

FRIENDS OF BATTERSEA PARK REVIEW

Issue 125
Summer 2023



Parkrun
Page 4, 6 & 11

Trustees Report
Pages 10-11

BBQ
Pages 16-17

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BATTERSEA PARK

Review

Summer 2023



Editor Frances Radcliffe
Production Lydia Jones

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Summer is well underway with special community events organised by Enable at the Bandstand and Bowling Green and private picnics taking place on the grass all over the Park, which is looking lovely with the trees in full leaf, refreshed by recent rain.

The most important issue for the Park is the Council's consultation on the proposal that Parkrun should come here. Individual Friends have strong views, both for and against. A summary of the Friends formal collective response is on page 6. Councillor Judi Gasser has indicated that while she is strongly in favour of Parkrun coming to the Park and it was in the manifesto, she is sympathetic to it going ahead on a trial basis as she recognises there are concerns from local residents.

The weather for our annual barbecue was certainly the best in the last ten years. Your BBQ team led by Peta May Law and Inge Darling pulled off a triumph. The Bowling Green was a great success as an alternative location to the Zoo Thank you to all who came and added to the party spirit. The party spirit of those at our damp Coronation Party was perhaps even more outstanding.

The Friends' Committee now needs your help! Garon Watkins is nobly fulfilling the

role of Chairman but he and his family now live 100 miles from London. We need a new Chairman and we would like some more trustees. Please will Friends who love the Park and could spare some time put their names and a CV forward to secretary@friendsofbatterseapark.org The CV can be a simple document. Do not let this requirement put you off. We need people who can develop policy and represent the Friends, who have financial skills and who can deal efficiently with administrative work. Other skills are welcome too. By the time you read this, you may also have received an e-mail from Garon.

The Park will host a major three-part event over the August Bank Holiday weekend. This is a new initiative offering glorious music and some fireworks. For details, see page 4 and Enable's website.

A reminder that our AGM is on 12 September at All Saints Church. Come along in person (we are not like M&S!) meet other Friends, have something to eat and drink, and most importantly, ask those who manage the Park the questions to which you would like answers. The Trustees Report for 2022/23 is on pages 10 and 11.

After our AGM, autumn will be upon us and spiders will be more conspicuous than at any other time of the year. For a chance to brush up your spider-knowledge, book your ticket now for our Lunchtime Lecture on 'Spiders in London' on 13 November.

Enjoy the Park!

Cover Image: Song and dance at our BBQ

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Patrolling mob:	07500 959442
General Enqs:	020 8871 7532
Wandsworth Borough Council:	020 8871 6000

Parkwatch

Parkrun

Friends may not have particular concerns about the proposed introduction of Junior Parkrun on Sunday mornings at 9am. Reaction to Wandsworth Council's consultation on the proposed introduction of Parkrun for adults on Saturday mornings at 9am is very different. Although recognising the benefits provided by Parkrun, there is widespread concern, mainly because of the number of runners likely to descend on the Park from both north and south of the river.

Many Friends and other locals will have responded individually to the Council's consultation which closed on 30 June. Chairman, Garon Watkins has also written to Councillor Judi Gasser as on page 5.

The Council's news release announcing the consultation concludes: 'all feedback we receive in response to the consultation will be carefully analysed and considered before a decision is made on the way forward'.

Wandsworth Greenspaces meeting

Your Chairman attended this meeting on 20 June. Key points were:

Grounds Maintenance and Tree Contracts

These are coming up for renewal in 2025. Enable have been asked to contribute to the new specifications and will be seeking input from Friends Groups as well as learning from the experience of other boroughs. Climate change will have an important bearing on the new contracts.

Pathway repairs

The Council has made some funds available for pathway repairs. The Friends will work with Enable to identify paths in our Park that might qualify.

Signage Audit

The Borough-wide audit has now been completed. Friends have long been concerned about the positioning of signs and, in some cases, the lack of clarity, particularly about cycling. Enable are planning consultation meetings in coming weeks. The Council has also proposed that a working group of interested Friends groups, Management Advisory Committees (MACs), and representatives of the Council and Enable be set up to move things forward and develop a plan appropriate for each greenspace.

Climate Change

This is affecting all Wandsworth greenspaces. Enable are considering its impact in many areas, e.g. what trees to plant, how to manage the effects of wetter winters and what changes should be made to the grounds maintenance and tree contracts. Enable acknowledged that it was difficult for Friends and other stakeholders to see a holistic and accessible overview of their approach. Valerie Selby, Biodiversity and Parks Development Manager is writing a document to capture this.

Tawny owls

Michael Mac reports that there is no sign of any young this year although the parents are still present. It is not clear why this should be. Last year, 4 owlets had fledged by the end of February. The number was unexpected because there are usually no more than 2 owlets, and their fledging was extraordinarily early.

Swans - see page 12.

New benches in the Old English Garden

An anonymous donor has provided funds for four magnificent new curved corner benches which were

installed at the end of April. This beautiful garden is well worth a visit.

Open-air concerts: message from Enable

For the first time ever, this August bank holiday weekend, Battersea Park is set to host **Battersea Park in Concert**, a three-day open-air concert series, featuring a selection of the greatest acts in classical, jazz and soul music.

Round up your friends, pack a picnic and get ready to pop some fizz as a summer's day turns to night, with a choice of three spectacular shows.

A Night at the Musicals on **Saturday 26**, offers the chance to immerse yourself in the romance and drama of your favourite West End shows, brought to life by the **Royal Philharmonic Concert Orchestra**, conducted by Peter Balcombe, and a dream line-up of guest vocalists.

On **Sunday 27**, the 60-piece **Royal Philharmonic Concert Orchestra** will present **Proms in the Park**, a two-hour programme of classical masterpieces with rousing anthems from the likes of Elgar, Puccini, Vivaldi and more, in what promises to be an unforgettable night of musical majesty, led by Conductor Peter Harrison, closing with a magical fireworks finale.

Then on **Monday 28**, for one special afternoon, Battersea Park will become the sublime stage for the finest contemporary jazz and soul talent around, including **Gabrielle**, **YolanDa Brown** and **The Ronnie Scott's All Stars**. The perfect way to round off the August bank holiday, **Jazz & Soul on A Summers' Day** is a not-to-be-missed concert experience.

