



NEWSLETTER

Issue 108

Autumn 2023



Sunflowers in the Brockwell Park Community Garden Greenhouse

Back in the Spring we were given a talk by Liz Day about the Brockwell Park Community Greenhouses. We were given a brief history and introduction as to what can be found in the heart of Brockwell Park. The site was originally the walled garden which served the Estate Hall. The retro-fitted Hall building will be used for community hire, the stables a new cafe. A photo from the 1890's shows the lake, the clock tower and the bandstand when the estate had only recently been opened up to the enjoyment of the public. Up until the 1980's the site was used for plant propagation for the park with a newer greenhouse and planting beds. This went into decline as more stock was bought in and no longer grown on site. It then went through a period of guerrilla gardening with people adopting the plot for their own use growing tomatoes and pot. By 2002 it became a site users association. A group of people got together to organise the site better and padlock the gate. Inside there's the main greenhouse, another greenhouse which wraps around the walled garden, an orchard, growing beds, seating areas and sheds. It describes itself as a haven for people and wildlife, and is a tranquil and attractive place. The site is open from Thursday to Sunday for visiting or volunteering, and can be accessed through a gate leading through the decorative walled area. On Mon to Wednesday there are school groups, with just the occasional private hire event. But usually these will only use part of the site, such as with children's birthday parties. It can also be hired for evening events. Three people are employed; a gardener, an outdoor teacher and an events organiser. Paths, composter and beds are the result of corporate groups sent in on team building community giving days. There is an indoor area with kitchen and facilities for when the cold is inclement. As 75% of activity and income was happening between April and September, the greenhouse was extended and renovated so more use could be gained, and the charity's financial future made more sustainable. Solar panels are used to heat water which circulates to keep the plants warm. Chili's are a speciality. Improvements to the site have been made and there are workshops and instructional events, children's events and suppers. The site could be defined as a series of managed learning spaces, but that's only a part.

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Pollen,Ponds, Parterres, Reconstructing Planting in 18th Century Landscape Gardens

Dr Petra Dark

Dr Petra Dark did this research work at Lacock Abbey, Wiltshire, given to the National Trust in 1944. This location has been featured in many productions eg. Pride and prejudice, Downton Abbey, Harry Potter, The Other Boleyn girl, and Cranford. Henry Fox Talbot, 'the father of photography' made the first negative here in 1835, with a view of a window in the long gallery. Being a keen gardener he made many changes to the gardens, using plants collected from abroad. The grounds encompassed many trees, woodland areas and ponds.

Maps and documents were used to give clues to the features in the grounds. Some dated back to the Middle Ages. A map of 1714 shows channels to a mill pond, three fish ponds and possibly a moat. An engraving from 1732 shows house, trees and a canal type pond. The 1764 map has elaborate water features, an L shaped canal, great canal, great basin, round pond, great walk, radiating paths, willow beds, a hermit's cell, woodland wilderness, haha and terraces. None of which exist today.

By 1827 Fox Talbot simplified the gardens for easier upkeep. An Ordnance survey map of 1886 in large scale shows mature trees and only a rectangular pond remaining. Dr Petra Dark's research involved taking 50cms core samples from waterlogged soil which preserves pollen. When cleared of soil they are magnified 400-1,000 times. They are compared with modern pollen in order to identify the same apertures, sculpturing, spikes and air sacs. We were shown large 3D copies showing details clearly. The grains are counted and arranged in depth order. Starting at the bottom with the oldest, spruce, cedar, grasses, dandelion, bracken, water lily and reed mace. The bracken suggests untended areas, maybe wilderness. The spruce, cedar, pine, and walnut were ornamental. Oak and linden (lime) were popular for avenues. No clear ornamental flower or roses evidence was found although some from the daisy family group may be ornamental. *Astrantia major* pollen, rare in records, was found, which could be linked to 1835-38. Early negative prints are of *Astrantia*. The work to give insight into plants from the past is still ongoing.

A New Chairperson for Lambeth Horticultural Society

Lambeth Horticultural Society is looking for a new Chair. After many years of involvement at every level, our Chairman announced his intention to step down at our Spring AGM. Tony Pizzoferro has done a magnificent job leading this much-loved Society for many years, including through Covid. We are now looking for a new Chair to help a long established, much loved and financially solvent organisation. We want to evolve so as to meet the challenges and take advantage of the changing times landscape.

We are transitioning from a Club to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. The new structure will bring many opportunities which we are keen to embrace.

Lambeth Horticultural Society was founded in 1951 and has a great track record supporting people in all types of gardening. We have twice hosted Gardeners' Question Time. Since 1974 we have partnered with Lambeth Council to manage the Annual Flower Show during the Lambeth Country Show at Brockwell Park. We put on many other activities which are free for all, and have the Trading Hut, currently open to members only. Although our name and heritage are specific to Lambeth, our active membership reaches across all of the neighbouring boroughs and we have more distant members. We would anticipate that our new Chair would have an interest in gardening but not necessarily consider themselves an expert. Rather we are looking for someone with a hands on approach to leadership who can help us focus on development and income generation, and support committee members and volunteers in developing and delivering the changes necessary for us the Society to thrive in a changing environment. We also aim to build more partnerships within the community and across the generations and our new Chair will have a corresponding role as the Society's ambassador and spokesperson. Con'td page 7

