

The Friends of Holland Park

Summer 2010



Roses by the Ice House

Photo by Joy Puritz



President Sir Angus Stirling

Chairman Nicholas Hopkins

Secretary Rhoddy Wood

Treasurer David Jeffreys

Editor & Minutes Secretary Joy Puritz

Art Exhibition Organiser Andy Walker

Nigel Brockmann

Kathleen Hall

Deborah Newberry

www.thefriendsofhollandpark.org

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



Jigsaws

Some years ago we were able to offer for sale jigsaws depicting a Holland Park peacock in full display. These are now available again and we have added a beautiful new jigsaw of the Kyoto Garden. Both are high-quality, finely-cut wooden puzzles of approximately 250 pieces measuring 360mm x 250mm. Made for us by Wentworth Puzzles, they contain unique “whimsy” pieces shaped to reflect the image theme, and will happily challenge you for hours. They are packaged in a smart shrink-wrapped box with the puzzle’s picture on the lid – ideal for presents.

We cannot do them justice here with just black and white illustrations, but they can be seen in full colour on our website, and ordered on the enclosed order form.



Pimm’s in the Park

**Tuesday, 20 July, 6–8pm,
in the youth hostel garden**

If you missed last summer’s “Pimm’s in the Park” party, don’t miss it this year!

It will again be held in the garden of the youth hostel, courtesy of the manager, Sally Martyn-Johns. This is a lovely venue made even more inviting by being private for the rest of the year and only partly visible through the railings. We might even be serenaded by an opera rehearsal.

If you were with us last year, then you’ll probably want to be there again. We shall be serving Janice Miles’ delicious canapés with a summertime flavour. Please order your tickets at £12 each on the enclosed order form.

The Annual General Meeting was held in the Orangery on Wednesday 24 March 2010. It was chaired by Sir Angus Stirling, The Friends' president, who welcomed a goodly number of members.

The chairman, Nicholas Hopkins, gave his report for 2009. He said that a lighting system for the cafeteria tiles had been switched on by Cllr Paget-Brown in December. Almost £2,000's worth of equipment had been donated to the Ecology Centre. Conservation of Holland House and the main gates had been completed; it was hoped that more work would be done to the terrace in the autumn. Despite opposition from The Friends and others, the developers of the Commonwealth Institute site had obtained planning consent. The Council had concluded the sale of the Holland Park School playground site; building of the new school was to be completed in September 2012. The Friends and others would try to limit the impact of the new residential blocks on the Park. The Friends had objected to the building of a single dwelling against the boundary wall of the Park in Park Close, and planning consent had been refused. Gratitude was due to Ian Thomson for his Bird Nature Walks. A survey by David Darrell-Lambert had indicated a healthy bird population in the Park. The Art Exhibition, in which 85 artists had exhibited, had raised £1,400; it had been organised by Mrs Andy Walker for the first time. Mr Hopkins described the events of the year and concluded by thanking the trustees.

All existing officers and trustees were re-elected and Debbie Newbury, co-opted in January, was elected as a trustee.

A Report of the Trustees incorporating the accounts and the Report of the Independent Examiner had been circulated. The Treasurer, Mr David Jeffreys, commented on some of the figures. There was a credit balance of over £68,000. Mr Leslie Du Cane was re-elected as the Independent Examiner.

The Secretary, Mrs Rhoddy Wood, said there were at present 780 members and more were due to renew. Volunteers might be needed for leaflet drops in May. Photos taken by Friends would be welcome for possible inclusion in the newsletter. Mrs Wood thanked all who had helped with the Art Exhibition.

