

Parklife



The Friends of Kennington Park Newsletter Working together to create a better park

Issue 14 • 2017

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Turning over a new leaf for the park's trees

Kennington Park has many notable and attractive features but its crowning glory is the number and variety of its trees, all combining to create the park's unique landscape.

That landscape needs to be protected and preserved; if it isn't, the park's visual appeal, heritage character and its biodiversity will be lost to future generations.

Already, several trees have been lost over the years and the condition of some of the ageing trees is largely unknown. As there is currently no strategy for replacing trees, the Friends of Kennington Park (FoKP) are supporting a survey of the park's trees and will use the findings as the basis for a tree replacement plan.

It's an ambitious – but vital – initiative. A £10,000 grant from Western Riverside Environment Fund is back-

ing the project, with further fundraising also underway. The survey will cover the structure, age, value, ecosystem services, health and threats from pests and diseases for every tree in Kennington Park.

A programme of replacement and legacy tree planting will be developed, replacing trees that have already been lost and preparing for when older trees die and new ones are needed to take their place.



Help save our trees

We're working in partnership with Lambeth Council and Trees for Cities – but we need your help too. You can get involved in several ways:

- help conduct the i-Tree Eco survey – free training will be provided
 - participating in the consultation events with the local community
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There's no doubt – the trees in Kennington Park are its crowning glory. These old London planes (left) with their middle-aged spread and crusty bark, are among our favourites

Pillow fight leaves major headache

Saturday 1st April was April Fool's Day. It was also International Pillow Fight Day and the joke was very much on Kennington Park, its users, managers and Friends group.

Over 1,500 people turned up for a pillow fight which lasted for several hours and left the

north field of the park covered in discarded pillows and millions of feathers. The event was unauthorised and although Lambeth and FoKP knew about it, they couldn't stop it.

There was a small police presence but they were only there in a crowd-
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control/public safety capacity and not charged with trying to disperse the fight.

£1,500 clean-up bill

As it was an unauthorised event, there were no arrangements for the clean-up afterwards, meaning the north field was cordoned off from use by local people until the mess could be cleared up, which took several days and cost £1,500. This money will come out of the park's budget which could have been spent on making improvements or new plants instead.

International Pillow Fight Day has its roots in a group based in Canada. Their website actually asks for the fights NOT to take place in public parks but says if that is unavoidable, then people should be asked to bring along bags and brooms. The problem appears to be that someone calling himself Dave Bigglesworth, who 'organised' the London fight via Facebook, didn't take the mother ship's advice.

April Fools' Day was no joke, with one half of the park closed off for the fight and for the next two days. There were millions of feathers all over the grass, and hundreds of perfectly good pillows left behind. Animal shelters turned them down – there were too many and they couldn't collect. A terrible waste



Payback time

Lambeth Council have contacted the organisers and those companies who were promoting the event (Time

Out) or using it to promote themselves (Hyde & Sleep, a subsidiary of Dreams, the bed company, were handing out pillows to participants). They have been asked to pay the clean-up costs and make a donation

of a similar amount to a homeless charity. So far, FoKP are unaware of any response.

Naturally, FoKP and the council don't want this to become a regular event; a much smaller pillow fight occurred in Kennington Park last April, after it had been moved on from Trafalgar Square. FoKP argue that if Westminster City Council could move it out of their spaces, then Lambeth should be able to do the same, and we will be working with the council to make sure this event does not return again next year.

In and around the park

Brightly dressed, loud and out there!

You can't miss the Kennington Krew – a screeching flash of blinding green and red darting through the park. The rose ringed parakeets arrived a few years ago and have established quite a colony.

No one knows for sure how the parakeets moved

into the wild but there are a few rather romantic rumours. One is that the birds escaped from Ealing film studios during the making of *The African Queen*. Another has it that a pair were released in Carnaby Street by musician Jimi Hendrix in the 1960s. Whatever their origins,



they've made themselves at home in London.

If you look very carefully you can see them nesting in tree hollows in the park – climbing with great agility up tree trunks or popping in and out of their nest holes. Parakeets eat fruit, nuts and seeds and have a large appetite. Let's hope they don't spot the fruit in Bee Urban's new orchard!

