



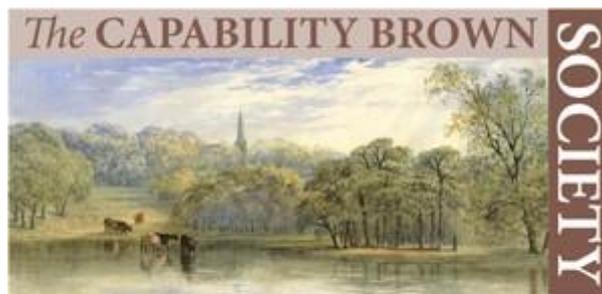
# Friends of Wimbledon Park



## Annual Report 2018

(Covering the period March 2017 to February 2018)

### The Grade II\* Heritage Landscape



*'Capability Brown's Wimbledon Park'*  
19th Century Water Colour Circa 1870 by an Unknown Artist



# Friends of Wimbledon Park



Capability Brown's Wimbledon Park (Only 61ha of the original 374ha remain) now in three ownerships:

- 1) The Golf course is owned by the All England Lawn Tennis Club and leased to the Wimbledon Park Golf Club (30ha)
- 2) The Public Park is owned by the LB Merton (27ha including 9ha lake)
- 3) The Wimbledon Club own the area marked TWC (4ha)



# Friends of Wimbledon Park

## Dear Members and Associates,

This was another successful year and a sample of activities carried out:

- Another 500 trees were planted in Horse Close Wood in February 2018. This adds to the 1,400 trees planted since February 2016. A total of 2000 trees.
- Supported an exhibition in the Norman Plaistow Gallery celebrating William Wilberforce.
- Commissioned a bat survey
- Attended Merton Heritage Discovery day at Civic Centre, Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> May 1230-1630.
- Took part in the Wandle Fortnight including a Capability Brown walk from Wimbledon Park Road entrance to The Wimbledon Club
- Planted bulbs in the Revelstoke Road entrance and by the Bowling Pavilion.
- Attended training in Wandle Vistas and this has given us a better understanding of the vistas in the Heritage Park.
- Planted a hornbeam donated by the Woodlands Trust. Regrettably this was stolen. A replacement has been planted.

On the downside is our failure to send out member's newsletters. The last one was issued in May 2017 and our thanks go to Jill Hopper for producing these over the years. She had to relinquish this due to work commitments. We hope to find a volunteer soon to replace her. My apologies.

Our website needs better attention and we seek a volunteer to help with this important task. Meanwhile Amelia Obertelli-Moriarty is doing great things with Facebook and is branching out into Tweeting! Thank you Amelia.

## Managing change in the heritage park

FOWP has no executive power over what needs to be done in the heritage park. This is the province of the owners LB Merton (LBM), The All England Lawn Tennis Club (AELTC), The Wimbledon Club (TWC) and the leaseholder Wimbledon Park Golf Club (WPGC). To preserve and improve the state of our park, joined up thinking is required and this means the four parties talking to each other, preferably including the community who value and use the park.

Our role is to collect and file information based on evidence, observation and opinions that best reflect what could be done, how it is sustained and how it fits within the Conservation Management Plan. A lot of groundwork has been covered in diverse areas and results are beginning to show.

## Capability Brown Society

The logo of this society is on the front page. It's still a work in progress but will be very helpful for events such as our Capability Brown weekend mentioned later in this report. It also prompts thoughts about a new logo for the Friends.

## Conservation Management Plan version 05 (CMP)

Our constitution requires us to support the implementation of a Conservation Management Plan for the heritage park. It became clear that this was an important item and that we would need to write it ourselves. We have completed this task and Conservation Management Plan for The Grade II\* Heritage Landscape known as Wimbledon Park version 05 was issued in November 2016.

Central to our thinking is that landscape, biodiversity and habitat **are our responsibility.** Bearing our accountability in mind, **what are the capabilities for people** in the heritage park?

Four topics are identified as key issues the Conservation Management Plan must cover. These are wellbeing, study, sport and community:

- **Wellbeing** includes health for all, regardless of age, as well as the feel-good factor for individuals.



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- **Sport** includes physical activity and games.
- **Study** includes lifelong learning, research and writing reports.
- **Community** is a self-organized network of people with common agenda, cause, or interest, who collaborate by sharing ideas, information, and other resources. Importantly this includes volunteering.

It should be noted that *each topic is treated as of equal importance and they provide a different perspective on how to approach different tasks. This ensures a balanced view with fair outcomes and respect for the CMP*

The improvement of the heritage park is our project and within this there are numerous tasks that need examination such as the lake, the landscape, stadium and arena and Horse Close Wood. These can be described as programmes within the project.

