

The Friends of Holland Park



Summer 2016

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Thanks to a generous offer from Opera Holland Park we have a venue and a date for our summer Pimm's in the Park party. **The venue** is the marquee on the raised terrace to the immediate east of the Dutch Garden, **the date** is Monday 18 July 2016, **the time** is 6-8pm.

This is our one event of the year that is only open to Friends and their immediate guests, but not to



the public. The trustees will, as always, be inviting one or two special guests as a thank-you for their cooperation with The Friends in our endeavours to make the park a pleasant place for all to enjoy.

Your tickets, at £17 each, can be booked on the enclosed order form which can also be downloaded from our website.

The Birds of Holland Park

Thursday, 27 October 2016, at 7pm in the Orangery

Those who braved the 5 a.m. start of this year's Dawn Chorus Walk, enjoyed the expert knowledge of leader, David Darrell-Lambert. David is no stranger to Holland Park, having carried out bird surveys, led walks and talked engagingly to our members several years ago.

He has kindly agreed to share more of his experience of birds in Holland Park by giving our autumn talk. I know he will entertain us with stories that bring to life the character of the various types of bird, and by his own interpretation of bird song. He also takes great photos.

His company, Bird Brain UK Ltd, specialises in surveys in urban parks,



David Darrell-Lambert

coastal sites and heathlands, and he has visited Israel, Canada, Tunisia, St Lucia, Egypt and Italy in order to observe birds. He illustrated the *London Bird Report* for many years and then became a local bird recorder. Since the 1990s he has led groups of birdwatchers all over the UK. He is currently Chairman of the London Natural History Society's Ornithological Section; and what he is really good at is entertaining people with bird tales.

Tickets are £15, to include wine and Janice Miles' delicious canapés. To order these, please use the enclosed order form, which can also be downloaded from our website.

Bumblebee Talk

Once again The Friends have sponsored Ecology walks and talks. Do come and hear the talk on bumblebees on Thursday, 21 July, 6.30 – 8pm in the Ecology Centre.

To book, e-mail ecology.centre@rbkc.gov.uk. or ring 020 7938 8186. The park needs the bees, and the bees need our support.



theguardian.com

Belvedere Joins Friends & Neighbours

We are delighted that the Belvedere Restaurant in Holland Park has joined our Friends & Neighbours scheme, offering 10% off meals on presentation of a current FHP membership card.

Many of you already know the restaurant, and those who do not should. It has a stunning site overlooking the Iris Garden, is a distinguished listed building which was once the summer ballroom for Holland House and, last but not least, has a very tempting menu. Book a table on 020 7602 1238 or find out more on their website: www.belvedererestaurant.co.uk.



Jennie Kettlewell

The Belvedere

We are pleased to announce that Romulo is offering our members a 10% discount (when no other promotional prices apply) at its new restaurant and café in Kensington High Street.

Filipino food is a mixture of four culinary traditions: Spanish, American, Malay and Chinese, and at Romulo Café there is an appetizing range of bar food, snacks, main courses to share, healthy salad options, vegetarian options, desserts and homemade ice cream. Romulo Cafés are well established in the Philippines, and they feature some of their most popular dishes for us to experience in London. The owner has transformed an elegant Georgian town house to echo the spirit of a comfortable Filipino home which comprises four discrete dining areas: the General's Bar, the Ambassador's Lounge, the Diplomat's Dining Room, and a space for private dining.

Mention that you are a member of The Friends when you book, and remember to take your membership card with you.

Romulo Café London
 343 Kensington High Street
 London, W8 6NW
 Tel. 020 3141 6390
reservations@romulocafe.co.uk



Romulo Café

Dahlia Garden Sculpture

Each year the Dahlia Garden becomes a temporary exhibition space for a contemporary sculpture. This year's sculpture is *Meridiana* by Helaine Blumenfeld.


Blumenfeld says that the inspiration for *Meridiana* came from spending the long late summer afternoons in the park, seeing children wildly chasing their own shadows, which grew longer and longer as the afternoon moved closer to dusk. It is the ephemeral, ungraspable beauty of passing time and changing light that is captured in *Meridiana*, meaning 'sundial' in Italian.

This sculpture will be in place for longer than usual, until November 2017, giving more exposure to the piece, and helping to reduce the cost of installation and reinstatement.



Jennie Kettlewell


Meridiana



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The Friends' AGM was held on 20 April 2016. The President, Sir Angus Stirling, welcomed those present, and the minutes of the 2015 meeting were approved.