© Parakeet photo by Aaron Burton

New look park management

There have been some big changes in the way the park is managed and maintained in the last year. The biggest change is that Lambeth have not renewed their maintenance contract with Veolia, and have taken the service back in-house. The new organisation, Lambeth Landscapes, has a base in Archbishop's Park instead of Kennington, and a new management and staffing structure.

One of the two new Operations Managers is Kevin Wallace, now also the main contact for all matters relating to Kennington Park. Former Park Manager Mike Penney is now

Operational Supervisor for six Lambeth open spaces, including Brockwell and Ruskin Parks.

Two Lambeth Landscapes staff will work in the park. Sadly, much of their time is spent picking up litter rather than doing any gardening. The contract terms dictate that FoKP will have two park walkabouts a year with the Operations Manager and we will use these occasions – and every day in between – to ensure the park does not go into decline.

If there's any matter you'd like to raise with the managers, contact parks@lambeth.gov.uk or telephone 020 7926 9000.

Loos and locks

Faced with a 56% cut in the Parks Department's budget, Lambeth Council and their contractors have been exploring various ways to save money.

They suggested closing the adult toilets during the week in the winter, something FoKP lobbied against successfully. The toilets are cleaned by contractors, and Lambeth plan to take the work in-house this summer. We're hoping they'll have the park's drinking fountain back in action for the summer.

Another suggestion was to stop locking the gates of larger parks at night. The Friends protested against this too – a park that's open all night could lead to more vandalism, graffiti, illegal events, noise, camping and vehicles in the park. Lambeth still haven't decided on this, but we're keeping a careful eye on it.

We are also holding Lambeth to their commitment to use the £800,000 from the sale of the Park Keepers' Lodge to Transport for London for improvements to the park. Top of our priority list for this money are toilets, drains and pathways, as it is almost impossible to secure charity grants for this sort of work.

Long journey for bus

A firm favourite with youngsters since it was installed in 2008, the playground bus had fallen into disrepair. Replacing it was our key fundraising objective of 2016 – a big thank you to all who donated.

A suitable ready-made bus from a commercial play equipment company was prohibitively expensive. It would have taken too long to raise so much money, and we wanted the bus back on the road as soon as possible.

So we asked the local carpenter who had made the original bus to produce a replacement. However, we were frustrated by events; he suffered a period of ill health, and then, when the bus was finally in place, it was badly vandalised. The Council had no choice but to close the bus and fence it off.

But quick repairs by Lambeth meant that the bus wasn't out of action for long.

All in all, it's been quite a wait! But we think the wait has been worth it.



The beloved playground bus (Mk 2), fenced off and out of bounds again after it was vandalised between Christmas and New Year. But thanks to quick work by Lambeth's maintenance team, it was soon back on the road

Summer celebrations

Events to help celebrate the renovated Flower Garden continued last summer.

On a balmy Midsummer's evening, we celebrated the Solstice with a recital of poems written by local school students. A small choir and a performance of soothing guitar and cello music completed a heady, lazy evening's entertainment.



Then, in July, the Friends and Kennington Gardens Society got together to put on a flower show. Locals battled it out for prizes in categories as diverse as best rose, best cut flower and best floral arrangement in a kitchen utensil. Father Nature paid us a visit, showing and telling all about the joys of plants and planting. There was



pot-painting, twig-weaving and flower arranging, giant bubbles and a live band – a wonderful afternoon was had by all.

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- planting trees
- make a donation for a new tree

Help us to preserve the park's treescape. Contact the Friends at friends@kenningtonpark.org



A hungry bumblebee demonstrates that it's not just honeybees that love feasting on apple blossom! Richard Galpin sent us a couple of first draft ideas for his tree labels in the Kennington Park Orchard (right)

What's in a name?

A welcome and recent addition to the park's stock of trees is the orchard planted on the Green Link, in partnership with Bee Urban and local artist, Richard Galpin.

The mini-orchard features a variety of fruit trees and the plan is to create small signs giving their name and some details. Later, we want to create QR codes that can be 'read' with mobile phones and which tell people about the different varieties and draw attention to the park's rich history.

