

FRIENDS OF BATTERSEA PARK

REVIEW

Leisure & Culture Contract

Pages 5 & 14

parkrun

Pages 5 & 8

£1

Issue 112 Spring 2019 Free to members


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Review

Spring 2019

Editor Frances Radcliffe
Production Karen Horan

friendsofbatterseapark.org
Registered Charity 802905



Late February and early March are lovely times to be in the Park. When the sun is shining, there is light everywhere and the structures of the trees can be seen clearly and enjoyed. The Park is home to about 4,000 trees with 172 named species, so we have plenty of scope to consider different forms and different barks.

The Friends are aware that considerable effort is made to secure good succession planting. There are many fine mature trees which may last for decades. However, they can be subject to the vagaries of the weather, as when the black walnut near the Albert car park lost a major branch in a storm, or can succumb to old age, as did the plane tree by the Pear Tree café.

Your Committee have not been as diligent as the Park's arboriculturalists over our succession planning! At last year's AGM, I announced that this would be my final year as Chairman after 11 years.. We need a new Chairman urgently and are looking outside the Committee. An enthusiasm for the Park is the key requisite, and a keenness to work with the friendliest Committee I have ever known. Under our constitution, we can also co-opt three more Committee members. If you think that you can help in any way, not necessarily by joining the Committee if that isn't your thing, then please email media@friendsofbatterseapark.org

Succession planning in terms of managing the Park is also an issue. On page 10, Valerie Selby pays tribute to Kevin Freed who is retiring after some 30 years' service. His knowledge and expertise have been invaluable. New talent is of course available and Neil Blackley has quickly got to grips with his Head of Parks post. The tendering of Wandsworth Council's Leisure and Culture contract, currently held by Enable, adds a further element of uncertainty. In all this, it is clearly very important that the Park is managed efficiently and effectively.

The next Friends' event is our lecture on bees on 25 March. This is a fascinating subject. Please see the enclosed leaflet and buy your tickets now!

Our main fundraising event is our annual BBQ on 11 June which offers something good for everyone, of whatever age. Please don't miss it!

Finally, the Winter Garden is looking wonderful. Snowdrops, daffodils, hellebores and much more are in flower. It is very well worth a visit.

Cover Image:
Hybrid strawberry tree; read more on p.5.

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Parks Police

Non-emergency incidents	101
Patrolling mob:	07500 959442
General Enqs.	020 8871 7532

Parkwatch

The new garden at Chelsea Gate

How very splendid that 2018 began with the opening of the Promontory Garden at the west end or the River Walk and ended with the completion of a new garden at its east end. The garden is between Chelsea Bridge and Chelsea Gate has been funded by Cadent Gas as part of restoration work after they took over the area during the building of their tunnel under the Thames.



The garden was designed by Caroline Druon from LUC with the specific intention that it should be robust, low-maintenance, good for bees and other pollinators, and provide colour all year round.

Litter blowing in from behind the bus stop has become a conspicuous problem. It was previously partly hidden by the nettles. It is hoped that adding some mesh behind the railings will help to address this problem.

Winter Garden

Dan Pearson's annual review took place on 7 November.

Dan fully understood why Thrive had found the Winter Garden difficult to manage in the challenging conditions of 2018 with a long, cold winter followed by an exceptionally hot and dry summer. There had been more losses than usual, particularly amongst the luzula at the east end of the garden. He expressed his gratitude to Thrive and praised the commitment of the team for the evident care that they had taken to maintain the garden. He also said how much he appreciated being able to carry out annual reviews organised and funded by the Friends.

This year, Dan decided that any silver birches that had failed should not be replaced and that the experiment of using prickly plants rather than fencing along the entrance path should continue. He recommended complete replacement of the luzula at the east end of the garden and bulking up of the viburnum in the south east quarter, which has been a difficult area. Solutions were suggested for various bare patches, such as bringing forward luzula and epimedium at the entrance by splitting plants, with new plants under the elm. He also suggested bringing mahonia, which has proved successful, into the central space north of the oval to give additional long-lasting colour.

Many people will be delighted that at the end of his visit, he suggested planting some primroses in a cluster next to the fence along South Carriage Drive and some cyclamen under the Persian ironwood trees in the oval.



The usual aim is to have all replanting completed by Christmas. Planting is delayed this year but should be completed shortly.

Ladies' Pond

Nothing further to report. Estimates are still being sought to re-line the pond in order to deal with the leak. The work would be complicated because the site is difficult. There is little room for access and it would be important not to damage bankside vegetation. Moreover, the spoil would need to be removed from the Park.

Russell Page Garden

The Russell Page Garden remains a challenge. We have high hopes for the roses this year after the beds were completely refurbished by the Friends. However the work done to replace missing or damaged coping stones has fallen well short of what is needed. The good news is that Enable are on the case and Head of Parks, Neil Blackley agrees that more work is needed to find matching concrete slabs and to secure the underlying walls. We await further developments.

The topiary chessmen are looking horribly hairy but a radical reshaping trim is proposed for the spring with an annual late summer or early autumn trim thereafter. For information on Russell Page's design principles, turn speedily to page 12.

Work carried out using funds from Formula E

We understand that there may be as much as £70,000 remaining from the Formula E funding allocated to the Park, mainly because work on reconfiguring and resurfacing the paths north of Albert Gate was less expensive than expected.

There is no progress to report as yet on the Cascades restoration feasibility study for which £50K was allocated. Until this is done, there can be no grant application and this and the £110K held back for use as match funding will remain in hand.

Dogs

There is a happy story on page 17 about Danny, the dog from Cuba who was feeling the cold. There are less than happy recent stories about two other dogs, although in both cases, they have returned to full health.

Jack, a young, enthusiastic and large cockapoo, dashed out for a glorious run

on Christmas day while the lunchtime turkey was cooking. He returned to his family limping and bleeding heavily having trod on piece of glass. Luckily, one of the family was strong enough to carry him home. He was driven at once to an emergency vet who stitched him up. He was collected in the evening and had made a full recovery some three weeks later.

Poppy, a Jack Russell was badly injured in December by a man on skis with long black ski poles. She was chasing after him, attracted by the noise, when he struck her with one of the poles causing a severe puncture wound on her back.The man concerned continued on his way, unaware of the damage he had caused. The incident was reported to the Parks Police. After hefty vet's bills, this dog too has made a full recovery.

Latest news on the contract currently held by Enable

The Council's contract with Enable for Leisure and Cultural services was due to end on 30 September 2019. A report was presented to the Council's Community Services and Open Spaces Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 7 November, and subsequently approved by the Council's Executive. The Council decided to extend the current contract until 31 March 2020 to provide more time for new contract arrangements to be made. The scope of the current contract has been revised, with the arts service coming back into the Council, and other services to be tendered in lots. Notice of tender and specifications will be issued shortly, with a final decision on the award of a contract or contracts later this year.



