

# FRIENDS OF HYDE PARK & KENSINGTON GARDENS

[www.friendshpkg.org.uk](http://www.friendshpkg.org.uk)

SPRING 2017

FOUNDED IN 1991 TO PROMOTE THE PEACE AND BEAUTY OF THE PARKS

ISSUE 44

## Spring 2017 Newsletter

### Why are the Royal Parks becoming a charity?

As highlighted in our Autumn 2016 Newsletter, the Royal Parks and the Friends of Hyde Park & Kensington Gardens have both moved towards acquiring charitable status. The Friends became a charity last year and the Royal Parks are completing the process this Spring. We asked Royal Parks chief executive Andrew Scattergood to give us an insight into how the complicated transition from being part of a government department to independent charity has gone. What does he see as the main benefits for the organisation?

*It's been a long time coming, but finally we are just weeks away from creating a new charity to manage and fundraise for London's eight Royal Parks.*

*The plan is that by the end of this month we will have created the new Royal Parks charity which will look after the 5,000-acre estate stretching from Greenwich Park in the east to Bushy Park in the west. It will also take on the role of generating the £36million needed each year to run the parks.*



*Currently, the parks are managed by an agency of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, with fundraising undertaken by a separate charity, the 'Royal Parks Foundation' (RPF). These changes will bring the two organisations together into a single new charity.*

*Our new charity will continue to receive Government funding in addition to the 65 per cent we currently generate ourselves from a number of areas including fundraising, donations, lottery funding, catering, rent from properties, fees and licences, events, and sponsorship. As we expect there to be further reductions to the government grant we receive, we will need to generate more of our own income in future.*

*Because we are now increasingly self-sustaining, becoming a new charity will allow us to manage the parks even more efficiently, with better services provided at a lower cost while maintaining excellent visitor satisfaction.*

*Being at arm's length from government means we will also be able to present a more compelling case for support to private donors, charitable trusts and corporate partners as well as attracting new volunteers.*

*We have recently appointed a new board of trustees under the chairmanship of lifelong arts and heritage enthusiast Loyd Grossman CBE, who has already been clear in his vision that he wants the new charity to secure the Royal Parks' position as "the best in the world", growing income and support without over-commercialisation.*

*One of the early key decisions for the Board will be appointing a new Chief Executive. This process is underway and a decision is expected in the next few weeks.*

*Changing our status from a government agency to a new charity is a significant milestone in the long history of the Royal Parks, and one that will enable us to continue to conserve and improve these amazing parks for everyone now, and in the future, to explore, value and enjoy.*



#### Getting stuck in...

*Andrew with Steve Edwards, Head of Special Projects on the site of the new Hyde Park Nursery*

Andrew Scattergood  
Chief Executive  
The Royal Parks  
Agency

# Letter from the Editor



*Spring* is finally here, the parks are looking wonderful and Paul, FHPKG's accredited photographer, has been out and about capturing moments at Friends' events and in Hyde Park, as you will see throughout this issue of the newsletter. Special features include a fascinating interview by Sue Heywood, one of our trustees, with Yana Peel, recently appointed director of the Serpentine Galleries. Her bold ideas and vision will undoubtedly ensure that the gallery will continue to be a focal point in the international art world. Our front page interview with Andrew Scattergood has the good news that the Royal Parks are nearing the end of the transition to becoming a charity - a complicated step, but definitely worthwhile. Maybe it's just the effect of Spring, but the updates from the Parks Managers show them being busier than ever, with major projects such as the restoration of buildings at the Brompton Cemetery well underway.

As members already know, the Friends are now a charity and we are keen to put any funds we raise towards helping specific initiatives within Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens. If you wish to make a donation to support the work of the Friends, please go to the home page of our website [www.friendshpkg.org.uk](http://www.friendshpkg.org.uk), click on the 'Donate Now' button, or contact us by post to FHPKG, Old Police House, Hyde Park, W2 2UH. Thank you!

Tessa Singleton

## News round-up from the Parks

### Kensington Gardens

Andy Williams, Park Manager

#### Brompton Cemetery

In January we commenced construction works as part of the delivery phase for the £6.2m HLF/Big Lottery funded cemetery restoration scheme (<https://www.royalparks.org.uk/parks/brompton-cemetery/brompton-cemetery-conservation-project>). Restoration of the Chapel and restoration and extension of the North Lodge is underway with other works to the catacombs, colonnades and listed memorials due to start later this year. The Garden of Remembrance will be redesigned using a range of plant species included a number introduced by Robert Fortune, an eminent Victorian plant hunter and former Curator of the Chelsea Physic Garden, who is laid to rest in the cemetery. A number of compensatory bat boxes have been erected on trees across the site and a recent volunteering event supported by TRP and the Friends of Brompton Cemetery has culminated in the planting of 12,000 snowdrops and bluebells along the main avenue and in a glade. The Friends of Brompton Cemetery will be continuing to undertake tours throughout the year and can be contacted via <http://brompton-cemetery.org.uk/>



#### Albert Memorial Kiosk

Construction works are well underway and we are due to be fully open and functioning before Easter. Colicci are fitting out the kiosk and will be providing simple, high quality food in the form of handmade cakes, pastries and freshly made sandwiches as well as locally roasted speciality coffees and teas and premium British scoop ice cream. Complementary landscape improvements are also taking place. Readers may have noticed a major refurbishment of the over mature shrubbery, which will in time be replaced by a rich palette of new plants to reflect the area's history as a Victorian Flower Walk. Some planting works will be carried forward to winter 2017. We are also introducing a new recessed gateway at the eastern end of the Flower Walk mirroring the existing detail introduced at the Palace Gate (western) end of the Walk two years ago. The existing brick Police Box will continue to act as storage for the catering concession but we are making use of the exterior walls to display interpretation.

#### Catering

**Broad Walk Cafe** Colicci commenced their alterations to the Café at the end of February. We anticipate the facility re-opening in time for Easter. The works include: extended back of house area, additional service points, accessible counters, improved product display areas, zoned seating to better accommodate playground queues, external re-cladding

Alternative mobile units have been provided by Colicci to serve the regular customer base and meet the needs of playground visitors.