Richard's work involves



research into the naming of apples and the stories both the names and the apples can tell about land use or local people. 'Our idea is to create local synonyms for the varieties we have planted on the Green Link,' he says, 'names that say something about the park. One suggestion is 'Pride of Kennington' as the synonym for an apple tree named 'Charles Ross' which refers to the Gay Pride festivals held in the park in the 1980s and 90s.' If you've any ideas for suitable names, we'd love to hear them. Email friends@kenningtonpark.org

Marietta Crichton Stuart, chair of the Friends, said 'The park can't stand still, and

these two tree initiatives show how people can get involved – finding out more about what is already in the park, but also taking part in the work that looks to the future, so it will be a park for the 21st and 22nd centuries.'

© Designs by Richard Galpin

Meet the committee

Marietta Crichton Stuart
Chair, historian & researcher, long-time Lambeth resident, former Oval councillor for 13 years



Nikki Smiton
Information Specialist, editor Mumsnet Lambeth. Interested in playground, family and children's issues



Colin Hunte
Committee member of several community groups. Club Secretary for West Indies United Cricket Club. Responsible for FoKP cricket issues



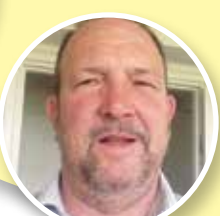
Emily James
Chief Strategy Officer at Y&R advertising agency, looks after FoKP membership



Christian Clark
Copywriter and director of Wonderful Thinking, responsible for FoKP's marketing and advertising



Kathryn Penn-Simkins
Career coaching and communications. Promoting FoKP at our social & wildlife events



Dave Sellers
Treasurer, NHS Federation Project Manager



Marnie Searchwell
Graphic designer and home baking businesswoman, runs in the park, produces marketing literature (and cakes!)



Adam Blacklay
Consultant, responsible for FoKP's sport and website issues



Rita Sammons
Secretary, retired HR Director, loves running and walking in the park

The Friends of Kennington Park is a voluntary group made up of local people who want to help the park become the best it can be. We're always happy to welcome new members but just as important are those people who want to get involved directly by volunteering. There are loads of ways you can get involved – gardening, events, marketing, website, sports, dogs and so on – whatever your interests or skills, we'd love to have your input. You might also consider joining the committee. It's quite social and meets every 6-8 weeks to discuss future plans and current issues. If you'd like to join the committee, just email friends@kenningtonpark.org

Hands up for getting hands on

Volunteering in the Flower Garden is a great way to make new friends, learn or improve new skills and get to know your park in a totally different kind of way.

You don't have to be an experienced gardener. Our expert Amanda Rew will be on hand to show you the ropes. We provide all the tools you'll need too, as well as refreshments and a lively chat with your fellow volunteers.

You'll be doing invaluable work, like pulling up the ever-present bindweed, pruning, tying in and digging out acanthus.

For upcoming gardening – and other – dates for your diary, see the green box (right).

If you're lucky, you might have the chance to sample some produce from the garden too; in April we discovered some stinging nettles in peak condition. Picked and cooked, they made the most delicious soup shared with the volunteers at our last session.

Here's the recipe for you to try. If it's too late in the year to

harvest fresh nettle shoots yourself, you might be able to find some on a vegetable stall at Oval Farmers' Market!

Simple Nettle Soup

This soup is lovely hot or cold and freezes well, so you can make lots and keep it for later in the season.

The best time to pick nettles for eating is March and April, as they get more fibrous and less appetising later on. They are also food for caterpillars, such as Red Admiral, later in the season – so it's better for us to pick and eat it earlier so we don't deprive the caterpillars of a valuable food source.

Ingredients

Bag of nettles (first 4 or 5 leaves on the stem)
Onion, diced
Potato, diced
Garlic, crushed
Vegetable stock cube
Gloves (so you don't get stung picking and handling the nettles!)

Method

Soften the onion and garlic gently in a little butter in a saucepan.

Add the diced potato and washed nettles – stems and leaves.

Cover with lid and allow to wilt down on a gentle heat.

Cover with water and add a vegetable stock cube.

Simmer for about 20 minutes until the nettles are cooked and the potato soft.

Liquidise the soup.

Add some freshly grated nutmeg and salt and pepper to taste.



