

The Friends of Holland Park
Winter 2016



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'From Anvil to the Finest Wrought Iron in the Land'

Wednesday, 22 February 2017, at 6.30pm in the Orangery (*Please note earlier time*)

Chris Topp is Managing Director of Topp & Co., the leading restorer of antique ironwork, and the company whose team of craftsmen restored Holland Park's beautiful Earls Court gates. He started as a blacksmith at a time when little formal training was available, so he learned the craft on the job under the guidance of a time-served smith.

Although best known for restoration, his inquisitive nature has gained him a wide range of skills and expertise in design and construction of ironwork, resulting in a varied and highly respected portfolio. His interest in working with historic materials led him to set up a rolling mill to supply genuine wrought iron to



Chris Topp at work

blacksmiths for restoration work and, in doing so, he became the world's sole supplier.

Chris will tell us about his fascinating journey from apprentice blacksmith to his work for some of the most prestigious properties in the world. Quality matters to him, and he has won many awards including two Industrial Diplomas of Excellence, an award from the Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths.

Tickets are £15, to include wine and Janice Miles' delicious canapés. To order tickets, noting the earlier time than usual, please use the order form that arrives with your newsletter, or download it from our website.

Subscription Renewals and Membership Cards

The Friends' subscription year runs from 1 January. Some of you have already paid for 2017, and a healthy number (about 64%) pay by bank standing order on 1 January. New members who have joined since 1 September are already covered for 2017. To the rest of you, now is the time to pay using the order form. If in doubt, check with Rhoddy on 020 7602 0304 or rhoddy.wood@virgin.net. We would like to emphasise that it is less trouble to both you and us if you pay by standing order; if you do not yet do so we are always ready to send you a form.

You will know that your membership card, which entitles you to discounts under our Friends & Neighbours scheme, expires at the end of February. Those who have paid their subscriptions for 2017 will receive replacement cards with their spring newsletters which will reach them in late February.

Your membership gives the Friends clout when negotiating with the Borough on the park's future. Thank you again for all your support.

Mulled Wine and Mince Pies

11am-1pm, Saturday, 7 January 2017
 Chez Rhoddy Wood, 21 Kenton Court, 356 Kensington High Street, W14 8NN

All members of the Friends are invited to celebrate the New Year on the first Saturday in January at this warming occasion. It is quite informal, come as you are, and no RSVP is necessary – just turn up and enjoy the company of other Friends.

Christmas Concert

Sunday, 4 December, at 7.30pm in the Orangery

There are still a few days to go before our popular evening of Christmas music and readings, given by the Tallis Chamber Choir and conducted by Philip Simms, so you are not too late to book if you have not yet done so. This can be done on the order form, enclosed herewith and also downloadable from our website.

Moss Walk Led by Dr Alan Harrington

Saturday, 4 March 2017, 11am-1pm. Meet in the Stable Yard

Alan Harrington, known to many of you for his tree walks, spent his professional life studying mosses. He continues to observe them wherever he goes, and has agreed to come to Holland Park on Saturday, 4 March, to see what is new since his last walk for us in 2013 when he made some interesting

finds. Numbers are limited so please book your place on 020 7602 0304 or on rhoddy.wood@virgin.net. You will need a hand lens of at least 10 x magnification to appreciate fully the beauty and intricacies of these natural wonders.

Kyoto pond

At some time over the winter, the Kyoto Pond will be drained and cleaned. We hope that visitors will resist throwing bread into the fresh water; it makes the pond murky, and the yeast is bad for the carp.

Earls Court entrance

Now that the gates have been splendidly restored, it is time to improve the area just inside the gates. The bed to the left as you enter the park will be planted to match the bed on the right. Both will be protected by knee-high rails. The Keaki tree died and the stump has been removed, along with the decaying circular bench around it. The popular circular bench round the cherry on the left also has to be removed for work around the tree and is in no fit state to be reinstated. Two new benches will be installed, set on York stone paving. The path between Phillimore Walk and the Design Museum park entrance will have been re-laid by the time you read this, all in time for the museum opening on 24 November.



The Kyoto Pond

Jennie Kettlewell

Personal trainers

Exercise in the park is encouraged, but a new licensing scheme and code of conduct restricts personal trainers from using benches, trees and other park furniture as part of their sessions. This is both to prevent damage and to ensure seated areas remain peaceful places to enjoy. Trainers must register on the scheme and are shown which areas of the park

they may use to work with their clients. Further information can be found on www.rbkc.gov.uk/personaltrainers.



