

The Friends of Holland Park
Autumn 2014



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Thursday, 16 October at 7pm in the Orangery



Peacock in the park

When you read this you might still be in time to book for our Autumn Event which this year is a talk about how the peacock has adorned many objects of art and craft over the ages and in many different cultures. The

imaginatively illustrated talk will be given by Louise Coffey-Webb who has been a university professor as well as a curator, collections manager and archival advisor at various Californian museums. She has worked for the BBC and discussed costume on US television. Her book, *Managing Costume Collections*, will be published in 2015. Tickets are £12 to include wine and canapés. To book please use the enclosed order form or download it from our website. And while you are using the order form do not forget to book also for our popular Christmas concert...

Christmas Carol Concert

Sunday, 7 December, at 7.30pm in the Orangery

We are greatly looking forward to having our talented friends, The Tallis Chamber Choir and their director, Philip Simms, perform for us in the Orangery early in December. This will be their fifteenth visit, and every time they come they say how much they love it; and it is not just the wine and scrumptious canapés they mean but the lovely setting and friendly Friends. They always delight us with a programme of varied music and readings, and the standard is so high that we are usually sold out. So we advise early booking on the enclosed form, also downloadable from the website. The price of a ticket is £17 to include the above-mentioned refreshments, also of a very high standard, as most will testify.

Charles Bauccio Co-opted as Treasurer

We have found a new treasurer and are delighted that Charles Bauccio not only wants to take on that important role, but that he is interested in playing a part in the broader remit of the Friends' work. He is well qualified for the role, both due to his career in the financial world and because he is well acquainted with the park, having lived in close proximity to it for the past 30 years. He has been a member of FHP for several years, has followed our progress and understands the Council and community framework in which we operate.

Charles told us: 'When I saw that the Friends were looking for a new treasurer it occurred to me that I should apply in order to "give something back" to Holland Park. My first visit to the park was in 1964 when I stayed at the youth hostel on my first visit to England. Since that time I have always enjoyed Holland Park's woodlands,



flower gardens and all the activities in the park. I look forward to my role as treasurer and hope I can contribute to all the fine work the Friends have undertaken in preserving the park as an oasis of tranquillity and natural beauty.'

Supporting Charles is our very able assistant treasurer, Simon Lindsay-Bethune. Our previous treasurer, Madeline Denmead, was unable to stand for election at the April AGM due to other commitments. We welcome Charles as a trustee of the Friends and very much look forward to working with him.

*The cover photo,
of the same view as one of our
new Christmas cards,
was taken by Joy Puritz
on 26.11.2010*



A few weeks ago I noticed a bamboo 'raft' in the Kyoto pond and assumed it was vandalism and that someone had thrown a gate or some such article into the water.

I was wrong.

The raft has been very carefully constructed, along traditional Japanese lines, as protection for the carp when the heron loiters by the pond. The carp shelter safely beneath the structure and the heron cannot get at them. Clever.

Text and photo: Jennie Kettlewell



Koi shelter

Holland Park on Japanese Television

In the middle of June NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) filmed a half-hour documentary entitled *Journey to Paradise on Earth, London Kensington*. Among other things it showed the delights of shopping in and around Kensington High Street, the V&A, a house in Lansdowne Walk, and Ladbroke Square Gardens, it being Open Garden Squares Weekend. Part of the programme was filmed in Holland Park. Our new park beekeeper, Des O'Grady, was interviewed in the Dutch Garden wearing his bee suit, which looked a little odd. He was also shown by the hives, talking about the delicious park honey. Interestingly, there was neither sight nor mention of the Kyoto or Fukushima Gardens.



The half-built learning garden

Ecology centre – learning garden

The small fenced area of grass to the south of the Ecology Centre is being turned into a teaching garden for primary-school children in the borough to learn about edible plants. It is an opportunity to demonstrate small-scale food gardening with year-round productivity. Wholefoods in Kensington High Street donated funds to develop the space.

