

FRIENDS OF BATTERSEA PARK REVIEW

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New AGM date—Monday 7 September

Issue 116

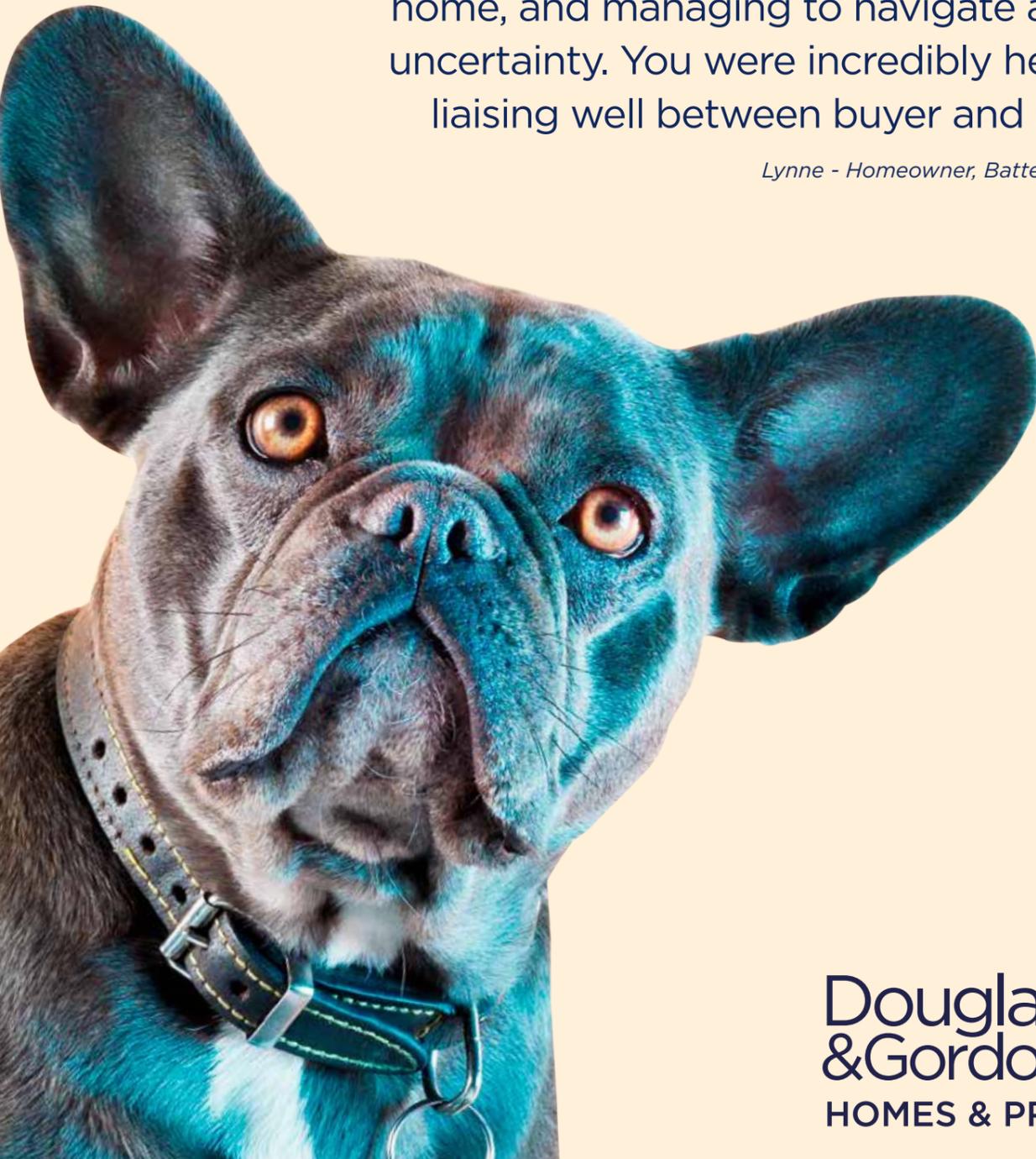
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Review

Summer 2020

Editor Frances Radcliffe
Production Karen Horan



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So much has changed since the last issue of Review was distributed in February. We were concerned that coronavirus was spreading but perhaps not fully aware of the implications. By 29 February, one British citizen had died, a man on a cruise ship in Japan, and there were 23 confirmed cases in the UK, mainly linked to travel to Italy and Asia. By 23 March, the UK was in lockdown.

This issue of Review reflects the seriousness of the coronavirus pandemic. Its effects on individual UK citizens and the economy are impossible to exaggerate. The Park has been a lifeline to many.

The following statement has been provided by Councillor Steffi Sutters, Wandsworth Council's Cabinet Member for Community Services & Open Spaces:

“The pandemic has had an enormous effect on people and resulted in the tragic deaths of more than 200 of our residents. The emotional and psychological impacts are profound and we have done all we can to support our communities during this time. Time and again, I have heard how much people value our parks and open spaces which have played

a key role in supporting residents' well-being during lockdown. It's been a real team effort to keep things going and my thanks to Enable, Parks Police, Idverde, the Friends and so many others for all the work they have done to make this possible.

COVID has had a serious effect on the Council's finances. It is too early to say what the long term impacts will be on budgets, but we have been prudent with our finances over many years and are better placed than most to weather this storm. As part of our long term plans to maintain the quality of life in Wandsworth, we will continue to invest in our green spaces, building upon our reputation for having some of the capital's best loved and best run parks, commons and open spaces”.

Ian Mitchell, Managing Director of Enable, has commented:

“Enable has had significantly to adapt its way of working during the crisis, with reallocation of staff, procedural changes and financial management. Enable is working closely with the Council in the recovery of all activities across the Park when permitted and is confident that, in time, we will be able to provide the same level of service we delivered pre the pandemic”.

Please respond to consultation on parks and open spaces, see end page 4.

Our next events are our AGM, now moved to 7 September, and the Autumn Lunchtime Lecture on 9 November. We hope that both will go ahead and to see you there!

Cover Image: The Peace Pagoda from across the River Thames

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Non-emergency incidents 101

Patrolling mob: 07500 959442

General Enqs. 020 8871 7532

The last few months have been one of the most difficult periods in the long history of Battersea Park. Enable's offices in the Staff Yard have been closed, yet this is the hub of the Management Team looking after the Park. Just outside the gates, Idverde have faced the same problems with staff being furloughed and all non-essential work coming to a grinding halt. Government advice from 23 March was to "stay home, protect the NHS, save lives".