**Italian Gardens Cafe** Colicci have recently provided two new hardwood bench seats on the North Walk. Their new bespoke Gelato cart is ready for use and will be positioned on the North Walk enhancing the ice cream offer within the park. (See Restaurant Review page 10)

#### Tree Strategy

We have made good progress this winter delivering phase three of the published 2014 Kensington Gardens Tree Strategy (<https://www.royalparks.org.uk/park-management/park-strategies/kensington-gardens-tree-strategy>). We have completed the replacement of over-mature and declining horse chestnuts on the West Row of the Dials with a known resistant elm species, namely *Ulmus x lutece*. <http://www.resistantelms.co.uk/elms/ulmus-lutece/>. We have also undertaken significant gap planting along Lancaster Walk (north of Physical Energy sculpture) with London plane and common lime, reinstating the inner and outer avenues respectively.

#### Storeyard redevelopment

Having received planning permission from WCC for the construction of permanent welfare facilities for our landscape maintenance team, we are now awaiting the capital allocation of funds. The project has been tendered with a total project cost of circa £750k. The new building would replace the existing temporary buildings, present since the relocation from the adjacent Magazine when the Sackler Gallery was developed, with a simple structure sympathetic to its surroundings

#### Winter Projects

We have repaired the worn desire line on the slopes of Buck Hill adjacent to the Italian Gardens in order to remove footfall and relieve compaction in the rootzone of the mature trees in this area. The previously eroded bare earth desire line contributed to soil particles migrating into drainage at the Italian Gardens causing maintenance issues (blocked drains). We have also implemented some simple willow-based play interventions within the Diana Playground to help add additional play value, utilising the skills and expertise of the same willow artist who developed the original willow features within the playground in 2000. Both the projects have been funded by the Royal Parks Foundation.

#### Biodiversity

We have worked with TRP's Conservation Officer to identify and place several new nest boxes for kestrels (x2) and owls within the tree canopy. Work on the new kingfisher bank on the west facing bank of the Long Water nears completion - we hope in time that the visiting kingfishers are able to make use of this new habitat. This site is also seeing the inclusion of new woody understorey through a corporate volunteer planting event managed with the Royal Parks Foundation. New parakeet proof bird feeders have been installed at the Leaf Pen - early indications are that the design is deterring access to the parakeets to the benefit of smaller native song birds.

#### Events

The team for the Gorilla Circus will be with us on the picnic lawn for an extended period this year commencing in late May through until the end of August.

# News round-up from the Parks

## Hyde Park

Rob Dowling, Park Manager



### Spring Update

*It has been a busy Spring in the park with a number of significant projects taking place. The current phase of the Cycle Superhighway works are now reaching their conclusion and the soft landscape reinstatement works can soon take place. Storm Doris resulted in the loss of 2 trees but over this winter alone we have planted 45 new trees. Despite the storm, the park is coming back to life and the first grass cutting of the year commenced in mid March. The shire horses from Richmond Park were also brought in to assist with a harrow of the meadow to improve the sward for wildflowers. Across the park, the Spring flower displays are coming into their own, especially in the Rose gardens. Sadly though, plant thefts have started again, something that deprives park users of the enjoyment of seeing the park burst into colour.*

### The Parade Ground

*The Parade Ground works are ahead of schedule. Progress has been swift, largely helped by mainly good weather and improved scheduling. We are currently planning on opening a large swathe of the parade ground during the last week of March, subject to the weather and growing conditions.*

*A number of areas of cobbles have been removed at the southern end of the parade ground and the area returned to parkland. This will reduce the expanse of hard landscape in the area immediately north of the Serpentine Bar and Kitchen.*

### Hyde Park Nursery

*On 13th March the first above ground construction of the nursery commenced. The works are on track to be completed by the end of July. Construction works have to date had minimal impact on the park surroundings as they are largely self contained on site. Some landscaping works around the entrance to the new nursery will take place later in the Spring*



### Serpentine Bar and Kitchen Toilets

*The restaurant toilet extension works are running ahead of schedule with completion due for Friday 24th March. Upon completion, some landscaping works will need to take place to help blend the block into the landscape.*

*Internally, the improvements to the toilet block greatly add to the facilities for restaurant customers.*

### Victoria Border Landscape Improvements

*A significant expanse of park has been reclaimed back from the former route of West Carriage Drive near Victoria Gate. Due to the new soil profile being built up from scratch, the ground has needed some time to settle down. The final landscaping works will commence once the site has had some time to dry out.*

### Broadwalk Cycle/ Pedestrian Crossing Points Scheme

*From mid March, a project will get underway to install small speed bumps and highlight shared space on the Hyde Park Broadwalk.*



*The idea behind the scheme comes as latest statistics show that more than 1,200 cyclists commute on some cycle paths through Hyde Park during the rush hour, with four out of five travelling above the recommended 10mph – considered by The Royal Parks to be the ideal considerate cycling speed in its parks.*

*In one instance, a cyclist travelling along the Broadwalk was clocked at more than 32mph – above the limit allowed for cars on some local roads. The latest work includes small speed bumps and new path surfaces at several key crossing points along the main stretch of the Broadwalk. The aim is to alert cyclists that they are entering a different part of the pathway where more pedestrians are likely to be encountered.*

*Changes will also be made to signage in other parts of the route at pedestrian entrances to reinforce the The Royal Parks' Pathway Code of Conduct which states that pedestrians have priority over all other users, even in areas designated and marked for other purposes.*

# Update on membership

The following new members have joined the Friends since the Autumn 2016 Newsletter:

Mr Nigel Cox  
Mrs Olivia Cox  
Ms Caroline Sheldon  
Ms Virginia Kairis  
Mr Loyd Grossman CBE  
Mr David Colver  
Mrs Sandra Körner  
Mr & Mrs Simon & Anne Burnett  
Mrs Katrina Ashe  
Ms Camilla & Adam Temple  
Mrs Stephanie Tiley  
Mr Panda & Ms Agarwal Pradesh & Neel Panda  
Mrs Shirey Brihi  
Mrs Mel White  
Mr Josh Welby  
Miss Jane Low  
Mrs R Ranson  
Mr Tim Corner  
Mr Ray Prior

## CONVERTED TO LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Dr Jane Deal  
Mr. Adam Goodison

We have lost 21 members, apart from those who have died, and have lost contact with others.