## Special places for nature in Wimbledon Park

In respect of nature conservation sites on and around Heritage Wimbledon Park Dave Dawson explains:

- *Much of Heritage Wimbledon Park is identified as of Borough importance (the Golf Course, Lake and Horse Close Wood). The railsides to the east of the park and the adjacent hedgerows are also of Borough Importance. Other nearby Borough sites are along other rail lines, the lower River Wandle, King George's Park and parts of Wandsworth Common.*
- *We could use mappable entities for nature called "**special places for nature**": i.e. our own jargon. If people ask what they are, we have a paper to refer them to. Whilst it needs updating, it remains fine for the basic concepts.*

## Greenspace Neighbourhood Planning.

Special places for nature and some buildings need attention and Greenspace Neighbourhood Planning allows discussion on items such as:

- 1) The lake is declining; water lilies mostly gone, eels unseen and the fish count is down by over 90%. Lake margins need attention and the water quality needs monitoring.
- 2) Bigden, Rushmere & Wimbledon Park brooks.
- 3) Horse Close Wood has a management plan and is being attended but still work to do.
- 4) Ashen Grove is ancient woodland and needs a management plan.
- 5) Owl Copse following the unfortunate clearance in December 2018 needs to be revamped.
- 6) Bowling Pavilion needs refurbishing
- 7) Water Activities Centre needs to be re-sited to restore vistas.
- 8) Stadium needs replacing with a building that can cater for everybody.
- 9) Improve Revelstoke Road entrance.
- 10) Veteran tree preservation

With the above in mind we need to meet Merton & Wandsworth planners to discuss:

- 1) Local Plan for Heritage Wimbledon Park
- 2) Strategic environmental assessment and sustainability appraisal
- 3) Wimbledon North Conservation Area. A Character Assessment, LB Merton.
- 4) Wimbledon North Conservation Area Appraisal, LB Wandsworth

In the meantime idverde have interesting proposals to improve the crazy golf layout.

## Historic England 'At Risk Register'.

The Grade II\* Registered Park and Garden (RPG) has been included in the Heritage at Risk (HAR) Register for London. Chris Laine (Historic England) has given the following guidance on removing RPG from HAR:



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*“The starting point is Historic England’s letter to the landowners dated 06 June 2016, in which my predecessor (Zosia Mellor) stated that the RPG had been included in the HAR Register due to the following issues:*

- *Uncertainty around the future [of the entire historic landscape];*
- *The impacts of divided ownership on landscape management;*
- *Obscured designed views; and*
- *The deterioration of the Lake.*

*The above issues would need to be addressed before the RPG could be removed from the HAR Register, and the responsibility for removing the RPG from the HAR Register lies with the landowners. Historic England has not yet had a detailed discussions with them to set out and agree a strategy for making this happen.*

*All of the landowners are already around the table during meetings of the Wimbledon Park Lake Technical Steering Group set up by LB Merton to discuss remedial works to the Lake required under the Reservoirs Act. There is tremendous scope for this project to deliver additional heritage, amenity and biodiversity benefits, and I have been representing Historic England at these meetings to ensure that the RPG’s significance remains part of the discussion, and to ensure that every opportunity is made to improve the poor condition and appearance of the Lake as the principal feature of the RPG -- a key determinant in the RPG’s inclusion in the HAR Register. While the discussion is focussed on the Lake at present, this Group represents a forum through which Historic England can engage all of the landowners and set up those important discussions about the wider RPG, its HAR status and how to remove it from the HAR Register”.*

## **Green Flag award**

We have permission to work towards the Green Flag award for public parks.

- Purpose and Aims:
  - ❖ To ensure that everybody has access to quality green and other open spaces, irrespective of where they live
  - ❖ To ensure that these spaces are appropriately managed and meet the needs of the communities that they serve
  - ❖ To establish standards of good management, and to promote and share best practice amongst the green space sector
  - ❖ To recognise and reward the hard work of managers, staff and volunteers
- This involves addressing a field assessment of:
  - 1) A welcoming Place
  - 2) Healthy Safe and Secure
  - 3) Well Maintained and Clean
  - 4) Environmental Management
  - 5) Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage
  - 6) Community Involvement
  - 7) Marketing and Communication
  - 8) Management

## **Wandle Valley**

- i. The Wandle Fortnight ran from Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> September to Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> September.
- ii. We participated in the Wandle fortnight with tree weeding, a bat walk and a Capability Brown walk.
- iii. This year the Wandle Fortnight runs from Saturday September 8<sup>th</sup> to Sunday September 23<sup>rd</sup>. We plan to participate with our CB Weekend described later.
- iv. Wandle Valley Regional Park Trust: helped out with Get Active Wandle Valley a research project.