The 'stay home' requirement had a crucial exemption: one hour's exercise outside was allowed.

Battersea Park has been greatly affected both by the 'stay home' lockdown and by its exemption for outdoor exercise.

Litter collections and grass mowing by Idverde continued, but all pruning, weeding and watering ceased. Thrive was forced to close, which has had a dire effect on the four gardens that it manages: on East Carriage Drive, in the Staff Yard, the Old English Garden and the Winter Garden. On top of this, London had the driest and sunniest spring on record.



While care of the Park was at an exceptionally low level, use of the Park increased enormously. Lengthening sunny days brought people out in their droves. This is not at all surprising given the beauty of our Park and the respite it offers to everyone faced with hard times and deep concerns over health, jobs, finance, home-schooling their children and much more. The one hour's exercise was a lifeline for many.

When the one hour limit on exercise was lifted, the Park became even busier. At least this coincided with the return of more Idverde staff. When the Park will return to its former glory remains unclear, but much effort is being made to achieve this as soon as possible.

Closure of playgrounds, cafés and lavatories

It was striking to see playgrounds being fenced off and cafes closed for lockdown. These are two features of life in Battersea Park which mean an enormous amount to many people. The happy sound of children in the playgrounds is one of the keynotes of the Park as is the lure of a mug of coffee for those looking after them. It is good news that the cafés were able to open again in mid-June to provide a takeaway service and that playgrounds will reopen on 4 July. Those in charge of children are strongly urged to follow the guidelines issued by Enable which will be on posters and its website.



The loos in the Park have always been difficult to manage. The consequences of no loos are even more difficult and unpleasant to manage. Well done Head of Parks, Neil Blackley, for the way in which he was able to reopen the loos from 6 June.

Litter



Litter has been a major problem. The combination of excellent weather and many being at home due to closure of places of work and schools vastly increased the number of people using the Park and volume of litter generated. Figures from the Council for all open spaces in the Borough show that the volume of litter was up by 55% in May compared with the same month last year. In response, more wire bins were bought and deployed, and bin collections continued to 10.30pm. But it is never enough.

Consultations

The Wandsworth Public Spaces Protection Order Consultation was extended to 5 July. It included a proposal to extend the current dog control arrangements in open spaces which would otherwise have come to an end in October.

Most importantly, the Council is asking residents, businesses and interested parties for their opinions on public open space in the borough. Please contribute before 8 August! haveyoursay.citizenspace.com/environment/open-space/consult_view.

Cascades

The restoration feasibility study was extended to include a topographical analysis to give a better understanding of any movement in the foundations of the cascades. It has now been completed.

The next stage is to decide what restoration exactly can and should be done, how much it would cost, and what funding would be available. Funds were set aside from Formula E resources ring-fenced for the Park, but these were for the study (£50k) and for a contribution towards the restoration work. The latter, at £120k, would nowhere near cover the total actual cost.



Staff changes at Enable

The Friends were astonished and concerned to learn on 29 June that Enable's Executive Directors Simon Ingyon and Jack Adam were both leaving Enable the following day. They take with them some 45 years of knowledge and memory. Their experience will be greatly missed. We owe them a considerable debt of gratitude.

Volunteering

Many Friends have expressed an interest in volunteering to assist in gardening to help remedy the ravages of lockdown, or

to collect litter. The Friends approached Enable to offer their services. Enable have now responded with a set of guidelines to ensure that volunteering is done in a safe manner and asked that we coordinate with them before undertaking any work. The guidelines are published on our website, friendsofbatterseapark.org. Expect an email shortly.

Bandstand

Work to restore and redecorate the bandstand is underway, funded by Formula E. It should be finished by the time you read this.



Donation

The Friends are delighted to announce a donation of £4,851 received in April from the estate of Jack Curran, an American of many talents and a basketball coach committed to causes benefiting less-privileged children. His nephew, Andy, is a long standing supporter of the Park.

Air ambulance

It is good to know how quickly the emergency services can respond! On 25 June, a large branch fell from a sycamore tree in the Park without warning. An air ambulance landed and three fire engines, two ambulances and the Met Police arrived. A 12 year old boy was treated in the Park but not taken to hospital.

Drinking Water Fountains

Everything agreed: the location, the

design, the funding for purchase (Formula E) and installation (Council) but everything is in abeyance because of Covid-19. The fountains are on order. They are utilitarian to say the least, but are the best available. We tried unsuccessfully to source something more in keeping with the Park.

Birthdays!

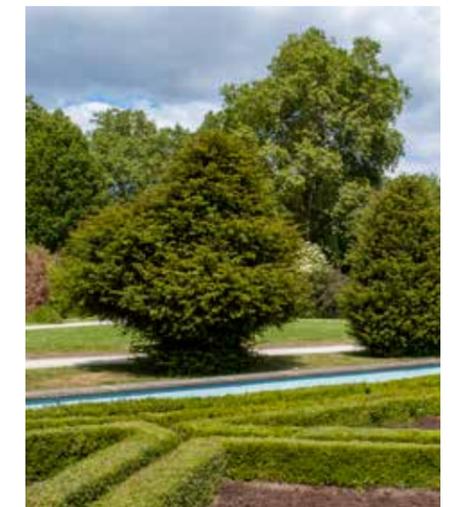
Best wishes to all Friends who have birthdays, especially milestone birthdays, this summer. We hope that you will be able to enjoy a happy, celebratory day with what must, in current times, be only a small number of family and friends.

There are two birthdays which should not go unmarked:

- Elizabeth Hood, our wonderful, hard-working Secretary for many years, will be 90 years old on 21 August,
- Christian Lamb, who featured in the BBC's programme celebrating VE day, will be 100 years old on 19 July. See her website, christianlamb.co.uk for a good read!

Yews in the Russell Page Garden

The Friends have agreed to fund the radical re-pruning and reshaping of the topiary yews which now require more than routine maintenance. The cost is around £2,000. The work will be done as soon as possible.



During the year ending 31 March 2020, there were 6 meetings of the Committee and 68 new members joined the Friends.

On 9 June, the Friends hosted a guided walk through the Park, led by Frances Radcliffe and Mike Bates, as part of the Wandsworth Heritage Festival

On 11 June, the Friends held their 14th annual fund-raising BBQ at the Children's Zoo by kind permission of the owners, the Heap Family. Despite grey clouds it remained rain free until the later stages of the evening. By any standard, it was a tremendous success with £6,656 raised and a record 450 tickets sold. Our thanks to Peta May Law and her BBQ Committee for an excellent event and to all those companies and individuals who made generous donations to support the work of the Friends to benefit the Park.

