



*The Friends of Holland Park  
Winter 2017*

# JOHN WILCOX & Co.

ESTATE AGENTS AND VALUERS



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By the time we hear this talk by Xanthe Quayle, much of the work on the Holland House and Café Yard landscaping improvements will have been completed, but the site will still be closed, and you will not have seen what it will eventually look like. You certainly will not know the complexities faced when working on a historic site with all sorts of surprises under the earth, nor the technical demands of providing for a canopied open-air theatre for the opera with over a thousand seats. Come along and find out what is involved in our major landscaping project.



*Xanthe Quayle on site*

Xanthe Quayle is owner and Director of Camlin Lonsdale, the landscape architects who designed the scheme and who are overseeing the implementation. She was brought up in this area and has known the park since childhood: a fitting context for appreciating our historic assets.

Tickets are £18, to include wine and Janice Miles' delicious canapés. To order

tickets, 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 2018, 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 2018. 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 2018 will receive replacement cards with their spring newsletters, which will reach them in late February. Please be careful opening your newsletter, as the cards can easily fall out and be lost.

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, 6 January 2018  
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 – just turn up and enjoy the company of other Friends.

## Christmas Concert

Sunday, 10 December 2017, at 7.30pm in the Orangery

There is just time for you to book for perhaps your first taste of Christmas this year: our Christmas concert of carols and readings given by The Tallis Chamber Choir, conducted by Philip Simms. As always the evening will be rounded off by wine and mouth-watering canapés. Tickets, at £22, can be ordered on the enclosed order form, which can also be downloaded from our website.

## Moss Walk Led by Dr Alan Harrington

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 11am-1pm on Saturday, 10 March 2018, to see what is new since the last walk for us on a similar date

in 2017 when he made some interesting finds. Numbers are strictly 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.

## Landscaping improvements

The day after Opera Holland Park (OHP) had cleared the Holland House site (19 days early this year), the Council's contractor, Blakedown Landscapes, started work on improving the area around the Grade-1-listed building.

Some of you have asked why it will take until 10 March 2018 to complete what looks to be a simple task of resurfacing the café yard, moving the road and resurfacing the Holland House terrace. It is anything but simple, and many of the complicated bits are likely to be those you will never see: under the ground.

The first task was to carry out tests to establish the bearing capacity of the ground under the terrace. Planning consent requires a large underground tank to accommodate water run-off from the Opera's auditorium canopy: it is important to improve drainage of the permanently re-landscaped terrace. Remember all the unsightly puddles that used to accumulate on the paths between the Astroturf? A large tank needs a large hole, and you will notice approximately 60 truckloads of soil being removed over the next few weeks. Each year, OHP has rigged up its own electricity supply, but this will now be laid permanently under the terrace.

There are many mature trees on the site whose roots must be protected during digging and hard landscaping. Blakedown are advised by a tree specialist, engaged by the Council, whom I witnessed paying great attention to the space immediately around each tree on a recent site visit. Our RBKC arboriculturalists are also keeping an eye on our valued greenery. Unfortunately, the two Yellow Buckeye from the café yard are casualties of the new layout, but we are being compensated by a splendid and rather special *Acer freemanii*, 'Autumn Blaze', chosen in discussion with the Friends. This tree is in for special treatment with the most inventive chambered tree pit I have ever seen.

The new café yard layout will provide increased seating space, and extend further west than before. The café will remain open throughout the works, with seating inside and on the north terrace. Public access to the outside seating area to the south will be closed until 10 March 2018, and the Holland House Terrace will be closed to the public until the end of the opera season in September 2018. The much improved café area and terrace will be worth waiting for.



*Work on Holland House terrace*

Notices on the site fencing show photomontages of the completed scheme, and give contact details for any queries.