Daffodils in the Winter Garden

parkrun

Following discussions between the Council and the group's local organisers, parkrun could begin staging its events in Battersea Park on an initial trial basis. The Council sought the views of the Friends and these are set out on page 8 with thanks to all those who contributed. We took a neutral position.

The Council is now minded to give the initiative an 'in principle' approval. Further clarification of details is still required before any events can be staged.

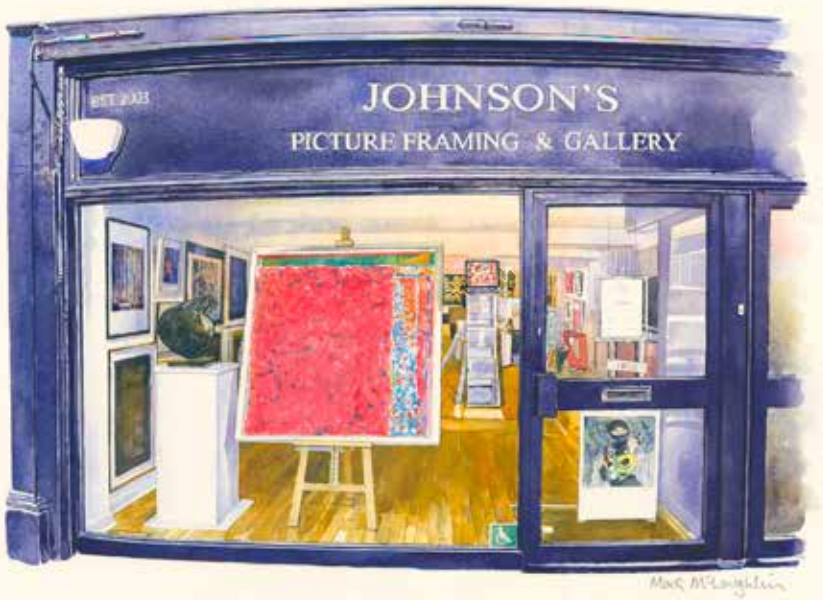
The proposed route for the 5km Battersea Park run could begin at the Bandstand and would use the carriage drives in the southern half of the Park. Runners would complete two circuits.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Inspector Steve Biggs advises that the aim is to begin this new system into force in March.

Hybrid strawberry tree (our cover)

This tree (Arbutus × andrachnoides) at the west end of the Ladies' Pond is believed to be the largest in the UK. It features in the Monumental Trees of the UK and was awarded its green plaque in 1997.



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The joyful blossoming . . .

Sophie Campbell

"Oh, we made plenty of mistakes," says Annabel Partridge of the Pear Tree Café, looking at her co-chef/owner, Will Burrett, who is nodding wryly, "We used to read the Google reviews at meetings and it was grim." She thinks for a minute, sitting in the elegant brick, glass and concrete drum by the boating lake in Battersea Park, originally designed for the London County Council by H A Rowbotham in the late 1930s and cunningly adapted by 31/44 Architects into a light-filled meeting place, dog-friendly café, summer gelateria, outdoor bar, entertainment space and pop-up fine dining venue.



She and Will met as sous chefs at Skye Gyngell's restaurants, Petersham Nurseries in Richmond and later Spring, over the river in Somerset House, cooking for well-heeled foodies. "We started here with squid, or pigeon and beetroot purée, that sort of thing," she says, "The food has really changed - smashed avo, buttermilk pancakes with bacon marinated in paprika and maple syrup, scrambled eggs with extras are all really popular. It took us a while to realise that what we needed to be was brunchy."

I reviewed the Pear Tree for Telegraph Online just as it opened. Like most Park-users I was thrilled to see the building coming to life again after a decade or so as a wasted opportunity beside the lake that dominates the south-east corner of the Park. And I loved the food – but was worried about the fine-dining menu, not to mention the prices. Once the launch excitement was over, this was a café which, to non-locals, would seem impossible to get to – you needed, still need, to drive, walk or get a bus.

The market, in the end, was going to be us: the people living around the Park, young parents with kids, dog-owners, older residents and freelancers like me, many of whom were prosperous but many of whom were not. It was too much Made in Chelsea and not quite enough Made in Battersea.

I emailed the website, expecting to be ignored or rebuffed and to my amazement got a courteous reply saying that they had already changed down a gear with the menu. I then sent mates along for dinner with their teenage daughter: they loved the food but said they wouldn't go back: it had been busy and they couldn't hear themselves speak – that Art Deco brick drum bounced the noise around.

Another email. Another swift reply. I'm embarrassed to say that I never noticed the sound-damping additions they had made until this interview - I just hadn't heard anyone complaining. Hamish Budge, front of house manager and Annabel's real-life partner, pointed out white acoustic panels discreetly fixed to the white upper walls and acoustic padding hidden under the lip of the horseshoe bar, a free-standing shelf of goodies for sale and plants in hefty tubs, all absorbing the sound of merry diners.

Ah, the merry diners. What has happened to those fine dining ambitions? After all, they left Spring specifically to start a restaurant, at a moment, explains Annabel, that was almost comically disastrous. "There were a lot of foreign investors in town, snapping up everything that came on the market, the prices were insane." She was walking in the Park with her sister when they passed the café. "She said 'You ought to get that'. It wasn't for sale, but I thought about it and went in for a chat. It turned out they wanted to sell and it was actually under offer. So I just said I'd pay more. And here we are!"

They then had 10 weeks to turn it around, on a repairing lease from Wandsworth Borough Council. That turned into three months, partly because, according to Will, they discovered that the extractor fan was holding up the kitchen roof. They launched in October 2016 and three months later the outer ring of the drum was glassed in, as planned, making the space usable year-round and providing an extra layer of insulation without spoiling the lines of the building. A circular skylight brightened it up.

The terrace between the café and the lake has become popular with its rosé bar in summer. Last year's spectacular weather caused problems with service and clearing, to the delight of the local pigeons, so this year there will be a new clearing station so people can dump their own trays.