As usual, the Friends had a stand at 'Music at the Bandstand' on 15 June organized by Enable, which manages the Park under contract to Wandsworth Council. We promoted our work, garnered new members and sold copies of Jennifer Ullman's Battersea Park.

The Battersea Park Dog Show organised by the Wandsworth Council Parks and Events Police Service took place on 23 June and enjoyed record attendance with

the Friends once again being the grateful recipients of a cheque, on this occasion for £831 representing all the profits. Again, as usual, the Friends had a stand at this event.

The Friends also took a stand at the Chelsea Bridge Wharf Summer Party on 30 June. This provided a valuable opportunity to engage with the community in that rapidly developing residential area east of the Park

The Friends' Annual General Meeting was held at All Saints Church on 2 July and, after formal business which included the election of the new Chairman, Garon Watkins and two new Trustees, Alan Meneghetti and Juliet Lyon-Smith, there was a question and answer session with Simon Ingyon, Executive Director, Parks and Leisure from Enable, Neil Blackley, Head of Parks for Enable and Inspector Steve Biggs of the Council's Police Service. An audience of some 45 Friends asked questions on a variety of issues including: monitoring of cyclists in the Park, wheelchair access from Albert Bridge Road, the rose beds in the Russell Page Garden, tree health, idling vehicles, areas of the Park where dogs should be on leads and the laws governing controls on dogs, and the proposal to increase the height of the Evolution Building on the

British Genius Site.

Our popular lunchtime lecture series continued, the autumn topic being Fish in London Lakes by Dave Webb and Kat Tye of the Environment Agency on 21 October. The lecture on fungi by Geoffrey Kibby scheduled for March unfortunately had to be postponed following the imposition of restrictions on gatherings due to the coronavirus. This lecture has been rescheduled for 2021.

The Chairman continued to represent the Friends during the year when the combined Management Advisory Committees (MACs) of commons and Friends of various open spaces in Wandsworth met officers of Wandsworth Council to discuss the new contract for the running of open spaces in the Borough. The contract was tendered in the summer of 2019 with a commencement date of 1 April 2020. MACs and Friends groups were keen to ensure the contractual stipulations would be sufficiently rigorous and their delivery appropriately monitored. The Chairman also represented the Friends at a new group, the Wandsworth Green Spaces Forum, which was established in 2019 to enhance communication between the Council, its contractor, Enable, and MACs and Friends' groups within the Borough.



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The Friends continued to monitor planning matters related to the Park and made a formal and robust objection, albeit unsuccessful, to the proposed increased height of the Evolution Building on the British Genius Site.

Dan Pearson's annual review of the Winter Garden took place on 9 January. He made various recommendations to address bare patches and help with weed control.

During the winter, the Friends lobbied successfully for the return, after many years, of drinking water fountains in the Park, which we believe will significantly reduce both the need for environmentally damaging single-use plastic bottles and the cost of removing them. The Friends had worked with Enable and the Council to agree workable locations and obtain

finance before the coronavirus lockdown disrupted the installation.

Karen Horan produced three editions of our Review magazine which allows Friends to keep abreast of matters relating to the Park and Friends' activities. Our thanks as always to her, the Editor, Frances Radcliffe and the contributors and distributors who give of their time to enable us to produce the magazine at minimal cost. Our thanks also to Virginia Darbyshire, the independent examiner of our accounts, and to Angela McDonald who stepped down as Secretary during the year to be replaced by Juliet Lyon-Smith.

During the last weeks of the year, the coronavirus took hold in the UK resulting in Government restrictions that had a far reaching impact on the Park.

Friends of Battersea Park Committee

Garon Watkins Chairman

- Fenella Barber (*Review*)
- Russ Coffey (*Web*)
- Inge Darling (*Children*)
- Chris Davies (*Dogs*)
- Claire Elliot (*Thrive*)
- Adrian Flook (*Treasurer*)
- Karen Horan (*Review Production*)
- Peta May Law (*BBQ*)
- Juliet Lyon Smith (*Secretary*)
- Michèle Marriott JP (*Events*)
- Sally Orman (*Advertising*)
- Frances Radcliffe OBE (*Review/ Planning*)
- Annabel Stein (*Membership*)

The Park and lockdown

Garon Watkins



In any history of Wandsworth or London for that matter, Battersea Park would be sure to feature. Since its foundation in 1858, the Park played its part in two World Wars, both defending the capital with gun emplacements and feeding the community when turned over to allotments and a piggery. In happier times, the Park was host to the Pleasure Gardens during the 1951 Festival of Britain, a legacy that endures in the Festival Gardens that we continue to enjoy today. In 2020 however, the Park rose to prominence in another dark episode in our history in the form of coronavirus, and while some Friends may have imagined, as I did initially, that this was an issue plaguing foreign shores, it became bleakly apparent in March that it had insidiously and silently invaded our streets and homes and was, day by day, claiming lives in our community.



As lockdown was mandated, Londoners were confined to their homes, not only by Government fiat but increasingly out of a sense of fear that they could become infected or worse could infect someone else more vulnerable, older, frailer. The comparative quiet around the Park, free from the hum of cars and

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planes was punctuated only by the poignant sound of the ambulance siren.

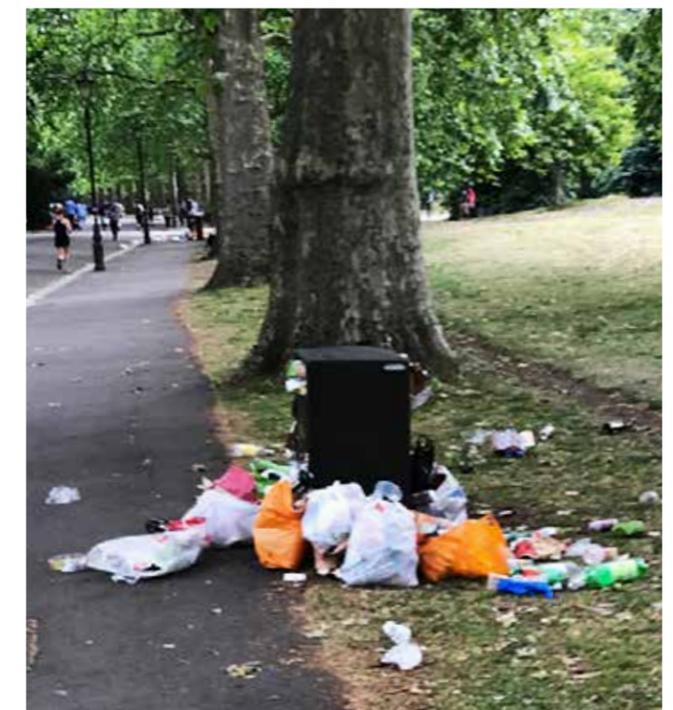
With the promise of a precious one hour's exercise a day, the Park became a source of refuge and relief, a place to get away, a place to walk, think, allow children to run, play, shout and enjoy the colours and wildlife of the emerging spring.