Ecology Centre, RBK&C

Rescued toad

Wildlife pond and gates

The pond has been drained and all the amphibian life within it (see photos) safely moved to a temporary home. The plan is to reline the pond and replant the margins. The dragonflies and a busy grey wagtail will have left voluntarily before work started. Weather permitting, this work should be completed by the end of 2016, ready for schools visits in 2017.



Ecology Centre, RBK&C

Rescued ramshorn snail

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Apart from the very bold and ubiquitous grey squirrel, the park is host to many mammals, but due to their mainly nervous nature and nocturnal or crepuscular habits they are often very hard to see.

The Ecology Service held its first small-mammal walk in mid-September, and in the days before we set up a range of traps in order to find out what might be around. The first type of trap explained was a hedgehog tunnel; it is a plastic triangular prism baited inside with peanut butter, which apparently no animal can resist. Before reaching and eating the preserve, the animal steps onto an inky pad and leaves behind its footprints on white paper. The 'ink' is oil based and harmless to the animal when licked off. We identified the tracks of a cat and mice in our two hedgehog tunnels. The night before, five Longworth traps were set to catch. After three empty traps, we were lucky



Rhoddy Wood

Trapped wood mouse

As a relatively small park very close to central London, we will always be somewhat limited in the range of mammal species that can live here compared to the countryside or parks like Richmond. Sadly, too, hedgehogs are no longer present in the park and are now restricted to only a few central London locations. A population of hedgehogs needs about 90 individuals to be viable, and they would need about four times Holland Park's area of woodland for food.

We hope to repeat the mammal talks in the future, and to identify a few more species that live in the park. Perhaps again we will spot signs of the muntjac deer whose hoof-prints were discovered in the snow in the nursery yard one morning a few winters ago.

Trevor Bowyer, Education officer, Ecology Service



Rhoddy Wood

Hedgehog tunnel

enough to capture, temporarily, two very lively wood mice. These traps do not harm the animals, as once inside there is food and hay for them to sleep in overnight before being released. The last type of survey method shown was a camera trap, which we have over the last few months put in many different enclosures of the park. It is motion sensitive, taking a photo every time something walks past the light sensor. It has captured a family of fox cubs playing in the wildlife area, at least three rabbits and a very impressive looking dog fox that appears to like to patrol the north part of the park near the D Garden.



thetimes.co.uk

Fox cubs

In the last newsletter, I wrote that the public consultation had resulted in little criticism for the Holland House terrace proposal, or for the plan to re-site the approach road to the terrace. There were, however, concerns about the treatment of the Holland Park café.

Since then The Friends and other stakeholders have met on several occasions with architects Camlin Lonsdale to develop solutions that are in keeping with the essence of Holland Park. Camlin Lonsdale really listened to the feedback and have created a plan that, we believe, overcomes the issues raised:

- The access road to the Holland House terrace will be relocated to the south east of the current café terrace. It will no longer run through the middle of the café, which will significantly increase safety.

of café furniture on the plan shown; this will be agreed with stakeholders once the café franchise has been renegotiated.

- Space for delivery lorries in the café yard will be restricted and clearly indicated.
- The whole space will be united through treatment and colour of the surfaces of the terraces and pedestrian spaces.
- The Holland House terrace will be redesigned in buff and brick-coloured surfaces that are far more appropriate to the environment of Grade-I-listed Holland House. This will be constructed to take the weight of the opera canopy anchor points.
- A power supply will be laid under the terrace so that Opera Holland Park do not have to install it annually. Drainage under the terrace should see the end of the horrible puddles that used to accumulate in winter.



Artist's impression of the proposed café yard

- The café terrace perimeter will be secure to prevent children running into the road.
- There will be separate spaces on the café terrace for those with dogs and for those who prefer not to be with dogs. The café terrace will be at least as large as it is now.
- The design is much softer and more appropriate to a park than the plan originally proposed.
- More space will be given to tables and chairs when the café is busier in summer, and some of these might be in the opened-up arcade where the old ice-cream kiosk used to be. Pay no attention to the arrangement
- An accessible ramp will be created where the Portaloos usually stand in summer. The details of the ramp are still being finalised. At last the Portaloos will go.
- New WCs for the opera will be built on the grass to the south west of the hostel car park, next to the rail on the eastern side of the terrace. The WCs will be low built and thus hardly seen from the road in from the Duchess of Bedford Walk entrance. Any glimpse through the trees will show a tasteful finish to the small building. Permanent plumbing will remove the need for service vehicles. (*contd*)

It is now high time to order your Christmas cards if you have not already done so. We keep a supply of this year's new card – Holland House from Acer Walk – in both sizes, and also our bargain packs of mixed cards. All other designs from the brochure (further copies can be posted) or the website www.mbcards.co.uk can also be supplied but might take a little longer.