Budget it is not, though you'd hard-pushed to get coffee anywhere in central London for much less than £2.80, which is what the Pear Tree charges, and food prices are similar to those at, say, the Pavilion in Victoria Park, which also makes all its own food, or to Benugo's park and museum cafes. They are too discreet to say how much the Council charges for the lease, but the rumours I've heard make my hair stand on end. Staff numbers from 40 or so in winter to 75 in summer, mostly part-time.

of the Pear Tree Café

The café is now fully on the map. I've stopped being startled by people from other parts of London – or over the river, anyway – who casually suggest it for coffee. Food fans subscribe to the newsletter and pounce on pop-up fine dining nights, when Will and Annabel can really unleash their creativity. They've got the measure of their audience now: the last one was Burns Night, with hot toddies in the riverside car park and Hamish piping them into the café for posh nosh and the Address to the Haggis.

Timing-wise, they may have cracked it. They've made their mistakes and are in the groove just as Battersea Power Station comes back to life, the American Embassy beds in half a mile downstream and thousands of new residents move into the new blocks of flats to the east of Chelsea Bridge Road.

I love the fact that a corner of the Park has come to life again, a fine building has been rescued by a group of energetic 20- and 30-somethings, their ingredients are largely from nearby or at least from British producers and they're co-operating with other Park businesses such as Putt in the Park with its pizzeria by Go Ape!

Hmmm. Time to put my name on the newsletter and try one of those pop-up dinners.

Pear Tree Café, Lakeside, Battersea Park, SW11 4NJ, 020 7978 1655, www.peartreecafe.co.uk. Kitchen closed on Monday but toasties, salads, pastries etc. available.

Dogs in the Winter Garden

Friends might like to see this exchange of emails on 10 October 2018 between Mark Emery who leads the Thrive team working in the Winter Garden and Neil Blackley, Head of Parks. Please will Friends do their very best to keep their dogs on leads and off the borders in the Winter Garden. Please also have a word with those whose dogs are causing both damage to the plants and difficulties for Mark and Thrive's clients.

From Mark Emery:

Hello,

I just wanted to take the opportunity before the Dan Pearson visit, to raise a topic that has come up before and one I hope we can all agree, we do not want to be the main subject of debate in the short time we have available with Dan himself.

Over the past year a number of gardeners have made complaints or comment about finding dog mess when working in the borders. I have always stressed that it is not their job to clear this and have made it my obligation to get rid of any mess found during the course of our working session. This has worked to a point, but a few gardeners have now raised issues with working on the front border in particular and especially at this time of year when we are clearing 'thatch' from the luzulas and the beds of leaves in preparation for the winter. We seem to be coming across more and more unpleasant surprises.



I do not feel we can ban dogs altogether from the garden and nor would I wish to. What I propose, is that we improve the signage on the entrances to make it clearer what the garden functions as and appeal to the public's sense of moral obligation to keep their dogs on leads and pick up after them. We are running a 'therapeutic' enterprise and with vulnerable individuals with personality disorders, high anxiety, depression and low sense of self-worth. With that in mind I feel it's only fair to provide them with an as inviting and 'safe' space to work in as we can.

I hope these concerns seem reasonable and that with the correct signage it could improve the attitude of those who do not take due care when walking their dogs through the Winter Garden.

Thank you for your time and kind regards,

From Neil Blackley:

Thanks for the feedback. These issues are never nice to deal with so I understand your frustrations. It's a difficult one as there are (generally speaking) many responsible dog owners who use the Park (not just this area) and ensure they clean up after their dogs, but we are unable to address those irresponsible owners by simply adding more or larger signs. I do not believe this will solve the issue when you add that foxes and other wild animals that frequent the Park cannot be controlled in this regard.

We are working on a review of signage within Battersea Park (and other open spaces) and will happily seek your thoughts once we have progressed sufficiently through the process.

Friends of Battersea Park views on parkrun in the Park,

parkrun's proposal*

parkrun organise timed 5km runs open to all, free of charge, at 9am on all Saturday mornings unless for some reason, such as another event, the run has to be cancelled. There are runs at 580 locations in the UK. parkrun have long wanted to organise a run in Battersea Park and have now proposed a circuit in the southern half of the Park. The run would begin and end near the Bandstand. Runners would make two circuits, heading from Central Avenue down West Carriage Drive, along South Carriage Drive and then up East Carriage Drive turning left back into Central Avenue.

Friends' views

In the past, the Friends have opposed parkrun in the Park mainly because of inconvenience to regular Park users, the large number of runners likely to be involved, complications for vehicles at the Chelsea, Albert and Rosery car parks and potential clashes with the many other established events and runs in the Park.

The route now proposed by parkrun avoids runners and cars meeting at the Chelsea and Albert car parks but there would still be cars and runners on the same stretch of tarmac at the entrance and exit to Rosery car park.



The Friends acknowledge that parkrun is a wonderful idea, encouraging people to run and engendering a community spirit. It is well organised, relying on motivated volunteers. The main concern for Battersea Park is the huge—and they could be huge—numbers of people that could be expected to come to the Park and both the disruption that might be caused to those who already use the Park and the number of cars and bicycles that would be involved. On the other hand, the Park, including the car parks, is relatively quiet at 9am on a Saturday morning. All or almost all signs of parkrun would have disappeared by 10am.

Expected number of runners

The Friends consider that parkrun's estimate of the number of people who might come to the Park is unrealistic. The number suggested to us was 350 runners. The Clapham Common run, which began in April 2018, had a record attendance of 640 runners on 3 November with 601 runners on 20 October. Tooting had 643 runners on 3 November and has a record attendance of 817 runners. We accept that the number of runners will fluctuate depending on, for example, whether nearby runs are closed, there is a boost caused by New Year's resolutions or 'tourists' come to try out a run in a new area. Battersea Park is a glorious place and there are no runs immediately north of the river. We would expect there to be well over 600 runners (and rising) from an early date.

We accept that parkrun want their runs to take place at the same time everywhere and to be open to all i.e. no cap on numbers. If runs were to go ahead, there should be a trial period of six months so that the level of disruption to Park users and other factors can be assessed. Given the hardstanding and the width of the carriageways, we would not expect there to be any damage to the ground surface of the Park as a result of the run itself.

Bicycles

Runners are encouraged to bicycle or to use public transport. parkrun are confident that through briefings on the website and marshalling, they can ensure that bicycles are left in the car parks and are not brought into Central Avenue. The Friends do not want to see bicycles tied to the newly painted railings around the Park or to railings within the Park. This is a point of difficulty. The number of bicycles at Clapham Common suggests that at least 10% runners—and we suspect significantly more—come by bicycle. It is certain that more bicycle racks would be required in all three car parks. There is an issue as to who should pay for these racks and any damage caused by bicycles. Would parkrun be prepared to contribute?

Car parks

The Albert and Chelsea car parks fill up quickly on Saturday mornings but the Rosery car park has plenty of spaces before 9am. Most people appear to leave immediately after running

—as submitted to Wandsworth Council on 11 December 2018

which suggests that even if runners come by car, spaces would be available by 9.50am ready for the significant number of people who arrive in the Park around 10am. Those who use the car parks would need to pay for parking.



