

# FRIENDS OF HYDE PARK & KENSINGTON GARDENS

AUTUMN 2014

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

ISSUE 39



## Autumn 2014 Newsletter

### News Round-Up from the Parks

#### Kensington Gardens

**South Flower Walk** *The newly installed self-closing gates at various points have helped to discourage illegal cyclists. Crossings with extra benches are much appreciated and pleasant places to sit.*



**North Flower Walk** *is a rather neglected area. Andy Williams plans to improve this area following extensive historic research.*



**Round Pond** *has undergone a major restoration project. The edges of the Pond are crisp, and the dangerous slope into the water replaced by level granite blocks. The water is clear of weed thanks to various treatments and aeration.*

**Silver Thimble Shelters** *The Grade II listing by English Heritage is dealt with elsewhere in the magazine.*

**Queen Caroline's Temple** *lost its lead roof to thieves some time ago. Its costly replacement, built to English Heritage standards, was also stolen. The Park Manager is still waiting for a decision from EH as to what roofing material would be acceptable. Meanwhile, the building languishes under an unsightly blue tarpaulin.*

**Café** *Planning consent is being sought for a new café at the Italian Gardens to replace the existing wooden hut kiosk. It will have both indoor and outdoor seating on a deck.*

**Japanese Knot weed** *The battle on the few stands of this hooligan plant is being fought and won.*

#### Hyde Park

**Summer Pavilion** *by Smiljan Radic has been very much photographed and enjoyed both during the day and for evening events.*



**Triathlon** *took place this early summer over a weekend only, and was much less disruptive. Organisers were very careful to lay down protective paths and there was little damage to the grass. Other park users over the weekend enjoyed the peace and quiet of no traffic.*

**Major Events - Concerts:** *Winter Wonderland, British Summer Time concerts, BBC Proms and Radio 2 Live have all taken place with favourable weather conditions, which make the ground easier to repair. Although the Royal Parks have to raise a whopping £22 million to balance the books, there are many Friends and neighbours who regret the long periods when a large area of Hyde Park is closed for repairs.*

**Speakers' Corner** *has been refurbished with new surfaces, planting of disease resistant semi mature Elms (Ulmus 'New Horizon') and two new plane trees (Platanus). Railings have been installed, successfully protecting planting from antisocial behaviour. Culture Secretary Sajid Javid performed the early morning opening ceremony which was reported throughout the day on radio news items. Free speech had prevailed and there had been heckling at the event.*



**Band Stand** *has been restored and funding is being sought to resurface the surrounding area. How about a brass band concert to celebrate completion of the works?*



#### South Carriage Drive

**Childrens' Playground** *has been completely redesigned and rebuilt,*

*following research on what children like to do best in playgrounds, and is a marvel of clever use of equipment, different surfaces and imaginative planting. There is also a staffed kiosk. The playground has been very popular during this lovely long summer.*



**Volunteers** *installed in their kiosk by Hyde Park Corner appear to be busier than ever answering questions from visitors to the Parks. Anyone interested in becoming a volunteer can get in touch by email to [contact@friendshpbg.org.uk](mailto:contact@friendshpbg.org.uk)*



# Restaurant Review

## The Orangery

After a rather traumatic night staying with a girlfriend, where the mice were very active behind the skirting boards, the Orangery was an oasis of calm and light.



There are no reservations so it is on a first come first served basis. I was immediately shown to a very nice table for two by a huge window overlooking Kensington Palace. Whilst waiting for Sue, our Chairman, I was constantly but politely asked if I wanted anything to drink - I finally gave in and had a glass of Pinot Grigio.

Average prices on the menus are £7 for a starter - £15 for main and £7 for puddings. The menu selection is good with loads of vegetarian options. My chicken pate with port jelly was quite rich - not sure about what was supposed to be toasted brioche. Sue had grilled English goats cheese with beetroot carpaccio which she said was delicious - I don't like goats cheese!

My chicken girolle with bacon lardons and sweetcorn was extremely good but too salty even for my taste buds. The lobster pearl risotto with lobster bisque was much enjoyed by Sue but tasted over fishy to me

We shared a rhubarb Eton Mess with crystallised rose petals which we both enjoyed.

