## **The Friends of Holland Park Autumn 2012**



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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 all and would ask you to show your thanks by supporting them, please.



## The Belvedere

We are grateful to the Belvedere Restaurant for offering to loan glasses and supply wine at cost for our autumn event and for the Christmas carol concert. We are sure we will enjoy their choice of wine, and having it come from so close by makes the organisation much easier.

## Crab Apple Jelly

Jeremiahs have been telling your secretary how none of their favourite apple trees are bearing fruit this year. If this dearth does indeed extend to crab apples, then there can be no jelly. Nevertheless, she will check all her favourite trees in early October and you are invited to ring her on 020 7602 0304 from 8 October to discover the position.

The cover photo was taken by your editor in the Kyoto Garden on 30 October 2009



Filp

Our autumn event is an illustrated talk by Sally Miller to mark the publication of her book which was commissioned by The Friends, *The Pleasure Grounds of Holland House*.

Little has been written about the park and pleasure grounds, but Sally has discovered records to show that they were laid out by successive owners with taste as well as money, and who were familiar with some of the finest gardens in England. Changing landscape fashions down the centuries were reflected in the gardens of Holland House. The original estate, created in 1591, covered about 500 acres from what is now Holland Park Avenue almost to the Thames. Sally's book

uses the surviving evidence to create impressions of the gardens as they would have been seen and experienced in each of the four centuries of their existence.

After her retirement Sally Miller gained an MA in garden history from Birkbeck College, University of London, and is now a professional garden historian

## Christmas Concert

The Tallis Chamber Choir is greatly looking forward to singing for the Friends in the Orangery in Holland Park at 7.30pm on Sunday, 9 December. This annual concert presaging Christmas will, as usual, include an eclectic mixture of ancient and modern, plus one or two surprises. This enjoyable event is always well subscribed, so do book your tickets in good time. These are £17, to include wine and canapés; they can be ordered on the enclosed order form which is also downloadable from the website.

## Pimm's in the Park

Last summer our Pimm's party was rained on, and so it was on the evening of 18 July this year, except somewhat more decidedly. Once again Park management and hostel manager Sally Martyn-Johns came to the rescue with gazebos under which we all cosily congregated in the youth hostel garden, in true British spirit not at all fazed by something as trivial as the weather. Once again we were forced to stand closer to our fellow guests than we might otherwise have done, which can only be a good thing; these included Mayor Cllr Christopher Buckmaster with Mayoress Mrs Anne Hobson, Cllrs Deborah Collinson, Johanna Gardner, Tony Holt and Warwick Lightfoot. Trustees had rolled up their sleeves and prepared the jugs of Pimm's. Our regular caterer and Friend, Janice Miles, was on holiday, so we were most grateful to Jidwiji Nasarzewska ('Jackie') for providing delicious refreshments. Thanks are also due to Sally Martyn-Johns for her kind hospitality.



researching, writing and lecturing on garden and landscape history. Having moved from London to Winchester, she contributes both to the work of the Hampshire Gardens Trust and the London Parks and Gardens Trust where she coordinates a group of volunteers who research material for www.londongardensonline.org.uk, a comprehensive database of the public parks, gardens, squares, historic greens and commons, cemeteries and churchyards of local historic interest in Greater London. She has previously published The History of Bishops Park and articles in Garden History and the London Gardener. Sally has family connections to Notting Hill dating from the 1940s, and she lived there briefly in the 1970s, so Holland Park was a favourite place, and she has enjoyed the opportunity to

explore its history.

Tickets, priced at £12, may be obtained using the enclosed order form, or via the website. The price includes wine sourced from the Belvedere Restaurant and delicious canapés by Janice Miles; and, of course, copies of Sally's book, hot off the press, will be available to purchase at just £9.99, signed by the author at no extra charge.