Design Museum

Chelsfield, developers of the old Commonwealth Institute site, should complete their work and hand over to The Design Museum by the end of 2014 for the interior fit-out to begin. The Friends have worked with both Chelsfield and the Council on suitable subjects for the Section 106 agreement, a financial contribution from the developer to compensate for the impact of building works. We have asked that the 18th-century wrought-iron Earl's Court gates be restored and that the path from those gates up to the Duchess of Bedford Walk gate be considerably improved.

Opera Holland Park

Discussions continue between the Friends and RBK&C regarding the visual impact of the ancillary buildings. We remain positive that we will be able to find a solution together with which we can all live, though this is not easy and will take time. It is unlikely that any change in the type of buildings will be made for the 2015 season but you might have noticed the footprint had been reduced in 2014 over 2013, and the stark appearance to the north was relieved by old pictures of Holland House and a hedge (not living, but green). We will keep you updated on progress. The Friends are pressing for improvement of the front terrace for the winter months and stricter regulation of traffic throughout the year.

Autumn tree walk *(see Dates for your Diary)*

Botanist Dr Alan Harrington has once again kindly agreed to lead our autumn tree walk in the park, helping us learn how to identify different trees while he dispenses fascinating facts

and figures. We are lucky to have a rich collection of native and exotic trees and we need to ensure they are appreciated and cared for. The walk is organised and sponsored by the Friends so that it is free to participants.

Duke's Lodge

Immediately adjacent to the north east of Holland Park is a 27-flat mansion block, Duke's Lodge. This has been acquired by the Candy Brothers with the intention of replacing it with a building which appears from the outside to be five large villas. The issue that directly affects the park is that digging down a further level right next to the park boundary might further destabilise the park's high ground and reduce water levels under the big trees in that area. We are urging that this is thoroughly investigated before any planning consent is granted.



Holland House, East Wing: part of the youth hostel

Youth Hostel

We await the outcome of the tender for a 50-year lease for this site which has been occupied by the YHA. We hear that a decision has been made and that the youth hostel will sadly close on 15 November, but we do not know who the new tenant will be. A private Act of Parliament determines that the premises must be used for youth accommodation. Youth hostel manager, Sally Martyn-Johns and her family have looked after the site wonderfully well for over 20 years and have been welcome inhabitants of the park as well as great supporters of the Friends. We shall miss them but have been assured they will stay in touch.

Upgrading of paths

This work has now been completed. It will undoubtedly improve disabled access as intended, but it does look rather municipal rather than appropriate for our park.

On the evening of 23 July John Phillips of Maydencroft Farm gave a talk to several adults and children by the Arboretum about the conservation grazing of his English Longhorns who stood and stared at us, except when they were enjoying the treat of a supplementary feed. There were two cows, each with a calf: a heifer and a steer. The horns of



John with his Longhorns

these cattle grow downwards and would eventually grow into their faces if they were not trimmed regularly. They are a docile breed, good around people and dogs; they are not good milkers but are considered premium meat – lean, and with the excellent flavour you get through mixed foraging. John sells his meat mainly to local butchers in Hitchin, the rest going into the Marks & Spencer food chain.

Unlike last year, the cattle were only in the park for three weeks, the vegetation this time not being enough to sustain them for longer. John has Longhorns which regularly serve about 16 different sites, Holland Park being the furthest from their Hertfordshire home. Here they were grazing in order to rejuvenate the wild flowers in both the Arboretum and the Oak Enclosure. Longhorns are good rough grazers, happily eating nettles, brambles, diverse grasses and thistles as well as flowers. They wrap their tongues around and pull up tall tufts of vegetation. They often choose the more

dominant species which allows less competitive plants to become established. By grazing in the summer, before the pasture rots down and enriches the soil, native wild flowers, which prefer nutrient-deprived soil, have more chance of re-establishing themselves in the following year. Soils are naturally acidic, calcareous or neutral; wild plants have adapted to these soil

types. Changing the pH value with fertilisers to favour high-yielding grasses means that many other plants are out-competed and disappear. No such problem with natural cattle dung. Stewardship schemes have been introduced whereby farmers are subsidised if they manage their land to benefit conservation, letting more species have a chance. Another benefit of the cattle is their trampling which creates areas of bare ground that become nurseries for seedlings which might not otherwise survive. For example, John's cows might graze in a conservation area in the spring until orchids start appearing. The cattle are then taken off until the orchids are over. Back go the cows and trample the seeds nicely into the soil.