Referring to 2010, the chairman said that The Friends were now looking to a professional designer/maker for the wall hangings in the cafeteria. It was still

hoped that a booklet on the social history of Holland House would be published and possibly another on the history of the gardens of Holland House if enough material was found. The Friends would continue to lobby for permanent landscaping of the Holland House terrace so that it could be opened to the public. The building of a new Ecology Centre next to the Adventure Playground was a possibility. Pigs had been placed temporarily in the arboretum to help restore the wild-flower meadow. The Art Exhibition this year included a mini-market for items up to £40. In February John Watkins had given a talk on the Elizabethan garden at Kenilworth Castle, and in July there would be another "Pimm's in the Park" party. In October there would be a talk by David Darrell-Lambert, and The Tallis Chamber Choir would give a Christmas Concert in December. The Friends now had a licence to sell tickets for events to non-members.

Questions from the floor, largely about the introduction of pigs into the arboretum, were answered reassuringly by Mrs Wood and Mr Hopkins. Sir Angus having had to leave the Meeting at 8.30pm, Mr Hopkins declared it closed at 8.36pm.

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Although we were not quite as lucky with the weather as we were last year, all went very well and we made only a little less for The Friends than in 2009. Twenty-five artists sold forty-nine works for £3,473.90, giving The Friends a net profit of £1075.19. We are grateful to all our loyal supporters and to the artists who make the exhibition what it is.

This year we had a slightly different arrangement where a member of the Friends' committee was present on each day, helped by one and sometimes two other stewards. Very many thanks to all those who undertook this, and also to those who helped on the receiving and collection days, both at the tables and in helping to hang works and, at the end, to take them down. Nigel Brockmann did a wonderful job in organising the steward rotas so that everything went very smoothly.

The main change from last year was the introduction of the "mini-market", a new idea introduced by Rhoddy Wood, which was a great success. It added to the interest and made the entrance to the Orangery more intriguing, drawing in more people. Very many thanks to Rhoddy for organising this and to the artists



Photo by Joy Puntz

who took part so enthusiastically. As usual we would also like to thank Rhoddy for her work with the artists' cards which so enhance the exhibition.

This year Isabel Langtry acted as the sole judge for the exhibition and did a wonderful job. We are extremely grateful to her for giving her time and for considering so carefully the choice of winners of the various prizes and commendations.

We also wish to thank Alison Beckett who worked wonders with the hanging of the paintings, a really difficult exercise, and achieved a very good result which was much appreciated by both artists and visitors. Joanna Irvin helped Alison with this and we are most grateful for her contribution. We also appreciate the help we received in displaying posters or flyers in shops, restaurants and other public places, which does so much to attract people to the exhibition. The poster was very successful again this year and we sold quite a lot of copies.

Last but not least, we offer congratulations to the prize winners, listed below, all of whom were a tremendous asset to our exhibition and whose works were much admired.

Andy Walker

<i>Poster competition winner</i>	Catherine Bajour
<i>Show prize winner</i>	Brenda Sakoui
<i>Highly commended</i>	Diz Harford
<i>Highly commended</i>	Wendy Mackenzie

<i>Spirit of Holland Park</i>	Krystyna Dankiewicz
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<i>Three dimensional works:</i>	
<i>Prize winner</i>	Lujain Razouki
<i>Highly commended</i>	Hazel Leach

Danuta Piesakowska, who exhibited with us for many years, was seriously ill at the time of the exhibition but arranged for her works to be brought. We are especially glad that two of them sold, as she died shortly after. We would like to thank her family for their support, and extend our sympathy to them.



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The Friends of Holland Park artists defied economic gloom and wintry weather to present an array of work brimming with sunshine, colour, enthusiasm and imagination for display in the annual exhibition in the Orangery.

Philippa Kennard-Bent evoked memories of happy holidays with a painting of beach huts, as did Rouhi Peck with her Camber Sands, while Catherine Bajour tempted travellers with her delightful watercolour of a Moroccan village and her accomplished mosaics inspired by the Orient. Renate Ober presented two views including a little German harbour in exquisite hues. Closer to home Keiko Yokota captured spring in Holland Park, and Krystyna Dankiewicz depicted the beautiful Orangery itself. Julian St Leger portrayed Kensington Gardens with great aplomb, and José Suárez caught a stunning sunrise. James Parfitt created a wonderful snow scene, as did Margaret Whitehead with her watercolour of sheep. Jeannette Carr also showed great skill in depicting animals,