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- v. Wandle Valley Vistas project includes Wimbledon Park as part of the Wandle Valley. Five FOWP members participating.

## **Public meeting**

‘Plans and Proposals for the Modernisation and Upgrading of the Grade II\* Heritage Landscape’  
Chaired by Justine Greening MP on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1900 at TWC.

- i. Just under 100 attended 40 minute presentation followed by questions.
- ii. Key points:
  - a. Needed to emphasise that our work predates and has nothing to do with LB Merton’s Master Plan (publication has been delayed again until spring).
  - b. The Heritage Landscape is the 61ha not just the 27ha public park.
  - c. The proposed artificial surface within the athletics track is controversial.

## **Capability Brown Activity Celebration weekend Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2018**

### **Procedure-Sport**

- 1) *Clubs to be invited to join in the celebrations*
- 2) *Participation may be minimal in that they only offer an induction into their sport*
- 3) *If their activity coincides within the Weekend period then this would continue but with greater publicity*
- 4) *Individuals encouraged to attend and engage*
- 5) *Secondary schools to be approached so they can get their pupils involved and active.*
- 6) *This activity to be co-ordinated by The Wimbledon Club*

### **Procedure-Study**

- 1) *Individuals encouraged to attend and engage*
- 2) *Secondary schools to be approached so they can get their pupils involved and active.*
- 3) *Pupil contributions can be prepared at end of summer term and displayed during the celebrations.*
- 4) *Individual or group work can also be prepared in own time*
- 5) *Co-ordinators to be assigned*
- 6) *Arts*
  - i. *displayed in Lake room TWC*
- 7) *Music*
  - i. *in stadium arena*
- 8) *Science*
  - i. *walks and talks*
- 9) *Community*
  - i. *Zumba, singing & networking*

Revelstoke Road murals within the railway arches to be considered.

- 1) *We’re currently discussing with TfL.*

The above is an outline of proposed activities and is subject to change. This fits in with the 2018 Wandle Fortnight which is a community-led celebration of all things Wandle. It runs from September 8th to September 23rd.

## **LB Merton’s Master Plan**

We’re still waiting for this report to be published. It has nothing to do with our Conservation Management Plan which predates this report.

## **Crime**

Crime report for Heritage Wimbledon Park shows a total of 18 crimes for 2017. This is sent separately (our thanks to Clive Williams for this compilation).



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## **idverde**

- idverde took over park maintenance for Merton and Sutton councils from 1 February 2017. They are the largest greenspace provider in Europe. Patrick Phillips heads this group and we're building a good working relationship with this company.

## **FOWP Forum**

- The Executive Committee (EC) continued to improve its knowledge and expertise. Jill Lovett and Charles Runcie joined during the year, otherwise the Executive Committee remains unchanged.
- There are four London Borough Council wards surrounding the park. To provide further free flow of information 11 of the 12 councillors are ex officio members of the FOWP Forum. Borough elections are due in May and we will liaise with the successful candidates.
- Leonie Cooper, GLA member for Merton and Wandsworth is an ex officio member.
- Dave Dawson (is an environment and ecology adviser) is an ex officio member of the FOWP Forum.
- Paul McCue (officer from Wandsworth Council) is ex officio and will help liaison between the two boroughs.
- Johnny Perkins has recently become our main contact with AELTC. Although not part of the FOWP Forum he is kept up to date with developments and we meet from time to time.
- We're pleased that the Rt Hon Justine Greening (MP for Putney) and Stephen Hammond (MP for Merton) have again agreed to be Honorary Friends of FOWP.
- We continue to liaise with park officers both formally and informally. These interactions will become more important as community involvement in the park increases

## **A word on associate membership**

Under our constitution, we have a membership category called 'associates'. This includes: individuals in an organisation which joins as a corporate member; park officers; and members of the three local residents' associations (Southfields Grid, Wimbledon Park and Wimbledon House). We would be delighted if associate members would consider upgrading to full membership, which will entitle you to a vote at our AGM and to receiving our quarterly email newsletter. You can find out how to join by visiting our recently redesigned website <http://www.friendsofwimbledonpark.org.uk>

Wimbledon Park is remarkable for the number of assets it contains and our job is to ensure that these are not lost or wasted but are enhanced. This requires the owners and community to work together on implementing the Conservation Management Plan.

Nick Steiner  
Chairman FOWP

March 2018