Such was the need for open green spaces across London that some became overrun: social distancing became impossible to achieve let alone enforce, tensions rose as a minority ignored guidelines, police patrols increased, warnings and fines were issued. In response, some councils closed their parks. But Wandsworth Council, recognising the health benefits to a confined and stressed community, resolutely determined to keep Battersea Park open. There was palpable gratitude in the community and the Friends received many emails and letters expressing this and thanking the staff and all involved for allowing access to our precious Park despite the very challenging circumstances.

This commitment was not without its problems. Like all organisations, the dedicated staff who run the Park were no less affected than others in term of illness or safely getting to

work. Commercial survival meant Thrive had to furlough staff and close so the Winter Garden and the Old English Garden were left untended.

More serious problems emerged in May as unseasonably warm weather beckoned housebound residents, furloughed workers and home-schooled children to the Park. Litter became a major concern. For the month of May the volume of litter across the Borough parks increased by 55% compared to the same period last year; much of this was left in the Park in the evenings after litter collections, only to be strewn around by foxes, birds and dogs off leads. Park Management responded with longer shifts and more bins but the reality is that allocated financial resources are not infinite.



What has become abundantly clear during lockdown, if it wasn't already, is that the value of parks and green spaces to communities cannot be taken for granted. The health benefits both mental and physical of facilitating exercise, social interaction and recreation for all in our community far exceed the maintenance costs of our parks and open spaces. Proper provision of green spaces can lead to savings in other areas such as the NHS and social services. As Friends of Battersea Park we need to ensure that this point is made clearly and robustly to the Council as they grapple with multiple competing financial priorities. A consultation for residents has recently been issued on the Wandsworth Council website (wandsworth.gov.uk) and is open until 8 August. Can I encourage all Friends to respond to ensure that the value our parks and open spaces bring to our community is met with commensurate funding.

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Sharing our spaces—impacts on

Valerie Selby, Enable's Parks Development & Biodiversity Manager

During this unprecedented time, we have all realised how precious it is to have access to free public greenspace for our health and mental wellbeing, and to feel we are part of a place shared by others, even if those interactions have changed substantially. What we as land managers have seen over recent weeks is that where this greenspace is of high quality and includes varied landscapes and habitats, as in Battersea Park, it is understandably more popular than smaller, doorstep spaces. This was particularly evident at the time when people were allowed only limited outside access and needed to find places within walking distance to stimulate and soothe.

What is often overlooked is that we share our treasured greenspace with millions of other creatures apart from our fellow humans, and in our rush to be outside we are affecting them significantly. The result of many more people trying, in most cases, to adhere to social distancing guidelines, has led to almost every square centimetre of the Park being walked over, cycled through or sat upon. And all of this has come at a time when we have had an unusually dry spring. April showers usually bring both welcome water and a brief respite for our wildlife from constant public activity.

Colleagues who manage nature reserves in Surrey with limited public access have reported that grass yield has dropped to 70% of that in a normal year, solely because the extremely dry weather has restricted grass growth. Our grasslands and meadows are similarly affected, intensified by the compaction of the ground caused by trampling and picnicking. Looking below ground for our first example, studies have shown that earthworms are affected by above ground trampling and compaction with a consequent reduction in numbers and individual

size. These populations may take many months to recover, but recovery won't start until the pressures ease and our greenspace won't recover until the worms do.

Lack of earthworm activity restricts the root growth of grasses, meaning that the plants themselves become smaller and weaker and more easily ripped out of the ground. With fewer grass plants to hold the soil in place with their roots, the dustier our parks will become in dry weather; noticeable when grass mowers are followed by a large cloud of dust. Grasslands will also be far more susceptible to fire damage this year; the ground being hard and dry, fires will travel below ground as quickly as above. It's easy to forget that in these conditions, a dropped cigarette stub or an abandoned glass bottle is just as likely to start a fire as a barbecue.



Photo: Jamie Baker, Battersea Park Zoo
Stag beetles are a rare sight

When the dry spell is over, compaction from trampling will become obvious in other ways. It is much harder for rain to

wildlife during Covid-19 restrictions

This article was written at the end of May 2020

percolate the soil below and most of it will run straight off into surface drains, particularly if the rain is heavy and falls in short bursts. In the autumn and winter months standing water can be expected in places where it isn't usually seen and the parks will stay wetter underfoot for much longer after the rain stops falling.



Photo: Doug Allison
Goldfinches are shy about where they nest

In our woodland and shrub areas, increased use has meant a corresponding increase in movement and noise, with physical damage from people creating new routes through groundcover. Children moving logs and branches to make dens have a significant impact on nesting birds as well as deadwood invertebrates. The extra disturbance affects nesting in two ways. The more secretive species, such as goldfinches, may well not nest at all although it will be some years before we know how much their numbers have declined. Secondly, if birds have felt confident enough to nest, their ability to feed their young to fledge successfully has been affected, as natural foodstuffs are harder to find because of increased visitor pressure and the dry weather. I have had reports that on Wandsworth Common, thrushes are foraging for food for their young within the playground fences as this is one of the few places where they aren't disturbed and where the ground remains soft enough to probe for food.

Lack of access to food may result in a longer nesting season, with birds perhaps nesting four or five times in the year and later, into high summer and autumn. Overall the population may remain stable if later nesting is successful even if earlier attempts result in a greater number of fledglings starving or dying of dehydration. Again we mustn't forget that the lack of water affects not only plants, but birds and animals too. No rain means no puddles to drink from and not all species can safely use the lakes as a source of water.

The sudden prevalence of den building in our woodlands will, I think, be devastating for deadwood invertebrates such as stag beetles for years to come. Many of these species spend several years as larvae feeding on rotting deadwood and if they are disturbed, they die, although the reduction in their numbers

will not be apparent for several years. In turn, this affects the birds and small mammals that usually feed on them. Rolling a log over carefully to see who lives there and then carefully rolling it back is a good way to educate ourselves and our children about the variety of creatures to be found in this habitat. Picking up the log to make a den or moving it, dropping it, or propping it up so that the damp side dries out, will render these marvellous mini-beasts homeless and quite possibly cause their death through trampling or desiccation.