## Difficult Problems Solved

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

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We are delighted to report that after a long search the trustees have invited Stewart Katz to succeed Nicholas Hopkins, who stood down from the chairmanship at the AGM in March. Happily, Stewart has accepted and is keen to start work. He will be co-opted formally at the trustees' meeting in October and will then stand for election at the AGM next year.

Stewart Katz, a chartered accountant whose current practice is in Notting Hill Gate, has been in various partnerships over the years and managing partner

of a 30-employee practice. In that capacity he has had to deal with hundreds of clients from all backgrounds, and has thoroughly enjoyed the challenge presented, which will hold him in good stead in his new role. He



Stewart Katz

is also a trustee of the charity Children in Need (not the BBC one) and an adviser to Kids in Museums, as well as a patron to The Kensington Forum for Older Citizens. In any spare time Stewart is interested in observing nature, reading science, collecting minerals and playing table tennis.

'Holland Park is really my back garden and I visit every week, summer and winter,' says Stewart. 'I look forward to this new challenge with interest, and hope that my connection with the wider community of Holland Park as chairman of The Friends will be successful

and enjoyable. I very much look forward to meeting members, and hope to fulfil the obligations of chairman to my very best ability.'

Sadly, Terry McGrivigan, who painted our Christmas cards for a number of years, died a few months ago. However Mountbatten Cards found Catherine Masterman to continue the tradition, and she has produced our new card for 2012. It is called *Holland House from the West* and shows the front as it was last winter with the benches given by the Friends and the topiary to furnish it while the public is allowed in. Opening this area when the opera is not there

is an achievement of which we are very proud.



East Wing, Holland House

smaller *East Wing, Holland House* at 55p, and packs of mixed designs and sizes at £5 for 10. There are other Holland Park designs as well as a large variety of London views in the brochure, and an even wider selection on the website www.mbcards.co.uk.

## Christmas Cards



Holland House from the West

We will also

be holding

stocks

of some

previous

full-size

Dutch

cards: the

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*Garden* at

75p, the

are included and there are discounts of 5% on 100 cards, 10% on 200 and 15% on 300. We hope that you will all nominate FHP as the recipient of the charity



The Dutch Garden

donation from Mountbatten of 25% of the profits, but you are free to choose any charity.

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be ordered from Mountbatten. In either case envelopes



This has been a year of very mixed fortunes. All three resident pairs of moorhens attempted to breed, and there was at least one 'spare' pair without a permanent home on Kyoto, Lord Holland's or the Wildlife ponds. The season began with tragedy during the second week in April when our first nestlings on Kyoto were killed by stones thrown at them on the island where they were easily visible. No one witnessed the incident(s) but stones recovered from the nest matched those on the edge of the lake. However, the indomitable parents tried again and succeeded in fledging a brood of six, hatched at the end of June. They grew remarkably quickly: nature's ability to compensate for the depredations of man never ceases to amaze. On Lord Holland's the parents followed their familiar pattern of sitting for months before producing anything but, unlike previous years, at the time of writing (early September) there was still no sign of any young. On the Wildlife pond, a brood of four moorhen chicks emerged in early May, followed by a second of five chicks at the beginning of June, so they must have come from separate parents. All survived.

Michael Martyn-Johns has sent me his usual report on the youth hostel moorhens whose resident pair have had another good year. Their first brood of seven chicks was hatched in April, of which three survived, leaving in late June. They had a second brood of seven in June, six of which survived and, at the time of writing were still present; finally, a third brood of two in the second week in August, one of which is also still present. Their fat (domestic) duck retains its aggression towards mallards, but duck and moorhens have learned to live together.

About mid-June a newly-hatched duckling with mother mallard appeared on Lord Holland's pond but, after a few days, both had gone. On 24 June, five mallard ducklings with proud parents were seen on Lord Holland's pond where, apart from the father's early departure, they remained until early September. At the beginning of August five new ducklings appeared on Kyoto. On 14 August two (very likely from the five) ventured one after the other onto Lord Holland's pond. Sadly, they had not reckoned with the possessiveness of the, by now, fairly mature juvenile mallards who had settled there. Each duckling was in turn set upon and killed by the juveniles: nature can be cruel too. The three remaining of the Kyoto five seemed later to have moved with their mother to the Wildlife pond, but within a few days they too had gone.