while Eleanor Longmire fell for a Sicilian cat, Maria Kaleta painted a magnificent peacock and Joan Fiddes Dalley a marvellous bantam. Hazel Fennell produced one of her splendid abstracts, Patrick Killery two very fine portraits and John Schetrumpf a powerful figurative study to set one thinking. Anne Bulitis's mixed media works were as fascinating as ever, and the photographs of Isher Dhiman and Joan Bovarnick of Mont Blanc and Lord Holland's winter pond respectively were both a joy; so were the sculptures of Ann Neimer and Patricia Collins, notably the latter's bronze hares. Marianne Moore presented some amazing stained-glass freesias, Lujain Razouki some remarkable tiles, and Sheri Rahmanian a selection of jewellery that was dying to be worn.

The work which added the most vitality to the whole vibrant exhibition, however, was Joan Fiddes Dalley's striking portrait "Punk still rocks".

Alison Beckett



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Leighton House Museum, the home and studio of Frederic Leighton, and one of the most remarkable buildings of the nineteenth century, was reopened to the public on 3 April after an 18-month extensive refurbishment programme. The interior décor of the



The dining room. Photo by Justin Barton

Difficult Problems Solved

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house has now been reinstated, as far as possible, to what Lord Leighton had originally intended – as a backdrop to his large collection of furniture, ceramics, woodwork and paintings, amassed during his travels. For example, the wallpaper in the drawing room is now brown to match the colour of the landscapes by Corot in the four large panels flanking the bay window – now copies, since the originals were sold after Lord Leighton's death.



The Arab Hall. Photo by Justin Barton

Particularly awe-inspiring among other restoration work is the repainting of the patterns onto the dome above the Arab Hall and the new gilding with gold leaf worked carefully around these.

A continuous video presentation in the annex to the studio gives some idea of the scale of the work, including the repair of floor mosaics in the Narcissus Hall, the weaving of the green silk wall-covering for the Silk Room, the painstaking restoration of the picture by Lord Leighton, "The Death of Brunelleschi", and much more – but go and see it for yourself.

Kathleen Hall

The museum, at 12 Holland Park Road, is open 10am to 5.30pm daily, closed Tuesdays.

Tel. 020 7602 3316. www.leightonhouse.co.uk

John Watkins, Head of Gardens and Landscape in the Conservation Department of English Heritage, said he was delighted to be in Holland Park again: 30 years ago he had lived nearby. He was in the Orangery on 11 February describing to us, with many illustrations, the reconstruction into its Elizabethan form of the garden at Kenilworth Castle in Warwickshire. It is one of the oldest gardens to be reconstructed, and finding out how the garden had looked in 1575 was like a detective story or a jigsaw puzzle. We were shown Turner's painting of the castle, representing it as a picturesque ruin. Originally well defended with a Norman keep, and surrounded by mere and bog, it was given to Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, by Queen Elizabeth I. Dudley added the "Renaissance Wing", and it is thought that he made such changes, and had the garden newly designed, to impress his Queen, whom he probably hoped to marry and who often visited and inspected the work.

After the Civil War the castle was made "indefensible": the mere drained, the keep demolished and, unfortunately, the garden was destroyed. In the 1970s a garden of hedges was reconstructed, but based on a plan of 50 years after Dudley's garden. With the help of a grant from the Wolfson Foundation, English Heritage undertook the restoration of the Elizabethan garden. A geophysical survey and the digging of trenches uncovered boundaries, a terrace, the foundations of the Elizabethan fountain (and even a mediaeval tilt yard). Letters by Robert Laneham, a mercer at Dudley's court, written to another mercer, describe the appointment of the garden. The terrace sported white bears perched on spheres and had an arbour at each end, each quarter of the garden had a porphyry obelisk at its centre (or, more likely, a wooden one painted to look like porphyry, which was extremely expensive), there was an aviary and, the crowning glory of the garden, a marble fountain in the form of a statue of two atlants*, back to back, holding up a globe from which jets spouted water. Scenes from Ovid's *Metamorphosis* were carved into the panels

around the plinth of the fountain, but Laneham only describes five out of the eight panels, so the restorers had to choose some sea scenes from Ovid's work to fill the gaps. As there was no record of the importing of such a statue, it is assumed that it was hewn in England. Laneham describes what it was like to be in the garden among the scents of flowers and strawberries (the latter grown as edging for the plots), the fluttering of birds, the streaming of water from the fountain.