The short stretch of South Carriage Drive where runners would share space with vehicles entering or leaving the Rosery car park is a problem. parkrun believe that this can be resolved by efficient marshalling and given the low number of vehicles involved, this could work. It should be a precondition that adequate numbers of marshals are available anyway, but especially at this point and the safety of runners, vehicles and pedestrians would need to be kept under review. parkrun would not require the vehicle barrier to be lifted.

Cancellations and funding

There are a large number of regular events in the Park. This gives rise to three issues:

- Many events and runs are organised by or partly for the benefit of charities or by small businesses. The Friends would not wish to see them pushed out by parkrun.
- If there were to be a significant event in the Park, parkrun would need to cancel their run. They should agree in advance to do this without question when requested to do so. The Friends estimate broadly that cancellation may be necessary on up to 30% of Saturdays but this would need further discussion.
- All those who organise events in the Park make a payment to the Park, including charities. parkrun is not a charity. As the Friends understand it, parkrun is not prepared to make a payment. We do not think that an exception to the general rule should be made for parkrun. A way round this was found by Wandsworth Council for the runs organised every Saturday by parkrun on Tooting Common. If it were again possible for the Council to find a solution to this problem, this should be acknowledged by parkrun.

Conclusion

The Friends recognise that a parkrun in Battersea Park could have both benefits and disadvantages, as outlined above, and are taking a neutral position. If a run were to go ahead, it should be on the basis of a six month trial but with an immediate review if (during or after the trial) numbers were to exceed 800 on more than two occasions, significant damage were to be caused e.g. as a result of bicycles locked to railings or there were to be other issues such as major parking problems or inconvenience for local residents. parkrun must agree to cancel runs on particular Saturdays when requested to do so by the Council. parkrun should accept that funding for the Park would need to be provided by them or from some other source, as for all other organised events in Battersea Park. If Saturday runs were to be agreed and were to be a success, Sunday Junior parkruns should be considered. If at any time the Council were for good reason to withdraw parkrun's permission to use the Park, parkrun should accept this with goodwill.

**Paul Cook has clarified that "parkrun do not organise runs and have not asked to organise an event in Battersea Park, but they support local residents who do". Paul Cook, who is a local resident, has been seeking to organise and launch a parkrun for eight years in Battersea Park.*

Friends of Battersea Park Committee

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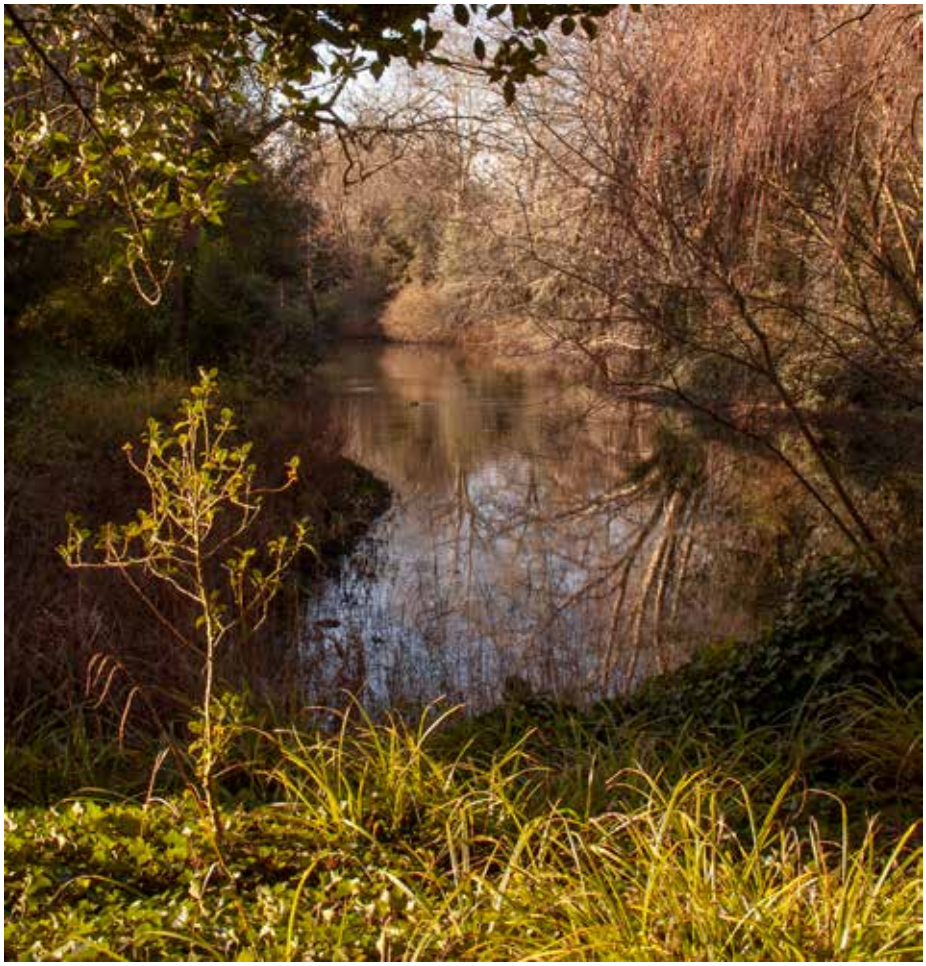

As I mentioned in the last Review, integrated Lakes Management is an approach we have implemented since the 1990s across all the lakes we manage. There are four key factors to consider in the main lake in Battersea Park: aesthetics, biodiversity, angling and boating.

The aesthetics are key here as the planting around the lake needs to be sympathetic to the Grade II* listed status of the Park. During the heritage restoration, large tracts of bankside vegetation were replanted with plants chosen with care to minimise nutrient rich inputs reaching the water, i.e. fallen leaves and debris. Emergent planting was also greatly increased; these are the plants that have their feet in the water but stand tall and proud around the edge of the lake. Their root systems provide a valuable home for invertebrates and breeding fish, whilst the stems provide a route by which dragonflies and damsel flies can emerge into their adult forms. The fence, which has its base in the lake and hugs the bank, reduces but doesn't eliminate the impacts from grazing by birds and it enables the water lilies to survive.

Other planting within the lake includes submerged aquatics such as ceratophyllum demersum (rigid hornwort), myriophyllum spicatum (spiked milfoil) and potamogeton pusillus (small pondweed). These plants are vital to oxygenating the water allowing fish and invertebrates to thrive and supporting aerobic bacteria to break down fallen leaves and other debris.