Trustees' Report for 2015, delivered by Andy Walker: After objections from The Friends, the developers of the Campden Hill project agreed not to press for thinning of the trees along that eastern edge of the park. The Friends had also objected to the removal of the brick structure around the Earls Court gates as requested by the Commonwealth project developer. The Friends and others objected to Safestay's application for large branded signage in the park, and the application was



Tree shelter belt on the east side

withdrawn. All signage had to be in Holland Park style. The Council had commissioned architects to propose design options for buildings on the Holland House site that benefitted the park and provided appropriate facilities for Opera Holland Park during the opera season. The Friends had sponsored Ecology Centre events, funded the stable yard clock repair, donated new 'wave' benches, and



Stable yard clock

published a new Kyoto Garden guide. Some 80 artists had supported the art exhibition which had been well attended, as had two talks, two concerts and the Pimm's party.

Treasurer's report for 2015, delivered by Simon Lindesay-Bethune:

The balance for the financial year 2015 was £105,645, therefore £3,381 more than that for 2014. There had been two generous donations, of £5,000 and £1,000. Subscriptions and merchandise sales were up, event income and costs down. The increase in Aims Expenditure was due to printing of publications, and money spent funding improvements to the park.

Secretary's report, delivered by Rhoddy Wood:

Membership stood at 993, with 25% acquired through the website and 40% through letterbox drops. Members were encouraged to sign up for Gift Aid and to pay by banker's order.

Election of the trustees. Charles Bauccio had resigned as treasurer and trustee, and Gordon French as trustee. Sandra French had been co-opted as trustee. All trustees who had agreed to stand were (re-)elected.

Election of the independent examiner. Roger Foreman was re-elected.

Chairman's Outlook for 2016 was delivered by Jennie Kettlewell.

Much has happened since the AGM, and this is an opportunity to update you rather than report on the situation as it was in mid-April. Please therefore see News Update.

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On 23 February Deirdre Murphy, Senior Curator of Historic Royal Palaces, gave the Friends a very interesting illustrated talk on the history of the design and occupants of Kensington Palace in the 1700s. Deirdre is currently working with others on a history of the palace which will be published by Yale University Press in about two years' time.

The palace began as a square little house in the countryside owned by the Earl of Nottingham. In 1689 it was purchased by William and Mary who employed Sir Christopher Wren to make some additions. In amongst these is the so-called Apartment 1A where Princess Margaret eventually lived, now occupied by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge. Gradually, more and more parts were added. As it was not intended as a main royal palace with all the functions that that would hold, the building increased organically and rather haphazardly, with no real front door, and staircases going in all directions.

In 1727 George II came to the throne and was the last reigning monarch to live full time at the palace. During this time Kensington Gardens became the place to be seen, and in one's best clothes. Research has shown that in the 1720s many changes were made to the building to allow for grand events to take place. In the King's state rooms were some glorious William Kent interiors, already commissioned by George I and completed at the time of his death, and which the late Victorians replaced: among other things they stripped paint off the walls and replaced floorboards with inferior ones. Some of this has been reversed by restoration. We were shown an illustration of visitors climbing the King's staircase, looked down

upon by courtiers of George I's court; also of courtiers standing around in the state rooms. As they were not allowed to sit down in the presence of the King there was very little furniture here and, regarding the other palace furniture of the time, very little has been traced so far. Bills found in the National Archives have given clues as to how the rooms were made to look in the 1720s. Sometimes clues about early decor were found in the rooms themselves: it was known that the panelling in one room had been painted white, but what kind of white was only discovered when a Grinling Gibbons overmantle in the room was removed behind which tiny paint flakes were discovered. Other colours, for which there was little evidence, had to be endlessly discussed by the restorers. No work seemed to have been done to the attic space, let alone cleaning: literally a ton of dust has been removed from there. Concealed objects have sometimes been found: the sleeve of an 18th-century child's shirt was hidden behind a cornice. It might have been used by William Kent's workmen and deliberately concealed for good luck.