## Wildlife Enclosure

There was a time when rough sleepers and teenage drinkers were jumping over the fence into the Wildlife Enclosure and causing problems. The Parks Police worked hard to discourage this behaviour and the Friends collaborated with both the police and Park Management to find solutions in the form of prickly hedging, dead hedges and the robust oak gates we commissioned and paid for. It is gratifying that the police report these measures have been successful in reducing unauthorised entry.



*The Wildlife Enclosure*

## Holland Park Conservation Volunteers

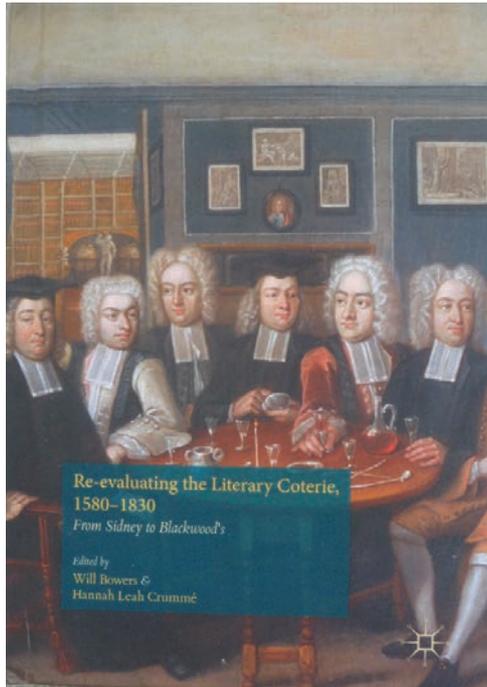
*id verde* are now running the Saturday volunteer programme for the Borough's Ecology team who report strong interest at around 8-12 volunteers each session. Tasks focus on practical conservation that is needed at the time, with workdays every third Saturday of the month. For more information, please see *Dates for your Diary* at the end of this newsletter.



*Volunteers in the park (RBKC)*

**New writing on the Holland House set**

Some years ago, Will Bowers, Junior Research Fellow in English at the University of Oxford, contacted me about his planned research on the Holland House set. This year he sent me a copy of his book, 'Re-evaluating the Literary Coterie, 1580-1830', by Will Bowers and Hannah Leah Crummé, ISBN 978-1-137-54552-7. He has written a chapter on 'The Many Rooms of Holland House': well worth the read. Will came to the talk by Prof. Malcolm Airs (see p.9) and told me the astonishing fact that most of the papers on Holland House visitors are in the British Library and, of all their collections, it is the third largest. Will's next plan is to analyse all the visitors-book entries and produce a summary of precisely who visited and how often.



*Will Bowers' book*

**Honey**

The Holland Park bees have produced honey this year and it will soon be available to buy from Park Reception in the Stable Yard. Due to the repair work on the Stable Yard roof, the number of hives has been reduced this winter, but we hope that Park Management, working in partnership with the London Beekeepers Association, will soon have more information on the bees and related events for 2018.

**Friends & Neighbours**

Sadly, the restaurant and deli, Valentina Fine Foods in Notting Hill Gate, has closed. They were friendly and supportive to the Friends and we shall miss them. We

are trying to find one or two more businesses to participate in our scheme.

*Text and photos: Jennie Kettlewell*



**CELEBRATE THE Season!**

The Holidays are almost upon us!  
**Enjoy Filipino family-style fiesta dishes at Romulo Café**

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## Art Exhibition

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Welcome to the introduction to our 2018 annual art exhibition.

Our goal for last year's exhibition was lots of red dots. We achieved this as it was our most successful exhibition to date. Now we need to think how we can continue to grow.

One of the ambitions of the FHP trustees is to increase the membership of the Friends. This year let us try to find new members who are also artists and will enter the 2018 exhibition. How do we achieve this? If you know any painter, sculptor or craft person, tell them about the Friends and encourage them to join and also enter the art exhibition. They will have an opportunity to display their work and perhaps also make a sale: in my view a win-win situation. I personally have encouraged one young person to join the Friends, and she is planning to enter a number of sculptures next year. Which brings me to sculptures and ceramics. When I took over the running of the exhibition we had double the number of artists who exhibited sculpture and ceramics. It has puzzled me as to why the number of entries has dropped off. If you have any thoughts or would like to pass on some suggestions, please e-mail me, as I always welcome hearing from any members.