Herons regularly drop into the Park but, for the past few weeks, an immature bird seems to have taken up residence on Kyoto, quite unperturbed by the presence of (human) visitors. It will be interesting to see if he/she remains.

David Jeffreys





On 11 March 2011 a massive earthquake caused a tsunami to strike the eastern seaboard of Japan – particularly the Fukushima Prefecture. This natural disaster and consequent human tragedy led to a near cataclysmic melt-down of nuclear power stations in the Fukushima region. Although nearly 2,000 people are known to have died, millions of people across Japan were directly and indirectly affected. Offers of assistance poured in from around the world, but amongst the first were those from the United Kingdom.



Park and Kyoto gardeners at work

On 17 May 2012 their Majesties, the Emperor and Empress of Japan, made a private visit to Holland Park before officially thanking the British people at a diplomatic reception at the Japanese Embassy for their compassion and practical support in response to the disaster. Some days later, the embassy's First Secretary, Kita Katsuhiko, put the problem to me: where to plant some rhododendrons in Holland Park - and specifically *R. brachycarpum* –as an expression of gratitude for the assistance rendered to the Japanese people. This particular rhododendron is common in the Fukushima region. I balked at the idea of adding to the Kyoto Garden so soon after last year's major refurbishment, and suggested an area behind the black bamboos. As Yasuo Kitayama, President of Kitayama Zoen and contemporary master gardener, was expected to return shortly from Kyoto, we agreed to put the proposal to him, and both did. However he was not particularly enthused by the idea. Early on the second day of his visit we again discussed it. Was I sure I wanted these planted 'at the back of the bamboos?' he asked. 'Yes', I replied, unless of course he had a better idea. 'A back garden?' he asked somewhat incredulously. 'Oh, no!' I replied before asking if perhaps he would rather design a small garden or border to show off the rhododendrons. He smiled, and having made his catch, told me to return that afternoon after he had given it some more thought. I returned as instructed to find the normally composed Kitayama-san in full creative flow: he wanted steps over here, this tree moved over there, rocks

- lots of rocks, and grass. 'Yes! More hydrangeas and, please, Binnell-san [Ben Binnell of Quadron], extend *that* hedge ....' The list was demanding and the trees no sooner planted than they were being uprooted and moved again.

Over the following days his three assistants (Norio Ueda, Yoshinobu Hirabayashi and Daisuke Kobayashi), Scott Evans, Louis Walsh and the Quadron gardeners (in particular Marc Sinclair, Nick Mawbey and Adrian Peters) worked like Trojans as he remodelled the site of the original works yard into a fitting memorial garden under the working title of the 'Fukushima Extension'. Visitors from the embassy were quickly followed by others from the Fukushima Prefectural Association, the Fukushima Minpo, and former residents of the region. A few days into the build, Kitayama and his team had to return home. However he left very precise descriptions of what he had intended the garden to look and feel like, and departed with the ominous warning: 'I'll be back in November to see how you've done!' Work continued . . .



Kyoto gardener making the steps

On Tuesday, 24 July two Olympic athletes (Izumi Kato, a swimmer, and Katsuaki Susa, fly-weight boxer), an agricultural worker (Koushi Fujita) and two schoolchildren (Kanami Ajima and Miyu Matsubara) from the Fukushima Prefecture plus the Head Gardener of Holland Park (Ian Fleming) and two local schoolchildren (Abigale Young and Anthony Peters) officially opened the garden in the presence of a very distinguished audience that included His Excellency, Mr Keiichi Hayashi, the Japanese Ambassador; Mr Masato Abe, Director of the Fukushima Prefecture Government; Cllr. Lady Borwick, the Deputy Mayor; Cllr Nick Paget-Brown (Deputy Leader), Mr Yoshio Mitsuyama (Chairman of the Fukushima Prefectural Association in the UK), Mr Seiich Nihei (Senior Managing Director, Fukushima Minpo) as well as senior officers from the Japanese Embassy, Friends of Holland Park and members of the Borough Council.