King George II and Queen Caroline entertained a great deal: Handel often visited, and famous singers performed. Many glittering drawing-room events took place. At these, courtiers were expected to wear new clothes every time. Naturally they (including men) complained about the expense this entailed, and would often swap clothes and jewellery with their friends. Most ladies' dresses were of silk, and many decorated with gold and silver embroidery. Ladies might ask their weavers not to use the same patterns on any other dress so that their own would be unique. Such garments might have cost the equivalent of £100,000 today. In those days one's clothes were one's ticket



Kensington Palace

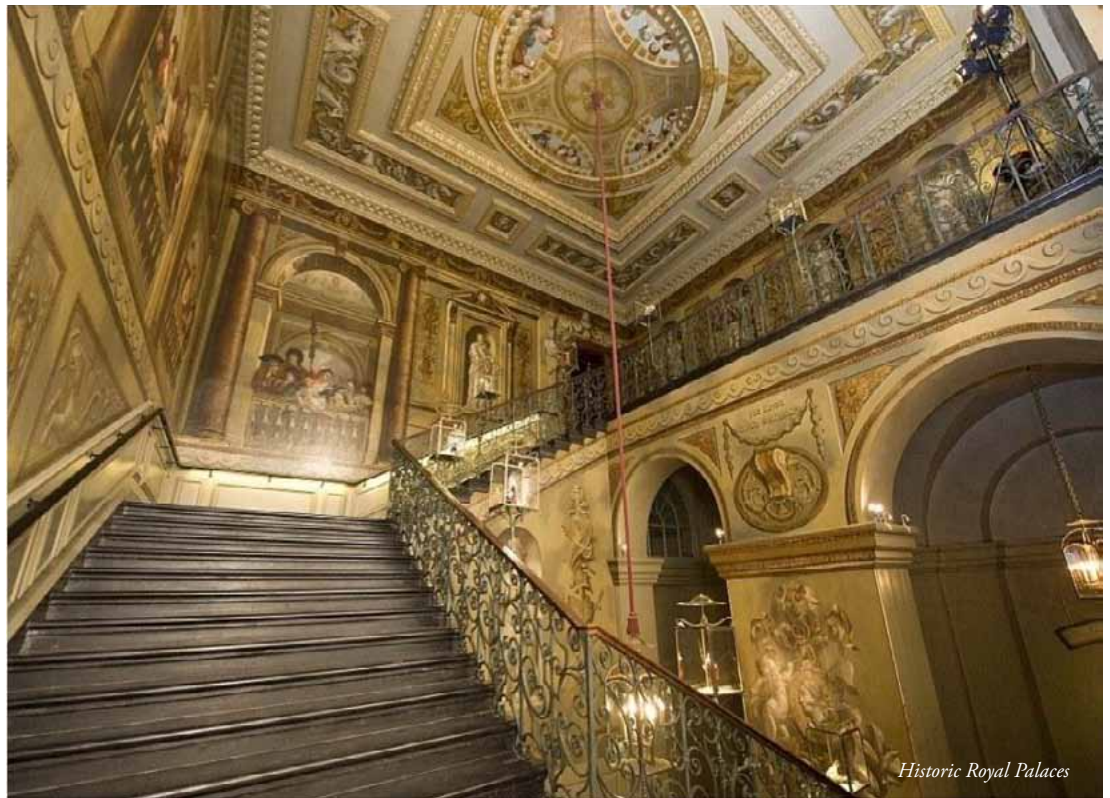
to an event; there was no formal invitation system: one was allowed entry if lavishly attired. (Deidre said that nowadays there were other criteria too: at certain hotels and clubs in Mayfair it would be the kind of car you arrived in that would be your passport, especially if it had diamond hubcaps, as she had once witnessed.)

Quite a lot is known about the day-to-day activities of the household because of the very critical and indiscreet memoirs of Lord Harvey, Vice Chamberlain of the Royal Household and a close confidant of Queen Caroline.

He once described how, when the King was annoyed, he threw his hat on the floor and kicked it around the room. Courtiers had to behave by strict rules of etiquette; there were even booklets setting these out, and ladies learnt to use the way they held their fans as a silent language to hopeful suitors. At levees, when the courtiers were allowed to watch the King dress in the morning, the men would hang about trying to get his attention in order, perhaps, to show off a new book or invention, and the ladies would hope to receive a compliment from the Queen on their dress. These attempts often ended in failure and frustration when other courtiers such as Lord Harvey hogged all the attention.

As then, the palace is now a series of apartments. Until she fell out of favour, Henrietta Howard, the King's mistress, had her own, especially as she was one of Queen Caroline's ladies and a friend. Courtiers had to rent accommodation in places like Kensington Church Street. Now, apart from the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester, Prince Harry, Princess Michael of Kent and various staff members live in the palace. The configuration of these apartments has been frequently changed according to requirements, but there have been times when people have had to walk through part of someone else's flat to access their own.