We are still trying to contact Ann Rosamund Harr and Mr J M Williams, who both pay by standing order.

As of February 2017 we have:

**TOTAL MEMBERS** 587  
(including 20 Honorary)

**LIFE MEMBERS** 154  
**NEW MEMBERS** 22 (of which 3 are joint)

**Corporate members** 12  
**Associate members** 12

## !! THE IMPORTANCE OF GIFT AID !!

Many of you have signed up for Gift Aid in response to our requests over the past months. To date a total of 93 members have done so and as a charity this increases the FHPKG prospective income by £650.

Additionally, 5 members have made charitable donations and 12 members have taken the opportunity to update their standing order or convert to Life membership. Thanks to these actions the charity receives an extra £103.

If the majority of members signed up for Gift Aid, the financial benefit for the Friends would be approximately an additional £1,800 per year - funds that can be used to support projects connected with the Royal Parks. **If you have not done so already, please help us by completing and returning the Gift Aid Form enclosed.** You can also make a donation to the Friends via our website [www.friendsfhpkg.org.uk](http://www.friendsfhpkg.org.uk) - click the Donate button and follow the instructions.

Thank you!

**Mountbatten Cards** produce scenes of London for Christmas which are beautiful reproductions of hand paintings, many of Kensington. They ask their customers to nominate the Charity they would like 25% of the profit to go to. We received a £20 donation from them as our members had nominated 'The Friends'. We would like to take this opportunity to thank those members and Mountbatten cards for their generosity. Do take a look at their website [www.mbcards.co.uk](http://www.mbcards.co.uk) or phone 020 8947 2671

## Obituaries

**Mrs Mary Patricia Wilson ("Pat")**, a member of FHPKG, for 13 years sadly died aged 86 on 6th October 2016. Pat had been a volunteer guide at the V&A for the last 27 years, and always walked across the park from her home to the museum. Originally from the country, the park was dear to her as a place of greenery and spring bulbs and where all the grandchildren were taken to play and let off steam when they came to stay. (This obituary was written by Sue Calderon, Mrs Wilson's daughter.)

The following obituary was written for **Mr Anthony Butcher** by Anne Woodward Fisher:

Anthony Butcher was born in Kensington and spent his whole life in the Borough except for Military Service in WW2. He died April '16 after a short stay in a nursing home. He was for many years Treasurer of Christ

Church, Victoria Road and lived in a flat with a view of The Albert Hall. He had lived in Cottesmore Court since 1995 and Kensington Gardens was a favourite venue for him. Latterly he was virtually housebound but enjoyed visits to Kensington Gardens, sitting by The Serpentine watching the bird life.

Anthony Butcher died in his 90's but visiting him was always a pleasure and one was left feeling uplifted and happier for the experience. He was the most gentle, delightful and amusing person, always interested in others.

**Barbara Tomkinson** died early in 2016. She had been a Life Member since 2000.

## Update on Trustees

**Mike Davies** has retired from the Committee, and we would like to thank him very much for everything he's done for the Friends over the last ten years.

He was an expert "Mister Sound" and arranged top notch amplification for our AGM's when we held them in larger spaces. His long career in the BBC meant that we are beneficiaries of his skill and knowledge.

He also represented the Friends on the Safer Parks panel, and was able to report back to the committee (now the Trustees).

We would also like to thank Celia, Mike's wife, who was much in evidence pouring drinks at events and a very capable extra pair of organising hands. We will miss them both, but hope still to see them from time to time in the Parks.

Sue Price  
Chairman



# Chairman's Report

*It's been a good winter in the Parks, with some wonderful frosty days, plenty of spectacular sunrises and sunsets and not too much mud to wade through.*

*I've leant on the parapet of the Serpentine Bridge with a shoulder against the*



*middle lamp post and have loved the view – alongside plenty of other visitors in the same place taking pictures. This is “our” protected view. Many of you will know about the media coverage of our friends and colleagues in Richmond Park, and its*

*protected view of St Paul's Cathedral. This has been spoilt by a development sited beside and behind the Cathedral dome. The measures in place which were supposed to protect these views round London were not heeded in this case, and something wonderful has been lost.*

***Sadly, our Patron, Dame Jennifer Jenkins, DBE died in February.*** *She featured in our Spring 2016 Newsletter with a wonderful photograph by Paul Shelley and interview by Tessa Singleton. She was still enjoying, at 95, almost daily visits to the Parks to have lunch with Friends.*

*She was concerned with the level of commercial activities which take place in the Parks these days, and was impressed by the high standards of planting and maintenance.*

***Winter Wonderland*** *which, like Marmite, members either love or hate, had a successful season. The profits from this one event contribute significantly towards the running of all the Royal Parks, and we in Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens have benefited in all sorts of ways. This year there were no noise complaints, nor complaints about light pollution, following relocation to the centre of the site of the brighter attractions.*

*The residents to the north of the Park who have complained in the past were complimentary about the cleaning which took place in their streets.*

*There weren't the build ups of large crowds at Hyde Park Corner as access was evenly divided between the north and south. And, following the move slightly to the north of the original site, the Serpentine Road was kept open for the whole period, which helped the daily use by cyclists and pedestrians. There were no security incidents and heightened safety checks were in place.*

*The ground restoration started immediately the first attractions moved out, and the newly restored areas are already re-opening bit by bit. The whole area, plus all the extra work on drainage and compaction, will be restored and re-opened by 14 April.*

*Football games can take place on superb new turf, which some years ago was a bald sea of mud.*

***Cycle Superhighway 3*** *is now open and running on both West and South Carriage Drives with work remaining at Hyde Park Corner and close to the Will to Win at Alexandra Gate. There are several places where crossings are difficult for pedestrians, cyclists and cars. There have been “interactions” (TfL) or “clashes” (our words). Julian Peach and I still attend meetings with TfL about the CS and there is further work to be done. Julian has had several successes, reducing the number of CS signs in the Park, sorting out contradictions and pressing for clearer signage about speed and pedestrian shared paths.*