Now some very good news: the 2018 art exhibition will be sponsored by Ilchester Estates. They have been undertaking some exciting work, as you will see from the 'Holland Green' quarter on Kensington High Street, adjacent to the Design Museum, as well as some other exciting residential projects in the area. We welcome Ilchester Estates' participation, and look forward to working with them to promote our sensational exhibition. Negotiations are ongoing for the 2018 Feature Artist, and it should all be confirmed before Christmas, and details included in your artist letters and next newsletter.

As I always say, this exhibition is about friends selling art to friends. Let us the artists support each other and generate more sales and revenue for our charity.

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 browser 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-market 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-market or both, need to register by completing 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-market at no additional cost. Completed order forms should be sent to Rhoddy Wood as soon as possible (please see timetable below) 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](http://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](mailto:gordon.l.french@gmail.com)

Let's have a great exhibition with lots of sales.

*Gordon French*

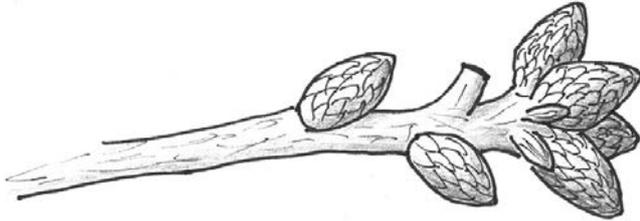
### Art Exhibition Timetable

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Friday, 9 March	All exhibit details forms must be received by this date to allow listing in the catalogue
Friday, 13 April	Artists deliver artworks to the Orangery, Holland Park, 8.30-11am <i>All artists will be required to sign the catalogue to certify that all details shown are correct</i>
Friday, 13 April	Hanging and judging, 11am-6pm
Friday, 13 April	Private View, 7.30-9.30pm, entry by ticket at £3
Saturday, 14 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, 14 April	Exhibition open to the public, 1-6pm. Entry free of charge
Sunday, 15 April-Sunday 22 April	Exhibition open to the public, 10.30am-6pm. Entry free of charge
Sunday, 22 April	Artists and buyers collect works, 6-7pm
Monday, 23 April	Artists and buyers collect works, 9-11am

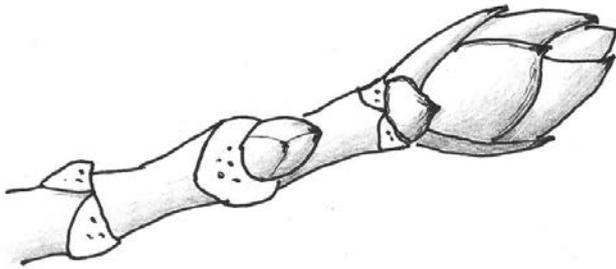
*Artists are particularly asked not to collect their works before 6pm on SUNDAY, 22 April*

Some regard leaf drop as the end of a tree's annual activity, after which it will go into a state of dormancy. If you look carefully, you will observe lots going on over the winter, and you could think about it as the start of production of the next year's glorious leaves and flowers.



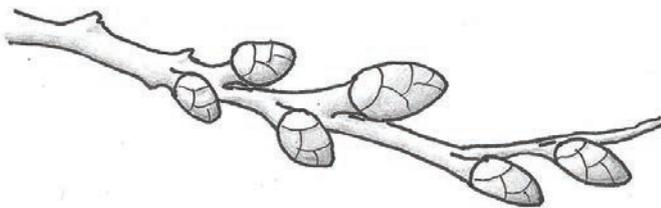
*English Oak*

Deciduous trees lose their leaves in order to conserve energy at a time when there is less daylight and sunshine to contribute to the production of sugars in the leaves, the tree's 'fuel'. First the tree harvests all the nutrients in its leaves back into the body of the tree where they can be



*Sycamore*

used. It then seals off the leaf through chemical action that weakens the point where the leaf joins the stalk, known as the abscission joint. The leaf is no longer needed and drops off, leaving a clean protective scar in which one can often clearly see the redundant 'plumbing tubes'.