William III, George I and George II tended to stay at the palace continuously while Parliament was not sitting, from May to the autumn. During Parliament they stayed nearer to Whitehall. But George II loved Hanover so much that he would sometimes spend months there, but returning in time for his birthday ball, a big social occasion for dancing, gambling and card playing.



Historic Royal Palaces

The King's staircase

During those periods of absence the Queen was officially made regent. But in 1736 he did not return for the ball. He had become enamoured of the Countess Amalie von Wallmoden, whom the Queen finally allowed him to bring to England. She was also given her own flat which she lived in long after the Queen's death in 1837.

The King was heartbroken by the Queen's death, before which she had suffered dreadfully at the hands of physicians. The King continued to live at the palace when Parliament was not sitting, but no longer entertained on a large scale. He died in the palace in 1760 where his autopsy also took place. Deidre had been fascinated to discover that his entrails were then transported from Kensington in a cortege that included the Lord Chamberlain and several courtiers in two mourning coaches followed by footmen with torches. The box with the entrails was carried in the third coach and was deposited in the royal vault in Westminster Abbey. The next day the King's other remains were taken in grand procession to the House of Lords to lie in state.

George III preferred to live at Kew, and George IV at Buckingham Palace. The latter, and William IV, thought Kensington Palace should nevertheless be kept ready for use, and when it was clear that Victoria was heir to the throne, her mother, the Duchess of Kent, asked for permission to use the state apartments. William IV gave it on condition that she make no changes to the building. When she subsequently had the King's Gallery divided into three he was furious, and publicly scolded her at a banquet at Windsor. Some but not all of William Kent's ceilings were lost.

Joy Puritz

Design Museum

At last the museum has its opening date fixed: Thursday, 24 November 2016. The museum shop will open in July 2016 and will be on the ground floor of the restored building. We shall enjoy having such a stylish neighbour, though we do hope that visitor enthusiasm does not put undue pressure on the south of the park and its fragile grass.



Planned ground floor of the Design Museum

Holland Park pavilions

After much effort by all parties, a proposal that met the needs of all stakeholders has not been found and the project has been closed. This is disappointing as Snell & Partners initially showed great ability for innovative solutions. We are now back to the drawing board to see if there is a way the white tents can be erected more quickly or if a simpler solution can be found.

Approach road to the Holland House terrace

The project, led by specialist architects Cameron Lonsdale, is still live and, by the time this newsletter is printed, your trustees will have seen proposed designs for Stage 1:

- Improving the look of the Holland House south terrace so it is an appealing place to sit and enjoy winter sunshine.
- Relocating the road that runs right through the middle of Holland Park Café up to the terrace. The intention is that it should run to the immediate east of the café but we shall keep a careful watch on whether that means significant trees would be removed.
- Improving the look of the café yard so that, when the café lease is finally put out to tender, it will be more appealing to a bidder, and generate more income for the park. These plans will be shared during a six-week public consultation period, starting on 22 June 2016. After feedback has been considered, the plans will be subject to a planning application. More information about the consultation is shown in this newsletter. Stage 2 is likely to include architect's proposals for:
 - The interior of the Holland Park café. Redesigning of the interior is much needed to reduce queues in summer and to minimise noise reverberation.
 - Making the most of the space in the stable yard block e.g. possibly using the old Ecology Centre room for displays and information about Holland House and its families. Improving the toilet facilities and adding a dedicated toilet for disabled.

It is unlikely that Stage 2 will happen before 2017.

Hostel

A further planning application by Safestay for branded signage has had consent refused by the Council following the objections

received.

Belvedere restoration

The scoping work has been completed but the planning application has been withdrawn. A new application will be lodged once technical adjustments have been made to the plan. The restaurant will now not close for a period from June 2016 as originally anticipated.

New fence for sports field

Recently a member reported that children were tunnelling their way through the native hedge and into the sports field because the fence was dilapidated and had gaps in it. Good news then that the fence is being replaced along the east flank of the sports field. The sturdy new posts will deter access other than via the gates, and also prevent damage being caused to the plants in the hedge.

Earls Court gates

The fine French 18th-century gates were removed on 6 January for their makeover by Topp & Co. in North Yorkshire. As ever, the work proved more extensive than expected, and we will not see the gates back in place until early July. At that stage the brickwork will receive some much needed repair work, so the entire entrance will look elegant before the Design Museum opens.

Dutchman's Pipe

One of Holland Park's more unusual plants is the climber *Aristolochia macrophylla* or Dutchman's pipe. Its common name comes from the shape of the flower that appears in May. The rest of the year the vine, which is on the old wall of the Mediterranean Bed, is covered in lush, heart-shaped leaves. It is not a flashy plant and not many notice it, but a good look at the flowers repays the effort.