We were warned not to feed the Longhorns. They would turn their noses up at a sandwich thrown over the electric fence, but they like fruit; the trouble is, they get a bit drunk on that: it ferments in their stomachs.

Text and photo: Joy Puritz

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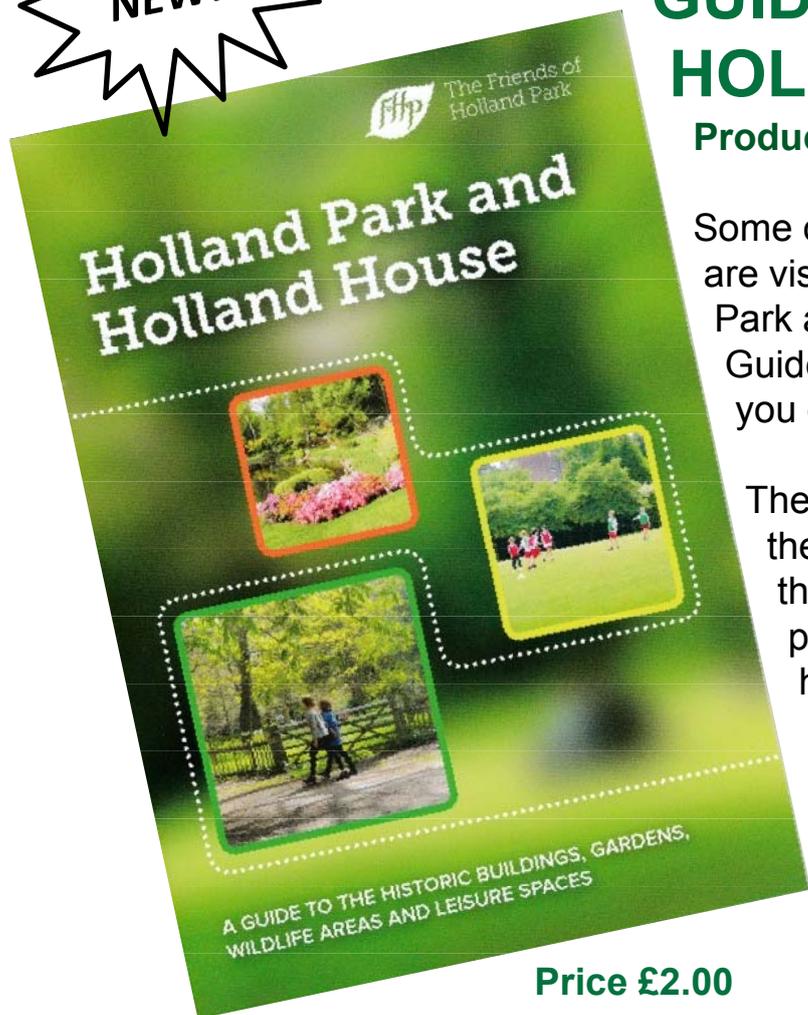


GUIDE TO HOLLAND PARK

Produced by The Friends of Holland Park

Some of you know the Park well and some are visitors wanting to know what's in the Park and where to find it. We hope this Guide will be interesting for all and that you enjoy reading it and find it useful.

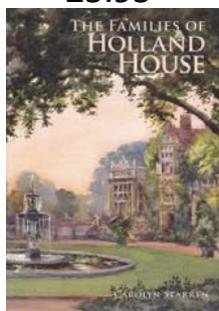
The Guide describes the various areas of the Park: the sports and other facilities, the work of the Ecology team, and the park services. It also gives a brief history of Holland House and the people who lived in it. A map in the centre shows you how to find your way around. Even if you do know the Park well, you might discover things you did not know.