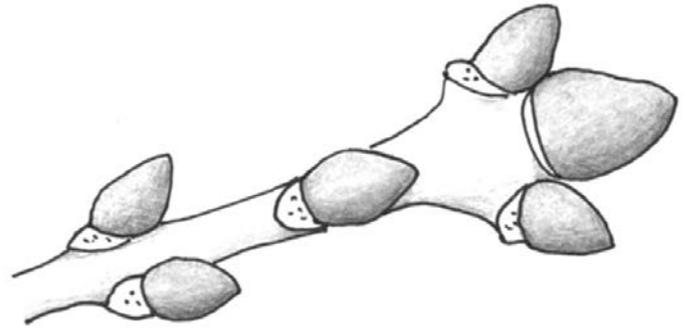


*'Regal' Elm*

## Heavenly Duets

Friday, 20 April 2018, at 7.30pm in the Orangery

Our annual recital in the Orangery, surrounded by the Art Exhibition, will next year be performed by Heavenly Duets: flautist Anne Allen and harpist Cecily Beer. It will be a mixture of classical and light music, and we are very much looking forward to welcoming this unusual duo to Holland Park. There will be more detail about their programme in the spring newsletter. Tickets at £18, to include wine and light refreshments, can be ordered using the enclosed order form, which is also downloadable from our website.



*Common Ash*

That is not the end of it, and already the clever trees are beginning to set their buds for the next season. Right now, at the end of October, the buds are small, but growth will speed up until, in early spring, you can see big buds with intact leaves intricately folded inside, all protected by leaf scales. Each type of tree has its distinguishing form of bud, which provides a useful identifier when the leaves are not present.

Do take a close look at Holland Park's trees in winter. There is a lot going on.

*Text and illustrations: Jennie Kettlewell*



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Once sold, you can then begin your next chapter and move on to better things. Our estate agency offers lots of help and free advice to our clients and would be delighted to sell your property. Contact us for an appointment.

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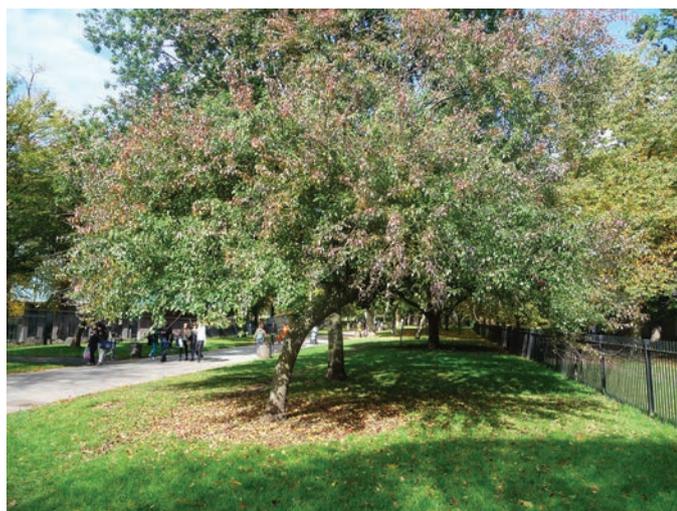
## Champion trees

On 16 October we were delighted to receive a visit from David Alderman, Director of the Tree Register of the British Isles (TROBI). TROBI is a registered charity that records champion trees, exceptional for size, age, historical associations or rarity, and logs them on its database of over 200,000 of the most notable trees in Britain. We are proud that Holland Park

has a few national champions and even more Greater London champions. David and his colleague measured just under 20 trees, being guided round the park by your chairman and secretary. The birch-leaved pear (immediately north of the gate to Phillimore Walk) and the Pagoda or Scholar's tree var. *Violacea* (leaning over the north fence of the West Lawn Enclosure) are very rare indeed, and many others might prove to be the best of their kind and therefore champions. We await David's report and will let you know more in the spring newsletter. The Holland Park champions will be listed on the TROBI website, so they are likely to be visited by interested dendrologists. We must be sure to look after these trees well.