Aristolochia macrophylla

Text and photo: Jennie Kettlewell

Many members have reported that they have noticed improvements to planted areas of the park. No surprise then that this is to the credit of Rob May, Holland Park's new head gardener who joined Quadron's park team last year.

Those of us who keep a horticultural ear to the ground had heard that there was an excellent head gardener at Peckham Rye Park, and were delighted when we found out via Peckham contacts that he, Rob, was to come to Holland Park. It was initially the nursery role that attracted him, but he found himself developing a real passion for Holland Park, which meant he wanted the head gardener role when it became available. He could see an opportunity to improve horticultural standards. The difference is already noticeable.

I asked him what attracted him about Holland Park and he said: 'The diversity. It has history, woodland areas and formal gardens. It is really different to other parks.'

He values his team, and one of his first acts was to promote Mark Sinclair to deputy head gardener, which is well deserved after the stunning work Mark has done in the Kyoto Garden over many years. Responsibility for the care of the Kyoto Garden now lies with Daijiro Mizuno, who brings us his



Rob May discussing Dablia Garden planting with his team

invaluable expertise in Japanese gardening. Rob has made it a priority to boost training in gardening techniques, and the team talk enthusiastically about the ideas Rob has and how he enables them to contribute to the wonderful park we all enjoy. Notice what they have done to improve the Acer Walk, the terrace above the Suntrap Garden, pruning vines around the rose garden, and watch out for other gems. He is working on plans for more semi-permanent planting that looks beautiful but requires less labour time than annual planting.

When you meet Rob it is obvious he is a New Zealander, not least because he gets so excited about NZ plants he finds in the park. He worked for the NZ Department of Conservation on grassland surveys and on threatened and endangered plant species. In 2000 he ventured a trip to the UK, without intending to stay, but felt he had not really had a chance to see the place, so never went back.

We look forward to working with Rob and his team to realise some interesting ideas.

Text and photo: Jennie Kettlewell

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The Friends of Holland Park held another successful art exhibition in the Orangery this April. The weather was good which meant visitor numbers were excellent, and the feedback on the quality of the work was extremely complimentary and wonderful to hear.

Firstly I would like to thank our sponsors, Romulo Café, the new Filipino restaurant on Kensington High Street. As Holland Park is on their doorstep I approached them about sponsoring the exhibition, which they did, and I encourage The Friends to support Romulo Café as they have supported us. You will not be disappointed, the food is exceptional.

I would like to thank Isabel Langtry, Principal of Hampstead School of Art, for judging the exhibition, and to the Hampstead School of Art for awarding a new prize: for Applied Art. Once again the Orangery was superbly hung by Alison Beckett who was assisted by Fen Murray and Graham Franklin.

The two private views were both well attended with everyone



Private view

seeming to enjoy the art on display. The raffle was a great success: around 300 tickets were sold, and some very happy raffle-ticket holders won prizes donated by generous local businesses. The Friends did a mail-drop of 5,000 exhibition flyers to residences in the Borough to help publicize the event.

As usual the credit-card

facility made the sale of artworks easier for both buyers and stewards. This year our feature artist was Mao Wen Biao who was responsible for painting the 'mural' outside the Orangery, opposite the Iris Garden. The Friends were able to hang a selection of his work within eyesight of the original mural which was a 'conversation piece' in itself.

Lastly I would like to thank all the artists: you are each year's exhibition, thank you; also Joy Puritz for compiling the catalogue, and all the stewards and trustees. I look forward to doing it all again in 2017.

Gordon French

The Judging Experience 2016

Never mind where I travel in the world and the wondrous things there are to see, I long to return to Holland Park and revisit the collection of trees by the low wall, watch the squirrels' antics and walk through the rose garden towards the ice house. The combination of art and nature is a marriage made in heaven that fires the imagination. I love it when artists engage in observing and responding to nature: as I made this walk today I remembered how the magnificent trees here inspired my own sculpture *Picasso's Petals*, a 2.5-metre bronze now installed in the Tramuntana Mountains of Majorca, part of the Hobbs Family collection: a little bit of the Holland Park spirit that works so well among the carob trees and olives of the area.