For more information and to book tickets, please head to www.batterseaparkinconcert.com

Rare spider found by Clive Freedman

In May, Clive was surprised to find that one of his spider photos had been identified by two spider experts in France as being a *Dasylobus graniferus*. This spider has only been recorded at one other location in the British Isles (a domestic garden in Epsom). Clive has informed the British Arachnological Society. To learn more about spiders in the Park, come to our November Lunchtime Lecture! See Page 19.

Trees

A number of trees have been removed either because they were unsafe (e.g. horse chestnut west of Bowling Green, weeping ash by air raid shelter, robinia in Winter Garden) or have fallen down (e.g. tree on island nearest the War Memorial).

The trees in Battersea Park are a large part of the glory of the Park. Cherry Tree Walk featured in *The Times* on 8 April and Neil Blackley, *Enable's* Head of Parks was interviewed by BBC London.

No mow May

Battersea Park took part again



in the charity Plantlife's annual campaign. Strips of long grass and halo mowing, i.e. no mowing under tree canopies, has resulted in some attractive variations within areas of grassland in the Park. The aim is to encourage pollinators and support the Council's biodiversity strategy.

New Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO)

In 2020, the Council implemented a borough-wide Order allowing Council-authorised people, as well as the police, to take action against those found drinking alcohol or consuming substances like nitrous oxide and causing anti-social behaviour in a public space. The Order also covered various dog controls. It is proposed that the 2020 Order is not extended when it expires in October but instead a new two-year Order is introduced. It will largely include the same prohibitions and restrictions but the

opportunity has been taken to refresh the PSPO. The consultation closes on Sunday 23 July 2023.

Evolution Planning Application 2023/1412

The Friends would of course prefer the British Genius Site to be returned to grassland with trees but recognise that there are financial reasons why this is unlikely to happen in the short term. We also recognise that the previous requirement that the Evolution building be taken down and removed from the Park every two years would result in unnecessary effort and eco-unfriendly movements of traffic. Our support of this application is based on the clear understanding that the marquee remains defined as a temporary building and that if it is proposed that it be retained beyond 2027, there will be another planning application which will allow that proposal to be re-examined.



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Friends of Battersea Park View on Parkrun

On 30 June, Garon Watkins sent Councillor Judi Gasser, Council official Lesli Good and Enable a summary of the Friends views. The full text is on our website.

Garon recognised that parkruns have benefits for physical and mental health and are well organised. Also, that runners have largely dispersed by 10am. However, there were key issues that would need to be addressed. These related to:

- the expected number of runners
- restricted access to amenities especially to the three children's playgrounds, Go Ape, Putt in the Park, the All Weather Pitches and the Football Pitches near the Sun Gate
- cars and bicycles
- cancellations and funding.

Below is the conclusion section in full.

In the past the Friends have opposed Parkrun in Battersea Park mainly due to the inconvenience to regular Park users. Having consulted with Parkrun participants and visited other Parkrun sites we acknowledge that these events are very popular, beneficial to health and wellbeing, and community spirit, and are in general well organised and of limited duration. That said, Battersea Park is already a well-used, formal heritage Park and not a common like Tooting or Clapham. It is also very central. We believe that there are therefore benefits and disadvantages. We cannot support a run in the Park unless the disadvantages outlined above can be addressed.

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 1,500 on more than two occasions, significant damage were to be caused e.g. as a result of bicycles locked to railings; or the Winter Garden becoming a through route and significantly damaged again as it was during lockdown; there were to be other issues such as material 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 Wandsworth Council, as for all other organised events in Battersea Park. If at some time the Council were for good reason to withdraw Parkrun's permission to use the Park, Parkrun should accept this with goodwill.



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Tom Davis's March Lunchtime Lecture on Waterfowl

Cathy Longworth

Tom Davis was brought up on a Council estate in Battersea and enjoyed nature in the Park. After a visit to a city farm aged 8, he wanted to be a farmer. At the age of 16, he showed his ducks and geese around the UK. He is a Council member for the British Waterfowl Association, Trustee of the Rare Breeds Survival Trust, and works with children with behavioural difficulties at Mudchute Park and Farm on the Isle of Dogs.

Historically, Battersea Park was home to many domestic ducks and geese but these were prone to disease, and easy prey for predators. Wild ducks, such as the mallard were then successfully introduced.

All duck varieties originate from the mallard, and all geese from the greylag goose, in the same way as the wolf is ancestor to the dog. The mallard nests for 28 days, and only the females

'quack'. At the end of the breeding season all mallard moult and the drake becomes brown and flightless. This is called eclipse plumage, which camouflages them whilst their feathers regrow. The female has an orange bill and the drake an olive green one with a distinguishing curly tail. In search of food, they dip their heads into the water - hence the name dabbling ducks. Diving ducks include the tufted duck, the coot and the moorhen, all of which can be vicious when protecting their young.

Ducks associate people with food but bread is bad for them: it fills them up and is not nutritional. Special food is best: floating pellets for the dabbling ducks and sinking pellets, such as wheat, for the diving ones. The European shoveler duck, a winter visitor, has tiny serrations in its beak to filter the food from the water. Another winter visitor is the

gadwall, which is grey with a white dot, and the pochard, a deep diving ornamental duck, with a red head and bill. Ducks in the Royal Parks and at the Barnes Wildfowl & Wetland Centre, have their wings pinioned, but occasionally find their way to Battersea.

Beware pet terrapins dumped in the Park. They are an invasive species and a menace. They eat everything, nip the feet of ducks and have salmonella. Not good!

Other invasive hybrid species are the Canada goose, the Egyptian goose, mandarin and Carolina ducks. Heron and cormorant numbers are increasing.

Geese and swans can also be aggressive and the black swans on the lake some years ago had to be moved. Swans pair for life and are excellent parents. Seven of last year's eight cygnets survived.

Herb Garden, botanic dye beds and mosaics

The Herb Garden is perhaps the least known of the four gardens in the Park managed by the charity Thrive. If you haven't visited it, you have missed a treat. It's in the centre of Staff Yard, and visitors are definitely welcome!