Holland House from Acer Walk, by Clare Weatherill

newsletter hand-delivery area but have to charge postage of £1.60 per ten beyond that. If you order from Mountbatten Cards directly, delivery is free. 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.

Rhoddy Wood

If you send your order to 21 Kenton Court, the minimum order is 10 cards, and we will deliver free within our

Holland House and Café Yard – Landscaping Plan (*contd*)

There are still some details to be sorted out, but we feel there is now a design for the area to the south and west of Holland House that will be of benefit to park users. The next stage is for the landscaping plans to be lodged for planning consent, which is likely to be this autumn, with building starting no earlier than autumn 2017.

Many of you ask about the café itself, which is a separate project. The plan is for the lease of the café to go out to tender. At that point it is intended that problems of queues, noise and menu be addressed by whoever wins the franchise.

All this started with discussions about opera buildings that might replace the white tents. These were put on ice after the unsuccessful attempt to design semi-permanent buildings; it is a separate project which will not be back on the agenda until the surrounding landscaping is sorted out.

We will keep you up to date with developments.

Jennie Kettlewell

If the new neighbours make you feel like moving, we can help you to sell the property as quickly as possible!



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The park welcomed an unusual visitor when Catherine Bourne, who had been a gardener there in 1954-1957, came to see what the park was like now. Like many young women of her time, her parents had wanted her to be a secretary, but she had persisted in her desire to be a professional gardener. After a year on a big country estate, and passing her first RHS exam, she came to London. Kensington Gardens did not take female gardeners, but the London County Council did, and sent her to us. She started as a third-class gardener (not allowed to work alone) and quickly passed a practical exam to become second-class (allowed to work alone or with another second-class) and then a written exam to become first-class (trusted to work alone or supervise a third-class). The standard of the written exam was very impressive. Questions included 'What



Catherine at work, with the stable block in the distance



Catherine's bridesmaids, also gardeners in the park

are the main points of cultivation and management required for the planting and growing of an ornamental flowering tree as a special feature?' and 'Outline one season's activities in the cultivation and management of an established herbaceous border'. Catherine was a little vague about how she acquired the knowledge to do so; her RHS exam would have helped and perhaps gave her the aptitude to study on her own. The system was set up so that each grade of gardener helped in the training of lower grades, and there was enough time for Mr Fred Hilliar, her superintendent, to concentrate on training. For instance, he gave her twigs to draw to help her learn observation and identification, and some of these drawings are shown here. The training provided helped all the staff and

benefitted the park. Catherine was working shortly after the war had ended, and the park had not fully recovered from wartime neglect. The playing field had been cleared of the jungle growing in the ruins of the anti-aircraft battery, and tulips were being planted in the Dutch Garden (Catherine was the only gardener allowed to plant tulips, as with no garden of her own she would not be tempted to take some home). She remembered that the Mediterranean Bed was being used for 'foreign' plants,

its sheltered southern aspect needed for marginally tender plants, as today. There were ducks (they must have been Muscovies) nesting on top of the long wall, and once the chicks had jumped, she guided them to the Iris Pond. As we entered the woodlands Catherine exclaimed, 'But these are just like they were, still untamed!' (She meant untidy.) I explained that our members liked them looking natural. It was Catherine's daughter who suggested that our well-loved chestnut paling, enclosing areas of woodland, was mostly in the positions dictated by the creation of the 'Wilderness' in the seventeenth century.

The world was different then. No health and safety; on one occasion Catherine erected her 12-foot ladder carelessly so that it started to fall, and she jumped into the tree she had been pruning. Women were not fully accepted into the workplace: the gardener who had been there before the war thought it was wrong to have women as gardeners, but was always polite. The five women had a different messing room in the stable yard from the ten or more men. But Catherine enjoyed the mixed company and was allowed to play cricket with the men in their lunch hour because she was good enough. Once she and one of the men had stopped pruning in the woodlands and she



Mr Hilliar with the bridesmaids

Plant pests have reason to be fearful now that Carlos Trabajo has taken on the responsibility for the Holland Park nursery. He qualified in agronomy (the science of soil management and crop production) in Seville before specialising in plant-disease research and then teaching the subject. He came to England to improve his English but has ended up improving our plants, working with a number of companies on raising the quality of plant supply. This is valuable knowledge in a time of damage from ever more pests and diseases.