The highlight was when I asked to go to the loo and was told to go 'outside'. I looked rather surprised as he tore off a piece of paper from his waiter's pad and handed me a number to enter the loos. I followed the path through the shrubbery and there was the door and keypad. Inside, to my obvious relief, ten immaculate loos including a disabled one.

*Review submitted by an anonymous Friend*

The Orangery  
Kensington Palace  
Kensington Gardens  
London W8 4PX  
Tel: 020 3166 6113



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

*Note: The Orangery offers Friends a 10% discount on meals on presentation of a current FHPKG membership card.*

## Letter from Sue Price, Chairman

*My heartfelt thanks for their generous sharing of information go to Steve Edwards (Hyde Park Manager), Rob Dowling (Assistant Manager), Andrew Williams (Kensington Gardens Manager) and of course to Linda Lennon, Chief Executive of the Royal Parks. Long time members may remember that it wasn't always like this.*



*Below I have listed the major concerns and issues that we currently have and on which I urge you to make your own views known. The more feedback we have from our members, the more effective we can be as an organisation whose opinions are listened to. Email me at [contact@friendshpkg.org.uk](mailto:contact@friendshpkg.org.uk)*

*It's been a real pleasure to meet so many of you this summer at our various events. Most of these were in the Parks and were especially good because we had lovely weather. We've got many more in the pipeline, and we are, on the whole, concentrating on doing Parks connected things, and offering opportunities not normally available to the general public.*

*I've come to the end of my first year, having had no idea, when I started as Chair last summer, how busy this year was going to be.*

*However, with the help of colleagues on the committee and other friends and relatives, I think we are making great strides in "growing" our organisation and making it something that all our many new members, and our longstanding ones can appreciate and enjoyably take part in.*

***NB Your new membership card is attached to the back page of the newsletter, beneath a full list of the concessions now available to the Friends. Please detach it, sign it and start using your member benefits!***

*Sue Price  
Chairman*

## Issues and concerns

**Antisocial behaviour:** *This covers rough sleepers, destruction of trees by dogs attacking the trunks, misuse of public lavatories, cycling on footpaths, aggressive cycling on shared paths, walkers with too many dogs, and LITTER.*

*Nearly all the undergrowth in Hyde Park has been removed to stop people sleeping in the bushes and using them for other antisocial activities.*

*Lavatory blocks are opened later in the morning now when an attendant is in situ to stop the facilities being used to wash bodies and clothes and making such a mess that they are then unusable by other Park visitors.*

*Rough sleepers are moved on but keep re-appearing. In Kensington Gardens recently an encampment of tents was set up. New ways are being investigated into how to deal with the vast amounts of litter.*

**Policing:** *a 20% funding cut is proposed for the police, and Parks' Police will be part of this. I am liaising with the Chief Executive, and will shortly have a meeting with other Royal Parks' Chairmen who will all be as anxious as we are. I do not yet know where it is proposed that these savings should come from, but will of course keep members up to date.*

### Cycling

*By the time you read this, you will no doubt have heard about the Mayor's proposals for an East West Cycle Superhighway. Hyde Park has been earmarked for a section of it and consultation open until 19 October 2014. Every response counts as one response. I have commented on behalf of the 500 Friends, but this counts as one response only.*



*The proposal is for the route to come in/out of Victoria Gate (Bayswater Road) and go along West Carriage Drive, South Carriage Drive and then to Hyde Park Corner. The route is on roads, which is fine, but no account has been taken for loss of parking spaces along the roads (revenue for the Parks, loss of access for Park users who live further afield), the pinch-point of Serpentine Bridge, and the thousands of extra cyclists who join having come from Kensington Gardens.*

*Most importantly, there is the real worry that there will be a massive amount of "seepage", i.e. commuting cyclists who cut the corner and join paths which are shared with pedestrians. This will exacerbate an existing problem. Staff of the Royal Parks are working hard to make shared use footpaths very unattractive to cyclists and will be seeking extra funding for this. We want to avoid covering the Royal Parks with more signage, barriers, gates and colours. Protecting footpaths and shared paths by clever design has got to be the best way forward.*

*The proposals can be seen on line at the TFL Cycling Vision for London ([tfl.gov.uk/cycle-east-west](http://tfl.gov.uk/cycle-east-west)) Or you can get copies of plans by writing to FREEPOST TFL Consultations or calling 0343 222 1234 (option 3 then option 1).*

# News of the Friends

Some cheerful souvenirs of spring/summer Friends' events

## Summer Party at the Boathouse - 25 June 2014

There was no shortage of guests at the Friends' annual summer bash - the Boathouse was filled to capacity, the sun shone, the boats glided across the Serpentine, the wine flowed - and Peter Scott's music helped put everyone in the party mood. Our warm appreciation to Peter Scott (Boat House Director, see below L) for providing the perfect venue and helping make the event such a success.