*We look forward to seeing the results of more electronic monitoring of paths within the Parks. There are some adaptations to be done to the “rumble strips” along Mount Walk. About 20% of cyclists go round the sides and have worn away the grass for considerable stretches. 10 mph speed signs are going up. Better behaviour is called for!*

*Don't forget to dial 101 if you see anything which is non urgent, but shouldn't be happening*

***We have watched with anticipation as work progresses with the building of the new nursery in Hyde Park.*** *The site has been cleared, and pile driving is going on.*

*Sadly, we won't be able to have our May/June wine-assisted visits this year when the place is packed with geraniums for Buckingham Palace as it won't be completed, but we have been invited in the Autumn. I think we'll be some of the very first visitors to this fantastic new facility.*

***I think our next campaign is going to have to be on the wide scale feeding of animals (mostly vermin)*** *which goes on and seems to be on the increase. When you walk along S. Flower Walk you will see no flowering bulbs at all. The planting of these was abandoned after several years when the whole lot were eaten by squirrels. You cannot walk along this stretch now without seeing nearly everybody photographing and feeding squirrels and pigeons. The rats, which are thriving, are not so noticeable, but they enjoy the food which is thrown down on the ground.*

*I've often seen people sitting on benches with squirrels running all over them (I wonder if they'd do the same if the animals had a bare tail instead of a fluffy one!).*

*Parakeets are also increasing in numbers, and are busy stripping trees of new growth when they are not being fed and attracted by people with bird whistles. It's never dull in the Parks, but sometimes rather peculiar!*

***As the Royal Parks have become a charity, so too have the Friends.*** *Members voted at the last AGM and in July, thanks to Tom Newman and with assistance from Simon Walton, our Treasurer and Lynden Easton, our Membership Secretary, we were up and running in July 2016. As I expect you will know, we are able to boost our funds both from donations and the income from events by being tax efficient. We are creeping towards being in a position to be able to contribute something towards modest projects in both Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens.*

***For several years we have financially only just been keeping our heads above water,*** *but the position has been gradually improving, and thanks to everybody's efforts the future looks a lot brighter. **If you have not done so already, may I urge you to complete the Gift Aid Form enclosed with this newsletter, to enable us to reclaim tax on donations.***

***We still need new members though,*** *so do ask friends and neighbours if they'd like to join, and to tempt them, get them to look at the website. Tessa Singleton, who was responsible for setting it up originally, is now concentrating on the newsletter, and has handed website management over to volunteer Paula Dyche to whom we are extremely grateful.*

*Once again, and I know I say this every time, I am so grateful to all the volunteers at the Hyde Park Corner kiosk answering questions, to the Trustees who work so hard and are also volunteers, and to you the members who are so enthusiastic and a pleasure to meet at our events.*



*Sue Price  
Chairman*

# Out and about with the Friends

The autumn/winter events take a different turn from the spring and summer ones, but tend to be more unusual. Some are FHPKG special outings, others are open to all.

## The Veteran Car Run

Sunday 6 November 2016

*A beautiful cold and sunny morning was the backdrop to the 120<sup>th</sup> London to Brighton Veteran Car Run in Hyde Park today.*



*So much to see - what a show. Babies in child seats wearing goggles and flying helmets along with dummies in their mouths. Dogs on board looking round on full alert. Imperial college students in striped blazers. Beautifully dressed ladies. Totally brilliant! Its got to be the biggest and best display of veteran cars in the world.*

*If you've never seen it you have missed some of the best street theatre in London, right on your doorstep in the park. It's always on the first Sunday*

*in November. The first car sets off at sunrise - this year it was 7.02 am. But whatever you do, don't call them old corks.*

*The noise of the engines is like the percussion section of an orchestra. Pops, bangs, hammers hitting on anvils and whipcracks. Then, when you've heard it all, Genevieve makes her start. You are immediately taken back to the strains of a harmonica being played by Larry Adler and the memorable musical accompaniment to the film with Kenneth Moore and Vivien Leigh. I don't know about you, but I remember that film from the first time round. It inspired me to admire these splendid old cars from childhood. And I keep coming back.*

## FHPKG visit to Royal Thames Yacht Club

Monday 14 November 2016



*A gathering of members assembled at 60 Knightsbridge for a tour of the Royal Thames Yacht Club. Here is a report from one of them.*

*The multi-layered secrets of London never fail to astonish. Here on the edge of Hyde Park, is a yacht club house. Mystified? Well I was too, so I had to join this Friends' tour to find out more.*

*We were given an introduction to the historic roots of the club by the current Secretary, Captain David Freeman. He explained that the idea of racing yachts started on the Thames at Vauxhall Gardens in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.*

*From there it grew to the vast international sport it is today. The Americas Cup has been tussled over by several entrants supported by members of the RTYC. Gold Olympians from Rio are members of the club, as are other greats of the yacht racing world.*



*Nick Bonham who has been the curator of the club's treasured art collection then took us on a tour of the picture galleries. My sailing expertise doesn't stretch much beyond the rowing boats on the Serpentine but I was able to admire the beautiful painting of yacht Livonia staggering across a stormy Atlantic ocean with a broken bowsprit on its way to another attempt to wrest the Americas Cup from our transatlantic competitors. Perhaps the one that made the biggest impression was the first known painting of a yacht race in the world which was at Vauxhall Gardens in the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Some of us then adjourned to the restaurant for a delicious lunch overlooking our beloved parks and were treated to a practice march past of the Horse Guards in full dress.*

*So, well done to the Friends' organisers for arranging yet another fascinating peek behind the front doors of a London institution.*

Contributions from an enthusiastic and anonymous FHPKG member

## Harrods: behind the Scenes - private visit for FHPKG members Thursday 3 November 2016



*Raj Assan, Director for Business Development, and James Healy, Director of Store Operations, hosted a special Secret Places of Harrods tour for the Friends. This included the newly opened spectacular Grand Entrance Hall, Shoe Heaven and Urban Retreat at the one million sq ft store which occupies a five-acre site.*

*The small group of Friends were also much impressed by the miles of underground floors housing electricity generating, water and security systems ensuring safety at all times for shoppers and staff.*

*Our thanks go to Raj and James for a fascinating and special visit to the legendary store.*

Tessa Kulgour

# Out and about with the Friends

## Winter Wonderland

*Fun for all ages...*

Last year we related the children's excitement in a family visit to Winter Wonderland. This year an older FHPKG member tells us how it went for him and his companion.