You will see an area beautifully maintained by Thrive staff, clients and volunteers, with much of interest. There is a range of beds full of herbs and vegetables. Of particular interest are the two dye beds in the northeast corner. Friend David Ewen has a major role maintaining these beds and making colourful mosaic plant signs. These show the plant in question on a background the colour of the dye made from it.

You can also enlarge your knowledge. If, for example, you have ever wondered

what woad looks like, head to the Herb Garden. There is a fine madder (red dye) growing on a frame on the corner and the Latin names of the plants are somehow more charming than usual: who could resist *Anthemis Tinctoria* (Dyer's Chamomile)?

Congratulations to all those involved in working in and managing this delightful space.

When in the Staff Yard, don't forget to look at the interesting back wall. Regular readers will know that the unusual mixture of colours, textures and fossils in the wall arises because it was built using dumped ballast from ships coming up the Thames mainly



from the Channel ports and the east coast of England. Battersea Park was 'elevated' by dredgings from the construction of the Surrey Docks in the mid nineteenth century. Suitable stones were saved and reused to build the wall.

Oak trees in Battersea Park

Clive Freedman and Brian Livingstone

There are around 180 oak trees in Battersea Park. These trees support an enormous number of other species. The trees themselves, and the leaf litter from the leaves which fall in autumn, are host to many kinds of insect, and in turn the insects are an important food source for birds. Spiders make webs across the crevices in the bark to catch insects. Squirrels collect the acorns and bury them for later consumption. Fungi grow from the leaf litter beneath the tree. In the countryside, acorns are eaten by badgers and deer, and are fed to pigs, in particular the black Iberian pigs in Spain.

There are two kinds of native oak in the Park: the English Oak (also known as Common Oak or Pedunculate Oak, *Quercus robur*) and the Sessile Oak (*Quercus petraea*). Most of the English Oaks have the typical spreading habit of the ordinary native English Oak, but a few (near the Pagoda for example) have a columnar shape (“fastigate”) with branches which are nearly vertical. In April,

long thin catkins of wind-pollinated flowers can be seen drooping beneath the young leaves (fig.1). The leaves typically have the familiar rounded lobes of an oak leaf, though there is some variation in the shape of the leaves even on a single tree (fig.2). Over the summer, green acorns start to form, and these turn brown before they fall in autumn. In some years there are fewer acorns – this helps to limit the growth of populations of acorn predators. The Pedunculate Oak has acorns on quite long stalks (“peduncles”) and the leaves have short stalks of less than 0.4”, while the Sessile Oaks have stalkless acorns and stalked leaves which are larger. A Sessile Oak can be seen on the grass east of the Winter Garden. The Sessile Oak is seen mainly in the north and west of the United Kingdom. Leaves sometimes remain on the tree through the winter.

The Turkey Oaks (*Quercus cerris*) also have lobed leaves, but the ends of the lobes are usually pointed. There is very wide variation in the shape

of the leaves, and some leaves are deeply cut towards the midrib. The acorns are stalkless and are in cups surrounded by whiskers (fig.3). Two notable Turkey Oaks are the Grace Darling Oak beside the Pagoda, which commemorates Grace Darling who on 7 September 1838 rowed with her father to the wreck of the steamer ‘Forfarshire’ and rescued nine survivors, and the fine tree in front of the entrance to the Millennium Arena. Turkey Oaks originate from the area bordered by South-east France and Turkey.

Holm Oaks (*Quercus ilex*) originate from Southern Europe and are evergreen, and they can be seen all over the Park. There are some fine examples in the area north-east of the Pump House, and the tree west of the Pear Tree Café usually has lots of acorns in the summer. There is wide variation in the shape, size and colouring of the leaves. Some leaves have spiny lobes like a Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) - the scientific name of Holly is *Ilex aquifolium* because of the



Fig 1. Catkins on an English Oak in April



Fig 2. Leaves and acorns of an English Oak © A Emmerson (CC-BY-NC)

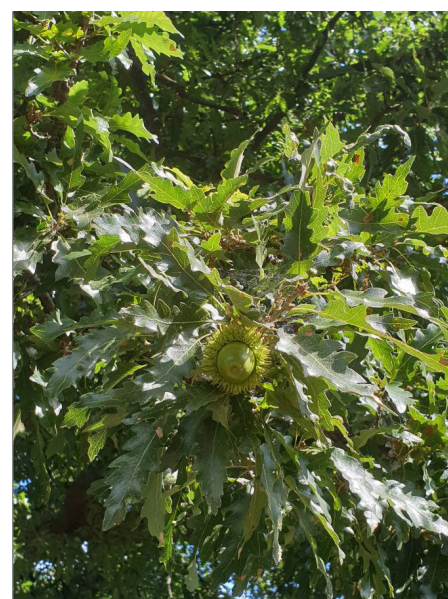


Fig 3. Leaves and acorn of a Turkey Oak

similarity of its stiff evergreen leaves to those of *Quercus ilex*, which often have prickles as well. Some trees have small, narrow leaves, and some have leaves with a lighter grey underside. Most of the Holm Oaks in the Park have discoloured leaves as a result of the activities of a small leaf-mining caterpillar (like the Horse-chestnuts in the Park) (fig.4).

There are Red Oaks (*Quercus rubra*) near the cricket pavilion. These have much larger leaves, which in autumn may be a deep red colour on some trees. In Battersea Park the autumn colour of the leaves is usually disappointing.

The largest of the Pin Oaks (*Quercus palustris*) is west of West Carriage Drive. This tree is the tallest recorded Pin Oak in Greater London. The lobes of the leaves are deeply cut with a rounded space between each lobe.

South-west of the lake, beside South Carriage Drive, are two oaks next to each other which could be hybrids of the Turkey Oak and the Cork Oak.

The leaves are less deeply cut than those of the Turkey Oak and have more regular triangular lobes.

The single Cork Oak (*Quercus suber*) is on the grass north of the bandstand. In Mediterranean plantations the cork is stripped off every 7-10 years to make corks, without damaging the tree. It is feared that the increasing use of plastic corks and screw-top bottles will reduce the number of Cork Oaks which are planted, with a consequent loss of habitat for other species. The leaves are not unlike the leaves of some Holm Oaks, and are also attacked by a leaf-miner.