Amanda's garden dates for your diary

Volunteer Gardening

July Sunday 9, 12-4pm
Sept Sunday 10, 12-4pm
Oct Sunday 8, 12-4pm

Herb Walks

July Saturday 8, 12-2pm
See park noticeboards for details

Please note: Tickets for Herb Walks are £5, from G Baldwin & Co, 171 Walworth Road, SE17 1RW or online at www.baldwins.co.uk

There's more information on Amanda's website: www.handsonherbs.com

Other diary dates

Bat Census

Saturday September 9
7.35pm at Flower Garden noticeboard

Remembrance Sunday

Sunday November 12
11am at the War Memorial

Work in progress

Although the work for the Northern Line extension below ground is on a huge scale and incredibly complex, the visible signs in the park are comparatively straightforward.

The green shed-type building at the northern end of the park is the most obvious consequence of the work. It provides cover for the digging going on beneath it and helps keep noise and dust down as much as possible.

Along the park side of the site are small sections of brick walls, samples of the various colours/types of bricks Transport for London (TfL) will consider for the Head House, the structure that will remain in the park once the work is complete. As the Head House will be a permanent fixture, it's vital that it blends in with the surroundings.

The proceeds of the sale of the Park Keepers' Lodge to TfL means around £800,000 should be available for park improvements – a commitment FoKP will ensure the council is held to.

If you've any questions about the work, or would like to be kept up to date with developments through the weekly e-bulletin circulated by the contractors FLO, please email their

Community Liaison Representative, Caroline Brennan, at nle@flo.com

If you have any concerns about any part of the project you can call the 24/7 Helpline on 0343 222 2424.

Dog area

The dog run had to be moved because of the Northern Line Extension (NLE) work. The new area, near Camberwell Road, is smaller, shadier and prone to getting muddy, so you might see more dogs than normal running about in the main fields. Most dogs are well-behaved, and most dog owners ensure they don't disturb other park users. But we've had a few complaints about wayward dogs and scared children. We ask dog owners and other park users to be more aware of each other during this period.

The original dog area will be reinstated once the NLE work is finished. The new area might include new features but only if dog walkers want them. If you're a dog owner and want to get involved in the conversation, please email friends@kenningtonpark.org



Have you noticed these mini brick walls at the northern end of the park? TfL will be consulting to find out which option you prefer for the new Head House. To have your say, email nle@tfl.gov.uk or phone 0343 222 2424

Flying the Green Flag

In 2016, Kennington Park was awarded a Green Flag for the sixth consecutive year, becoming one of only twelve parks in Lambeth to receive the award.

Winning the award for excellence in a public space takes a lot of work and commitment from the Lambeth Landscapes team, FoKP's gardening group and ad hoc gardening and litter picking sessions from local volunteers.

Thanks to everyone who helped out during the year and in the final pre-inspection push.

Red letter day

The Green Flag was raised by Gordon and Jill Johnston. Gordon was FoKP Chair for over ten years. Together with Jill, he was instrumental in the success of many of the park's projects. A more permanent reminder of our thanks for their efforts is the Ginkgo Biloba planted near the Kennington Park Place entrance.

The party continued with a Family Fun Day, which included face painting, pot decorating, bulb planting, pavement art, an outside snakes and ladder game and a stilt walker.

Location, location, location

You'll notice the Green Flag has moved from its home near the ping pong tables to a spot close to the Camberwell Road gate.

That's because we hope to turn the space between the table tennis tables and basketball court into an Activity Area focused on teenagers. We need to consult and raise funds for this but, with the Green Flag moved, there's room to manoeuvre.

Boost for the bees

Bee Urban have been every bit as busy as the bees who make their home in the organisation's hives in Kennington Park.

The orchard on the Green Link was expanded when more fruit trees were planted by a team of enthusiastic volunteers, led by artist Richard Galpin and Barnaby Shaw of Bee Urban.

Helping out that day was local resident Shereen Lincoln. She had long wanted to create raised beds to allow disabled people to get closer to nature and get their hands dirty with some community gardening. Bee Urban, with financial assistance from Disability Advice Service Lambeth (DASL), built a bed, filling it with soil and providing the lavender plants. DASL also got young people from the Orchard School on board to help with the planting and watering.