Price £2.00

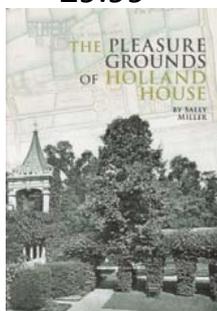
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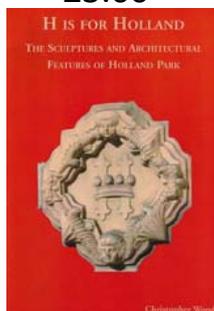
A fascinating account of the influential people associated with Holland House.

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The story of the pleasure grounds of Holland House through the ages

£3.00



The sculptures and architectural features of Holland Park.

£2.00



50 notable trees in Holland Park and where to find them.

All publications available from The Park Reception in The Stable Yard, or from Rhoddy Wood (The Friends) on 020 7602 0304 & rhoddy.wood@virgin.net

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A suitable setting

Holland Park's Sun Trap garden has been nurtured to create an exotic display of colourful plants and ferns. At the centre sat an empty brick plinth just crying out for a sculpture that fitted the richness and warm colours of the planting.

Rhoddy Wood and I researched sculptors and, after a rewarding visit to a sculpture park in Farnham, decided that Jonathan Loxley was the artist we wanted. Jonathan studied marble sculpture techniques in Florence and eventually set up his own studio in Carrara, Italy, the home of marble. His sculptures have been widely exhibited in Europe. We liked his work because it is



Jonathan unwrapping Tonda

Quadron man responsible for the Sun Trap, kept an eye on proceedings to ensure that none of his planting was damaged. Once the new plinth was secured, the sculpture was firmly cemented into place and oriented to best effect.



Fixing Tonda onto the plinth

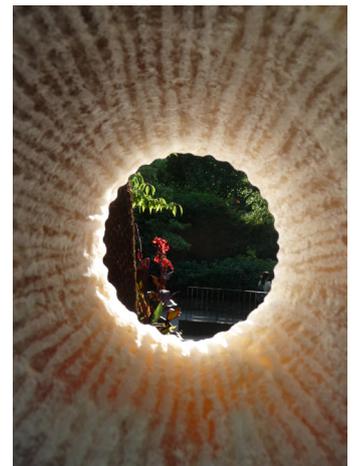
mystical, and understanding it is left to one's own imagination. After meeting him and agreeing a form, stone and size, Jonathan set off to Italy to buy a large chunk of honey-coloured onyx. He went to work in his studio, now in Salisbury, making several visits to the Sun Trap garden to check how the piece would look in situ.

Finally, on 17 July 2014, 'Tonda' arrived in Jonathan's trailer. The weighty piece was expertly transported from the car park to the site by Scott and Louis, wielding an oversized telehandler (or telescopic handler), under the watchful eye of RBK&C's Abi O'Neill. Liam, the

Why 'Tonda'? We wanted a suitably mystical name with links to her Italian origin. Tondo is an Italian word which is used for rounded pieces of art and, since the piece is female, 'Tonda' is appropriate.

Jonathan told us: 'In my work, I try to strip away the superficial so that it can be experienced at an elemental level. People respond to Tonda's colour, texture, feel and shape in a way that is hard to describe to someone who hasn't seen her.'

'Tonda' was commissioned and paid for by the Friends.



Evening light through Tonda's eye

Text and photos: Jennie Kettlewell

Woodland is a precious asset, nowhere more so than in London. The concentration of leaves helps reduce pollution, and research shows that access to the quiet green spaces is a significant contributor to individual mental wellbeing. Given the importance of trees in our lives, we need to pay great attention to their conservation and future health. Trees have an uncanny similarity to humans, not least in that they occasionally appreciate a sugary drink, and an Aspirin might do them good when they are feeling down.