*I managed to get a pass to the opening night of the Winter Wonderland fun fair in Hyde Park. Such fun! And such a great way for the Royal Parks to raise essential revenue.*

*First a walk through the elves' house to see them making toys for the children's Santa sacks. This was swiftly followed by a freezing walk through the ice sculpture hall, complete with a tableau of the Shackleton expedition.*

*Then the Bavarian village for a mulled wine and bowl of hearty minestrone soup. My companion also pleaded for a bratwurst sausage with potato wedges but I had to explain to her that the Nutcracker on Ice was about to start. This was beautifully performed with an excellent sound system and quality skate dancing.*

*After that we walked round looking for a ride that we could summon up the courage to go on. But all the twisties and roller coasters looked way too scary. Plunging and diving with the riders screaming in terror. On the other hand the nice little roundabouts were for children only plus their parents and we didn't have any little ones with us.*



*So into the big top to see Cirque Beserk - an acrobats, knife throwing and fire eating display which was spectacular. By the end of this the fair was closing down so there was just time for a crepe. We even failed to be adventurous with our choice of fillings - one lemon and sugar, the other golden syrup.*

*A great evening, even though our spirit of adventure seemed to have been left behind at the entrance gates. Oh the shame - we had wimped out and didn't manage a single ride. Still, perhaps next year.*

<http://hydeparkwinterwonderland.com>

## Kensington Palace visit...Fashion Rules and breakfast in the Orangery

Monday 5 December 2016

*A bunch of members met in Kensington Gardens on a very frosty sunny morning at 9am in early December.*



*In the exhibition, which we had to ourselves, we were gripped by an amazing talk on the unwritten rules for dressing the Royals: colour, suitability, impact etc. and had a good look around before tucking into an enormous breakfast in the Orangery which would have fed practically every member we have. No chance of fitting into any of the svelte outfits on display in the Palace after this.*

*And an intriguing mystery -*



*one of our members recognised in photos of Princess Diana, a red frock which she owns.*

*Investigations are now underway and we will let you know if indeed it is one which belonged to the Princess of Wales.*

*Thank you to Gina and Rhiannon for organising this visit and looking after us so well.*

Sue Price

# Yana Peel takes over as Director of the Serpentine Galleries



**Susan Heywood reports:** The new Serpentine Galleries Director Yana Peel is an acknowledged art entrepreneur and philanthropist. Born in Russia, educated in Canada and here at the LSE, Yana is dynamic, glamorous and global in her outlook. Serpentine Artistic Director Hans Ulrich Obrist has described her as an “explosion of ideas”. For this issue of the Friends’ Newsletter she was kind enough to share some forward thinking about the gallery with me.

**SH:** *The gallery has a special two site setting in the park. How does this shape the gallery programme?*

**Yana Peel:** I see us as an open landscape for art and ideas. We bridge two sites and multiple worlds in the middle of this beautiful London park – and the Serpentine Bridge has become a powerful metaphor for everything we do. Local and global, young and old, we want to make positive connections and the most important one, of course, is between artists and audiences. It is certainly a joy showing an established name at one gallery who can bring attention to an emerging artist in the other. But we like to think that, as with our current exhibition of the British conceptual artist John Latham, artists can be both at the same time.

**SH:** *You marked your arrival with a show of drawings by Zaha Hadid, followed as you say by a John Latham retrospective. Tell us about the summer show of Grayson Perry’s “Brexit Tribes”.*

**Yana Peel:** We are as thrilled as Grayson to be presenting The Most Popular Art Exhibition Ever!, which will include his new Twitter pots as well as some exciting

events in the park itself – look out for Grayson on his bike. His art is the art of identity, something he shares in common with our other summer artist, the wonderful American filmmaker and cinematographer Arthur Jafa. Both are provocative in the sense that they make you think not just about who they are, but who you are, and what your place is in the world. Our Park Nights series of live events and performances – which I’m happy to say are back for 2017 – do the same.

**SH:** *The park has a very diverse visitor profile; what is the strategy to make contemporary art more appealing and accessible to a wide audience? What is the role of technology? Can we expect more performance art?*

**Yana Peel:** As chair of Intelligence Squared and founder of the Outset Contemporary Art Fund, this is an issue close to my heart. For me, the most exciting aspect of technology is how it can bring audiences closer to art. It’s what made our Zaha Hadid virtual reality experience a success this year: The works we were showing were painted in the 1970s and 1980s, before the digital tools existed to make Zaha’s 3D dreams a reality. Now, in 2017, we can bring her vision full circle, giving visitors a truly immersive experience in the gallery she built. Digital works best when connected to a live experience. Rush to the Sackler before 21 May and you can catch Cally Spooner’s work in our group exhibition, Speak: a live dancer warming up in the gallery every day from 12 noon until 5pm – Cally calls it an anti-performance.

**SH:** *Visitor numbers swell in the summer months; what can they expect for the Summer Pavilion this year?*

**Yana Peel:** Hans Ulrich Obrist and I have chosen Diébédo Francis Kéré to design the 2017 Pavilion. He comes to us from Burkino Faso via his award-winning architectural practice in Berlin. Inspired by the tree that serves as a central meeting point for life in his home town of Gando, Francis has designed a pavilion that connects visitors to nature – and each other. It also makes a virtue of Britain’s unpredictable summer weather. Just wait for the magic to happen when it rains. Inspired by Francis’s wonderful sense of storytelling, this year’s pavilion is going to be a hub for cultural collision, improbable pairings and conversations that might just change the world.