And the bees now have another foraging site – a small orchard was planted close to John Ruskin Street on the park extension earlier this year. The project, supported by Southwark Council and Brandon 2 Tenants' & Residents' Association, saw trees planted in new hexagonal beds, with herbs and flowers planted beneath the trees.

Fancy getting involved in beekeeping, frame making, gardening and carpentry? Drop in on the Open Days held on the second Sunday of each month. Or volunteer – every Thursday 10am–4pm and Friday 11am–3pm.

You can keep up to date with further news and events at beeurban.org.uk



Gordon and Jill Johnston raised the park's sixth Green Flag in a row, with the help of Lambeth Landscapes Operations Manager Kevin Wallace, at our October Family Fun Day

The new raised bed (right) on the Green Link, planted with lavender. Built by Bee Urban supported by DASL, it will allow disabled people to get closer to nature



In and around the park

The art of rubbish

You'll remember the poster designed last year by 7-year-old Madeleine McGhee, a student at Kennington Park's Picassos in the Park art sessions. Maddy's striking design really got the message home.

Now the poster's going borough wide; Lambeth's Parks department were so impressed with it, they're rolling it out to other parks in the bor-

ough from this July. Which is a very tidy result for Maddy and Kennington Park.



Alive and kicking

The park extension has long been a hub for various football teams over the years but now all the players are on side after an initiative from FoKP.

Working with the leaders of the various teams, particularly Stephen O'Connor, we applied for a grant from Sport England to buy an old shipping container for storage.

It was installed on the park extension last year,

and painted by members of the various teams. Management of the container has now been passed from FoKP to the Football Association.

The container will become the foundation for a football hub on the extension, adding to the facilities for cricket that already exist there. With the continued support of the teams, the Council and FoKP, they will help the development of both sports in the area.

What a picture

Kennington Park has plenty to keep local photographers busy. But our Flower Garden photo competition gave them an extra incentive to get snap happy.

The competition, one of the activities marking the reopening of the Garden, ran throughout the year, with a winner chosen for the photos that best captured Winter, Spring and Summer in the Garden. Each winner received a £30 prize.

Our judge was Niall Horton-Stephens, whose local photographers' agency represents some of the world's best known commercial photographers. 'I was very flattered to be asked to look at the pictures,' he said. 'I liked so many of them.'

The winner for Spring was David Sim. Eugenia Riberio took the Summer prize, and Michael Turner won for Winter.

Congratulations to all our winners – and thanks to all those who took part.



David Sim's picture of pigeons on the sundial won the Spring prize. 'The black and white has timeless appeal,' said judge Niall Horton-Stephens. 'I love the captured moment of a bird about to take flight, with another in perfect silhouette.' Eugenia Riberio's photo of a bee on allium took the prize for Summer, and Michael Turner's picture of the sunny pergola won the Winter category



Local hero remembered

A Victoria Cross commemorative plaque, installed near the Civilian War Memorial, was unveiled in a special ceremony on 5 May 2017. It honours George Jarratt, who was born on what is now the Brandon Estate.

A Corporal in the 8th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers, he died near Arras in France on 3 May 1917. During the battle a hand grenade was thrown into the dugout where George and some wounded men were sheltering. Without hesitation, he placed both feet on the grenade. The explosion blew off his legs. Although his comrades were saved, George lost his life.

George's widow and daughter Joyce received his Victoria Cross from King George V at Buckingham Palace. It's on display in the Museum of the Royal Fusiliers in the Tower of London.

The park's war memorial originally commemorated our local battalion, the 24th Battalion of the London Regiment, but it is now the Kennington memorial for all casualties of the armed forces. In February, Historic England gave FoKP the good news that the memorial had been added to the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest and is listed as Grade II.



Garlanded with prizes

Since the newly renovated Flower Garden reopened it's been drawing approving glances from local people who eat their lunch there, grab a bench to read, pass through or just sit a while.

And it has impressed the judges of horticultural competitions too. Since it reopened it has been:

- given a BALI award in the 'Regeneration under £500K' category
- Highly Commended in the Landscape Institute 'Heritage & Conservation' category

- won a Silver Gilt by Britain in Bloom in the 'Walled Garden' category
- a Regional Finalist in the Civic Trust Awards.