## Bowls evening at Will To Win Tennis in Hyde Park - 16 July 2014

A group of amateur but enthusiastic Friends (see above) turned up at Steve Riley's Will To Win Tennis centre, where they were shown the basics of the game. A competition ensued and the two proud winners are shown above R.

Our grateful thanks to Steve, who not only provided the venue, but also the instruction and photos!

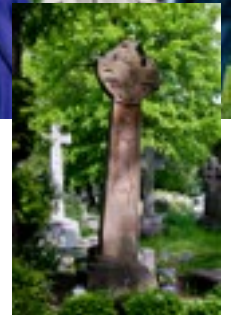
## Visit to Hyde Park Nurseries - 28 May 2014



An invitation at short notice for a Friends' exclusive visit to the nurseries in Hyde Park was taken up with alacrity and quickly oversubscribed. Head Nurseryman Mike Jones showed us round the extensive greenhouses, explained how the plants are grown and prepared for display and answered our many questions. Given the level of interest in this visit, it is intended to repeat it next year. Our thanks go to Mike and to Rob Dowling, Assistant Manager Hyde Park for enabling the event to take place.

## Brompton Cemetery visit - 30 April 2014

On a beautiful spring afternoon, a sizeable group of Friends enjoyed learning about the intriguing history of the cemetery, provided by expert guides. The tour was followed by a delicious tea in the Rotunda. Our thanks for the visit and tea go to the Friends of Brompton Cemetery.



Events organiser Tina Raymond and Chairman Sue Price (pictured above) are busy planning more interesting outings for the Friends. Keep an eye on the website ([www.friendshpkg.org.uk](http://www.friendshpkg.org.uk)) for details.

## New members

We welcome the following new members who have joined the Friends since the Spring

Anthony Pilcher*	Joceline Morrison	Richard and Rosie Shakeshaft*
Alec and Adrienne Reed	John Folds	Robert Carnwath*
Alethea Siow*	John French	Robert Wallace
Andrew Haworth-Booth	John and Caroline Pendreich.	Rosemary Nelson*
Ann Larke	Lee and Tara Lowenstein	Sandra Hillard
Anne Greenstock*	Liz Cassie	Sarah Connolly
Britt-Marie Tidelius	Mary Wood	Stephen Waring
Charles and Carole Hill	Maxine Buchanan-Michaelson	Susan Heywood
David and Heather Shaw*	Morella Cottam	Susan Ripley
David and Susan Egerton-Smith	Nick and Amanda Feeny	Syra Vahidy
David Bouch	Nicola McFarland	Tessa Kilgour
David Cockburn	Owen Calvert	Thomas Newman
Esther Alderson*	Phyllis Lusher*	Tony Shaw
Gail Alexander	Quentin Marshall*	Veronique De Giorgi
Gillian Wray	Rhoda Bucknill	
Glenn and Ginger Irvine	Richard and Angela Haw	
Gregg Prentice	Richard and Elizabeth Setchim*	
Heather Beckwith*		
Jacqueline Knight Preiss		

\*Life members

## OBITUARY

## JEANETTE TOMLIN

18 March 2014

Jean Tomlin, a Friend of Hyde Park and volunteer at the Lodge, died suddenly on 18 March 2014. With her friend, Pam Bell, Jean was for many years a gallery volunteer at Harrow School. She helped as well on special days such as Founder's Day and Speech Day, and will be fondly remembered by masters, parents and boys as well as members of the visiting public.

She was also indefatigable in volunteering elsewhere, including with Pam Bell at the Great Barn (at Harrow Museum) until the barn closed to the public late last year. Prior to retirement she worked with British Airways and often spoke of her travels.