*Tree measurement by TROBI*



*Pyrus betulifolia with a healthy crown after treatment in 2016*

## Tree health

Last year the Friends arranged and funded proactive health treatment on 16 trees in the park, which involved aerating to reduce compaction, inserting natural

nutrients around the root plate, and then finishing off with a circle of mulch. Dr Glynn Percival, Head of Bartlett's Tree Research Unit at Reading University, returned with Adam Steggles, Arborist Representative at Bartlett, to assess how the trees were doing. There was evidence of improved health, for example the big London Plane outside the Orangery and the two coral willows on

the Belvedere lawn showed comparatively little sign of their previous anthracnose disease. The old Walnut outside the Orangery had lost most of its black leaf blotch, and other trees showed a healthy crown of leaves. That meant the investment was worth it, and we have asked that the next group of trees to be treated be the Commonwealth Copse (at the southern end of the sports field, near the Design Museum). We hope that the proposal will be approved by Park Management so that work can be completed and funded by The Friends in this financial year.

## Long-term tree strategy

The project group of RBKC tree officers, Park Management and the Friends, started work on a long-term tree strategy with enthusiasm, and have assessed several areas of the park with the objective of:

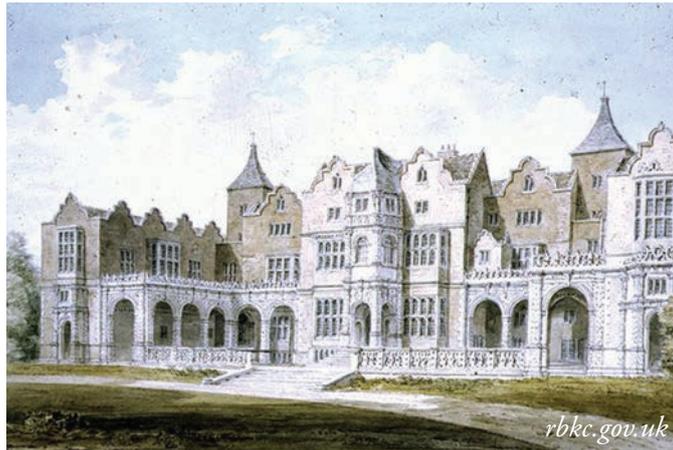
- Describing the nature of the space, e.g. copse, avenue, woodland, lawn margins etc.
- Deciding what we want the nature of the space to be in 30-50 years: the vision.
- Identifying healthy and appropriate specimens which will still look great in years to come.
- Deciding what work is needed now, e.g. remedial pruning, removal of saplings, coppicing.
- Deciding if any new trees need to be planted.

Against the odds, there was a high level of agreement between all members of the group but, sadly, almost none of the work indicated has yet been done due to the heavy workload of the council officers involved. It is a great and ground-breaking project, but necessary for a public park if we are to leave a fitting legacy of trees and not a diminished treescape.

*Text and photos: Jennie Kettlewell*

It was gratifying to hear a real expert tell us that we have something 'precious' in the elegant remains of Holland House. The expert was Malcolm Airs, Emeritus Professor of Conservation and the Historic Environment at Oxford University, when he gave a talk to the Friends on 18 October.