Oak timber is hard and very durable (*robur* = robust) and has been used for thousands of years. Around 6,000 trees were required for the construction of HMS Victory in 1759. To rebuild the frame of the transept and spire of Notre Dame in Paris, 1,000 oaks from more than 200 forests have been selected.

From time to time individual oaks in the Park need to be fenced off.

This is to protect passers-by and their dogs when Oak Processionary Moth infests the tree. The hairs of the caterpillars cause skin irritation. They also strip off the foliage (like the Ermine Spindle Moths which defoliate Spindles in the Prince of Wales Drive border, and the Box Tree Moth). The Oak Processionary Moth is a native of Southern Europe, but is slowly spreading from London after first being seen in the United Kingdom in 2006.

At www.treesofbatterseapark.org you can access an interactive map which shows the location of some of the trees mentioned here, and also shows trees and shrubs of interest in particular months of the year. To discuss oak trees, or other trees and shrubs in Battersea Park, contact batterseaparktrewatchers@btinternet.com

Friends of Battersea Park Committee

- Fenella Barber (**Review**)
- Karen Buckle (**Events**)
- Julia Camara (**Dogs**)
- Russ Coffey (**Web**)
- Inge Darling (**Children**)
- Adrian Flook (**Treasurer**)
- Miles Kerstein (**Wildlife**)
- Peta May Law (**BBQ**)
- Juliet Lyon-Smith (**Secretary**)
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- Sally Orman (**Advertising**)
- Frances Radcliffe (**Review/Planning**)
- Annabel Stein (**Membership**)
- Garon Watkins (**Chairman**)



Fig 4. Leaves of Holm Oak showing leaf-miner damage



Fig 5. Leaves of Pin Oak

Trustees Report for the year



This report is subject to approval at the Friends' AGM on 12 September.

The year ending 31 March 2023 proved a busy year for Battersea Park and the Friends as it was the first full year free of any Covid-19 related restrictions so our usual programme of events was re-established and enhanced. During the year, your Committee met 9 times by zoom. These meetings were also attended by Neil Blackley, Head of Parks for Enable Leisure and Culture, joined more recently by Valter Goncalves who has been appointed by Enable to coordinate and communicate with Friends groups and Management Advisory Groups (MACs) across the borough. Membership at the end of March stood at 643.

The AGM was held at All Saints Church on 6 September and attended by 46 Friends, followed by an open forum session with Neil Blackley and Sergeant Sunnee Arhagba of the Parks and Events Police Service.

In terms of governance, during the year two long-standing trustees stood down from the Committee: Claire Elliot who joined in 2003, first as membership secretary and more recently as Thrive representative and much valued member of our Review team, and Chris Newbery-Davies who served on the Committee from 1993 and was involved in our work on dogs in the Park, and was a regular judge at the annual dog show run by the police. They both

left with our sincere gratitude. Sara Milne, previously co-opted, was elected trustee and Garon Watkins was re-elected as Chairman having served for the permitted three-year term. John Marsh was re-appointed as independent financial examiner for the year ending March 2023. Subsequent to the AGM, we welcomed Miles Kerstein and Julia Camara as co-opted trustees. Miles is a keen advocate for wildlife and Julia works at Battersea Dogs and Cats Home.

After an absence of two years, we were delighted to be able to hold the Friends' BBQ again in the Childrens' Zoo thanks to our hosts, the Heap family. The tireless enthusiasm of Peta May Law and her team over the years has meant that the event remains ever popular and enjoyed record attendance. As well as being our main fund-raising event of the year it has always been a wonderful opportunity for the Friends' community to enjoy an evening together. This year the event raised £7,505. Friends also gathered in May to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee with a party in the Old English Garden organised by Sara Milne, an event that was so well received that another party was planned for the Coronation in May 2023. Our popular lunchtime lecture series led by Annabel Stein and her team also resumed with a presentation in November on Butterflies by Simon Saville from the Centre for Butterfly Conservation, and one in March by Tom Davis from the British Waterfowl Association. Frances Radcliffe led a guided walk for the Wandsworth Heritage Festival on 12 June while the Friends also had stands staffed by volunteers at both Summer at the Bandstand and the Police Dog Show to promote the work of the Friends and attract new members. The Friends were delighted to receive a cheque for £1,520 from the Parks Police

representing profits from the show.

The Friends' work in the Park centred primarily on repairs to the Winter Garden. As Friends may recall the garden was heavily impacted by lockdown when it became used as a de facto playground. The damage to the flower beds and plants was so significant that, during his annual inspection paid for by Friends, the designer Dan Pearson advised it was in danger of being lost unless action was taken. Friends worked with Enable to ensure that it was fenced off on a temporary basis, funded volunteer days with Thrive to work on restoration and then subsequently replanted the garden with the cost of the plants being met by the Friends. We are increasingly convinced that the only way to prevent damage in the future is to put down a permanent low fence. Costings have been procured by Enable for fencing similar to that used on the perimeter and costs range from £85,000 to £94,000. While the Friends would be happy to contribute, additional funding sources will be required and we are investigating options. However, we are pleased to report that the topiary yews in the Russell Page Garden have now been restored to their former glory after the Friends funded a specialist firm for this work.

The initiative we established with the Sir Walter St John's Educational Charity (SWSJ) last year for five local state primary schools to undertake educational visits to the Park was very well received and it was suggested that teaching material be produced by a retired teacher so that it is easier for all primary schools to incorporate a visit to the Park within the curriculum. The Friends are very supportive of this and in March, provided funding of £3,600 for the development of teaching material for science. Between April and October, our secondary

ending 31 March 2023

school project with St John Bosco College took place, again overseen by the SWSJ Charity.

The Friends' Committee continue to monitor planning applications around the Park on your behalf and made an ultimately unsuccessful objection to the extension of a wire by Go Ape from their site to support a new plummet activity on its high ropes course. While we are happy for Go Ape to innovate, we believe this was an inappropriate intrusion into designated green space and the sightline of those entering and leaving at the junction of the South and West Carriage Drives. The wire has not as yet been installed.

The Review team produced and

distributed three issues of the publication this year and it remains a popular medium of communication to Friends. May I thank on your behalf Frances Radcliffe, the editor, and her team as well as all the Friends who distribute it by hand thus saving substantial and ever-increasing postage costs.