We struggle to get sufficient water plants established as they are a favourite food of fish and waterfowl. We have had some success by planting within submerged mesh gabions (imagine a closed box made of chicken wire and you are not far short of the idea) so that the planting can reach 1m^3 before it pokes through the box and gets nibbled off. However, with a lake as large as ours, we would need probably hundreds of these to provide enough oxygenation, so we also use mechanical means to aerate the water. You can see our aerators bubbling away across the lake—there are 20 in total—24 hours a day 365 days a year.

Parts of the southern bank have been designed to accommodate fishermen and are the only places from which angling is permitted. These areas have hard surfaced banks with the shrubs and plants pulled away from the edges to minimise the amount of line that might become caught and tangled. If this isn't removed regularly, it can cause problems for birds and mammals. We actively manage the fishery here, surveying for fish health and biomass once every three years with the aim of keeping a balance of species and sizes of fish.

Different species feed in different ways and whilst they are a firm favourite with the anglers, carp and bream are bottom feeders and continually cause the lake sediments to be moved about. This in turn limits the light that can penetrate the water column, thus limiting the ability of submerged aquatic planting to photosynthesise. It is for this reason that we adjust the fish stock (pardon the pun!) as required to ensure that numbers of these bottom feeders are in balance with the numbers of 'silver' fish such as perch and roach. We have also introduced pike into the lake to add to the natural predators, alongside the cormorants and the herons. There are still occasions when the biomass (weight) of fish is more than the 660lb per acre (740kg per hectare) of water we believe the lake can host whilst still maintaining good water quality and for fish health itself. On these occasions we apply for the appropriate fish movement licences to remove the surplus from Battersea Park, rehoming the fish either to our other lakes if capacity allows or to fishing lakes outside the Borough.

The lake in Battersea Park is a popular boating spot, giving a different

perspective of the Park with rowers contained in an area marked by floating barriers to allow an uninterrupted vista. They are not allowed to set foot on the islands as these are key locations for nesting wild waterfowl including ducks, swans and herons.

We undertake water quality monitoring each year, commissioning outside experts to assess our lakes both for issues that might cause concern to humans and for guidance on the quality of the biodiversity supported. In this way we can pre-empt problems such as blue-green algae outbreaks sadly suffered by some other lakes in London. We can also track the progress of the water quality in our lakes at it continues to improve.

The key factor that allows this large lake to accommodate so many different activities whilst continuing to improve in quality, is the water supply itself. We are fortunate to have a borehole bringing fresh untreated water straight to our lake. Following extensive works to the borehole and the pumps across the last couple of years, the volume of flow is now significantly improved allowing the force of fresh water to push through the lake. That movement is also important to improve oxygenation.

For all of the above pieces of the jigsaw to come together, I have been indebted for the past 14 years to my colleague Kevin Freed (pictured here). He has been instrumental in delivering all the biodiversity land and water management within the Park (and indeed across the whole Borough) that I write about. He will be leaving at the end of February to begin an extremely well-earned retirement, although I doubt for one minute he will stop and sit still. He has brought a vast range of skills to the role, merging



background with the knowledge he gained from an environmental degree as a mature student and from many years of practical land and water management, all mixed in with a hefty dose of common sense, tolerance and good humour. I shall endeavour to make sure that new colleagues follow well in his footsteps, but I shall personally miss him tremendously and I suspect the lake and its wildlife will too.

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"The most famous Garden Designer

Peta May Law

Russell Page and Contemporary Garden Design was Liz Rawlinson's topic for the Friends' Autumn Lecture on 29 October 2018.

Liz told her audience of some 50 Friends that she would be talking about, in Page's own words, "the most famous gardener that no-one had ever heard of". Liz herself is a highly regarded designer, having qualified with distinction from the prestigious Inchbald School of Garden Design. She is now a senior tutor at Inchbald and runs her own garden design practice.

Montague Russell Page (1908–1985) was one of the 20th century's foremost landscape architects. Among his famous gardens are those at the Frick Museum in New York City, Villa Silvio in Turin and the Festival Gardens in Battersea Park. The purpose of the last was to make a dazzling break from the bleak rationed world of post-war Britain. Page's design involved masses of colour which he said in his book, *The Education of a Gardener*, "would combine to make all the flower plantings sparkle, shimmer and seem to move in contrast to the bright, flat and static surfaces of paint". Page was



awarded the OBE for his work.

Page's success was built on rigorous early training. When working at the Chateau de Boussy he measured the whole garden and redrew it as he saw it as a model of success. His first major commission was to remodel the estate gardens at Longleat, originally laid out by Capability Brown—who he did not admire. Before WWII he worked on, among other prestigious commissions, the Cheddar Gorge project with Geoffrey Jellicoe, introducing a pool on top of the Caveman Restaurant, considered very cutting edge. Page spent much of the war abroad and was influenced by time spent in India and Sri Lanka. He returned to Britain when invited to design the Festival Gardens in the Park.

Water featured in most of Page's designs. He also favoured hedges, lines and 'rooms' in his design. Flowers were typically used in 'masses'. The gardens in Battersea Park combined all these signature elements.

Liz talked us through the 'Design Language of Russell Page', covering ten points that he believed were key to any successful garden, and illustrating them with examples from current garden designers.

1. An overall masterplan framework—It was important to edit an existing garden to ensure clarity of design. He advocated taking control of the site by drawing it and then making

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it work with the surroundings and purpose of the garden. Page used repetition of planting and continuity of visual language, often achieved with evergreen structure. Liz referred to Jinny Blom's planting and Anthony Paul's work at the Black and White Cottage in the Hannah Peschar Sculpture Gallery in Surrey.

2. Understated and self-disciplined aesthetic—Page strove to achieve 'grand but simple' designs. Liz illustrated this point beautifully by sharing photographs of a Dan Pearson designed walled garden in Oxfordshire, featuring a simple cut-and-fill mown lawn landform surrounded by much softer, longer grass. Tom Stuart Smith's 2008 award winning garden for Laurent Perrier at Chelsea was also cited with its limited colour palette and calm, restrained design.

3. Formality and Austerity—The influence of Page's early years of training, especially in France, informed this design rule. Liz also discussed the restrained and geometrical approach of Luciano Giubbilei, Chelsea gold medal winner.

4. Scale and Proportion with strong geometry—This was illustrated with examples by Del Buono Gazerwitz's gardens in Holland Park and St John's Wood.

5. Large landscapes and long views—Allow for views, but understand that clever framing will better lead the eye. An excellent example of this is Diarmuid Gavin's Irish Sky Garden, which frames the sea and incorporates transparent seating in order not to detract from the view. Andrea Cochran's work in San Francisco, architectural in style and, using simple planting and local materials, dramatically illustrates this point.