Arriving at the Orangery's 'The Friends of Holland Park Art Exhibition 2016' makes it a perfect evening: the diverse range of artworks with sculpture, applied art and paintings of all types, alongside photographs, prints and drawings beautifully displayed by the hard-working hanging team. It is also a pleasure to see a collection of work by the invited feature artist Mao Wen Biao who painted the beautiful Holland Park 'mural'. The hanging makes the viewing of the work a pleasure; many thanks to the hanging committee and co-ordinator Gordon French.

This year I was especially excited to present the new yearly 'Hampstead School of Art, Applied Art Award' – to Anne

Musso for her porcelain lamp.

Each year the prize-winner will receive a term of an art course of their choice, at the art school. The new prize joins the Sir Hugh Casson Prize, Sir Hugh being the honoured historic President of The Friends of Holland Park, the prize posthumously and kindly awarded by his daughters.

I relish looking through the browsers which are always full of visual treats; many of the works are very reasonably priced, and if you bought a piece, well done, your contribution is extremely important in supporting Holland Park itself and in encouraging the artists.

Many artists received a special mention from me at the private view and I congratulate you all again for submitting work, contributing to an excellent exhibition and supporting an event that makes such a valuable contribution to the creative year.

The exhibition really is a wonderful way of encouraging artists and supporting our beautiful Holland Park, bringing us together through art and nature.

I look forward to seeing your new work, next year, alongside new contributors.

Well done to The Friends of Holland Park.

Isabel H. Langtry, Principal of Hampstead School of Art



Private view

Artist Friends of Holland Park were brimming with enthusiasm, versatility and talent in the annual exhibition in the Orangery this spring with work ranging from spectacular flower paintings to alluring landscapes, stunning wildlife pictures and humorous sculpture.

Annie Leach's painting of a lilac dahlia was bold and magnificent, while Elfin Ebury's flower still life was sweet and gentle, and Glenna Devlin showed an extraordinary delicacy in her fine drypoint print of pansies. Iwona Behar, however, won the Prize for Artistic Excellence with her captivating *Nature study* in pastel, swirling with energy in many shades of green. Trees were a favourite subject, in all shapes and colours, Katrina Rose reproducing the stunning reds of Colorado, and Karen Humpage engagingly depicting impossible tangles of branches. Mysterious, half-visible trees merged enchantingly with the waters of a lake in a beautiful photograph by Nadhira Benaissa, and fallen leaves were captured in glorious hues with great dexterity by Hassiba Hafiz. Images inspired by a



FHP Chairman, Jennie Kettlewell, at a private view

ruined church proved an intriguing work from Zoe Zenghelis, and Wendy Mackenzie's village street scene had an enticing warmth compared with the splendid but rainy London views of Olga Brown and Ihor Ropyanik. Joanna Irvin presented two delightful aquatint prints, *Up the creek* and *Blue haven*, that might attract anyone on a carefree boating trip, and Alessia had taken a great photograph of a mass of gondolas parked in Venice.

A highly accomplished and colourful mixed media study, *Roche's Point Lighthouse in Cork*, won Jeanette Carr the Hugh Casson prize for drawing. However, Elizabeta Chojak-Mysko also demonstrated a great affinity with line in her painting of a marina with a confusing multitude of masts,

as did Clare Weatherill with a glorious watercolour of leggy flamingos. Cows starred happily in a further work by Jeanette Carr as well as in a gloriously whimsical painting by Bob Barling of one jumping over the Moon. An etching of a black cat by Masako Jikihara made me smile with pleasure, and two photographs by Jennifer Bush cleverly portrayed carp luxuriating in the waters of the Kyoto Garden.

A sensuous use of green drew attention to Aude Grasset's fascinating composition of two figures awkwardly seated at a table, and Hazel Fennell employed the colour to superb effect in a pure abstract painting, *Green guard*, that you could



The Mini-Market

enjoy looking at again and again. Hazel Leach's picture of two young sisters walking on a country road in summer was particularly charming, and there were several very well observed portraits including Patrick Killery's painting of a man leaning on a table, and Roger Harris's pastel of Astrid with a background of stripes.

Among the 3-D works were Barbara Foster's fantastically animated goat sculptures and Elzbieta Stanhope's lovely Greek-style vases decorated with trees. But the 3-D prize-winner was John Schetrumpf for his amazing aluminium and gum tree sculpture of an axe embedded in a tree trunk, beautifully judged and executed, entitled *Erectus interruptus*. A triumph.