The trustees wholeheartedly thank all those who work in and for The Park for their dedication and support this year, especially the Friends' volunteers who are helping to restore the Winter Garden. May I as Chairman also extend my sincere thanks to the Committee for all the work they do and time they dedicate on our behalf.

Parkrun update

Councillor Judi Gasser's response of 6 July includes: 'I agree we must be very careful in introducing a big new project, if the consultation gives us the go-ahead. ... The key point is that Enable would be organising the Parkrun, on behalf of the Council; it will not be run by a Parkrun race director as at Clapham and Tooting (although some of the volunteers might be the same people)'.

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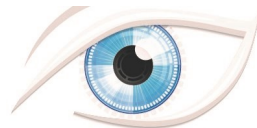


PADS, PAWS & CLAWS

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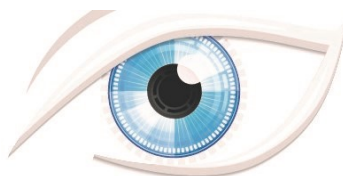
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Swans

Valerie Selby, *Enable, Biodiversity and Parks Development Manager*

Many Friends will be aware of the sad demise of the female (pen) on 12 April after she had laid a couple of eggs. There was no sign of injury and no obvious cause of death, although it is likely that it was avian flu. There were rumours that a new female had joined the male and had laid an egg, but this now seems unlikely. In any case, it is not unusual for new females or new pairs to be unsuccessful at breeding in their first year on a site. .

More generally, as swans usually mate for life, they are usually also site-faithful but if one of a pair dies the remaining bird can be vulnerable if a new pair is scouting for territory and our male (cob) and any new female may yet get ousted if a new pair is persistent. In many cases, territorial fights are sorted out without any human intervention, with the weaker pair of swans just flying off. However, these territorial battles can be significant and in the past we have seen competing swans inflict serious injuries on one another. If this should happen, we would intervene if there was a welfare issue such as an injured bird being unable to fly; they are particularly vulnerable to dogs so it's important that they are removed for their own safety. I don't know of any sites in our part of London without a pair of swans which is why younger fitter swans that wish to breed will challenge a territory.

In a successful year, the pair would begin to build a nest in early spring. This is usually a huge mound of various materials, including dried grasses, assorted vegetation, sticks and reeds, constructed close to the water's edge or sometimes just onto the land of the islands. The nest is built by the female, while the male supplies the materials. The female lays up to seven eggs between late April and early May. Both sexes incubate the eggs, which hatch after 35-41 days. The young

birds, or cygnets, sometimes ride on their parents' backs and remain with the adult birds for four or five months until about October. Cygnets are generally a dirty brown colour, becoming whiter as the summer goes on. Swans lay such a large number of eggs because they are expecting some not to hatch and some cygnets to succumb to predators. Unusually, in our Park, often all six or seven birds make it to adulthood. This leads to the swan population in London being large, indeed possibly larger than there are available territories for birds to take up.

In late summer and early autumn, the cygnets are often encouraged to leave by the adults in what can sometimes seem a very violent way – chasing them and bullying them until they depart. They tend to move up the river to Kingston where there is a large “teenage” flock. When they are old enough to pair up, they will seek their own territory.

I've been asked to comment on a statement from The King's Swan Marker, David Barber, MVO which defends the feeding of bread to swans in response to the 'Ban the Bread' campaign. My advice not to feed bread includes consideration of wider ecological matters. Our swans are wild animals and need to be allowed to function naturally, eating the natural foodstuffs that are readily available to them. Ecologically, wild animals rely on adequate available food, water and shelter to support them, and populations either expand or contract according to what's available. Mute swans are by no means scarce, and their population numbers are not under threat. In addition, we have made great strides over the last 25 years in increasing the aquatic vegetation that forms the natural

diet for many of our waterbirds and so human intervention to feed them is totally unnecessary. The ecology of the lakes is significantly adversely affected if bread is used to feed swans. It is almost always fed in abundance resulting in much of it falling to the bottom of the lake and decomposing. This causes issues with water quality and water clarity and disadvantages a range of other species, some of which are undergoing population decline.

If people really do insist on interacting with swans, it remains our advice to feed other items such as lettuce or swan grains to ensure that the “inputs” to the lake ecosystem are less damaging to water quality and other species. The lake is a “closed” ecosystem, rivers are not, and so the adverse impacts we see from bread in lakes may not be repeated on the upper reaches of the Thames where other water and wildfowl managers may have differing views on feeding swans. Crucially we have never had issues in London with underweight or under-fed birds and when birds do end up in the roads it is not related to them seeking food.



To Battersea Park by Philip Hensher

Fenella Barber

Excited to see a newly published book *To Battersea Park*, I was disappointed to read some terrible reviews. However, with a title so apt, I thought it churlish not to give it a try, so semi-reluctantly bought it and, dear readers, don't believe the critics!

Philip Hensher's new novel does not come highly recommended and is not really about Battersea Park. It's a pandemic novel but it resonates in a number of places.

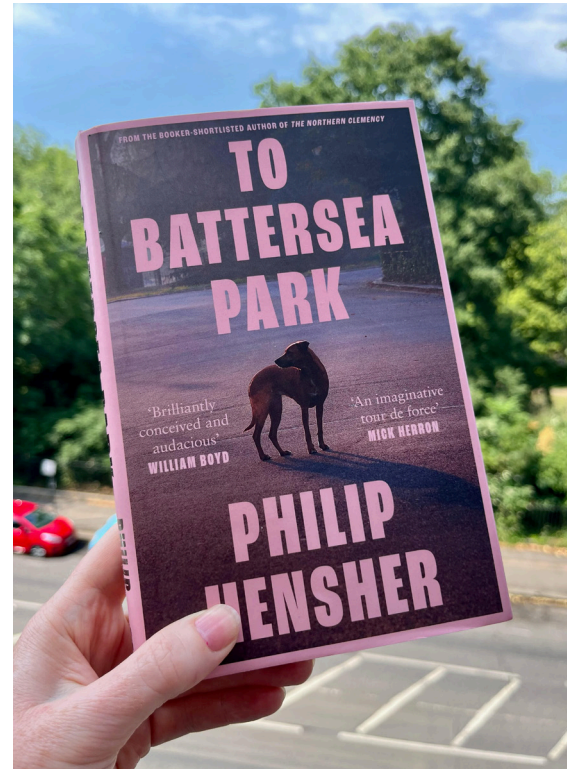
I liked the book, actually quite a lot. It took me back to the pandemic and had an interesting weave and narrative. It was also highly personal and the author came over as unattractive. Upon conclusion, I went back to the reviews and found one or two more positive ones.