*With free entry and the added attraction of the Zaha Hadid designed Magazine café/ restaurant, we wish Yana every success with her bold vision of an art inspired summer in the Park.*

*Susan Heywood*

# Restaurant Review

## The Italian Gardens Café, Kensington Gardens

The café is self-service, with smiling, efficient staff. Our FHPKG membership cards were immediately recognised and the 20% discount applied to our whole bill. In keeping with the location, there are old olive trees beside the terrace, and the plates and cups are rustic Italian porcelain. There's a tin bowl of water thoughtfully placed at the edge of the terrace for thirsty four-legged clients.



Arriving at the Italian Gardens Café on a sunny morning in early March, you are struck by the bustle - plenty of people enjoying the first breath of spring with their dogs outside on the terrace, others getting their food from inside, staff clearing tables, push chairs being manoeuvred into place - in a general atmosphere of cheerful relaxation.

As soon as we went inside to order our food, we realised we had just missed the brunch time slot, which finishes at 11.30. This was a pity, as the brunch menu looked particularly appetizing, but fortunately we were not disappointed by the choice on offer throughout the day which includes generously filled baguettes and thin tasty wraps with all manner of fillings and everything made with fresh locally sourced ingredients. There's a tempting array of pastries and cakes too, which are handmade at a small bakery in Bushy Park. And the coffee was seriously good, of which more anon.



And now, back to the coffee... by a quirk of fate, our visit coincided with that of Rob Colicci, whose company took over management of the Kensington Gardens kiosks four months ago, but whose association with the Royal Parks goes back many years. As true Italians, Rob (who grew up in the UK) and his father (who came over from Italy 30 years ago and sold ice cream round London) have made speciality coffee the cornerstone of the Colicci brand. All the coffee served in their 30 outlets is single origin, not a blend, 100% Arabica and locally roasted in London.

“Getting a good cup of coffee does not just depend on the coffee beans”, says Rob. “Equally important is how it's made and served.”

At Colicci every barista gets 20 hours training on how to make good coffee and based on our Italian Gardens Café experience, we can confirm that the training pays off.

The Café was busy in early March and as spring moves into summer, I predict that it will become ever more popular. Wouldn't it be nice to sit out on an expanded terrace, eating a gelato and listening to gentle jazz floating over the fountains of the Italian Gardens? Keep an eye out for the smartest ice cream van to be seen in London, and in the meantime don't miss the chance to taste the coffee!

*Tessa Singleton*

*The Italian Gardens Café is open from 7:30am, Monday – Friday and 9am, Saturday - Sunday. The Cafe closes at 8pm during July and August. In September, the closing time is 7pm and in October, 6pm. Winter hours begin on 30 October and the closing time will be 4pm.*



# Equestrian memories of Hyde Park

The article below, republished with the permission of *Country Life* magazine, now only records history rather than the current state of play and we are grateful to FHPKG member Neill Mitchell for providing it. The CSRC sadly had to leave the Royal Mews in 2002 – due to ever tighter Royal security constraints. Today, a few CSRC members ride Cavalry horses at Knightsbridge Barracks, but otherwise the Club's reduced activities are spread away from Hyde Park.

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COUNTRY LIFE—NOVEMBER 10, 1983

## HYDE PARK HORSEMANSHIP

THE CIVIL SERVICE RIDING CLUB

By NEILL MITCHELL

IT is always a matter of some astonishment to London's nocturnal motorists to find themselves being halted briefly by vigorous torch signals and the passage of 10 horses and riders across the West End's busiest traffic lanes at Hyde Park Corner. These shadowy figures emerge four nights a week in all weathers from the darkness of Hyde Park, cross the corner via the Wellington Arch island and then seem to melt away as they join the dim, gaslit Constitution Hill track, leading down towards Buckingham Palace.

This unique spectacle is a feature of the volunteer "Rota Riding" routine which enables members of the Civil Service Riding Club (CSRC) to ride after office hours in the Knightsbridge indoor school. The Club provides an ambitious programme of professional tuition in the very heart of the metropolis, its classes being graded to ensure that both adult novices and experienced riders can take advantage of the Club's 36 years of indoor teaching experience.

One of the largest civilian riding clubs in the UK, the CSRC is also one of the oldest, having been conceived by the late Ted Taylor and co-founded on June 20, 1937, by its current president, Cecil Adair (Fig 1). Initially, members' rides were booked at 24 of London's pre-war stables, but, following the Blitz and changed commercial and social circumstances, it was thought desirable for the Club to acquire its own horses and lease some stables. Thus, in March 1947, with help from the Civil Service Sports Council, the Club established a riding centre just south of Kensington Gardens, in De Vere Mews, W8 (Fig 2).

The De Vere Mews stable block was erected in 1877, and was the last multi-storey civilian stable in use in London. The first-floor loose boxes and stalls were reached by means of a sloping horse ramp leading from the courtyard, and were linked by broad, heavily-constructed galleries. The second floor was designed for staff accommodation and storage. The block was conveniently close to the park rows and easily accessible to the members.

The Club remained at De Vere Mews for 27 years until, in 1974, the commercial

pressures of the London property market resulted in these ideally situated and purpose-built stables being lost to residential re-development. The block still retains its structural character as, fortunately, do many of London's more conventional Mews, to which Barbara Rosen and Wolfgang Zuckermann have drawn attention in their well-illustrated book *The Mews of London* (Webb & Bower). However, the fundamental *raison d'être* of all mews was the provision of unobtrusive, safe and convenient stabling, and it is sad to see the sterile appearance of De Vere Mews today.

This unfortunate episode threatened the Club with outright closure, vividly illustrating the continuing need for planners to support the park's most remarkable and historic amenity by protecting adequate stabling in the adjoining boroughs. Luckily, having moved its horses to temporary accommodation in nearby Canning Place as an emergency measure, the Club was saved at the eleventh hour by a generous concession permitting its use of stabling in the City of Westminster.

The CSRC has never been insular, and has always sought to assist other riding bodies in whatever way it can. It helped the British Horse Society to formulate the important Riding Clubs Affiliation Scheme, and also put forward the idea that led to the adoption of the present BHS four-grade examination system. It continues to provide comprehensive tuition for its members to take these tests today. The Club was one of the first to be recognised under the BHS Riding Establishments Approval Scheme as providing sound teaching on well-kept



1—FOUNDING MEMBER AND CURRENT PRESIDENT OF THE CIVIL SERVICE RIDING CLUB: CECIL ADAIR. The photograph was taken at Chiswick in 1952, 15 years after the founding of the club

horses. It also took part in the first riding club teams competition to be held at the Royal International Horse Show in 1957, its team of greys taking second place.