Knowing what flowers would have been grown, and which colours of those flowers would have been available in 1575, involved a lot of careful research. Contemporary paintings, dress materials and tapestries depicting flowers were consulted. Plants



were by the sixteenth century regularly imported from Italy and the Ottoman Empire, and some were beginning to come from America. So there would have been pinks, carnations, gilly (wall) flowers, stocks, sweet rocket; the hedges might have been mixtures of sweet briar and field rose; and the climbing musk rose would probably have decorated the arbours.

Kenilworth Castle Garden is now the largest Elizabethan garden in existence. John Watkins told us that it is open all year round, but in winter the fruit trees and the fountain are wrapped in protective fleece. He gave us a fascinating and detailed description of the tremendous work done to restore this historic garden.

Joy Puritz

*an atlant is a support sculpted in human form



Pigs in the Arboretum

As you might have read from the notices on the fence of the arboretum, 95% of wild-flower meadowland has been lost in this country, and many native wild flowers are in decline. Park management are doing their best to save some meadowland – so important for the support of birds, small mammals and insects. Nettles and brambles were choking the arboretum, and who better to dig it all up than a



Photo by David Jeffreys



Bulb-eating squirrel

Photo by Monique Willems

British Saddleback sow and her three piglets – a hardy breed noted for its grazing abilities. As you know, pigs like nothing better than to stick their snouts into the ground, turn it over and sniff out tasty snacks such as roots, fungi and earthworms. Luckily they don't like the taste of bulbs (unlike squirrels), so leave these, if turned and somewhat "chipped". The result is that there will be fewer flowers this summer, but in the long term the bulbs will be reinvigorated. The pigs will not be an annual feature, but they might possibly be moved to other parts of the Park.



The Birds of Holland Park

**Thursday, 28 October,
7pm in the Orangery**

Last year David Darrell-Lambert was commissioned by The Royal Borough to carry out a survey of the birds frequenting Holland Park. This year he is our guest speaker at The Friends' autumn evening event.



David Darrell-Lambert

David is currently Chairman of the Ornithological Section of the London Natural History Society and Chairman of the Records Committee. Since 1988 he has undertaken a variety of bird surveys in urban parks, coastal sites and heathlands, covering nocturnal species, winter

wildfowl counts, high-tide roosts and breeding populations. In 1991 he began illustrating the London Bird Report and then became a local bird recorder. For the last eleven years he has led groups of birdwatchers around various parts of London, Essex and Hertfordshire, ranging from four to eighty people. He has expanded his identification skills to include butterflies and dragonflies, adding to his strong knowledge of British wildlife. Photography plays a large part in these activities, and his photographs have been published in a number of specialist journals. He has travelled widely at home and abroad in pursuit of his interest.

His talk to us will cover the importance of Holland Park as a bird habitat, what species were present at the time of his survey, and their numbers, plus the future of the site. All the species will be illustrated by his own photographs and, where possible, by recordings of their songs.

Tickets costing £12, to include wine and canapés, may be obtained using the enclosed order form.

What do you do to amuse and occupy lively five to ten-year-olds over the half-term break and even more so when the school holidays arrive? The Holland Park Ecology Centre has the answer with its regular holiday activity programmes, which are not only fun but teach practical skills as well. Since these activities take place throughout the year, children learn what to look out for in the different seasons: bird nesting in the spring, the many kinds of flowers to be seen in the park throughout the summer, and the signs of autumn in the wildlife area.