But it's not all doom and gloom. There have been far more reports of people appreciating nature this spring, seeing or hearing more of many species, from the dawn chorus of birds to moths and butterflies. My own view is that what there is actually more of is time to appreciate wildlife and a greater likelihood of having spent that time in a way that allows people to focus on the experience. Walking alone or with household members may well be a quieter experience than meeting up with a group of friends for an after-work picnic. People are performing spending time in local places rather than travelling afar or abroad at the peak of spring activity. Regular walking through the same spaces allows you to watch the changes unfurl before your eyes. And we have been able to walk perhaps at different times of the day from usual. Not having to squeeze in an early dog walk before we rush off to work and being able to walk later in the morning or in the early evening when we might otherwise be commuting allows us a different encounter with the nature on our doorstep.



Photo: Doug Allison
Mistle Thrush on Wandsworth Common

I also hope this experience has been rewarding for you in some way and that visiting Battersea Park has allowed you some small degree of escape, either physical or mental, during this odd and difficult time. I hope that you will find ways to continue to appreciate and care for the myriad of creatures with which we share our Park.

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Swans in the time of C-19

Jimmy Burns

It's the third week of May and a wonderful early morning in Battersea Park, celebrating the appearance of the first cygnet to hatch this year.



Photo: Jenny Chittenden

For us regular Park users the evolution of the swan colony through the seasons and years has always held pride of place among the wild life that inhabits this historic green space. With the Park providing a mental and physical lifeline during the Covid-19 lockdown, the bonding, mating and hatching of these graceful birds generated growing appreciation; the crafted nest and its occupants, observed in silent contemplation by an expanding Park community, as if transformed into a place of pilgrimage.

The Park regulars knew about the fidelity of the two swans who were with us long before we heard of Covid-19, and had bonded even before maturity. From the moment the grim reality of the pandemic threatened to engulf us, we looked towards the resurgence of spring. Park users found time to observe the swans share their parental



Photo: Mark Hodgkinson

duties, building their nest together and incubating their clutch of eggs over the following weeks, one sitting on the nest while the other foraged for food in the lake and fiercely attacked any predators threatening their chicks.

Wikipedia reminds us of the history

and mythology of swans. Helen of Troy was conceived from the union of Zeus, disguised as a swan, and Leda, Queen of Sparta, the Irish poet W B Yeats waxed lyrical about the swan's mesmerising qualities, St Hugh of Lincoln had a swan as his most devoted follower, while Hinduism considers swans to be transcendental, their chief characteristic that of being in the world without attachment, just as a swan's feathers remain dry while it is in the water.

If the mute swan has long played a special part in popular culture and beliefs, enduring in our collective subconscious, it is perhaps unsurprising that since mid-March we found ourselves reaching out to these beloved creatures in unexpected ways to help us navigate the troubled waters of Covid-19. The habits of these swans, formerly taken for granted by busy city dwellers, took on a new meaning and proved inspirational. The swans have been both a blessing and a series of epiphanies, in the original Greek meaning of the word as a moment of revelation. Observing the swans, we

found ourselves taking time to pause in each other's company, careful to maintain a social distance and yet feeling secure while drawn together by the magnetism of their serene presence and patience: the nest building, incubation and hatching coinciding with the lockdown and

the uncertainty surrounding its gradual relaxation, mirrored by the sad news that three eggs failed to hatch.

The swans have provided an uplifting lesson in survival and regeneration. The disruption to the life we had been used to, the suffering and the death, the dislocation and anxiety provoked by Covid-19, has involved us in a difficult and painful journey, and the swans have helped to make our daily outing to the Park a comforting and reassuring experience. Spending time with them has made me think again of that most famous of Epiphanies, the story of the three 'wise' men following the star to the birth of Jesus the Christ Child in Bethlehem and a day back in the 1950s when as a young boy my late father introduced me to his friend, the poet T S Eliot, as the three of us walked in the Park.

As described in Eliot's poem, *The Journey of the Magi*, it was a journey that was not without hardship and which was characterised by much uncertainty; those travelling, in the words of the poet, no longer at ease with the 'old dispensation', knowing that they were experiencing a kind of death of their previous existence and that if they lived on, their lives stood to be changed, even transformed. The swans, noble sentinels of the lake, have somehow been helping many of us overcome dark moments of fear and doubt.

I celebrate the birth of the cygnets as a good omen.

Three cygnets hatched. And a heron stood two metres away from the swan.

"A Mexican stand off?" enquired my American friend Susanna, as some of us regulars gathered to observe. But there were no apparent signs of hostility, all

present seemingly trusting and respectful. Nature and humanity held in a fragile balance.

Extracts from Jenny Chitterden's Swan Diary:

Friday 17 April—swan standing on edge of nest, four eggs visible.

Monday 4 May—swan not on nest, saw six eggs.

Wednesday 13 May—swan on nest. Pulled bits of nest over the six eggs and

went to stretch her legs.

Friday 22 May—swan on nest. Another swan fan said there were cygnets, and the swan's wings appeared to be spread out as if sheltering them.