On a day out with The Plant School I found myself being tutored on tree ailments by Glynn Percival, an advisor to Kew and consultant at tree-care specialist Bartletts. He believes that it is possible to activate a tree's defence system, just like vaccination in humans, and that this can forestall more drastic and costly remedial treatment. Trees can get stressed, and that is when they succumb to pests and diseases. Those of us with stewardship over significant trees can do much to ensure they are fit for the future, but what can we do?



The Arboretum, Holland Park

It pays to start with understanding the biology of each specific tree and deciding what it wants. Is it showing signs of stress, which could be for many reasons such as drought or compacted roots? Signs to look for are stag horn die back at the top of the crown, twig die back on sections of the tree, cankers and outbreaks of fungus. Solutions vary and need professional advice and equipment. We witnessed demonstrations of injecting tree roots with systemic fungicide, and understood that we need to be wary of pesticides that kill all the wildlife in the tree as well as the pest. That would be against the Park Management's policy.

So where do the sugary drinks and Aspirin come in? Photosynthesis is the process by which sunlight acts on leaves to produce sugar as an energy source for plants. When the leaves are damaged, lack of sugar weakens the plant. Sugar dissolved in water to drench the roots simulates sugar production and encourages root growth. I have tried it with a small shrub and it worked a treat.

Research has shown that when trees are watered with an Aspirin solution it improves the tree's resistance to some bugs and diseases. A big tree would need a lot of pills, so tests are being carried out on using a mulch of willow from which the essential ingredient, salicylic acid, is derived.

Trees that are fit are more likely to shrug off pests and diseases that might see off weaker subjects. It pays to get ahead of the game and find out how tree defence activators can lengthen the life of our trees.

Text and photo: Jennie Kettlewell



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Crab Apple Jelly

Your secretary has just heard that this is a good year for the English apple industry. Let us hope that this includes the wild crab apple crop which produces the tastiest jelly; if so we should have a good supply towards the end of September. Do ring 020 7602 0304 to check on availability and prices.

This is the first year there has been a choice between two new Holland Park cards. We went looking for a new artist, and the two best entries were so close, though very different, that Mountbatten Cards decided to print both. So we have 'Holland House through the Trees', a softer version than some previous ones, with snowflakes gently descending, and 'The Kyoto Garden' in deep snow. The first is by Clare Weatherill, previously unknown to us, who is Chairman of the Society of Fulham Artists and Potters. The second is by Margaret Whitehead who has exhibited with the Friends for many years and won prizes with us.

As always there is a further wide choice of cards in the enclosed brochure and even more on the website: www.mbcards.co.uk. On the latter you will note especially 'The Alcove', 'Belvedere and Arches' and two small designs, 'East Wing' and 'Holland House from the West', of all of which your secretary holds stocks as well as the ever popular mixed packs of 10 cards for £6. The standard size is 152mm x 197mm.



Holland House through the Trees, by Clare Weatherill

For the first time, all designs may be ordered in a smaller size: 118mm x 168mm, weighing less than 20 grams which keeps overseas postage to a minimum.

If you send your order to 21 Kenton Court the minimum order is 10 cards, and we will deliver free within our newsletter hand-delivery area but have to charge £1.50 postage per ten beyond that. If you order from Mountbatten cards directly, delivery is free to most West and Central London postcodes but is £5 if outside that area or the order is for less than £30. Overprinted cards must be ordered from Mountbatten. In either case envelopes 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 donation from Mountbatten of 25% of the profits, but you are free to choose any charity.

It might seem like a long time until Christmas, but ordering now gets one chore out of the way and allows you to concentrate on other Christmasy purchases without fear of a last-minute rush.