6. Incorporate bodies of water—If no water was present, Page always aimed to introduce some, be it a lake, pool, stream, canal or fountain, each creating a distinct atmosphere. Liz showed us examples of Russell Page's Battersea Garden followed by Dan Pearson's round pond and Jinny Blom's rectangular pond. All variations on a timeless theme.

7. Use of hedges as compartments—Here Liz drew on the work of Piet Oudolf and Anthony Paul. Tom Stuart Smith's hedging in a Herefordshire garden dramatically frames the lawns. All are outstanding examples of how dividing up a garden space can enhance the overall design.

8. Transition between spaces—As important as creating spaces, the transition between them can form a key feature. Again, illustrated with designers' use of paths, directional or winding, and the importance of materials, possibly local, that are appropriate to the space.

9. Introduction of trees and plants—Liz talked about having fun when using plants, the idiom of planting in swathes, and how plants can be used as a fashion statement. The chess piece yew topiary in the Russell Page garden is a good example of using plants to have fun while making a statement.

10. Use a painterly touch—Page felt it important to form an artistic composition. Tom Stuart Smith's expressive multi-stem planting with soft grasses below and Piet Oudolf's planting in drifts make up beautiful 'paintings'.

Liz summarised design language as: grammar, being the essential structure; narrative, the visual story told throughout the garden; and poetry, the designer's artistic detailing and embellishment. Russell Page believed that green fingers were the extension of a verdant heart.

Page was a contemporary designer, often ahead of fashions yet rooted in tradition. At the end of a fascinating hour, Liz left us with this provocative question: would Russell Page have been an Instagram influencer?

Wandsworth Council Community Services & Open Spaces,

Future Contract for Leisure and Culture Services—paper 18-399

Friends of Battersea Park Deputation

Speaking note delivered by Frances Radcliffe, Chair of the Friends

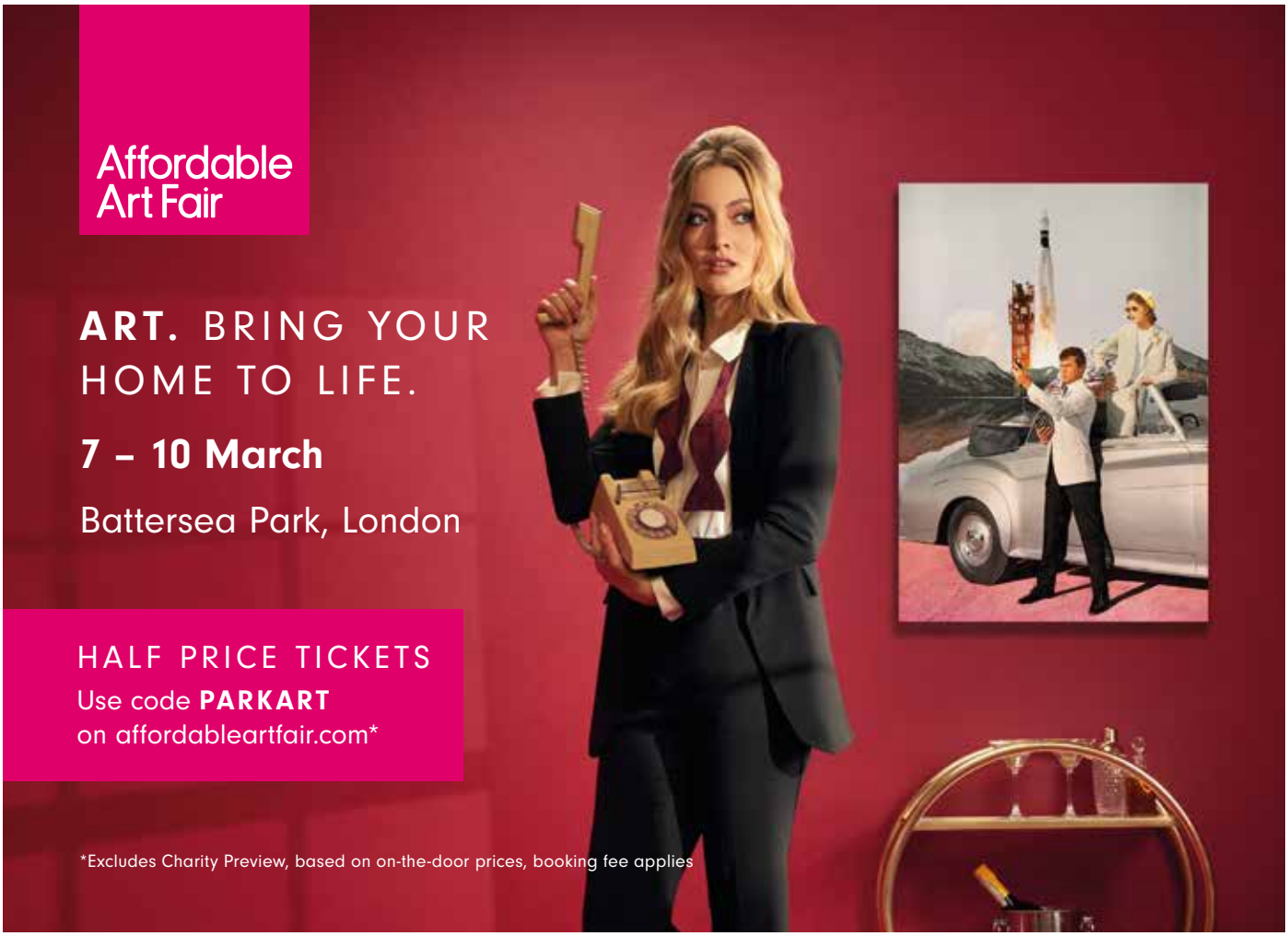
Thank you for agreeing to a deputation from the Friends of Battersea Park

It is good news that there are several Councillors round this table who are Friends of the Park.

The Friends understand why the recommended option is to tender in lots. We particularly welcome that management of parks and open spaces and events are combined in Lot 1. If they were to be in two lots and contracts awarded to two different companies, there would be huge potential for disagreement. Those charged with organising events could easily take less care of the Park and would almost inevitably want more and larger events if they were not also responsible for looking after the Park and trying to maintain a balance between tranquillity, enjoyable entertainment and fund-raising.

For the same reasons, we feel strongly that filming (now lot 3) should also be included in Lot 1. If it is not, there will potentially be a separate organisation wanting to arrange filming in the Park at times that would cause friction with other events. Inevitably, those who bid separately will want to greatly increase the amount of filming in the Park. There are many people who are already uncomfortable at the amount of filming and the number of film vehicles often present in the car parks.