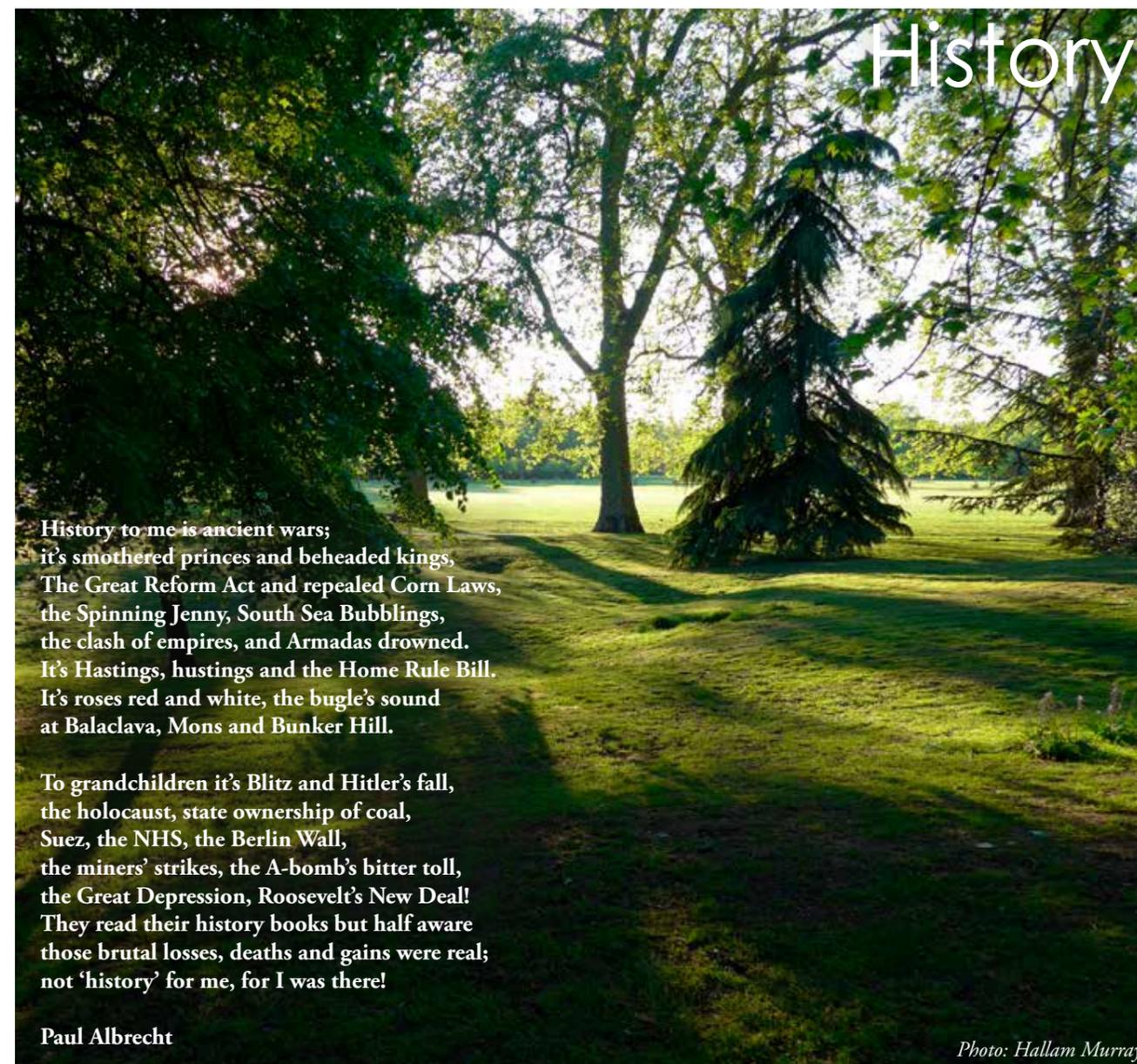
Saturday 23 May—saw swan leave the nest with three cygnets!

Monday 25 May—swan off the nest for at least half an hour, though still three eggs. Both parents and three cygnets on far side of lake, by South Carriage Drive.

Wednesday 27 May—saw two adult swans and three cygnets out on the lake. Still three eggs in the nest.

Thursday 28 May—saw all the swans out on the lake but only one egg in the nest.

Monday 1 June—no eggs left in the swan nest, which was occupied by a mandarin and her ducklings.



History to me is ancient wars;
it's smothered princes and beheaded kings,
The Great Reform Act and repealed Corn Laws,
the Spinning Jenny, South Sea Bubbings,
the clash of empires, and Armadas drowned.
It's Hastings, hustings and the Home Rule Bill.
It's roses red and white, the bugle's sound
at Balaclava, Mons and Bunker Hill.

To grandchildren it's Blitz and Hitler's fall,
the holocaust, state ownership of coal,
Suez, the NHS, the Berlin Wall,
the miners' strikes, the A-bomb's bitter toll,
the Great Depression, Roosevelt's New Deal!
They read their history books but half aware
those brutal losses, deaths and gains were real;
not 'history' for me, for I was there!

Paul Albrecht

Photo: Hallam Murray

Battersea Park Children's Zoo

Keeper Jamie Baker comments:

The past few months have been really uncertain for all zoos in the country and without visitors, all of our important conservation and education work is at risk of being lost. With no income to fund expensive daily running costs, the Zoo launched a crowdfunder appeal and was overwhelmed by the support we received. Donations flooded in from as far afield as Australia and fans of the Zoo raised an astonishing £20,000. These donations helped us push through the three difficult months in lockdown but the challenge is far from over.

In order to safeguard animal welfare and ensure we wouldn't run into any issues with food suppliers we decided to move a few of the animals to our sister site at the New Forest Wildlife Park. The donkeys, meerkats and small farmyard animals all moved down there during lockdown; a bit of a summer holiday for them, unaware of the difficulty going on around them.



All of the Zoo team were furloughed apart from four essential animal keepers who worked every day through lockdown, occasionally staying at the Zoo to avoid public transport and to ensure the small team stayed well and safe so they could care for the animals. There was

nothing like being woken up by the lemurs calling at sunrise but we definitely missed the hustle and bustle of visitors enjoying the Zoo and being able to chat to new people each day.



The animals are now all back and it's like nothing changed. The donkeys were waiting at their gate when the first visitors entered the Zoo on our reopening day and everyone's settled back home well. We even welcomed a brand new pair of Asian short clawed otters to the Zoo as lockdown ended and now have permission to join the breeding programme to conserve the species so we hope to see baby otters at Battersea in the near future!



In order to maintain a safe, enjoyable experience for visitors we have implemented a number of new measures, including online ticket bookings, a one-way route around the Zoo and a takeaway cafe for picnics. To avoid crowds around the enclosures we have suspended the popular animal feeding talks, and now have fun new virtual talks using smartphone QR code technology at different locations around the Zoo.

The past three months were a huge challenge for the Zoo team. We want to thank the public and the Friends of Battersea Park for their support throughout this ordeal. Not only did they financially support the Zoo's crowdfunder appeal, but also shared it on their own social media pages to spread the word of the Zoo's struggle. Without that support our future was uncertain.

The whole team can't thank the public enough for their ongoing support. Thanks to their generosity and kind words we will continue to fight for the environment and educate the next generation on how to save the species that share our planet with us. Cynthia the pig, Ant and Dec the emus and all the Zoo staff look forward to welcoming you back, and to the 2021 barbecue at the Zoo!

Reflections on Battersea Park in Lockdown

Fenella Barber

Battersea Park you have been magnificent. Rising to the challenge of chaos and illness in the human realm, you have remained constant in your changing beauty and indefatigable in your ability to soothe and sustain. You have let us all in when we needed you. A 200 acre oasis by the river. Alone or in groups of one or two walking, jogging, cycling, smiling, weeping, a salve for us all. We salute you.