His talk was entitled 'Jacobean Country Houses in the London Countryside', and he provided a fascinating history of the architectural context of Holland House. The first examples were of grand houses centred on a great hall, and where this hall was fully evident from the outside, given away by the large windows designed to light the big table at the 'high end'. This was followed by a trend for symmetry, with the service areas and rooms for the privileged more difficult to distinguish from outside and often masked by loggias. From 1603, novelty was in vogue, and pleasure grounds were created to be viewed from the roofs of the loggias and from the entertaining areas on the first floor. The service areas were banished 'below stairs' to the basement. So we can now see where Holland House fits in. Built in 1605 for Sir Walter Cope, we first saw a plan for a compact symmetrical house, then a later design by John Thorpe, showing west and east wings and a



*South front of Holland House, watercolour by John Buckler, 1812*

loggia. These wings were built in 1638, and the resulting H-shape was found in many other great houses of the period. It is interesting to reflect that many illustrations of Holland House show so much decoration that the symmetry is far from evident. Later mansions were built to a more regular shape, with the eccentric exception of Papillon Hall in Leicestershire, a six-sided

building with extensions later added to resemble the shape of a butterfly.

Malcolm teased us with his extensive knowledge of the many threats to Holland House over the years – we are lucky it has survived – and his studies of the old stables. Not only were we hearing his talk in the Orangery, created out of the old stable building, but he could tell us exactly where each horse stall was and more. But that is for another occasion. We do indeed have something precious, and we must ensure it is conserved.

*Jennie Kettlewell*

## Christmas Cards

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, Stable Yard 2017, 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](http://www.mbcards.co.uk) can also be supplied, but might take a little longer. If you send your order (on our order form or Mountbatten's) 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 postage of £1.60 per ten beyond that. If you order from Mountbatten cards directly, delivery is free. The Friends get a little more profit if ordered through us, but 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.



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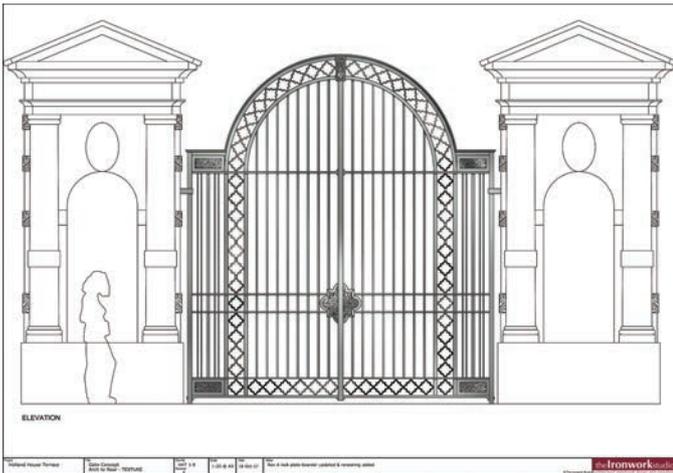
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*Holland House gates design*

Between the gate piers, built by Nicholas Stone in 1629, are some rather underwhelming gates. They are not old or valuable, and the wood panels conceal the view of Holland House from the road below. With the promise of a splendid new terrace and restoration of the terrace wall topped with terracotta tiles, we could do better with new gates.

You might remember that Topp & Co., leaders in the craft of fine architectural metalwork, worked their magic on the park's Earls Court gates, which now look splendid. A successful collaboration between Camlin Lonsdale, who shaped the concepts and principles for the design, and Topp & Co., who brought their considerable expertise in architectural iron work, resulted in a design we like and feel is fitting. The proposed gates are elegant but not regal

and, while being a work of art on their own, will allow a clear view of Holland House.

The gates are bordered by 'barbed quatrefoils', which are the same shape as the terracotta tiles and much of the decoration on Holland House. The gate design and materials await planning and listed-building consent.



*Barbed quatrefoil proportions*

Your trustees feel strongly that the new gates must be worthy of the Grade-1-listed house, and that they should become part of the historical assets of the park. For these reasons, the trustees have agreed to contribute towards the cost.