The critics may quite rightly be rude about the structure and style. As the fly cover says, 'Written in four parts, *To Battersea Park* explores the strata and sediment of a single place and

time'. The style did not bother me. I read it as an interested neighbour (the author lives off Queenstown Road) trying to place different streets, houses, and pomelo trees, and enjoying a world slowed down by the pandemic, seeing into the real or imagined lives of local people at this very odd time we all shared.

It told me too about the soil of the area and covered a few trees. Did you know that Wandsworth has 'slowly permeable seasonally wet slightly acidic but base-rich loamy and clayey soils'? I did not, nor had I ever thought about the landscape before London was built. As the author goes on 'the soil was characteristic of seasonally wet pastures and woodlands' and this

repeated phrase drew me into an unusual, not highly recommended read. But I liked it!



Claire Elliot

It is with great sadness that Friends' Committee learnt in May of the death of Claire Elliot. Claire joined the Committee in 2003, initially as membership secretary. More recently, she was a key member of the Review team as copy editor while also acting as our liaison with Thrive and being a passionate advocate for the Old English Garden and the Winter Garden. It is a testament to her commitment to the Park and the Friends that she stepped down from the Committee only in September last year despite suffering from a long term illness. The Committee is indebted to Claire for all she achieved

for the Friends

Claire was someone who did the un-glamorous vital work. Her judgements were quietly offered, well deliberated and sound. She always came to Committee meetings and turned up to do menial tasks at Friends' events but never sought recognition or the limelight. Very much in line with her approach to all things, she was quiet but highly effective in giving encouragement and inspiration as well as practical support. She also had a keen sense of humour and the absurd.

With deep empathy and knowledge,

her work as a Thrive volunteer made her professional listening skills as valuable as her horticultural skills. From 2009 until 2022, Claire's contribution was immeasurable. She was always ready to lend a listening ear and not afraid to get her hands dirty, whether in the Main Garden, Herb Garden or especially the Old English Garden, always with a big heart and a big smile. Fellow volunteers loved her, as did the gardener clients. Come rain or shine or snow, she was a regular at Volunteer Sundays. Her brownies, shortbread and lemon drizzle cakes were legendary.

Let's Shimmy To A Sushi

Annabel B Stein



Has anyone else noticed the proliferation of Japanese eateries which have sprung up across London? Even Battersea Park Road has its Waka Waka Sushi (No 545), Sushi Café (No 155), Sushi Express (No 348), and Kizana (No 214). Then let's not forget Kibou (Northcote Road), the 'ready to go' sushi counters in the larger branches of supermarkets, chains like Itsu and Sticks'n'Sushi (both have Chelsea premises, the latter with its elegant Danish style interior), Wagamama (newly opened in Battersea Power Station), and Morinoya and The Sushi Co (in Vauxhall Bridge Road). I've eaten in, or bought from, a number of these as I'm a great fan of Japan's clean, healthy and stylish cuisine.

My daughters and grandchildren also love Asian food. So for celebrations – aka treats – **Benihana** is our restaurant of choice. Watching dinner being cooked at your table over a hibachi grill with artisan chefs tossing knives and food, engulfed in flames, into the air is as entertaining as the food is delicious. Recently, we celebrated the youngest grandchild's birthday there. From their Ninja Kids Menu for under 12s she chose the teriyaki chicken (£12.75) which included onion soup, steamed rice, cucumber

rolls (which she thought would have been better with less cucumber!), hibachi vegs and a dessert. The last, a slice of lemon drizzle cake and berries, was brought to our table by two waitresses shielding a lit candle and singing Happy Birthday. My wine-buff daughter and I decided to share a sushi & sashimi combo i.e. a six piece mix of tuna, salmon, prawn and sea bass rolls (£10.50). She followed hers with a hibachi sirloin steak (£36.95) and I, a hibachi miso black cod (£47.95) with which we enjoyed a glass of Pinot Grigio Rosé Castelli (£8.00). These traditional dinners also include onion soup, salad with ginger dressing, prawn appetisers, steamed rice, and hibachi vegetables. Yet again the booking was a huge success, perfect for all ages, with the freshest of beautifully prepared and presented food

***Benihana**, 77 King's Road, SW3 4NX 020 7376 7799. Opening hours, weekday lunch 12.00 – 15.00, dinner 17.00-late; weekend 12.00 - late*

Nearer to home is the new **Kizana**, a few doors east of the now empty Douglas & Gordon in Battersea Park Road. Full of curiosity, I entered this smallish but welcoming place and decided to stay for a light lunch as the scallops-nigiri (2 pieces for £7.00) and the sashimi (3 pieces for £7.50) were winking at me. Sadly, I hadn't time for more, but I shall return, as I especially liked the look of the tuna tartare with truffle ponzu (£11.50) on their small but tempting menu.

***Kizana**, 214 Battersea Park Road, SW11 4ND. 020 3832 8790. Opening hours: Mon-Thu 12.00–15.00 and 17.00 – 22.00. Fri-Sun 12.00–10.00.*

This article came about because I invariably offer a plate of sushi with

a glass of prosecco when friends come round for supper. I work on four pieces per head – depending on the generosity of the supper menu which follows! I find sushi adds panache to any social occasion and the rice helps to minimise the effects of alcohol! I usually buy from Waitrose's Sushi Daily selection and particularly like their menu duo salmon (£12.95) and spicy chicken crunch (£6.35) which also proves popular with my guests. Whilst there, I often buy a Little Moon white chocolate and raspberry mochi (£3.05) as a special treat later for the golfer and me. At Sainsbury's, I'll buy practically the same mixes from their 'To Go Sushi' platters, but tend to find them a bit rice-heavy. I've yet to buy from M&S's Wasabi fresh sushi counter, but would expect good results.