Rhoddy Wood



The Kyoto Garden, by Margaret Whitehead

Standing Orders and Subscriptions

The Friends are as powerful as our numbers, and we are grateful to all of you for your support. The subscription year runs from January to December, and it has been our custom to remind you in the late November issue which leaves plenty of time for cheques to come in before January – and it is of no great consequence if they are a few days late. At the same time we urge those who do not yet use standing orders with your bank to set them up: it is so much easier for you and for us. However, it has become apparent that five weeks is not enough for standing orders: by the time the necessary papers have gone back and forth through the slow Christmas mails and the week's holiday, too many are reaching banks after 1 January, when they are payable, so that no money is transferred until a year later. So this year we are giving you a reminder in the autumn issue; if your order form is green, please fill in the instructions to your bank on the reverse and send it to us. Those with white order forms already pay directly and need do no more.

Thank you again for all your support.



Dates for your Diary

All FHP events in the diary are printed in bold. The Friends' Bird and Nature Walks (BNW) are continuing to be led by varying regulars while we look for a new permanent leader with the requisite skills and commitment. We will have strolls through the park looking at birds, plants, butterflies and park management of current interest. There is no charge and all are welcome without booking. Meet outside the café at 9am on the first Saturday of each month. No dogs, please, as even well behaved ones on leads disturb the wildlife. We recommend you bring binoculars if you can.

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 in the new Ecology Centre near the Adventure Playground. 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 (second Saturday in April and December). For more information, tel. 020 8762 0322, e-mail Netty.Ribeaux@groundwork.org.uk or visit www.groundwork.org.uk/london

| | | |
|--------------------|---|----------|
| Sat 4 Oct | BNW | |
| Sat 4 Oct | ES. Nature Photography: creative skills workshop. Must book. £ | 10am-4pm |
| Sat 4 Oct | ES. Open Day: Autumn's Harvest. Drop in at wildlife area. | 12-4pm |
| Thurs 16 Oct | Peacocks in Art and Design (see p.3), in the Orangery, £12. | 12-7pm |
| Sat 18 Oct | Autumn tree walk with Alan Harrington. Meet by Stable Yard. | 11am-1pm |
| Sat 25 Oct | ES. Fungi Foray (sponsored). Must book. | 2-4pm |
| Fri 17- Fri 31 Oct | ES. Half-term children's holiday activities. Must book. £ | |
| Sat 1 Nov | BNW | |
| Sat 6 Dec | BNW | |
| Sun 7 Dec | Christmas Concert: Tallis Chamber Choir (see p.3), in the Orangery, £17. | 7.30pm |

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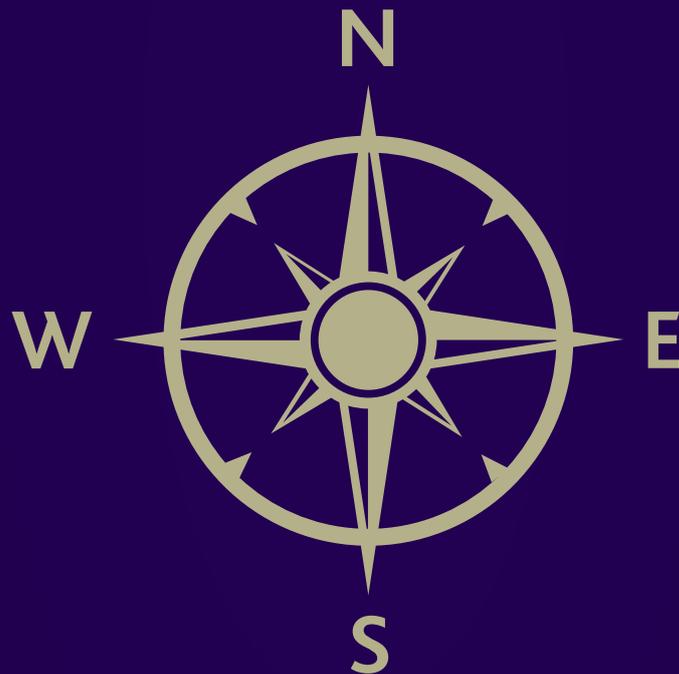
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