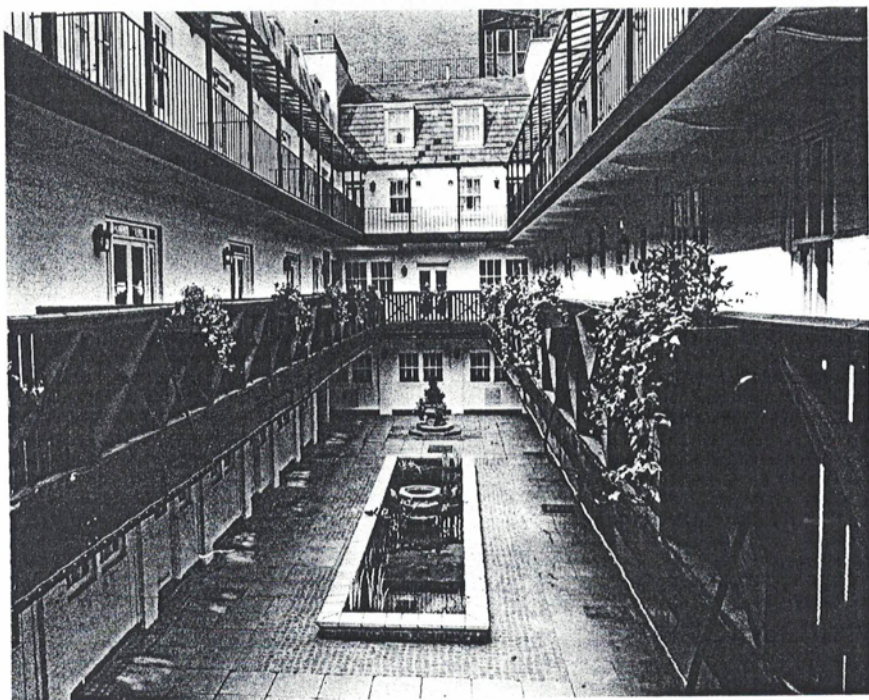
Horses and tack are provided for use by several outside clubs, such as the Riding for the Disabled Organisation, the Honourable Artillery Company Saddle Club and the British Petroleum Club, and the CSRC also maintains close links with the other remaining Hyde Park stables. It is associated with a number of broader equestrian bodies, including the BHS London Riding Clubs Liaison Committee and the Greater London Horsemen's Association, and it is always well represented at the popular annual events, "Horseman's Sunday" and the "London Riding Horse Parade".

Associations between the Club and the Household Cavalry date back 36 years to the granting of the important concession which has enabled continuous regular use of the Knightsbridge indoor school. This relationship was strengthened when the CSRC succeeded in coping with the formidable problem of hacking its horses some miles across central London each evening, to make use of the Cavalry's temporary covered school during the six-year rebuilding of the present Knightsbridge facilities.

The long and fascinating history of the Hyde Park riding traditions, particularly since the laying down of the Rotten Row track in 1689, is well recorded in Joyce Bellamy's outstanding account, *Hyde Park for Horsemanship* (J. A. Allen). Mrs Bellamy's text provides an insight into the demands of Row riding, which are seldom appreciated in other equestrian circles. They were highlighted by the dramatic death of Sir Robert Peel following a riding accident on the Constitution Hill track in the summer of 1850. Leading Victorian riding masters advocated the need for park riders to undergo an extensive course in equitation to equip them for the emergencies they might encounter on the public bridleway.

Teaching is regarded as the Club's first priority, and it is fortunate in having the services of Sonia Richards (BHSI) as stable manageress and principal instructor; she has proved to be a talented and perceptive tutor. Furthermore, the Club's head girl, Tamasine Lerner (BHSAI), is a popular and effective instructor of the adult-beginner classes.

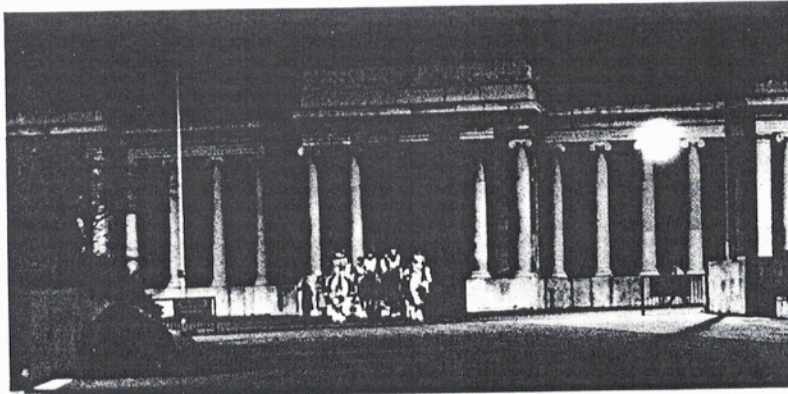
The CSRC has overcome many difficulties during its 46-year history, including the severe winter of 1962/63 which rendered its horses



2—DEVERE MEWS, KENSINGTON, WHERE THE CLUB ESTABLISHED ITS RIDING CENTRE IN 1947. This stable block has now been converted to time-share flats

snowbound for over a month and, more recently, a suspected outbreak of equine flu shortly before the royal wedding of 1981. The latter necessitated the removal of the Club's horses from their London stables for a couple of months to avoid any risk of the neighbouring ceremonial carriage horses becoming ill at such a critical moment.

Despite the escalating cost of caring for horses in central London, the Club has always sought to keep the cost of its members' riding as low as possible, in line with the Government's "Sport for All" campaign, as advocated by the National Sports Council. This has enabled people to learn and continue to ride without the need to purchase a horse. Consequently, the Club's membership represents people from all walks of life and all adult age groups. The Club does, however, strive to maintain high and traditional standards of horsemanship and turnout.