*Jennie Kettlewell*

## Local Events Run by Neighbouring Organisations: 2018

**Kensington Gardeners' Club** (information from [www.kensingtongardeners.co.uk](http://www.kensingtongardeners.co.uk) or please contact 07949 769702). Club meetings and talks take place in the basement lecture theatre at Kensington Central Library, Phillimore Walk, London W8 7RX. Doors open at 2pm and talks commence at 2.30pm.

*13 January* Club meeting. Bob Charman: 'Plants of Patagonia and Chile'

*10 February* Club meeting. Michael Warren: 'Tulips from Amsterdam – spring in Holland'

**The Kensington Society** (all information from [www.kensingtonsociety.org](http://www.kensingtonsociety.org) or please contact 020 7942 5235)

*New events being planned* Check on [www.kensingtonsociety.org](http://www.kensingtonsociety.org) for update on event schedule.

**Opera Holland Park** (all information from [www.operahollandpark.com](http://www.operahollandpark.com). Once booking opens, tickets available from 0300 999 1000)

*2018 opera programme* Check on [www.operahollandpark.com](http://www.operahollandpark.com) for performance and booking dates.

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 Stable Yard 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 RBKC 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](mailto: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; meet outside the Stable Yard. No specialist skills are required, and this is your chance to make new friends while getting healthy outdoor exercise: digging, chopping and planting in the wilder parts of the park. Refreshments, gloves, tools and instructions provided. Wear sturdy shoes and old clothes, and bring waterproofs and your lunch. For further information from the Ecology Team visit [www.rbkc.gov.uk/ecology](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/ecology), call 020 7938 8186 or e-mail [ecology.centre@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:ecology.centre@rbkc.gov.uk).

Sat 2 Dec	NW	
Sat 2 Dec	ES. Feed the Birds: Ecology Centre Open Day	11am-3.30pm
Sun 10 Dec	<b>Christmas Concert: Tallis Chamber Choir in the Orangery, £22 (see p.3)</b>	7.30pm
Sat 6 Jan	NW	
Sat 6 Jan	<b>Mulled Wine and Mince Pies (see p.3)</b>	11am-1pm
Sat 3 Feb	NW	
Mon 12-Fri 16 Feb	ES. Children's half-term holiday activities. Must book £	
Tues 20 Feb	<b>'Landscape in the Making' (see p.3), in the Orangery, £18</b>	7pm
Sat 24 Feb	ES. Winter Tree Walk: the Basics. Must book	1-3pm
Sat 4 Mar	NW	
Sat 10 Mar	<b>Moss Walk. Dr Alan Harrington. Meet at Stable Yard. Must book (see p.3)</b>	11am-1pm
Sat 7 Apr	NW	
Sat 14-Sun 22 April	<b>Annual Art Exhibition (see p.6), in the Orangery</b>	
Fri 20 Apr	<b>Heavenly Duets concert (see p.7), in the Orangery, £18</b>	7.30pm



*The front cover photo, of a Trachycarpus fortunei (Chinese Windmill Palm or Chusan Palm), was taken outside the Belvedere by Rhoddy Wood on 2 December 2010.*



## Your Committee

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Assistant Treasurer Simon Lindesay-Bethune

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Park Observer Andy Walker

### OUR ADVERTISERS

That we are able to produce this quarterly newsletter for members is in no small measure thanks to the continued support of our advertisers. We are most grateful to them, and would ask you to show your thanks by supporting them, please.

#### **New!**

#### **Payment via FHP website**

Any day now you will be able to make payments for merchandise (including Christmas cards), event tickets and membership on our website. If you want to pay this way, check [www.thefriendsofhollandpark.org](http://www.thefriendsofhollandpark.org). Once the service is up and running, we will add a statement to that effect on our [home page](#).

#### **Parks Police**

Holland Park is generally a safe place, but we should never be complacent.

If you see any antisocial behaviour, such as vandalism, please contact the Parks Police on:

**0300 3655 101**

Remember three key points:

- Keep yourself out of danger
- Take a description of the person, location and exactly what they are doing
- Contact the Parks Police and report the facts.