The run of success could well continue: the Garden is in contention for another prize in 'London in Bloom,' to be announced soon.

These accolades are testament to the dedication of all involved in the planning, design and maintenance of the garden. On behalf of all park users and FoKP, a big thank you!

Calling all parents

The playground continues to offer loads of local kids plenty of fun and laughs in the park. And parents find it a great place to catch up, make new friends and let off steam of their own!

But parents can also catch up on playground news on the Facebook page, **Kennington Park Playground Users group**. It's where you can go to keep up to date with latest developments about the playground and children's play in the park, report anti-social behaviour

and vandalism, make suggestions for improvements – and maybe even arrange play dates!

Joining the group is child's play. Log in at Facebook now.



Joyce's grandsons, their families and other relatives attended the ceremony, as did Lambeth's Mayor, local councillors, representatives of the armed forces and the local army corps. The vicar of St Mark's Church led the service



The Friends of Kennington Park

is a voluntary organisation of local people. We work together to improve the Park. Our aim is to help people to enjoy the Park, and for it to enrich their lives.

The Park needs your support, energy and ideas – so why not join us now?

It's easy to join online at:

www.kenningtonpark.org/join

If you'd like to pay annually by standing order, please email membership@kenningtonpark.org for a form.

Or you can complete the form below.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

I'd like to *join/renew my membership *(delete as applicable)

Name _____

Address _____

_____ Postcode _____

email _____

Membership rates

Please tick the relevant box. Cheques should be made payable to **The Friends of Kennington Park**

☐ £4 Individual ☐ £6 Household ☐ £2 Concessions

I'd like to make a donation

☐ £5 ☐ £10 ☐ Other £ _____

Total enclosed £ _____

Gift Aid

To enable us to claim back the tax already paid on your donations, and add 25p to every £1 you give, please complete the Gift Aid declaration below.

I agree to all my gifts in the last four years and any future gifts being eligible for Gift Aid. I have paid tax at least equal to the value of tax to be reclaimed.

☐ Yes ☐ No, I am not a UK tax payer

☐ No, I regret I am unable to help in this way

Signature _____

I'd be happy to help out/have expertise in (eg admin, horticulture, events, first aid, sport, PR, fund raising, leafletting, copywriting/editorial, design/web design, social media):

Please return this form to: Membership Secretary,
The Friends of Kennington Park, c/o Prince Consort Lodge,
Kennington Park, Kennington Park Place, London SE11 4AS

PARK CONTACTS

The Friends of Kennington Park

email: friends@kenningtonpark.org

Lambeth Parks Dept

tel: 020 7926 9000 • email: parks@lambeth.gov.uk

Police – Oval Safer Neighbourhood Team

tel: 020 8721 3592 • (in emergencies dial 999)

Animal Welfare Officer: Claire McMahon-Adie

email: CMcMahonAdie@lambeth.gov.uk

Lambeth Events Team

tel: 0207 926 6207

email: events@lambeth.gov.uk

www.eventlambeth.co.uk

Lambeth Events Calendar

www.lambeth.gov.uk/events

Astroturf & Tennis Courts bookings

Better Leisure • tel: 020 7091 0846

better.org.uk/leisure-centre/london/lambeth/kenningtonpark

You can book seven days a week: Monday to Friday – 9am to 6pm; Saturday to Sunday – 9am to 4pm

Flower Garden Expert Gardener

Amanda Rew • tel: 07757 250 037

email: amandarew@handsonherbs.com

Café in the Park

Come to café & see Chris, or tel: 020 7793 8886

Or email: cafeinthepark@supanet.com

Bee Urban

Barnaby Shaw • tel: 07985 220 277

email: beeurbanlondon@gmail.com

Trees for Cities

tel: 020 7587 1320 • email: info@treesforcities.org

SCCC at the Kia Oval

tel: 0844 375 1845

email: enquiries@surreycricket.com

Stay & Play and Adventure Playground

Sarah Moltoni • tel: 07739 973 890

email: kenningtonparkcentre@gmail.com

Picassos in the Park (children's art classes)

email: picassosinthepark@gmail.com

Designed by
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