I attended the funeral and like everyone else, was entertained to the most wonderful wake, as ordered by Jean, which took the form of afternoon tea. Everyone agreed, Jean would have loved it! She will be sadly missed.

Jean Lloyds



## Memories of an old rocker

*Chris Rich shares a never-to-be-forgotten experience in Hyde Park*

The free rock concerts in Hyde Park started during the summer of 1968 and were modelled on those which had taken place in San Francisco the previous year. Peter Jenner of Blackhill Enterprises had obtained consent for the concerts as the result of the influence of Jennie Lee, then Arts Minister. Peter had written to Jennie and introduced himself as the grandson of a lover of Jennie's during the 1930's prior to her marriage to Aneurin Bevan. Peter's letter was never formally acknowledged, although a Park representative made contact, and matters progressed from there.

The concerts were originally held in a part of the Park known as the cockpit, a natural amphitheatre close to the Serpentine.

The setting for the concert on 5 July 1969 was perfect with a cloudless sky reflected on the water as a backdrop to the stage. As a sixteen year old, having just completed O-Levels, the excitement level was high. The Rolling Stones were my favourite band and the chance to see them perform live a rare treat. The context was significant - the Stones had not performed live for two years and Brian Jones (a founder member and an early drug casualty) had died from drowning a week before. The concert changed emphasis as a result and was presented as a tribute to Brian Jones.

A visibly nervous Mick Jagger read a poem by Shelley as a eulogy and it was planned that thousands of white butterflies would be released into the crowd. The butterflies had been chilled to allow transit from a farm in the West Country and unfortunately had not been warmed-up properly prior to release. The proposed spectacle was a sad farce with very few butterflies actually airborne whilst the majority were merely trampled during the band's performance.

Everything about the day was magical, from the park itself, to the weather, to the sense of community amongst the crowd, to the music from a variety of bands and artists. The Rolling Stones were the stars of the show, and whilst their performance was woefully out of tune and under-rehearsed, they reached out to the largest audience ever assembled for a rock concert in this country at that time.

Looking back, the quality of the day is undiminished and symbolic of the optimism and innocence of the 1960's. Although the crowd was large (estimates vary between 50,000 and 250,000) it is easy to forget just how primitive the event was. The stage was very small, the sound system basic, security was virtually non-existent, and there were no additional toilet facilities provided. It is remarkable indeed that such an event could take place in Central London with very scant police supervision and scarcely any trouble.

I feel privileged to have been able to be part of that occasion.

I was also fortunate enough to be able to join a pilgrimage of the privileged to see the Rolling Stones perform in the Park on 13 July 2013. This was a joyous event in many ways - another beautiful summer day in a magical setting, and the Park filled with music fans of all ages and some families with three generations represented. The Rolling Stones have aged remarkably well and become consummate entertainers of the highest degree. Their show was professional in the extreme, the delivery sharply honed by years of experience at the very top of their game, and traceable clearly to an afternoon in the Park some 44 years earlier. It was a great show, steeped in nostalgia, with both the band and audience now very much a part of the established order.

The 2013 show took place adjacent to Speaker 's Corner, behind 10 foot high security fencing, cattle-pen security and bag checks, complete with funfair, extensive bars and food vendors, and of course a liberal supply of portaloos. Whether this level of facilities and security is actually demanded by ageing rock-fans or driven by weakening bladders and the inability to behave themselves is unclear.

What was apparent on walking through the Park on entering and leaving the concert arena, was the number of parties taking place outside the arena, and claiming their entertainment for free. It struck me as sadly ironic that many of those present in 1969 would be unable to afford entry to the later event.

I now know the Park fairly well and when in London attempt to arrange my diary to allow some time out in the various areas. The Park has aged well, and indeed now offers more variety of experience including the unmown areas and wild flower planting, as opposed to the somewhat regimented extensive mown grass I recall from the 1960's. It is always a joy to discover new facets and revisit old areas. The space and tranquility offered are unique and provide a perfect setting in which to daydream and reminisce. I cherish the memories of my times in the Park and look forward to further visits.