The garden is probably best entered from the south. The left hand gate post has a calligraphic plaque (donated by the artist Kashuu) that reads 'Fukushima Garden'. The garden is walked through via a footpath that evokes a dry river bed (hence the pebbles), tumbling in the north-west over the rapids (or steps) from the Kyoto pond, and in the east from the hills and mountains beyond.

The rhododendrons currently planted are *R*. x *hybridus* 'Cunningham's white', which is the closest variety that we could find to *R. brachycarpum*, the white flowering native of the region. We did manage to find seven rather poor specimens of the latter being grown by a Scottish nursery and these have been temporarily planted behind the screen further up the hillside. In future years it should be possible to replace the 2012 hybrids. The flowers are interesting because the buds are pink at first before giving way to white.



Cutting the tape

The motto of the Fukushima Prefecture is 'never give up' and that is perhaps best evoked at the entrance by the three 'growing stones' that rise up from the ground. The benches that were also donated by the Prefecture have been deliberately placed on the grass to make the most of the various views across the garden, including the *shakkei* or borrowed landscapes beyond its immediate boundaries. We will put more permanent bases in place in time.

Visitors are being currently permitted to enjoy the garden in contact with the lawn. We will review this from time to time, but to date it appears to have been successful; it has also helped the security guard who now has an alternative area outside, but near, the Kyoto Garden towards which to direct people wishing to sit or walk on grass. The crack underneath the bench looking over the Kyoto pond evokes an earthquake: not many people seem comfortable sitting astride it.

Final thoughts: the Fukushima Garden has been designed as a commemorative garden to mark the gratitude of the Japanese people for the support of the British people in an hour of great need. There is much to gain from compassionate responses to natural events, and accordingly the bonds with the people of Fukushima, that bind all of us associated with this garden, will indeed grow stronger.

'Together, we make the world' (Thich Nhat Hanh)

Barrie Maclaurin (text and photos)



Placing the rocks



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Autumn is a time of fruitfulness for the trees and plants of Holland Park, and it often feels like the end of the annual cycle. We have seen buds ripen and give way to flowers in their many forms before the petals fall and the fruit develops. Looked at from a different perspective, the fruits are actually the beginning. Though the pips and seeds from the fruit may lie dormant over a cold winter, they are the 'embryo' from which new plants will form in the next year.

When we think of fruit we tend to think of edible fruit such as apples or pears, but the fruit of a plant takes many forms and is defined as a seed-bearing organ.



#### Nut

A nut is a hard-cased fruit and only dispenses its seed when the case rots in the ground. *Corylus avellana* (hazel) bears nuts in a hard case that takes some cracking to get to the tasty kernel inside. There are a number of hazels in the native hedge that runs along the eastern edge of the Holland Park playing field.

#### Winged fruits

The fruits of maple and ash trees bear wings to help them spin through the air to deposit their seed where it can grow into a sapling.

The handsome *Acer platanoides* (Norway maple) at the south-east end of the path down to Kensington High Street is a fine example of a double-seeded fruit with a wing for each seed.



#### Drupe

A drupe is a fleshy fruit that carries a single stone in its centre, and this stone has a hard case enclosing one seed. The small olive in the Dutch Garden's Mediterranean bed bears drupes, as does the *Prunus persica* (peach) in the Peacock Enclosure, just north of the Walking Man statue.



#### False fruit

One of the strangest, though a firm favourite, is something that masquerades as a fruit but is actually a swollen section containing seeds at the base of the rose bloom. In the hedge along the eastern border of the playing field *Rosa rugosa* produces voluptuous fat-bellied false fruits which we know as hips.