Carlos Trabajo in the park's plant nursery

Right now, Carlos is raising 71,000 plants in the glasshouse. He has plans to use any space left in the nursery yard for polytunnels so that he can supply 100,000 plants for use in the many parks across Kensington and Chelsea. This significantly reduces the cost of buying in plants. His experience allows him

to produce the plants ecologically, using predator insects rather than chemicals to control pests. I asked him if he bought the predators on the internet, but he is economical here too and asks Quadron gardeners to collect specific insects in the park. If he cannot get enough of the right insects, he will pick off tiny green caterpillars by hand, thwarting their efforts to munch away at specimens, which will eventually help us win

another Green Flag award. The park management have noticed a difference, not only from what they observe, but because sanitisation of the nursery against disease means the whole team finds they carry a faint whiff of disinfectant around with them.

Carlos's experience is a welcome addition to the Quadron (now re-branded id verde) expertise and we will all benefit from his evident thirst for learning.

Jennie Kettlewell

Holland Park in the 1950s (contd)



Fraxinus (Common ash)

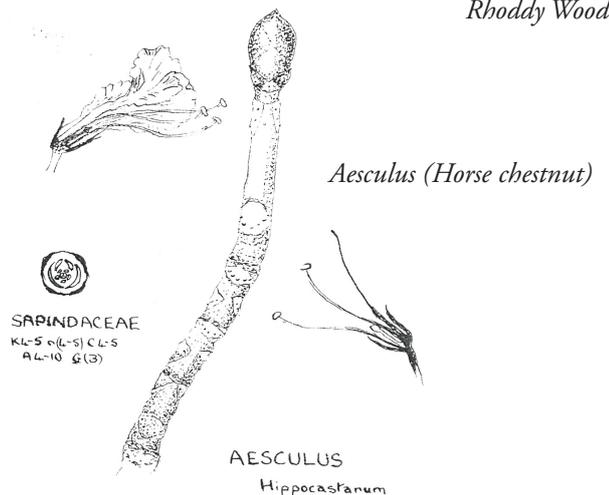
East Wing before it was occupied by the YHA, the floorboards creaked behind her like following footsteps. After work, she still had energy to go to the Campden Hill tennis club where she showered *before* playing because the bushes in the park were so black from London's polluted air.

It is no surprise that when she was offered promotion to Superintendent of a small park with an all-female team, she declined, preferring the fun of working in Holland Park. Shortly afterwards she married. Her bridesmaids were gardeners from Holland Park, and she was pleased that Mr Hilliar travelled 'all the way' to Peterborough for the wedding.

Thank you, Catherine, for your memories.

Rhoddy Wood

handed him her hatchet. Suddenly she looked at her watch and exclaimed, 'It's time for lunch' and ran off. Her colleague raced after her and the two burst onto the North Lawn, he apparently chasing her with a hatchet. They collapsed with laughter when the public rushed to rescue her. Another time she and another girl, Sally, had stopped pruning while they chatted, hanging upside down with their legs hooked over a branch. When they saw Mr Hilliar approaching, they dismounted so quickly that Sally fell on her head, and the superintendent wisely walked a different way. Once, when Catherine was illegally exploring the





David Darrell-Lambert

Robin

On the evening of 27 October our audience in the Orangery was delighted by the talk given by ornithologist David Darrell-Lambert whose consultancy company, Bird Brain UK Ltd, specialises in bird surveys in urban parks. He last conducted one in Holland Park in 2009 when he counted at least 28 bird species, and was able to estimate the number of pairs of each. Somewhere between 279 and 309 pairs were breeding, mostly in the north part of the park, which is full of invertebrates for them to feed on. He described them with beautiful photographs and by playing recordings of their songs and calls. He gave us ways of remembering some of the latter: the rhythm of the wood pigeon is as in 'it takes two twos, Taffy', while that of the collared dove is as in 'united', with the 'i' drawn out. He had recently discovered that both male and female tawny owls can make both their calls: the screech and the 'twit-twit-twoo'; it used to be thought that only the males did the latter. The good news about them is that they can eat squirrels and ring-necked parakeets, but there are not enough of them (one pair at most) to make an impact on the parakeets that screech their way around parks, and sleep at night in vast communal roosts. The majority of the audience agreed that they are not much loved. Ever since some apparently escaped from captivity, they have spread and multiplied, and there are now twenty to thirty thousand in the London area. It is permitted to shoot them under certain circumstances, because they are now officially a pest. They need to be watched, as they not only steal food and nesting holes from other birds such as nuthatches and stock doves, but damage trees by eating their buds in spring. David counted 8-9 pairs of stock doves in 2009, and we did see one on