*Chris Rich*



*The Cockpit - summer 2014, on a thundery day*

# Friends of The Friends...

We chat to two of the people whose daily working lives, though very different, are both closely associated with the Royal Parks

## Rob Dowling *Assistant Manager Hyde Park*



Rob started as a little boy in Cornwall with a tiny plot to look after which later turned into the whole of his parents' garden. So he knew from the off exactly what he wanted to do with his life.

Following a Landscape and Management Course at Reading University, and unable to get the sort of job he wanted, he worked for a year at a Garden Centre. "Rotten pay but good experience and a chance to get to learn a lot more about plants". After that a move to the Royal Borough meant working in all the Kensington Parks. "Well-resourced and funded".

Ten years ago his next move was to Hyde Park.

In those days he was a technical officer, sitting at a desk, staring out of the windows and longing to be out there in the fresh air amongst the plants.

*A typical day?* "I love this job because there is no typical day".

Rob lives in the noisiest house in London, in one of the Park Lodges right by a hectic road junction.

However, he doesn't mind being on the spot, in fact he loves it.

He can quickly deal with a "stuck duck, a fallen branch" or think about the re-design of a flower bed on his way to work.

*On holidays and at weekends?* He visits other parks, famous gardens and big cities, here and abroad. And he enjoys eating at the Serpentine Bar and Kitchen.

He is particularly proud of updating the planting in Hyde Park. When he arrived he felt it had been stuck in a Victorian style for far too long with masses of densely overgrown laurel shrubberies and with ivy everywhere. He's lightened things up and introduced interesting new planting, though much of this is under constant attack from squirrels.

He is proud of his Annual Meadows, some seeded with an exotic mix of borage, poppies and corn marigolds. He's introduced Yellow Rattle which is semi parasitic and will kill off the tough vigorous grasses which, if left, will take over.



*Sue Price*

## Quick-fire questions

*Q Dinner round the table or picnic on the grass?*

*A* "Difficult, but I think picnic"

*Q Herbaceous border or wildflower meadow?*

*A* "Wild flower meadow"

*Q Up with the lark or luxurious lie-in?*

*A* "I can't bear wasting time in the morning - up early"

*Q Swimming or walking?*

*A* "Walking"

*Q Frosty winter morning or hot summer's day?*

*A* "Frosty winter morning"

*Q Pizza or pork pie?*

*A* "Pizza and if you asked the question beer or wine, it would be wine!"



## Steve Riley *Founder and director of Will To Win sports in Hyde Park*

It was on a chance visit as a small boy to a free public sports show at the Winter Gardens in Blackpool that Steve Riley picked up a tennis racquet for the first time and hit a few balls. That early opportunity set him on a path that has led him to achieving his lifelong ambition of making tennis available to thousands of people, who would otherwise never have had the chance to play.

"After that first taste of tennis, I played as much as I could, from paddle tennis at primary school to tournaments at junior and senior level." says Steve "Following a degree at Loughborough, I qualified as a coach and then aged 21 worked as sports manager for the Sheraton Hotel in Dubai. That was challenging, but it was good experience and made me more outgoing. I then worked for sporting goods manufacturer Wilson, followed by several years coaching in private tennis clubs in London."

"My ambition was always to create something that would offer open access to tennis for all ages and abilities, that would be community based and not require membership."

*So how did he get started?*

"In 1997 I took over seven derelict tennis courts in Chiswick from Hounslow council, on a long lease and a low rent, with a remortgage pavilion and court rebuild - and it evolved from there. Will to Win now has 23 centres and 130 courts, 75 coaches and a staff of 50."

*How did the Royal Parks come into the picture?*

"We took over and developed the facilities in Hyde Park, Regent's Park and Greenwich Park about 10 years ago, originally in partnership with a catering company. In

Hyde Park since then we have built 2 mini-tennis courts, renovated the existing pavilion and put in a junior playground. More recently a changing facilities block has been added and we now have extended the catering offer for our visitors. And of course Hyde Park is the only centre we have where people can play lawn bowls."

*What's the greatest thing about working in Hyde Park?*

"It's a beautiful place and I love working there. Where else in London at 7a.m. on a weekday morning can you see the Household Cavalry drilling, people walking dogs, cycling, running and enjoying the open space? And where else, if you look in one direction can you see The Shard and in the other The Albert Memorial?"

*Biggest challenges?*

"Keeping the team together, trying to be in several places at the same time, expanding the variety of sports on offer."

