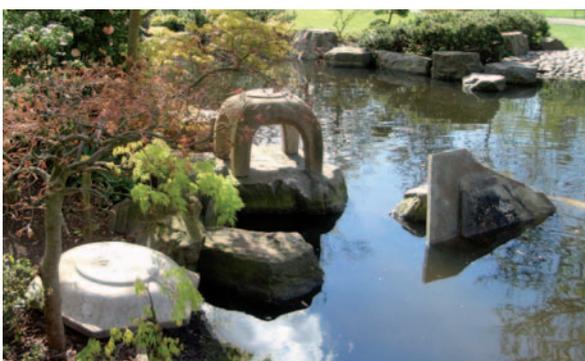
All FHP events in the diary are printed in **bold**. Our bird/nature walks (BNW) will continue to take place on the first Saturday of each month (except August) under the direction of our knowledgeable and informative guide, Ian Thomson. Meet him at Lord Holland's statue at 9am. The walks are free and everyone is welcome, not just Members, so please come and encourage your friends: they might become Members too! We recommend you bring binoculars if you can – they make such a difference.

Events organised by the Ecology Service of RBK&C are listed as "ES"; unless otherwise stated they are free of charge, meeting in the Ecology Centre (Stable Yard). It is advisable to ring the Ecology Centre on 020 7938 8186 or e-mail ecology.centre@rbkc.gov.uk for details of any changes, for further events or, especially for the children's activities, to check whether they are fully booked or not.

Sat 2 Oct	BNW	
Sun 17 Oct	ES. Autumn wildlife open day. At the wildlife area.	12-4pm
Sat 23 Oct	ES. Fungi foray with Mark Spencer.	2pm
Mon 25 Oct to Fri 29 Oct	ES. Holiday activities for 5-10 year olds, £3.60 per 2-hour session. Booking required.	10-noon; 2-4pm
Thur 28 Oct	"The Birds of Holland Park" , an illustrated talk by David Darrell-Lambert. In the Orangery, £12.	7pm
Sat 30 Oct	ES. Autumn tree walk with Alan Harrington.	11am
Sat 6 Nov	BNW	
Sat 4 Dec	BNW	
Sun 5 Dec	Christmas Concert: Tallis Chamber Choir. In the Orangery, £15.	7.30pm
Sun 12 Dec	ES. Winter wildlife open day. At the wildlife area.	12-4pm
Sat 18 Dec	ES. Winter tree walk with Alan Harrington.	11am
Thur 10 Feb	"Linley Sambourne House" , an illustrated talk by Daniel Robbins. In the Orangery, £12.	7pm

Snow Lantern Restored

In our Summer 2009 newsletter we reported the vandalism of the snow lantern in the Kyoto Garden. Against all expectation and despite the many fragments it had been reduced to, Park Management have succeeded in putting "Humpty together again". Unfortunately the vandals were at it again in the Garden on 10 September: a bench was completely smashed and the smaller lantern broken. Park Management are likely to be able mend the latter.



Before



After



The key.

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