the Dawn Chorus Walk in May, which David led. Let us hope that they do not disappear completely from central London as the house sparrows have.

Ornithologists use a 'traffic-light' system for their bird 'listings'. If birds are listed green they are not endangered: their populations are stable or increasing; amber means that there are signs of decline; red means a very serious decline. Song thrushes fall into the latter category; they are very sensitive to their environment, needing very thick vegetation as cover. Nesting boxes in the park, on which particularly coal tits and other tits depend, are a useful feature. Great tits and blue tits abound, the blue tits' young being totally dependent on caterpillars: if when they hatch these have not yet arrived, the chicks will die and the pair will go on to have another brood. Wrens, blackbirds and robins are also found in good numbers, the robins particularly liking the sound of their own voices – even in winter and after dark, as long as there is a light on nearby. Robins do not use nest boxes but are happy with any other kind of cavity. Dunnocks, blackcaps, song and mistle thrushes, goldcrests, starlings, jays, magpies, chaffinches, greenfinches, goldfinches, swifts, swallows, the odd grey wagtail, great spotted woodpecker, tawny owl, sparrowhawk or woodcock – all can be seen or heard in the park, and David told us what conditions the different birds preferred. One surprising fact: jackdaws, normally only seen outside or on the edge of London, now breed in Kensington Gardens and Hyde Park.

In the survey, David had also counted sea gulls of various kinds, grey herons, moorhens and mallards. The latter sometimes nest quite high up in tree hollows; when the ducklings fledge they 'parachute' down to the ground and then have to be led



David Darrell-Lambert

Tawny owl



You might have noticed this new logo appearing in association with the Quadron parks staff who work in

Holland Park, and wondered at the reason.

The Council's grounds maintenance contractor, Quadron Services, was acquired by id verde, Europe's largest landscape maintenance group, earlier this year. The decision for Quadron to join the id verde family was made to secure the future of Quadron and the portfolio of clients with whom it currently has the pleasure of working. As a result, Quadron's clients, and the residents they serve, will benefit from the expertise that id verde can offer as the largest

specialist horticultural company in the country, and its 2,000 directly employed staff will benefit from the excellent career paths on offer.

Quadron's branding is changing to incorporate this new identity, and Quadron will be updating its park staff's uniforms and vehicles with the new id verde logo in due course. Rest assured, however, that there have been no changes to the teams of staff delivering the maintenance services in Holland Park and Kensington and Chelsea's other parks and green spaces. You will continue to see the same staff working throughout the park, with no changes to their work specification or the quality of work you are used to seeing in Holland Park.

Ben Binnell, Bi-Borough Manager, id verde

The Birds of Holland Park (contd)

by Mum to the nearest water. David told us of a pair of mute swans who regularly had a brood on a small pond in Tottenham Cemetery. When they had run out of food by the end of each summer, they would walk their – as yet flightless – young to Pymmes Park, about 1½ miles away; the police always had to stop the traffic on the North Circular to let them cross. David cited this as an example of how wildlife adapts to circumstances (but of course the police had to do some adapting too). In Holland Park ducks often lead their ducklings over considerable distances too, such as from the hostel pond to the Lord Holland pond.

We were told some fascinating facts about bird migration. Thousands of birds migrate to Britain for the winter, or pass over on their way from Northern Europe to Southern Europe or Africa. The numbers can be massive: a flock of 26,000 blue tits (from Finland) and one of 57,000 Dartford warblers have been seen. David has been able to record at night the sound of migrating birds overhead, such as waxwings or redwings, making little calls as they go. He had also recently recorded 86 song thrushes flying over at night from the north. The distances that members of one bird species fly are surprisingly varied: swifts will migrate from Britain to North Africa, but swifts from as far north as Finland might fly much further south in Africa; wood pigeons might migrate from the north of England only as far as the south, while others will go further to the south of Europe, to 'top up their tans', as David remarked.