To sum up, the overall standard of all the sushi I've eaten this year is fairly consistent: some more generous with the ingredients than others; some drier, some over-riced, some less delicately crafted. The Japanese explosion in London is quite phenomenal with everyone, it seems, capitalising on this lucrative market. Even my keep-fit class tutor insists that during certain routines we shape our fingers as if holding a sushi, whilst we shimmy to some rock and roll!

NB As a culinary reminder: Sushi or Sumeshi is a special steamed short-grained vinegared rice which is wrapped around ingredients such as raw salmon and avocado. Sashimi is basically raw salmon or tuna but without a grain of rice and Nigiri is similar to Sushi (with rice) though doesn't contain extra ingredients or seaweed but unlike sashimi, it contains vinegared rice. Interestingly, Korea make their sushi with raw beef, instead of raw fish, whilst Hawaii make up their Poke bowls with raw tuna or octopus instead of salmon. Phew!! Who'd have known!

A Coronation Drink in the Rain

Fenella Barber

Galoshes would have been good for our celebratory drink in the rain. “It’s a little anxious’, Piglet said to himself, ‘to be a Very Small Animal Almost Entirely Surrounded by Water’”. Puddles of water covered the bar, the food and all of us. We put up our umbrellas and had a jolly time.

On 10 May, we gathered in the Old English Garden for a Coronation Drink, masterminded by Sara Milne. With an uncertain forecast, Committee and helpers arrived to set up under a lovely sun. With set

up complete, the heavens promptly opened. Out came the umbrellas and on cue so did our lovely guests. At one point during the downpour, the Friends of Battersea Park mobile phone rang enquiring if we were still going ahead: but of course, though an umbrella would be advisable.

Considering the rain, we had a great turnout, and I for one am delighted to know our members are not put off by a trifling downpour. Our menagerie for the evening grew as we were also joined by a heron, some

ducks, numerous parakeets and a few squirrels.

We were a little sodden, but nobody minded. We gathered in a lovely spot and Adrian, our Treasurer, raised his glass and asked us all to toast the King. Under umbrellas and in a fine setting with a little bunting, we did!

The sun reappeared, conversation flowed, everyone was happy, and nobody wanted to leave. A very fine, somewhat eventful, and memorable evening! God Save the King!



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Friends' Summer Barbecue

Fenella Barber

What a happy night and splendid gathering we had for the Friends' Barbecue on 13 June!

The weather was magnificent and the organisation superb. Guests spread out over the wonderful expanse of the Bowling Green, and the children spilled into their own area to the west, ready to be entertained by Sharky and George.

Gorgeous brightly coloured dresses and fine summer wear were on display as the drinks and conversation flowed and music rang out from Thomas's Jazz Band and Los Soneros.

The smell of the BBQ wafted over all, whetting appetites and drawing the crowd. With homemade puddings to follow, the food was much complimented.

With a further trip to the bar, the chance to spend big on the tombola and silent auction followed and spend big you did! For a full list of our generous supporters and sponsors please see below. They, combined with the hard work of our BBQ team led by Peta May Law and Inge Darling, made the evening a triumph.

Charles Dickens once wrote 'summer

came and if the village had been beautiful at first, it was now in the full glow and luxuriance of its richness. The earth had donned her mantle of brightest green; and shed her richest perfumes abroad. It was the prime and vigour of the year; all things were glad and flourishing'.

Thanks to a fabulous summer evening and a wonderfully organised event, we basked in the full glow of Battersea Park, played on the mantle of the green, and all present seemed glad and flourishing!

Barbecue Thanks

We are very grateful to all our generous supporters, Friends and friends, who made our 16th annual barbecue on 13 June such a success. As the Children's Zoo was unable to host the event this year because of building works, we were most grateful when Gemma Bechervaise from Enable Events stepped in and offered the Bowling Green as a venue. Sharky & George offered to provide the children's entertainment and with Savills' support, we were once again able to put together a fun evening – helped by the beautiful summer weather.

For the Silent Auction: Annabel Pope Prints, Battersea Park Children's Zoo, Ben de Lise, Lord Addington for a Tour of the House of Lords, The Power of Boxing, Private Tour of Lambeth Palace, Laura Hayes, Le Gavroche, Katie Mason for Glyndebourne tickets, Muni Pottery, Mosimann's Belgravia, Phene Bespoke Cakes, Sharky & George, Trinny London and Vivienne Westwood,

For the Barbecue: Smart Hospitality, under the leadership of Greg Lawson, run by the wonderful Kim Laley, cheerfully served us a delicious BBQ and salads. A special thanks must go to Kim for her unfailing support in helping to organise this event for so many years.

For Music: Victor Garcia and Natalia Pelaez of Los Soneros, and Thomas's Battersea Jazz Band.

For Puddings: Claire Jolie, The Masons Arms, Sandy Tucker and Susanna Stratton Norris

For Children's Entertainment: A big thank you to Sharky & George for offering their services when the Zoo was unavailable, saying "Battersea is our favourite London Park" and to our favourite regulars Teddy Tennis.

For Flowers: Thrive and Aileen McCarthy and Camilla Heywood

For Generous Donations:

Arts, Tours & Culture: Arts Society

Victoria, Battersea Dogs & Cats Home, Friends of Battersea Park, Theatre 503

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Hair and Beauty: Blue Ocean Nails, Elegance Nails & Spa, Hari's Hair & Beauty, Lily & Lime Beauty, Lux Nails & Beauty, Ramey Barber, Teamwork Hair & Beauty, Uffizi Hair Gallery, Amela Beauty Salon

Health & Wellbeing: Barking Fit, Body Logic Health, Casita Yoga, Embody Wellness, Fitness for the over 50s with Suzy Mills, Hillgate Practice, Ignae, Liz Earle Wellbeing, Love Life Sober with Christy Osborne, Nuffield Health, Perky Booty, Pilates

with Wendy Jardine, Queensgate Orthodontics, Space NK, Thai Charms & Spa, Vivobarefoot

Horticulture: Battersea Flower Station, Moyses Stevens, Peta May Garden Design, Rocco Flowers

Household & Specialists: Amy Poon, Atelier 18, Boden, Computer Tuition with Paula Willis, Fantasy Cleaners, Junk Monkey, M & G Autos, Natalia Violet Antiques, New Vintage Furniture, Percy and Dottie, Pines and Needles, Sammy Duder, Sweaty Betty, Tolstoy Edit, Ward

Thomas, Willa Grace

Leisure & Recreation: Battersea Park Children's Zoo, Bluebird Boats, Flying Fantastic, Go Ape, Latchmere Leisure Centre, Mum Dance, Muni, Putt in the Park, Royal Academy of Dance

Pets: Diana & George, Medivet, Pads, Paws & Claws, Steve Dog Trainer,

Young & Pre-teens: Fencing School, Mpira UK, My Gym, Urban Studio Sessions

On the Night: The Savills's Battersea team, led by Mayow Short, for publicising the event, donations to the Silent Auction and tombola, and invaluable help on the night.