This is a point specific to Battersea Park because almost all filming takes place in the Park but it could easily apply to the other open spaces.



Oversight and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 7th November 2018

Secondly, we do not understand how in practice, management of the ground maintenance contract and of the tree contract could be separated from management of parks and open spaces (paragraph 23). Those managing the open spaces need the flexibility to direct Idverde or the tree contractors to take specific and sometimes urgent actions. For example, the Friends met Dan Pearson in the Park today for his annual review if the Winter Garden. He asked for various plants to be planted and some branches to be removed from three overgrown trees. The Enable staff who were with us can and will make sure that action is taken. They also presumably do a whole lot if boring things like checking invoices and the standard of the work. It is not clear how managing these contracts from the centre would be practical.



Paragraph 28 of the paper refers to the split between price and quality and the development of the specification. This is absolutely critical. It is so important that the quality of the service offered AND the likelihood of it being actually delivered are given a very heavy weighting. We feel strongly that price must not trump quality. The evaluation formula should be carefully balanced so that quality of the job is given a significantly heavier weighting than price. In this respect, we also query whether it is sufficient for Cabinet member alone to approve the specification and weightings.

We think that the proposed six month extension of the Enable contract is sensible and would not object if it was extended a bit further. I should also say that a 10 year contract with a break clause seems much better than the current four year contract.

The last point that we made in our request for a deputation was that the suggestion that grounds maintenance and tree contracts in Richmond be extended to Wandsworth in 2021 without retendering looks unacceptable (paragraph 24). We may have misunderstood what was intended here.

Finally, can I raise the curse of litter? When the next ground maintenance contract is drawn up, it needs to allow for more resources for litter collection.

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Victoriana

Annabel Stein

Queen Victoria and Prince Albert were both born 200 years ago this year. So, to add to the celebrations, I thought I'd explore the notion that Queen Victoria, with her Prince, dined in one of the places that had caught her eye when travelling to open Battersea Park in 1858.

The Woodman opened in 1840 as a beer house but, using poetic licence here, would surely have been a 'must' for the royal couple. It was a stone's throw from the notorious public house, The Raven, frequented by smugglers and other lowlife, far too dangerous for anyone not of that ilk to enter. To reach The Woodman, Queen Victoria and Prince Albert would have crossed the original wooden Battersea Bridge, passed St Mary's Church, incidentally Wandsworth's only Grade I listed building, then parked their carriage at the rear—now its restaurant extension. A friend and I decided to follow this royal trail and fetched up dining in the original area of this low-ceilinged, welcoming pub. I ordered the loin of venison imagining it had been shot by Prince Albert when on a hunting spree—perhaps in Richmond Park. The venison, with sauté potatoes and kale, was very tender though I'd have preferred a pinker version with perhaps a slightly thinner red wine sauce. I followed this with sticky toffee pudding—a true Victorian speciality—which was calorifically delicious. My friend chose the beer-battered cod with chips as she reckoned Queen Victoria would have liked the idea that yesteryear it might have been caught in the Thames. She found the batter slightly greasy but thought the fish (actually from the Atlantic) was great. For pudding she chose a contemporary pot au chocolat. Luckily, as this dessert is based on a recipe for English syllabub it was well within the confines of the Victorian era. I can't vouch for the madeleine although Queen Victoria was certainly partial to sponge. The wine selection was impressive. In solidarity with France's alliance in the Crimean War, I chose a glass of claret whilst my friend, having given up alcohol, stuck to water.

The Woodman Pub & Kitchen, *60 Battersea High Street, SW11 3HX. 020 7228 2968. Open daily for food from 12 to 10pm. Prices range from approx £12 for mains, £5 for puddings, £5 for a glass of wine.*

The Duchess of York, recently renamed ***The Duchess Belle***, opened in 1789. As the incumbents of Buckingham Palace frequently travelled from Victoria Station (opened 1860) to Nine Elms Railway Station and beyond, this public house would have been a doddle to get to. It is rumoured Queen Victoria really was seen there but perhaps this was later when Battersea Dogs Home, of which she was the first Royal Patron, had moved opposite and where her son, the Duke of Albany, came to adopt one of their rescue dogs.



Anyhow, the golfer and I thought we'd see what changes the new management had made. We certainly weren't expecting fabric flowers embedded in the walls, moss under the ceiling, fairy-lit trees, three walled televisions and a pretty white outside patio! The menu was extensive and with the image of hens clucking away in the back yard or in a nearby allotment, the golfer chose Hunter's Chicken. The fillet came with BBQ sauce, melted cheddar, salad and fries (though 150 years ago these would have been called chips). I chose the parmesan (popular since Samuel Pepys' days) crusted salmon with salad and new potatoes (though pearl barley would have replaced the potatoes in the eighteen hundreds). Whilst the golfer had a pint of Victorian ale—two centuries ago perhaps from the local Lambeth brewery, Goding & Co, I chose a glass of South African chenin blanc in memory of the British Empire. We very much enjoyed our meals but as the portions were pub generous, passed on the cheese and retro puddings.

The Duchess Belle, *101 Battersea Park Road, SW8 4DS 020 7498 7611. Open daily for food from 12 to 9pm. Prices range from approx £12 for mains, £6 for puddings, £6.50 for a glass of wine.*

Even with the help of Wandsworth Heritage I couldn't find any more local establishments which Queen Victoria and Prince Albert might have visited as a couple. Sadly, all those which exist around the Park today opened after Prince Albert died in 1861. It just happens that a group of Friends recently ate at the ***Duke of Cambridge***, included as Queen Victoria would surely have been invited to its opening in 1871. Not only was it named after her cousin, but it would have given her another excuse to cross Albert Bridge, which opened the same year, and was named after her beloved husband. My final foray into exploring modern equivalents of Victorian dishes was ordering steak (which in the Queen's day could also have come from Smithfield market) and chips. The steak was tender, though a bit bland, and there was nothing special about the ubiquitous chips. Upon helping myself to a dollop of Colman's mustard to bolster the taste, I remarked to my neighbour that this brand was first produced in 1858 and I wonder if coming full circle in Battersea might have amused Her Majesty?



The Duke of Cambridge, *228 Battersea Bridge Road, SW11 3AA. 020 7223 5662. Open daily for food from 12.00-22.00. Prices range from approx £14 mains, £5 puddings, £6 for a glass of wine.*

Danny from Cuba tells his story

Tatyana Jordan

You may have seen Danny, also known as DanDan, Pudding, Treasure, Monkey etc. wrapped up warmly in the Park, with his mistress Tatyana. Here is his story in his own doggy words.