*Matthew Rose with pond dippers
Photo courtesy of The Ecology Service*

There are plenty of opportunities for hands-on experience too: children can learn practical conservation techniques by digging in the wildlife area or weaving, using natural objects and recycled materials. All children enjoy pond dipping and handling creepy-crawlies of all kinds, exploring the world of wriggly worms, slugs and snails. The half-term programmes, which were started over ten years ago, now attract about 160 children over the week; in the case of the under-eights they have to be accompanied by an adult.

This year the spring holiday activity programme included two half-day courses (including a picnic lunch) for eight to twelve-year-olds. One was a very popular Bushcraft Course teaching outdoor survival skills including shelter building, tracking and orienteering (look to your laurels, Ray Mears!). The other course, called Minibeast Mayhem, consisted of hunting for invertebrates in the wildlife area and helping construct a new habitat for bugs, beetles and other creepy-crawlies.

Lastly, there is also an Ecology Club, which is open to children from eight to fourteen, and which meets once a month to participate in activities exploring the natural world. So, in this the International Year of Biodiversity, the Holland Park Ecology Service is celebrating not only with a wide range of activities and talks for adults, but is also focusing on children, the conservationists of the future. Now they can learn about the natural world around them and have fun at the same time. So there is no excuse for them to be bored over the holidays.

Kathleen Hall

Please see "Dates for your Diary" on p.11 for contact details.

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Many readers will know the outline of the story of the Wollemi pine, *Wollemia nobilis*, how in 1994 a few trees were found by a Mr Noble at the bottom of an almost inaccessible gorge in the mountains 200 km north west of Sydney. The precise location remains a closely-guarded secret. Two other groves bring their numbers up to about 100 of which the tallest is 40 metres. What made this discovery so exciting was that the trees were otherwise only known from the pollen of their ancestors – and that went back 90 million years. They certainly overlapped with the dinosaurs, and scientists think they may well have been browsed by them. Hence one colloquial name is “pinosaur”.

One might expect that, as with the “living fossil tree”, the ginkgo, the Wollemi pine would be in a family of its own. Though it is the only species in its genus, it belongs to the family *Araucariaceae* whose members are many and widely spread and with very varying forms. The best known in this country is the monkey puzzle, *Araucaria araucana*, with its leaves both fleshy and spine tipped. From Australia is the untidy-looking bunya-bunya pine, *Araucaria bidwellii*, with its irregular branches and clumped leaves. In contrast the Norfolk Island pine, from a tiny island in the western Pacific, makes a very regular pagoda shape with its widely-spaced branches almost horizontal and then slightly ascending. The scientific name, *Araucaria heterophylla*, refers to its juvenile leaves, and it is planted round the tropics for its striking form and ability to stabilise sand. The giant Kauri pine, *Agathis australis* of New Zealand is also of the same family, and Eastern Australia has at least two other araucarias each with its own typical shape and leaf arrangement.

The discovery of the Wollemi pine was a scientific coup for the Australians, and they were determined to make it available around the world to maximise the species’ chance of survival and to do that in a manner which discouraged poachers from seeking

out the wild ones, and also made a profit for conservation. Distribution was first limited to botanical gardens so that Kew got one in 2004, and in 2006 an auction was held in Sydney when commercial growers from all over the world could bid by telephone. The first of these in the UK was Tregothnan Gardens in Cornwall. By now the trees are plentiful enough that Tregothnan sold 150 of them in 2008 as Christmas trees. When young they are just the right shape but mature trees are usually multi-stemmed with the trunks entwining. The first trees at Kew and Wakehurst were clearly signposted

and stoutly fenced and netted to protect them from vermin, finger blight and simple theft. However, if you go to one of the more remote parts of Wakehurst, you might find a grove, unlabelled, growing away strongly.



Wollemi pine

Although the Australian trees were found in a warmer climate than ours, their ancestors survived rather as do present-day Alaska’s. Their buds have a “polar cap” which might protect them from frost. They can be propagated by cuttings but, in common with some other members of their family, cuttings taken from horizontal branches continue to grow sideways and might never

acquire an upright trunk. So Tregothnan was excited when its first tree produced female cones a couple of years after first having male ones. Only problem: the female cones ripened two months after the male. So the garden is experimenting with freezing the pollen and bringing it out when the females are ready. Someone will soon try and hybridise with it.