Mayar Elassar and her colleagues from Enable, Inspector Steve Biggs and PCs Jason Crawford and Courtney Gordon from Wandsworth Council Police & Events Service

For contact details for any of the above, e-mail info@friendsofbatterseapark.org or call 07495 542399



Friends' Secondary School project with St John Bosco College

After the success of our project with five local primary schools (see Review issue 121) your Committee wanted to work with a secondary school to see what could be achieved for older children. Giving a teenager a positive and enjoyable learning experience in the Park may have an even more beneficial effect than for a primary school pupil. It may also help teenagers understand the precious nature of parks and open spaces.

As before, the Friends are grateful to the Sir Walter St John Educational Charity and to its Manager, Susan Perry, who oversaw the project on our behalf. We agreed funding of £2,840 at our meeting in March 2022. The project began in April and concluded in October. Susan visited both the Park when the project was underway and the school, meeting some of the pupils 'who really appreciated the opportunity to learn and to have such a positive experience in the Park'.

The project had four parts. Below is a summary of the report provided by Rubina Ahmad, Deputy Head of St John Bosco College.

1. Go Ape reward trip. This took place in the autumn due to the extremely hot weather at the end of the summer term. The activity enabled stress and anxiety reduction through exercise in a natural outdoor environment to support improved self-esteem, mental health and wellbeing. Students returned to school happy and energised, stating that they had thoroughly enjoyed participating and asking when they could go again!

2. Year 9 Science project. On the days when this activity took place, the weather was glorious, and it was great to have all the students walk to Battersea Park from school and back again. Students were able to choose which area of the Park to

investigate. They effectively designed their methods, collected a sensible amount of data in order to find averages and then extrapolated from their data to the whole field. Finally, students discussed their results and were able to suggest factors which may have impacted them. They were thrilled to finish their day with an ice cream. The activity was enjoyable as students were able to put in place learning in the classroom and were able to explain clearly the purpose of the activity and its execution. They all said how relaxed and happy they felt and asked afterwards when they would be going to the Park again.

3. A-Level Photography project. Students visited the Pump House to look carefully and closely at the architecture. They were particularly focused on how to zoom and use the DSLR cameras [purchased by the Friends] to get a really close-up shot, concentrating on the small details. Their outcomes are great considering this was their first time using a DSLR camera. Soaking up the atmosphere in the Park in the height of summer was a real boost to the students' wellbeing.

4. Tree Top Adventure Plus Experience at Go Ape for our students with ASD. This activity supported the wellbeing of our students with ASD as they were able to enjoy the Park at a great height in open skies. It supported their patience and cooperation as well as allowing hand-eye coordination, balance, and teamwork which further developed their focus and confidence. Feedback from students and parents has been very positive, some advising they will be visiting again with family. One student commented "I loved it! I've never tried it before. It was pretty scary at times but it was fun. I definitely want to go there again". Another added, "I didn't think I would be able to do it, but I did it! I

was even helping my friend who was a bit scared".



Events

JULY	Monday 24 to Friday 28 11.30 to 4.30 Battersea Evolution	Sport in the Park Sport for Young People - part of the Battersea Summer Scheme
AUG	Wednesday 9 at sunset Peace Pagoda	Nagasaki Day Peace Walk from Westminster Cathedral at 7.45pm to the Park for Floating Lantern Ceremony
	Saturday 26 Gates open 4.30. 7.15 to 10	A Night at the Musicals Royal Philharmonic Concert Orchestra Proms in the Park followed by Fireworks Royal Philharmonic Concert Orchestra Gabrielle in Concert Afternoon of Soul and Jazz All tickets from batterseaparkinconcert.seetickets
	Sunday 27 Gates open 4.30. 7.15 to 10	
	Monday 28 2pm All on rugby pitch area	
SEP	Tuesday 12 6.30pm for 7pm All Saints Church 100 Prince of Wales Drive SW11 4BD	Friends Annual General Meeting
	Saturday 11 Passes Chelsea Bridge from 10.45am	Great River Race
	Saturday 23 11 am to 1pm. Meet at the Chelsea Gate	Trees and Biodiversity Walk led by Greg Packman. Tickets £10 from friendsofbatterseapark.org/events . Information from info@friendsofbatterseapark.org or 07572 008329
OCT	Tuesday 3 to Sunday 8 11am to 6pm Battersea Evolution	RCA Autumn Decorative Antiques and Textiles Fair
	Thursday 19 to Sunday 22 11am to 8pm. Battersea Evolution	Affordable Art Fair
NOV	Saturday 4 Sunday 5	Fireworks in the Park – ticketed events enablelc.org
	Monday 13 Lunch from 12.15. Lecture from 1.00 to 2.00 pm Ethelburga Community Centre 60 Worfield Street, SW11 4RA	The Friends' Autumn Lunchtime Lecture Spiders in London by Edward Milner, Spider Recorder for London. £7.00 tickets & pre-ordered lunch @ £6.00 from friendsofbatterseapark.org/events or via the enclosed leaflet. Further information from info@friendsofbatterseapark.org or 020 7622 5199
REGULAR EVENTS	Sundays from 11am - 12 Wednesdays 10am – 11 Wednesdays from 9.30am Sundays Start date tba 9 - 9.30	Litter Picking Meet at Macduff pedestrian gate by York Mansions. Walk Wandsworth Led walk in the Park. Meet at Pedestrian Gate next to Albert Bridge. Contact activelifestyles@enablelc.org Gardening in Winter Garden Contact fhradcliffe@gmail.com to book in and check it's taking place Junior Parkrun from hut at All Weather Pitch



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