You opened your arms to us and mostly we behaved. There was always some moral outrage about this or that, but I have been impressed by the public and our collective heeding of the new rules as they appeared. There was space for all and mostly we left space for others too.

And as we walked our way round your leafy paths and through the pandemic we noticed you more too. We saw the seasons change at a pace we may never have seen before, slowly and with interest, we noticed individual trees and shrubs and gloried in their changes.

At first the Park went quiet, but the cafes were still open. I loved this moment. The Park was tranquil, but still came with caffeine and company. Pear Tree Café even optimistically erected

its summer bar as I got messages from China telling me to stay safe and stay at home. We looked naïve, they thought, we had no idea what was coming. Suddenly we were in lockdown with one walk a day.

Round and round the Park I went enjoying it more than ever, every day, watching spring burst through. Others remarked the same, they had time really to look for the first time in ages.

When the car parks closed and the planes stopped there was a new kind of bliss. It was quiet and nature was triumphant. While in our homes, the news raged as did our emotions and everything else. Then, after a month or so with statistics, numbers, science and rumours swirling, like many I turned off the news.

But spring and the birds didn't stop. They sang their hearts out and lifted the gloom. The parakeets shot up and down Prince of Wales Drive bringing joy. Green flashes one floor down from me, two at the beginning, then later groups of five. Other birds would come to my balcony for a sit or a drink, before rebounding onto the dance floor of the trees that line the Park. Playgrounds were shut for children, but the Park was not shut for its inhabitants, and they partied joyfully for us all.

The greenness of everything became more intense: it felt greener than any spring before. As the sun shone more and the first lockdown was extended, people slowly eased their patterns and a different life began to return to the Park.

New patterns of behaviour emerged, sunbathers in gym kit would slowly stretch out like big cats as policemen appeared, this new dance from flopped sunbathing to an emerging active stretch made me smile to watch; other sunbathers walked slowly. Then the rules relaxed and we were flopped on the grass again without the pretence. Outdoor gyms appeared as tennis and boxing took off in the empty car parks, and an informal gym with huge logs appeared at the eastern end of the Park. I loved this: all life back in the Park and not hidden in gyms and buildings. Over time small birthday parties appeared. Yes, there was too much litter and we were not all angels, but in a nation policed by consent, we played our part in the contract too. And Battersea Park, you played a blinder.

Battersea Park with all its associated wildlife, friends and relations, as Pooh would say, became a constant friend and companion. Constant in the turbulence and uncertainty. We seem to be through the worst, but really who knows where we will be in a month, a week or tomorrow. But if in doubt we have the wisdom of the Park and the wisdom of Pooh. His one-hundred-acre wood is our two-hundred-acre Park. "What day is it?" Pooh once asked Piglet. "It is today" squeaked Piglet. "My favourite day" said Pooh.

Stay safe.

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Offering general garden maintenance
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I started my gardening career working in Battersea Park, when I joined the Friends. After gaining further experience in a large garden in Umbria, I returned to the UK and worked with such well known names as Stephen Woodhams and Landform Consultants.

I have now started my own gardening business and can offer:

- Routine seasonal garden maintenance, hedge trimming, pruning and topiary.
- Ideas for new planting and design
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Work is charged at an hourly rate with plants, fertiliser, mulch and other materials extra on an ad hoc basis.

Please do not hesitate to ask about other gardening related tasks.

Colin Bell

Blue sky thinking

Annabel B Stein

Mine, is that by the time you read this, life will have returned to near normality. But as I write this piece it is still very much a 'then and now' situation. Then—i.e. since Spring Review was distributed—lockdown came into force and restaurants and bars are still closed. Then, 75 years ago, VE day finally arrived and on 8 May 2020 we celebrated this momentous occasion. Now, to keep chefs employed and to entice us away from cooking at home, many more restaurants have entered the take-away arena.



Then the choice was usually a Chinese or Indian which once ordered, had to be self-collected, but now with a plethora of worldwide cuisine out there including Caribbean, Chinese, Italian (pizzas galore), Thai, Turkish (kebabs), Vietnamese (anyway around SW11), one is spoilt for choice. So bringing the then and now together, I decided to focus on food which I felt would have appealed to our WW2 Armed Forces and some of our Allies plus, not wishing to flaunt the 'unnecessary journey' rules, establishments which offered home delivery.

First up had to be British and typically either a roast or fish and chips. As I've frequently passed *Maria's Fish & Chips* when on the 344 bus, it was to Maria I eventually turned. I phoned and spoke to a friendly man who talked me through the 'catch' of the day and with his help chose cod, chips and mushy peas.

For home delivery, though, Uber Eats reigns king. I downloaded their app, selected, paid, and hey presto my supper arrived before I'd barely pressed the 'send' key. It was all very painless. The cod, fried in a light batter, was hot, succulent, large and very tasty. The chips were golden and crisp (though I couldn't manage the huge

portion) and the mushy peas, tender, tasty and juicy, successfully replacing the need for tomato ketchup. My meal cost well under £15 and was much enjoyed! *Maria's Fish & Kebabs, 39 Falcon Road, SW11 2PH. 020 7207 3630. Opening hours 11.00am to midnight Monday to Saturday, and midday to 11pm on Sunday.*

What would we have done without the Americans? Thus in their honour a burger it had to be. This led me to contact *KKS Gourmet Burger*, a chain that has recently opened a Battersea kitchen. I chose a beef burger (chicken was the alternative) and delicious it was too; not overdone or dry, topped and tailed between a light bun, bacon, cheese, onion and a gherkin (my indulgence). From the side orders I selected French fries, as opposed to chunky chips, and a cos lettuce salad which came with a portion of garlic mayonnaise. The packaging was elegance personified and when I unpacked the carrier bag, a large paper table napkin and a handwipe sachet had been included. A lovely touch. The person who took my order was extremely efficient and I received a discount for opting to pay cash upon arrival or a free home delivery as I'd spent over £12. The deal came to £14.50. *KKS Gourmet Burger Co, 172 Battersea Park Road, SW11 4ND. 020 7435 5592. Opening hours 5 pm to 11.30pm Monday to Sunday.*

Finally, a tribute to the gallant British Indian Army who must have yearned for a curry whilst far from home. For these men I chose *Great India*, not only because some of our SW3 members use it, but also because its premises are rather appropriately near the Royal Hospital Chelsea and old Chelsea Barracks. When my Indian tastebuds evening kicked in, having previously scrutinised the vast menu displayed in their window, I plumped for chicken tikka masala, sag, pilau rice (for one) and poppadoms. The chicken was tender, the almonds and cream used in the tomato-based masala sauce were new to me, and my spinach

spicier than I'd expected. Anyhow, all this was a pleasant surprise and I enjoyed this new take on my usual trusted favourites!