Jennie Kettlewell congratulating prize-winner Iwona Behar

Alison Beckett



Ronald Rabson selling tickets for an event in the park in the 1960s

Seeing a picture of 'The Lodge' in Abbotsbury Road on page 23 of the excellent *Decorative art in Holland Park* booklet, brought back many happy childhood memories for me. My grandparents, Ronald and Elsie Rabson, lived in that house from March 1953 to February 1971, and my sister, Val Lambert, and I used to enjoy spending some of our school holidays staying with them.

Ronald Rabson was in charge of the gardening staff in the park. He started his career in horticulture in Hampshire in the 1930s and worked in several London parks before moving to Holland Park. During the Second World War he served in the Army and received a certificate from Crown Prince Olav to mark his contribution towards the liberation of Norway from German occupation. A letter he received from the Chief Officer of the Greater London Council (GLC) on his retirement in 1971 praised him for playing 'a leading part in the recovery of this lovely park from its years of wartime decay.'

The Lodge was a three-bedroom Victorian property with the letter 'H' for Holland displayed in black bricks in the hexagonal tower of this red-brick building. In my grandparents' time there was a huge bathroom on the ground floor of the tower with a bedroom above it. There was no central heating in the property. Water was heated by a large coal-fired boiler in the large kitchen-dining room, and the living room was heated by a traditional open fire, with electric heaters used upstairs.

High wooden fences surrounded The Lodge in the nursery area of the park, which included several

large greenhouses and cold frames. These were used to grow all the bedding plants for the park. This site also included a weather station, complete with a Stevenson screen and rain gauge, with daily readings being taken and supplied to the Met. Office.

A 1966 guide to Holland Park, produced by the GLC Parks Department, gives an insight into the history of the park during the last century following its acquisition from the Earl of Ilchester in 1952: 'Horticulturally, Holland Park is an extremely interesting place. In 1902, 4,000 separate species and varieties of plants were recorded, and many still survived in the neglected grounds in 1952. These have been carefully conserved and increased, and there are now well over 3,000 different plants, including 1,500 varieties of trees and shrubs. A new collection of native British plants was started in 1959, and this now amounts to about 400 plants. The woodlands are also rich in bird life.

Although the nightingale has not been heard here since 1884, 50 different birds were counted in 1958 including owls, woodpeckers and redstarts. Pheasants have been specially introduced to this area and one of the most familiar sights – and sounds – in the proximity of the North Lawn and the yucca garden is the peafowl.' (*contd*)



Ronald Rabson and Park Superintendent Fred Hillier in the Dutch Garden

Did you know?

- Horse chestnut petal markings change from yellow to red to alert pollinators that the flowers are already pollinated and they need not waste their time.
- Water from tree roots has to work its way up to where it can be useful: in the leaves. Thirsty leaves create enough suction to draw water up through the tree in one continuous column, using the cohesive nature of water to create tension. This is quite a feat considering that water might have to be lifted some 120 metres in the tallest trees.
- Catkins are a practical way to make the most of wind pollination. Simplified male flowers with reduced petals and dominant stamens are ideal for releasing large amounts of pollen as the catkin is blown in the wind.
- Flooded soil can 'drown' roots by starving them of oxygen. The swamp cypress grows 'knees' which project a hard root extension up through the soil so that it can breathe. The tree's answer to a snorkel.
- Leaf fall in deciduous trees is caused by a hormonally induced weakening of the fault line (abscission joint) where the leaf joins the tree, but not until



the tree has transferred the valuable minerals in each leaf back into the tree structure so that they are not wasted.

- Tree roots are opportunistic in order to fulfil their functions of feeding the tree and holding it up. Most temperate trees form a shallow root plate with around 85% of the roots in the top 60 centimetres of soil surface where it is easiest to access rainwater and minerals.
- When leaves are flooded, they quickly close their stomata (breathing holes) and only open them again when they can access air.
- Some common ash trees are male, some female, some a mix of male and female branches. Branches can change from male to female, or the reverse, each year. Both confusing and unpredictable.

The ability of trees to adapt to their environment never ceases to amaze, and they well deserve some respect.