With the help of his recordings, and photos taken sometimes at unusual angles, David described the birds in a refreshing way, helping to communicate their characters. We hope he will be able to conduct another survey in the park soon; this could be quite critical, as some species' numbers seem to be dropping. David showed us how lucky we are to have such a variety, but

this is limited by the nature of the habitat, so it is vital that we look after our trees and shrubs.

We look forward to seeing David again, perhaps at 5 a.m. on a day in May.

Joy Puritz

P.S. Why don't owls make love in the rain? Too-wet-to-woo.



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Art Exhibition

Welcome to the introduction to The Friends of Holland Park Annual Art Exhibition 2017. This time our goal will be: more red dots.

It has now been five years that I have had the privilege of organising this exhibition. It is always a team effort with my wife and daughter plus the trustees and volunteers. Each year we try to enhance and develop the exhibition by introducing initiatives in order to sell more art. Selling more art means you the artist are happy, and the trustees are delighted that more revenue has been received for the charity.

It is interesting to note that there are very few sales made at the private views; this is unusual. I am an artist and art-gallery owner, and when I arrange exhibitions there are always sales on the private-view night and the red dots kick-start and stimulate the ongoing exhibition. The private-view sales encourage the exhibition visitors to make a purchase ('...look at all the red dots!'). With this in mind, next year we will be introducing an incentive to the guests who attended the private views to make purchases.

It is always important for us to remember how special The Friends of Holland Park Art Exhibition is for many reasons:

- The venue: the Orangery is one of the most beautiful locations in London for an exhibition.
- The standard of work is very high.
- The prices you put on your works are fair and affordable; they provide the visitors with great value.
- The most important point: this is an exhibition put on by the Friends who are artists for the other Friends and the general public.

Let us, the artists, continue to support each other, generate more sales for each other, and revenue for our charity.

Now to the 2017 exhibition. Negotiations are ongoing for Feature Artist and sponsors; details and all other information should be confirmed by Christmas and included in your Artist letters. The conditions of entry remain unchanged from previous years: Friends who are artists and artists who become Friends are invited to exhibit up to ten works: two framed works to hang on the walls, and up to eight unframed works for display in the portfolio stands, these with a maximum size of 70 x 100cm (including mounts, but no wooden mounts please). Friends are also invited to exhibit up to ten three-dimensional objects such as ceramics, glassware and small sculptures, or enter the mini-mart of small works on offer at £40 and under, including cards and craft items. The minimum price for works in the main exhibition will be £50.

Friends interested in exhibiting in the art exhibition, the mini-mart or both need to register by filling in the order form (enclosed with this newsletter) and pay the £10 entry fee. Please note that artists who have registered for the main exhibition may also include small works in the mini-mart at no additional cost. Completed order forms should be sent to Rhoddy Wood as soon as possible because space is limited, and when enough artists have registered we cannot accept any more.

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

Let's have a great exhibition with lots of **red dots!**

Gordon French

Art Exhibition Timetable

Friday, 10 March	All exhibit details forms must be received by this date to allow listing in the catalogue
Friday, 31 March	Artists deliver artworks to the Orangery, Holland Park, 8.30-11am <i>All artists will be required to sign the catalogue to certify that the details shown are correct</i>
Friday, 31 March	Hanging and judging, 11am-6pm
Friday, 31 March	Private View, 7.30-9.30pm, entry by ticket at £3
Saturday, 1 April	Private View, 10.30am-12.30pm, entry by ticket at £3 <i>For the two Private Views, artists are entitled to 5 complimentary tickets in toto</i>
Saturday, 1 April	Exhibition open to the public, 1-6pm. Entry free of charge
Sunday, 2 April – Sunday, 9 April	Exhibition open to the public, 10.30am-6pm. Entry free of charge
Sunday, 9 April	Artists and buyers collect works, 6-7pm
Monday, 10 April	Artists and buyers collect works, 9-11am

Artists are particularly asked NOT TO COLLECT THEIR WORKS BEFORE 6pm on SUNDAY 9 April, as this would spoil the exhibition for others



Fallen oak by Acer Walk

Every year, we lose still more trees in Holland Park. Far too many rare trees have gone (Caucasian Wingnut, Chinese Sycopsis, Toothed Azara, Pink Siris, Lebanon Oak, Judas Tree and Chestnut-leaved Oak, to name but a few) and also some significant large trees. Some are old and just give up, and some are defeated by pests and diseases which they are insufficiently vigorous to resist. Whatever the reason, we will leave a legacy of far fewer trees unless we start doing something about it – now.