3—NOCTURNAL RIDERS NEAR HYDE PARK CORNER. (Left) 4—SUNDAY PUB RIDE IN CHELSEA. Club members moving on from *The Australian*, in Milner Street



As the Civil Service Riding Club approaches its golden jubilee, its objective continues to be ensuring that the historic facilities of Rotten Row are available to a broader, better-trained and enthusiastic group of city-dwellers and workers. This is being accomplished only as a result of patient and dedicated effort in the face of every conceivable modern metropolitan obstacle, by goodwill and in some instances good luck. There can be no doubt that future leisure-orientated generations of Londoners will appreciate and take full advantage of the survival of this remarkable amenity, which could so easily have been lost, to the detriment of the capital's rich and varied recreational life.

Illustrations: 1, S. J. Gates; 2, Webb & Bower Ltd; 3, the author; 4, Rosemary Trefusis.

## Soot the Dog...

*and the pressures of leading a model life*

*My name is Soot and I look after young Jack. I am a Working Cocker Spaniel. More about the working bit later.*

*Jack thinks he is my master, but actually it is the other way round. I tell him when we want walks and where to go. I usually take him to Kensington Gardens but sometimes we go further to Hyde Park. My other job is to help him with his university studies*

*I also walk Jack's grandmother, Ann. She is a member of the Friends of Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens. I am hoping Jack is going to join the Friends as the youngest member.*

*I have royal connections. One day as I was walking Jack's mother through the park I had a nice chat with a charming lady who was being walked by a dog very similar to me. He was called Lupo. We quickly made friends. The lady said she lived near here. It turned out that the lady was the Duchess of Cambridge. I had to explain to Jack's mother that she is rather famous and somewhat royal.*

*Jack's mother has a friend who has a "Doubles Agency" and she organises pictures of well-known dogs and their people. Well, I stood in as a body double for Lupo (although as I am much older than him, I have an air of*



*gravitas which he does not) and together with my (well, Lupo's) look-alike people, we posed in front of a Christmas Tree. How barkingly mad is that?*

*Lupo and I consider ourselves to be Working Cockers because we are taller than your average spaniel and our parents did useful things. I can't think what these things are, because living in Kensington, we have servants to help us with the heavy lifting*



*Hey ho! Jack and his grandma have finished their coffees on the deck at the new café by the Italian Gardens. It's a beautiful sunny morning, so I had better stir them and carry on taking them on their walk.*

*Barked out to Paul Shelley and Sue Price*

# FHPKG Concessions 2017

*The discounts on the latest list below are available to the Friends on presentation of a current, personal membership card. Please get in touch with ([contact@friendshpkg.org.uk](mailto:contact@friendshpkg.org.uk)) if you find any discrepancies or have any queries.*

## Will To Win

South Carriage Drive  
Hyde Park  
London W2 2UH  
020 7262 3474

*10% off court fees off-peak  
(Monday - Friday up to 5  
pm)*

*20% off food and beverages*



## Urban Meadow & Café Bar

150 Bayswater Rod  
London W2 4RT  
020 7792 7066

*20% discount on food and  
beverages*



## The Serpentine Lido

Hyde Park  
London W2 2UH  
020 7706 3422

*15%-20% discount- to be confirmed for next 2017 swimming season.*

## The Orangery Café

Kensington Palace  
Kensington Palace Gardens  
London W8 4PX  
020 3166 6113

*10% discount on food and beverages*

## The Lodge Café

Hyde Park Corner  
London W1 7NT  
0203 058 1224

*20% discount on food and beverages*



## Palace Café

Kensington Gardens  
London W8 4PX  
020 3166 6127

*10% discount on food and beverages*

## The Lido Café

Hyde Park  
London W2 2UH  
020 7706 7098

*10% discount for up to 2 people, of whom 1 must be a member*

## The Boathouse

Serpentine Road  
London W2 2UH  
020 7262 1330

*Hire of all boats at children's rates*

## Serpentine Bar & Kitchen

Serpentine Road  
Hyde Park  
London W2 2UH  
020 7706 8114

*20% discount on food and beverages*



## Lancaster London

Lancaster Terrace  
London W2 2TY  
020 7551 6000

*Become a complimentary Friend of the Lancaster London for 10% off in restaurants and bars and 10% off best available hotel rate.*

## The Magazine Restaurant

Serpentine Sackler Gallery  
West Carriage Drive  
Kensington Gardens  
London W2 2AR  
020 7298 7552

*10% off food and beverages for up to 6 people at lunchtime.*

## Hyde Park Kiosks

Hyde Park Corner  
Speakers' Corner  
Triangle  
Boat House  
Playground  
Diana Memorial  
Diana Memorial Ice Cream  
*20% discount on snacks and drinks at  
each of the above kiosks*

## Kensington Gardens Kiosks

Italian Gardens Café  
Broadwalk  
Palace Gate  
Albert Memorial  
Italian Fountain  
Ice Cream Vans  
*20% discount on snacks and drinks at  
each of the above kiosks*



## Royal Albert Hall

Kensington Gore  
London SW7 2AP  
020 7959 0500

*10% off at Cafe Bar (at Door 12)*

*10% off Retail Unit (at Door 12)*

*20% off at Verdi Italian Kitchen (Tuesday to Sunday 1200 - 1600)*

*33% off Grand Tour, Inside Out Tour, Secret History Tour*

*38% off Behind the Scenes Tour*

*20% off Story of the Proms Tour*

## Royal Garden Hotel

2-24 High Street Kensington  
London W8 4PT  
020 7937 8000

*Check with restaurant staff for 10% Discount Card in Park Terrace  
(A la Carte menu), Bertie's Bar and Min Jiang Bar*

## Park Deck Chairs

[www.parkdeckchairs.co.uk](http://www.parkdeckchairs.co.uk)

*On completion of a season ticket 30% discount.*

*Non-concessionary Rate Season Ticket £77*

*Concessionary Rate Season Ticket £31.50*

## The Kensington Wine Rooms

127-129 Kensington Church Street  
London W8 7LP  
020 7727 8142

*10% off entire bill for lunch Monday to Friday*