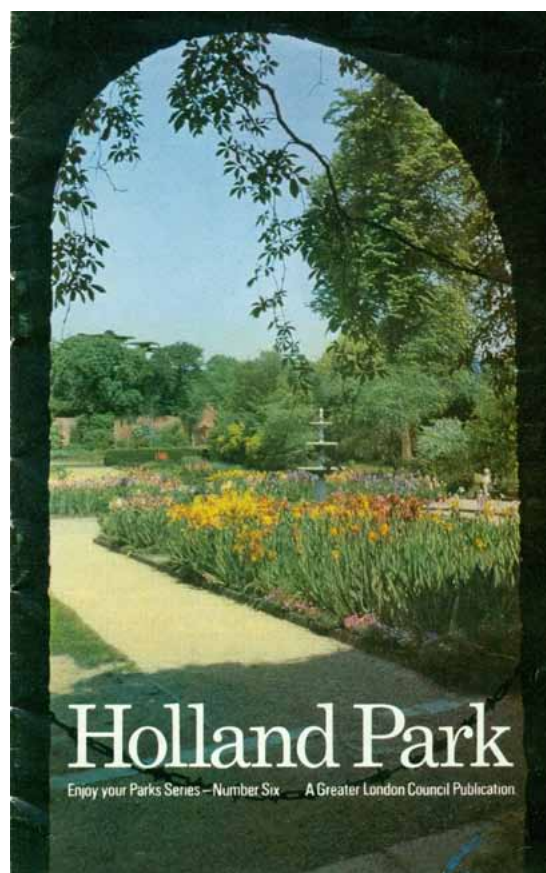
Information culled from Trees: Their Natural History, by Peter A. Thomas.

Text and drawing: Jennie Kettlewell

The Lodge (contd)

By the 1960s the park was well established as a wonderful place to visit with something for everyone. In addition to the lovely formal gardens and woodland areas, there were facilities available for children, sports and the arts. In 1965, for example, the open-air theatre had a six-week season, which included plays, opera, ballet and Spanish dancing. Also, open-air symphony concerts were staged on the North Lawn from 1955 onwards for up to 4,000 people. I remember one concert ending with a rousing performance of the *1812 Overture*, accompanied by fireworks, which was much appreciated by the audience, but was not received quite so enthusiastically by the peacocks. Demonstrations of Scottish Dancing took place on the Yucca Lawn adjoining the North Lawn, and children's shows were also staged in the park during the summer holidays.

Ian Marshall



Cover of the GLC park guide of 1966 showing the Iris Garden with its original fountain



Your Committee

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www.thefriendsofhollandpark.org

The Friends of Holland Park is registered as a charity, No. 281348



*The acrylic-on-canvas painting on the front cover by Anne Musso, 'Trees and Lord Holland House', won the 'Spirit of Holland Park' prize in this year's art exhibition.
(Photograph by Maria Kaleta)*

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.



Dates for your Diary

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 (contact details above).

Sat 2 July	NW	
Thurs 7 July	ES. Summer tree walk: the basics. Must book	6.30-8pm
Mon 18 July	Pimm's in the Park , in the Orangery, £17	6-8pm
Thurs 21 July	ES. Bumblebee talk (sponsored). Must book	6.30-8pm
Mon 25 July - Tues 2 Sept	ES. Summer holiday children's activities. Must book. £	
Sat 6 Aug	NW	
Sat 6 Aug	ES. Dazzling Dragonflies. Open Day. Drop in at Wildlife Area	11am-4pm
Fri 2 Sept	ES. Children's Night Safari. Must book. £	7-9pm
Sat 3 Sept	NW	
Thurs 8 Sept	ES. How and Why to Make a Wildlife Garden (sponsored). Must book	6.30-8pm
Thurs 15 Sept	ES. Hedgehog talk (sponsored). Must book	6.30-8pm
Sat 17 Sept	ES. Mammals of Holland Park (sponsored). Must book	9.30-11.30am
Thurs 22 Sept	ES. Autumn bat walk (sponsored). Bring a torch. Must book	6.30-8pm
Sat 1 Oct	NW	
Sat 8 Oct	ES. Celebration of Science. Open Day. Drop in at Wildlife Area	12 noon-4pm
Sat 15 Oct	Autumn tree walk . Dr Alan Harrington. Meet in Stable Yard.	11am-1pm
Mon 24- Fri 28 Oct	ES. Half-term holiday children's activities. Must book. £	
Thurs 27 Oct	The Birds of Holland Park , in the Orangery, £15	7pm
Fri 28 Oct	ES. Children's Night Safari. Must book. £	4.30-6pm

Opera Holland Park

Although The Friends of Holland Park is a quite separate organisation from Opera Holland Park Friends, we are happy to carry the announcement of their remaining productions for this summer:

La Cenerentola by Rossini July 14, 16, 20, 22, 27, 30 **7.30pm**
Die Fledermaus by Strauss July 19, 21, 23, 28, August 3, 5 **7.30pm**
The Queen of Spades by Tchaikovsky August 2, 4, 6, 9, 11, 13 **7.30pm**



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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