*Proudest achievement?*

"The satisfaction of enabling thousands of people to enjoy tennis who wouldn't have had the opportunity without Will to Win. I'm proud that our basic principle of community-based open access to tennis and no membership fees is flourishing."

*Steve offers Friends of HPKG special concessions at Will to Win in Hyde Park. Why not bring friends and try your hand at lawn bowls? For more info and reservations, tel 020 7224 1625, or email [info@willtowin.co.uk](mailto:info@willtowin.co.uk)*

*Tessa Singleton*

## Quick-fire questions

*Q Bowls or tennis?*

*A* "Tennis"

*Q Running or swimming?*

*A* "Running"

*Q Up with the lark or breakfast in bed?*

*A* "Breakfast in bed"

*Q Frosty winter mornings or sweltering midday sun?*

*A* "Sweltering midday sun"

*Q Strawberries at Wimbledon or foie gras at the French Open?*

*A* "Wimbledon!"

*Q Grass or clay?*

*A* "Grass"

*Q Beer or wine?*

*A* "Wine, red, preferably St Emilion!"

# Two views of the Park

Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens are a source of pleasure and distraction for thousands, whose ages, temperaments, demands and pleasures vary widely. Here are views from two park users with somewhat different perspectives.



## A junior view

### My report on the Princess Diana Playground in Kensington Gardens

by Megan Bannister, aged 8

Things good about the park:

I find the park very fun, because it has lots of things to do like a pirate ship and a playground with loads of sand pits to make sand-castles in. I also find that the little houses are really fun for young children. In addition, the swings have ones that are for babies and ones for kids who are older.



Things that they can improve on:

I think they can improve on the park by letting dogs be able to go into the playground, but keeping an area where children can play, without dogs making them feel scared.

What I personally think of it:

I personally think it is a great park, because when I was little me and my mummy used to go to puppet shows. In addition, they now do fun rides next to the playground which will delight any child.



## A dog's view...

### on personal trainers, health, fitness and families

by Luca, aged 12 (or 84)

I'm Luca. Although I'm a little bit grey now, when I was younger I was a luscious golden colour, just like Lucozade.

My sister Bena, here with me today, is a dark mysterious Ribena colour.

We are 12 year old miniature dachshunds and I'm afraid that these two young things with us are both 18 months old and are sisters, Bellissima and Poppet, and also belong to our family. I think these names are far too grand for such badly behaved girls.

Bella and Poppy think they're wild animals and one of them also seems to believe that she's a whippet.



I would prefer not to be here at all for this interview. I'm finding it very cold and am shivering. My personal trainer, Meryl, says that if I ran about a bit I would soon warm up. She will not let me have a coat, although there are several I fancy the look of in the Pet Pavilion in the Gloucester Road.

She also measures out my food to the milligram and won't let me have a scrap more.

She says it's good for my health and that what I would like, which is to sit on The Lap at home in the warmth in front of the telly and guzzle all day, is no good for my dicky heart.

She is terribly strict and likes us all to follow some kind of fitness regime. Even The Lap, which usually stays at home, gets prodded into action from time to time. So here we are.... in the Park.... again.



# Grade II listing for Silver Thimble Shelters



During the First World War, Miss Elizabeth Hope-Clarke collected vast numbers of silver thimbles to raise funds for ambulances and provide rescue services for the sick and wounded. Her efforts and those of the veterans were later honoured with two commemorative 'Silver Thimble Shelters' opposite Kensington Palace, which were erected in 1919. The charity was re-established in WWII and also operated in the US, Australia and New Zealand.

An application for Grade II listing was made earlier this year and accepted by English Heritage for the following principal reasons:

- \* Historic interest: the structures, erected by the Silver Thimble Fund, commemorate the tragic impact of The Great War, and praise the soldiers and sailors who fought for Britain;
- \* Design interest: the shelters are a restrained and simple neo-vernacular design, picturesque elements within the formal landscape setting;
- \* Group value: there is a strong visual relationship between the shelters, Kensington Palace, the designed landscape and many other designated structures.