Again the portions were generous, and the rice could have fed two. My meal, as ever with takeaways, was slightly on the cooler side of hot so needed to be eaten straight away. It came to £19.50 which I considered good value.

Great India (Tandoori Restaurant), 79 Lower Sloane Street, SW1W 8DA. 020 7730 5638 / 2207. Opening hours (for home delivery) 6 pm to midnight everyday including Bank holidays.

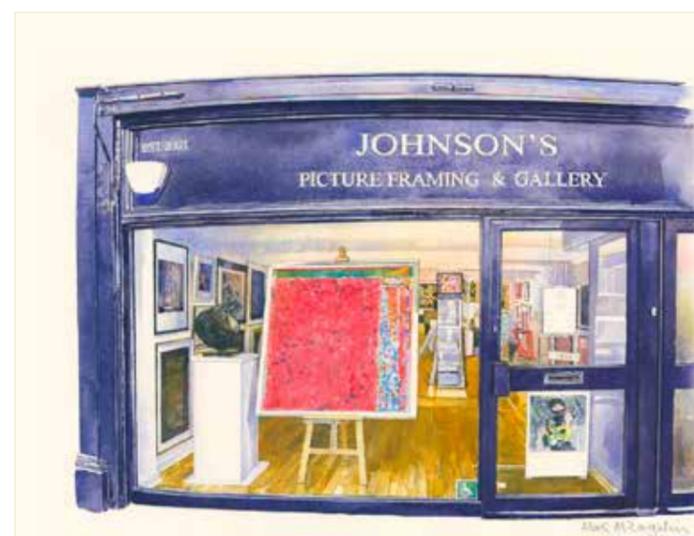
Unlike Marlene Dietrich, I didn't want to be alone, and missed my golfer and friends sharing my culinary experiences, but then those were the rules for indoor dining. However at next Thursday's final 8pm clapping session, I shall raise a glass of rosé and salute all WW2 heroes, dedicated chefs, delivery Vespa and motor bike drivers (many sporting 'L' plates), and cyclists with large boxes strapped to their backs who race to their destinations to ensure we receive our takeaways within the given time. Additionally the deliverers are having to contend with social distancing, masks, gloves, crash helmets and face shields. But if the choice of cuisine, cloud kitchens and excellent service continues, even when restaurants have re-opened, then there certainly will be blue skies ahead.

NB I contacted only establishments who offered home delivery and whose Food Standards Agency hygiene rating was 4 or 5 (5 being the highest). Restaurants are inspected every six months by the local authority and ratings can be altered whenever appropriate.

Events

Be aware that all these events are provisional and subject to confirmation or cancellation

MONTH	DATE	LOCATION	EVENT
AUGUST	Tuesday 4 to Friday 7 11.30am to 4pm	Millennium Arena	Battersea Summer Scheme Sport in the Park. Sports, workshops & activities for young people. batterseasummerscheme.org.uk
	Sunday 9 at sunset	Peace Pagoda	Nagasaki Day Peace Walk from Westminster Cathedral at 7.45pm to the Park for Floating Lantern Ceremony
SEPTEMBER	Thursday 3 Expected to finish at Cadogan Pier from 2.15pm		Doggett's Coat and Badge Race
	Saturday 5 From approximately 2pm past the Park		Great River Race from Millwall to Richmond. Part of Totally Thames, throughout September
	Monday 7 (new date) 6.30pm for 7pm	All Saints Church 100 Prince of Wales Drive SW11 4BD	Friends' Annual General Meeting
	Tuesday 8 to Thursday 10 'Doors' open 6.15pm 7.45pm	Pump House Lawn	Luna Cinema with Princess Bride; Knives Out; Joker. Ticketed: 0844 858 6767 or thelunacinema.com Food and bar on site, or take a picnic
	Friday 11 to Sunday 13	Battersea Evolution	Handmade Festival
	Saturday 12 7am to 5pm	Bandstand & Pump House Lawn	Wanderlust 108 London Triathlon, yoga and guided meditation tickets from Eventbrite
	Tuesday 29 to Sunday 4 11am to 6pm	Battersea Evolution	Autumn Decorative Antiques and Textiles Fair
	Thursday 22 to Sunday 25 11am to 8pm	Battersea Evolution	Affordable Art Fair
	Saturday 7		Fireworks in the Park—ticketed event
	NOV	Monday 9 Doors open @ 12.15, Lunch and Lecture from 1pm to 2pm	Ethelburga Community Centre 60 Worfield Street, SW11 4RA



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* Other costs and charges apply. Please talk to our sales advisers for further information.



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www.cinnamoncc.com/edencourt

Autumn Lunchtime Lecture

Monday 9 November 2020

SPEAKER: Charlotte Le Marquand, the Mammal Society's Data and Information Officer, will talk about *The Mammals of Battersea and Beyond: Who's about, what are the clues and how can we keep a record of them.*



VENUE: Ethelburga Community Centre, 60 Worfield Street, cnr Rosenau Road, Battersea, SW11 4RA. Please visit ECC's website for full details including travel information.

TIME: Doors open at 12.15. Lecture from 1pm to 2pm (approx 45 mins with 15 mins Q & A).

LUNCH & REFRESHMENTS: Sandwiches, fruit and cakes can be pre-ordered, whilst coffee, tea, wine, lager and soft drinks will be available for a small donation. All may be consumed whilst listening.

COST: Lecture: £6.50. Lunch: £5.50

HOW TO PAY:

Online at friendsofbatterseapark.org/eventshome

By Cheque made payable to 'Friends of Battersea Park' and sent with the slip opposite to FoBP, 11 Elm Quay Court, 30 Nine Elms Lane, SW8 5DE. Tickets(s) can be sent if a sae is included.

Advance booking is appreciated as it helps with administration, especially catering arrangements.

We look forward to welcoming you, your guest(s), and students to our Lunchtime Lectures. For further information please phone 020 7622 5199.

Name	
Address	
Email	
Contact No.	
No. of Lecture tickets @ £6.50	
No. of Lunches @ £5.50	
Total £	
Today's Date	

Please post my tickets; a stamped self-addressed envelope or stamp is enclosed.

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Know anyone who might like to join the Friends?

Encourage them to join online at friendsofbatterseapark.org or by phoning 07495 542399