#### Berry

A berry is usually relatively small, fairly fleshy but with multiple seeds, and it is probably the colourful berries that we appreciate the most in autumn; and so do the birds. The crimsons, oranges, deep purple and sometimes bright mauves advertise the berries to the birds, whose snacking plays a role in dispersing the seed to wherever it falls while the bird eats or passes it in its droppings. They go for the red berries first, then the orange and finally make do with berries of other colours.

The trees and shrubs of Holland Park produce all sorts of beautiful autumn berries. Here are some examples:



#### Myrtle

As you walk along the Diamond Jubilee Walk from west to east you pass a *Myrtus communis*, the lovely myrtle, a species which has been appreciated by people since ancient times. The berries start to form after the August flowering, and by November the plant is densely covered in dark purple fleshy fruits, formed in pairs from the angle of the leaves. In Sardinia and Corsica *Myrtus* berries are macerated to produce the drink *mirto rosso*, and it is said that in some parts of the world the berries were used to dye hair.



The mole, or rather, evidence of its presence, is to be found in both town and countryside, in fact, wherever the ground is suitable for burrowing. It is particularly fond of our lawns and golf courses.

There are eleven species of *Talpa europaea*, the European or 'Old World' mole, which has made its home throughout Europe and even as far as western Russia, but which never settled in Ireland. (Perhaps it found the ground too boggy.)

The mole digs two kinds of burrow: when searching for a mate in the spring it digs a tunnel close to the surface -a sort of ditch - but for the rest of its life, which is spent largely underground, it has a more elaborate residence. For this it digs much deeper horizontal tunnels, usually two, at different levels, with connections between them



and a central nest; from these, passages lead up to the surface giving rise to the familiar molehills. These have an exit hole, which it apparently closes when leaving or returning to the burrow, but these have rarely been found. The molehills over the central nest are the largest. Our mole is said to have designed a better burrow than its American cousin.

Unlike Mole in Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows* who is gentle, gregarious and house-proud, *Talpa europaea* is a solitary creature when not breeding, and far from gentle. While its main diet is worms and insects, it has been known to kill snakes, lizards, mice and even small birds. And house-proud? Probably, with all that hard work.

> Kathleen Hall Illustration by Joanna Irvin

## Season of Mists and Mellow Fruitfulness (contd)

#### Hawthorn

*Crataegus heterophylla* (the various-leaved hawthorn) is less often found than the common hawthorn, the noticeable difference being that the leaves of the former are trident shaped rather than multi-lobed. The berries are just as red and attractive as you can see on the mall tree in the eastern tree belt just opposite the gate into the youth hostel.

#### Callicarpa

*Callicarpa bodinieri*, known as beauty berry, is the shrub that produces a mass of alarmingly violet berries that look as if they were made of shiny plastic. When the leaves have coloured up for autumn, then fallen, the berries are unmissable and will last until Christmas. Find it at the extreme right end of the Mediterranean bed in the Dutch Garden.

#### Cotoneaster

The *Cotoneaster frigidus* (Himalayan tree) on the right of the path leading down to the suntrap (north) gate has arching branches loaded with large, heavy clusters of crimson berries in autumn and well into winter. This contrasts wonderfully with the golden-leaved *Choisya* beneath it.

#### And what is this?

After considering all of the above, I found myself trying to fit each fruit I found in Holland Park into one of these categories, but it is not so simple. What, I wondered is an acorn? Well, my trusty plant glossary indicates it is an 'arillate' fruit. That is, it has an 'aril' which you and I know as the cup of the acorn, defined as an appendage which covers part or most of the seed. I now realise how much more I have to learn.