The listing came as something of a surprise to Kensington Gardens Manager Andy Williams, as he was not aware that an application for listed status had been made. While fully supporting the protected status these two small iconic buildings now enjoy, Andy says that the listing inevitably creates some complications with regard to maintenance and repairs, which will now be subject to English Heritage specifications as to materials that may be used. The shelters have been a soft target for vandals in the recent past and the process of putting in vandal-proof benches will be more of a challenge. Andy is looking for new ideas to discourage anti-social behaviour and find materials that will meet the Grade II listing standards without becoming an even softer target for vandals.



## Letters

*Letters from readers help to keep us on our toes and we welcome your views on issues connected with the Parks, as well as suggestions for improvements to the newsletter and website. Please get in touch by email to [newsletter@friendshpkg.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@friendshpkg.org.uk) or [website@friendshpkg.org.uk](mailto:website@friendshpkg.org.uk), as appropriate. Below are two general interest letters we've received since publication of the Spring Newsletter. We have also received a substantial number of positive comments on the revamped newsletter.*



*Tessa Singleton Editor Newsletter and Website*

From: [Kenneth Stern](mailto:kenneth.stern@friendshpkg.org.uk)  
Sent: Monday, June 30, 2014 10:38 AM  
Subject: Re: FRIENDS OF HYDE PARK AND KENSINGTON GARDENS

From: John Cookson <[john.cookson01@gmail.com](mailto:john.cookson01@gmail.com)>  
Subject: For Sue Price  
Date: 5 June 2014 17:00:12 GMT+01:00  
To: [website@friendshpkg.org.uk](mailto:website@friendshpkg.org.uk)

Thank you for your update about summer concerts etc. Very helpful.

Dear Mrs Price...

I have lived in Kensington for the last 20 years and hugely enjoy walking in Kensington Gardens. But I am very concerned about cyclists tearing at high speed - probably 30 mph - along walkways which are primarily for pedestrians.

Looking through the website recently I came across two points which need correction. Firstly Hyde Park is by no means the largest Royal Park. Richmond Park with 2,500 acres, Bushy Park with 1,199 acres and Regents Park/Primrose Hill with 487 acres are all larger.

In particular, there's a dangerous stretch of walkway in front of what used to be the main entrance to Kensington Palace (where the gates are) and which ultimately leads to Kensington Palace Gardens.

Secondly membership of the Royal Parks Guild is not restricted to those who have worked or are working in the Royal Parks. Volunteers, members of Friends' Groups and others are welcome. For instance, Ann Riches is a member, as I am myself. I know that Mike Fitt is keen for the Guild to grow, so any plug will be greeted.

Here you find arrogant lycra clad racers and even some idiots on roller skis ploughing through groups of people, mostly families, on a downhill slope. I have seen several accidents including to young toddlers. It is only a matter of time before someone is seriously hurt or worse.

Kind regards  
Kenneth

I would like to see a ban cyclists on this path - they can still reach the High Street by turning left down what I would call the main walkway which runs in front of the new entrance to Kensington Palace.

I would appreciate your views and advice on how a ban might be put in place.  
John Cookson  
Old Court House Residents' Group

*(The errors noted by Kenneth have been corrected and a link to the Royal Parks Guild is now on the Friends' website. Ed.)*

*(This letter is representative of several we have received re cycling in the Parks. Sue Price has replied to John, agreeing with his concerns and adding her additional worries re the Mayor's proposed "Parks Super highways" - see Issues and Concerns on p2 of the newsletter. Ed.)*

# Concessions for the Friends

The concessions available to the Friends of Hyde Park & Kensington Gardens are in the process of being renegotiated and updated by Tessa Kilmour, a new committee member. The latest list to date is given below. Friends can take advantage of the discounts offered by presenting a current, personal membership card. While making every effort to keep up to date, the committee cannot take any responsibility for alterations to the concessions listed.

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 2015 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

Kensington Gardens Kiosks

Broadwalk  
Palace Gate  
Albert Memorial  
Italian Fountain  
Ice Cream Vans

*20% discount on snacks and drinks at each of the above kiosks*

*Your membership card is valid until 31 October 2015 and you can use it to obtain the discounts and concessions listed above.*

**Your new membership card 2014/15  
please print your name on it and sign it.**

*Tell us about your experiences at the restaurants, cafés, kiosks and varied facilities listed above!*

*Email us at [newsletter@friendshpkg.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@friendshpkg.org.uk)*