The Ten-Year Parks Strategy has committed to create a long-term tree plan and to a proactive health plan for notable trees in Holland Park. We already have a quote for an expert in proactive tree health (Reading University Tree Research Unit) to carry out a pilot study on 14 significant trees in the park. It is a sum that the Friends can afford to fund.

Proactive tree health is like proactive health in humans. You do things that cause the tree to switch on its defence activators so that it fights off damaging pests and diseases when they attack. It involves no harmful chemicals, just substances like molasses, biochar and other appetising mulches, along with aerating around the root plate where it has become compacted.

As I have written before, trees are clever. When they are attacked they produce defensive chemicals which can make leaves or

other parts of the tree unpalatable to nibbling beasties; for example, an oak produces extra tannin. These chemicals cost the tree a great deal of energy to produce and, if they are already weakened by stress, they cannot afford the effort, hence increasingly their vulnerability to attack. They need the health and resource to defend themselves, not least because the defensive chemicals produced warns nearby trees of the same species, and they too produce defensive substances. I did say they were clever.



Fallen chestnut near Holland Walk

A proactive health programme for Holland Park would help reduce tree stress and therefore allow them to trigger their protective plan. The principle is agreed. Let's just do it.

Text and photos: Jennie Kettlewell

Notable Trees Guide

Many members will have enjoyed the guide to the notable trees of Holland Park we wrote in 2007, and might even still have their copies. It is now out of print and, because of continuing demand, we decided to re-issue it. We found that a shocking 20% of the trees described have been lost, so we have re-written it to include new specimens, both newly planted trees and others which deserve attention. The new book has over 60 trees as compared with 50 in the old one. The overall format has been retained, and the same artist, Nina Barranca, has drawn leaves to illustrate

the new inclusions. It is still A5 and easy to carry. The trees are arranged in walk order, but the walk can be joined at any point and indeed may take several occasions to complete depending on how long each tree is studied.

We think all members of the Friends should buy a copy, at only £5, and perhaps extra copies for Christmas presents. Do order now.



Your Committee

President Sir Angus Stirling

Chairman and Acting Treasurer Jennie Kettlewell

Secretary Rhoddy Wood

Assistant Treasurer Simon Lindesay-Bethune

Events Organiser Graham Franklin

Editor and Minutes Secretary Joy Puritz

Park Observer Andy Walker

Art Exhibition Sandra French

Website Nicholas Hopkins

Publicity Nigel Brockmann

www.thefriendsofhollandpark.org

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

All FHP events in the diary are printed in **bold**. The Friends' Nature Walks (NW, formerly 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 a one-and-a-half-hour stroll 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 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 £.

Holland Park Conservation Volunteer days (for adults) are every third Saturday of the month from 10.30am to 3pm (except in December when it is the second Saturday); meet outside the café. This is your chance to make new friends while getting healthy outdoor exercise: digging, chopping and planting in the wilder parts of the park. Tea, gloves, tools and instructions provided. Further information from the Ecology Centre call 020 7938 8186 or e-mail laura.ashford@rbkc.gov.uk.

Sat 3 Dec	NW	
Sat 4 Dec	Christmas Concert: Tallis Chamber Choir (see p.3), in the Orangery, £20	7.30pm
Sat 10 Dec	ES. Terrific Trees Open Day. Drop in at the Ecology Centre	11am-3.30pm
Sat 7 Jan	NW	
Sat 4 Feb	NW	
Wed 22 Feb	'From Anvil to the Finest Wrought Iron in the Land' , in the Orangery, £15	6.30pm
Sat 4 March	NW	
Sat 4 March	Moss walk. Dr Alan Harrington. Meet in Stable Yard	11am-1pm
Sat 1 - Sun 9 April	Annual Art Exhibition (see p.12), in the Orangery	



*The cover photo, of a Narrow-leaved Ash (*Fraxinus angustifolia*), was taken by your editor on the north-east side of the park in December 2014.*



The Carter Jonas team were absolutely fantastic with our recent house sale. We were extremely well looked after and they made the entire experience stress free and we soon realised we were in very good and trustworthy hands.

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