Jennie Kettlewell (text and drawings)



Bird-ringing specialists netted a treat when they visited Holland Park in May: a reed warbler, previously unknown



in the park. Bill Haines, with two volunteers from the Aylesbury Vale Barn Owl Project, erected three mist nets in the wildlife area so that they could demonstrate bird ringing. The latter provides data on survival

Measuring wing feathers

and movement of birds, and this enables conservationists to tackle problems. Mist nets are often used for bird ringing because they are so fine that they are invisible to birds and catch them without harming them. Our specialists gently removed birds from the nets, identified the species, measured and weighed each bird, then recorded the information before carefully attaching a leg ring with a unique number. Some birds caught on the day already had rings, making it possible to trace from records where and when they had previously been netted.

People who dropped in to watch the ringing, which was sponsored by The Friends of Holland Park, had the chance of seeing a chiffchaff, male and female blackcaps, a robin, two blackbirds (who were squabbling hard when the net caught them), one very cross jay and a number of other birds not witnessed by me. But the reed warbler was the real prize.

Jennie Kettlewell (text and photos)



Chiffchaff about to be released

## **Diamond Jubilee**



Back L-R: Cllr Carpenter, Ben Binnell, Cllr Paget-Brown, Clive Ivil, Ian Fleming. Front L-R: Sir Merrick Cockell, Cllr Buckmaster, Rhoddy Wood, Barrie Maclaurin

Not all readers might have been aware that Holland Park was first opened to the public in 1952, the year of the Queen's accession. It therefore followed that 2012 was the Diamond Jubilee for both the Queen and the Park, and the two events were celebrated jointly with a party given by the Borough on 29 June. The path between the Mediterranean bed and the rest of the formal garden was christened the Diamond Jubilee Walk. Among those present were Cllrs Lyn Carpenter, Nick Paget-Brown, Sir Merrick Cockell and Christopher Buckmaster (Mayor); Senior Contract Manager of Quadron Ben Binnell, MD of Quadron Clive Ivil, Head Gardener Ian Fleming, Park Manager Barrie Maclaurin and Rhoddy Wood. Also there was a ceremony in which each member of the Parks Police was presented with the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal. This has been an exceptionally busy season for the police with the visit by the Emperor of Japan, the Jubilee, the Olympic Torch Relay, and 24-hour coverage during the Olympics to prevent unlawful campers. Leave had to be cancelled and extra shifts worked. It was good to be able to applaud the police for their continuing energy and diligence in keeping Holland Park and the other parks of Kensington and Chelsea secure and happy places to relax.

## **Chess Benches**

Chess players like to contemplate their next move, and sitting down seems to help. Until recently seating had only been provided for observers of games on the giant outdoor chessboard just west of the Dutch Garden, so the Friends of Holland Park have donated two matching benches for the players. The attractive benches are each robustly constructed in sandstone, with a grey limestone seat. The Friends hope these seats will aid contemplation.



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', some of which are sponsored by FHP where indicated. Unless otherwise stated the meeting place is outside the Ecology Centre in the stable yard. Some must be booked, in which case please call 020 7938 8186 or e-mail ecology.centre@rbkc.gov.uk. There is a charge for those marked £.

The Holland Park Conservation Volunteers sessions are on every third Saturday of the month. For more information call 020 8743 3040 or visit www.groundwork.org.uk/london.

Sat 6 Oct	BNW	
Sat 6 Oct	ES. Nature Photography Master Class. Must book. £	10am-4pm
Sat 20 Oct	ES. Autumn Wildlife Area Open Day. Drop in at wildlife area.	12-4pm
Wed 24 Oct	<b>The Pleasure Grounds of Holland House,</b> talk by Sally Miller (see p.3), in the Orangery, £12.	7pm
Sat 27 Oct	Autumn Tree Walk with Dr Alan Harrington. Outside café.	11am-1pm
29 Oct-2 Nov	ES. Half-term holiday activities for children. Must book. £	
Sat 3 Nov	BNW	
Sat 3 Nov	ES. Fungi foray (sponsored). Must book.	2pm
Sat 1 Dec	BNW	
Sun 9 Dec	Christmas Concert: Tallis Chamber Choir (see p.3), in the Orangery. £17.	7.30pm



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