I was born in sunny warm Cuba, in the town of Havana on 5 October 2017. My hooman mummy came three weeks after I was born, and I loved her cuddles so much I slept in her arms for all three hours. She came and picked me up forever three weeks later. I had my own puppy house, but I liked to sleep with her so every night she used to pick me up and I slept on her chest. We lived in three different houses. I loved it when we lived with my Aunty Tinda who was a doggy just like me. We played all the time and she taught me so many fun naughty things. My favourite was going through the trash and spreading it across the floor. Mmm, yum, all those left overs! We took trips to countryside and I got to ride a horse, chase the chickens and play on the beach. I made so many doggy friends and we used to swim in the sea which was so much fun!

My mummy works on the aeroplanes and when she used to go to work, I was left at the doggy hotel with lots of other doggies. We played all the time and made a lot of mess YEPi! I used to feel so sad every time my mummy left me, I used to cry with real tears. So when she decided to move to back to London, she said she's taking me—I was the happiest Cuban doggy!

It took eight months for my hooman mummy to complete all paperwork. We had many visits to the vet (I can't say I am a fan) who gave me my passport on21 January 2019. In the evening, we took a taxi to the airport. My mummy dressed me in my special doggy onesie and placed me in my special travel crate with my favourite hot water bottle elephant and my best friend toys. We took the plane from Havana to Madrid. Ten hours felt like a looong time. We waited four hours before our next flight from Madrid to Paris; that flight was only two hours and I got to see my mummy who gave me the bestest cuddles of all my life! I had a woollen jumper, a raincoat covering all my four legs, shoes on my paws (shoes on my paws, never seen this before) and a hat! I was wondering what was going on. When we went for walkies I saw this white stuff coming from the sky I had never seen it before it was cold brrrrr. Mummy said it was snow. It was very funny and squidgy to walk in.

On the next day mummy drove from Paris to Calais. It took us five hours with all the crazy rain and snow and our car breaking down but we made it onto the train and 30 minutes later mummy said we are home in the UK whatever that meant but I saw the happiness on her face and knew something very good was happening.

When we got to our new house, I couldn't believe it. I had my own house with my bed and lots of new toy friends. Best of all my mummy took me for a walkie in my favourite new park. It was huge and I loved it sooo much. Battersea Park rocks, I can walk off my leash and make lots of new doggy friends. I ran and ran and had so much fun smelling all these new smells. I really like it in the UK, so far my new home is so happy. I have had a lot of visitors and they all give me kisses and cuddles, I am so important!

This has been my story so far and I hope you have enjoyed it!



Events

MARCH	**Wed to Sunday** 11am to 5pm Pump House Gallery	See *pumphousegallery.org.uk*
	Thursday 7 to Sunday 10 11am to 8pm Battersea Evolution	**Affordable Art Fair** See advertisement on the page 14
	Tuesday 19 10.30am – 12.30 Thrive Main Garden	**Thrive Volunteer Taster Session** Pre-register attendance on 020 7720 2212 or *battersea@thrive.org.uk*
	Monday 25 from 12.15 for lecture 1.00 to 2.00 pm Ethelburga Community Centre 60 Worfield Street SW11 4RA	**The Friends' Spring Lunchtime Lecture** Margaret Murdin, President of the British Beekeepers Association, will talk about the life and life cycle of the honey bee. Buy £6.50 tickets plus optional £5.50 lunch at friendsofbatterseapark.org/eventshome or by cheque to 'Friends of Battersea Park' sent with a sae or 2nd class stamp to FoBP, 11 Elm Quay Court, 30 Nine Elms Lane, SW8 5DE *info@friendsofbatterseapark.org* / 020 7622 5199 Full details in the honey-coloured flyer enclosed
APRIL	**Saturday 6 to Monday 22** **Tuesday 9** **Thursday 11** **Tuesday 16** **Thursday 18** **Good Friday 19** Children's Zoo	**Easter Egg Search** —Entrance +£1.50 inc prize **Hedgehog Day** **Honey Bee Day** **Eggstravanganza Day** **Cocoa Day Fun** **Easter Bunny Day** 
	Tuesday 9 to Sunday 14 Battersea Evolution	**Decorative Antiques and Textiles Fair** See advertisement on back page
	Wed to Sunday 11am to 5pm Pump House Gallery	See *pumphousegallery.org.uk*
	Monday 29 10am to 12 Thrive Main Garden	**Garden Tour by Thrive** Pre-register attendance as above
MAY	**Friday 3 to Sunday 19**	**Wandsworth Arts Fringe**
	Friday 17 10.30am – 12.30pm Thrive Main Garden	**Thrive Volunteer Taster Session** Pre-register attendance as above
	Saturday 18 to Sunday 26 Check website	**Chelsea Fringe Festival** including Thrive
	Monday 20 to Sunday 26	**Chelsea Flower Show week** so car parks busy
	Friday 19 to Monday 6 May 12 to 8pm Boules Area	**Drake's Children's Funfair**
	Sunday 26 to Tuesday 28 Battersea Evolution	**Digital Kids Show** Tickets £35
JUNE	**Sunday 2, Saturday 8 and Sunday 9** 9am to 7pm Boules area and Carriage Drives	**Segway Experience**
	Friday 7 to Sunday 9 Battersea Evolution	**Antiquarian Book Fair**
	Tuesday 11 6pm to 9pm Children's Zoo	**Friends' 14th Annual Barbecue** with live music and children's activities. Adult tickets £18, children £8, four and under free. Book on *friendsofbatterseapark.org/eventshome* or on the white form

JUNE Contd.	**Saturday 15 and Sunday 16** 12 to 7pm	**Live at the Bandstand**—music and stalls TO BE CONFIRMED
	Saturday 22 2pm – 5pm Peace Pagoda	**Annual ceremony with Buddhist traditions** Messages, speeches, devotional music, tea
	Sunday 23 12.45 to 4pm Entries from 10.30am Boules Area	**Wandsworth Parks Police Companion Dog Show and Armed Forces Day**. All dogs welcome. The Friends present a prize for the best trick.
JULY	**Tuesday 2** 7pm for 7.30pm All Saints Church 100 Prince of Wales Drive SW11 4BD	**Friends' Annual General Meeting**
OCT	**Monday 21** Full details will be included with Review 113	**The Friends' Autumn Lunchtime Lecture** Andy Overall, Group Leader of the London Fungus Group, will talk about the Fungi of London Parks.

Some of last year's 'Easter Bunnies' in the Children's Zoo



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