With a species as special as this, you will not be surprised that Holland Park has a specimen of its own, even if it is only two feet high – about double what it was a year ago. You can see it from one of the paths but cannot get up close to it for its own protection. If you can tell me correctly where it is, I will give you your own escorted visit to examine it closely.

Rhoddy Wood



All FHP events in the diary are printed in **bold**. Our bird/nature walks (BNW) will continue to take place on the first Saturday of each month (except August) under the direction of our knowledgeable and informative guide, Ian Thomson. Meet him at Lord Holland's statue at 9am. The walks are free and everyone is welcome, not just Members, so please come and encourage your friends: they might become Members too! We recommend you bring binoculars if you can – they make such a difference.

Events organised by the Ecology Service of RBK&C are listed as "ES"; unless otherwise stated they are free of charge, meeting in the Ecology Centre (Stable Yard). It is advisable to ring the Ecology Centre on 020 7938 8186 or e-mail ecology.centre@rbkc.gov.uk for details of any changes, for further events or, especially for the children's activities, to check whether they are fully booked or not.

Wed 23 June	ES. Adult minibeast hunt (National Insect Week).	7pm
Sat 3 July	BNW	
Sun 4 July	ES. Summer wildlife area open day. At the wildlife area.	2-6pm
Fri 9 July	ES. Moth walk with Tim Freed.	9pm
Wed 14 July	ES. Introduction to native trees walk.	6.30pm
Tues 20 July	Pimm's in the Park . In the youth hostel garden, £12.	6-8pm
Mon 26 July to	ES. Holiday activities for 5-10 year olds, £3.60 per 2-hour,	
Fri 3 Sept	£7.20 per 4-hour session. Booking required.	10-noon; 2-4pm
Tues 3 Aug	ES. Summer tree walk with Alan Harrington.	7pm
Wed 11 Aug	ES. Bat walk and talk (London Bat Group).	8pm
Fri 3 Sept	ES. Wild night out, £3.60 per child. Booking required.	7pm
Sat 4 Sept	BNW	
Wed 15 Sept	ES. Bat walk and talk (London Bat Group).	6.30pm
16, 23, 30 Sept	ES. Nature photography course with Bruce Tanner and Graeme	
and 7 Oct	Harris, £25 for 4 weeks. Bring a digital camera. Booking required.	6-8pm
Sat 2 Oct	BNW	
Sun 17 Oct	ES. Autumn wildlife open day. At the wildlife area.	12-4pm
Sat 23 Oct	ES. Fungi foray with Mark Spencer.	2pm
Thurs 28 Oct	The Birds of Holland Park , an illustrated talk by	
	David Darrell-Lambert (see p.8). In the Orangery, £12.	7pm
Sat 30 Oct	ES. Autumn tree walk with Alan Harrington.	11am
Sat 6 Nov	BNW	
Sat 4 Dec	BNW	
Sun 12 Dec	ES. Winter wildlife open day. At the wildlife area.	12-4pm
Sat 18 Dec	ES. Winter tree walk with Alan Harrington.	11am

Opera Holland Park



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

Pelléas et Mélisande by Debussy:

June 1, 3, 9, 11, 16.

Carmen by Bizet:

June 2, 4, 5, 7, 8 (Charity Gala), 10, 12, 15, 17, 18, 19.

Don Giovanni by Mozart:

June 28, 30. July 2, 4 (matinée), 6, 8, 10, 12, 14.

Fidelio by Beethoven:

July 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13.

La forza del destino by Verdi:

July 27, 29, 31. August 4, 6, 10, 12, 14.

Francesca da Rimini by Zandonai:

July 30. August 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13.

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but isn't. They are able to take the weight off your shoulders and add significant value in the process. To sum up: they get better results.

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