**The Lambeth Horticultural Society
Late Summer Show 2 September 2023 – Trophies awarded**

Classes		
1-97	Banksian Medal most prize money won 2023 Annette Kingsley-Scott, 2021 Joanna French	Sue Wallace
1-23	Vegetable section best exhibit, NVS society medal	Alison Farrow
24	Collection of 4 salad vegetables winner, Society trophy	No entry
25	Collection of 4 kinds of vegetables The Lambeth Cup	No entry
26	LHS Top Tray	No entry
1-26	Vegetable section most points Eric Hunt challenge cup	Christopher Farrow
27-33	Fruit section best exhibit, The Worshipful Company of Gardeners Cup	Sue Wallace
27-33	Fruit section most points, David Shaw Cup	Michael Grimwood
34-43	Chrysanthemum section – NCS silver medal, NCS bronze medal	No entry
38	Chrysanthemum – vase of 5 blooms The Charles Jeal shield	No entry
44-50	Dahlia silver medal, bronze medal	Silvane Amaral Jackie Meldrum
74	Hanging basket Garden News shield	No entry
79	LHS Top vase £10 hut voucher	G Garton- Grimwood
51-79	General flowers Best exhibit Les Cooper cup	Sandra Horne
51-79	General flowers Best exhibit, Society trophy Mrs E Plant cup	Carol Pacifico
80-84	Pelargonium section Best exhibit Society trophy	Richard Holdaway
85-97	Houseplant & Cactus Best exhibit Tony Farrow shield	Martin Holdaway
98-103	Floral art Best exhibit	Norinka Ford
104-111	Domestic section most points The Lambeth trophy	Michael Grimwood
112-117	Handicraft section Best exhibit Bronze trophy	Annie James
118-120	Photographic section Best exhibit Society trophy	Philip Spedding
121-124	Children's section Best exhibit Society trophy	No entry

Photos of Prize Winners of the Late Summer Show 2023



Martin Holdaway
Houseplant & Cactus Best Exhibit
Tony Farrow shield



Sue Wallace Fruit Section Best
Exhibit The Worshipful Company of
Gardeners Cup



Norinka Ford Floral Art
Best Exhibit



Annie James Handicraft Section
Best Exhibit Bronze Trophy



Silvane Amaral Dahlia Silver Medal



Richard Holdaway
Pelagonium section
Best Exhibit Society
Trophy



Philip Spedding Best Exhibit
Society Trophy

Simon Saville from Butterfly Conservation

Born and bred on the Isle of Purbeck in rural Dorset with butterflies everywhere on the chalk downs, hay meadows and cliffs. Life intervened but the interest remained and now a volunteer, trustee and Chair of Butterfly Conservation Surrey branch (1850's borders) working in Lambeth, Southwark, Wandsworth and nearby boroughs. The first photo was of a marbled white butterfly taken in Burgess Park. For 26 weeks in a year Simon walks through the park noting each butterfly he sees. Butterfly Conservation is over 50 years old with over 100 staff, 40,000 members and thousands of volunteers carrying out science based work on real data, in partnership with other organisations such as the Wildlife Trust, National Trust, London boroughs and private landowners. Three goals: saving threatened species, restoring important landscapes, creating wild spaces for nature. There are guided and monitoring walks, field trips and conservation work, projects and outreach (such as to LHS). Simon talked about city vs countryside showing a photo taken in the North Downs near Dorking. In the foreground was horseshoe vetch an essential food for Adonis blue butterflies surrounded by wildflowers prevalent on low fertility chalky soils such as clover, and birds foot trefoil, great for all sorts of wildlife, while in the distance sheep graze on bright green fields laden with chemicals, making it sterile for nature. This demonstrates that the countryside isn't always so good for nature, pesticides and insecticides of intensively grown crops drifting on to hedgerows, in combination with habitat loss, fragmentation and degradation. Fewer hedges, hay meadows, coppicing of woodlands, changing of grazing regimes and the addition of chemicals make it hostile for wildlife, indicated by lack of butterflies. There is also encroaching house building, HS2, and new towns and infrastructure. In London there is the variety of parks and gardens, no agrarian monocultures, less fertilizer and pesticides. In Lambeth it's pesticide free! Green spaces also tend to be stable, such as Commons, parks, cemeteries, gardens and nature reserves. Brownfield sites also play an important part and Londoners are getting better at encouraging wildlife. In the centre of London there are more than 25 types of butterfly that can be regularly seen: there are only 59 types in the whole of Britain. Simon remembers how in 1981 the setting up of a Wildlife Trust branch in London was seen as a bit of a joke, being only fit for 'pigeons, foxes and rats'. Overwhelmingly proved wrong, Greater London possesses 15,000+ different species in a green mantle of 47%. There are species in London not found anywhere else in Britain. Focusing on butterflies, the Brown Argus, Marbled White, and Comma are doing quite well in London. The Comma being one of the commonest butterflies to see in the Spring in London which returns to the same place every year in Burgess Park. This butterfly has been monitored since the 1970's and it has been found edging Northwards as far as the north of Scotland. It used to feed mostly on hop and elm, until Dutch Elm disease and a lack of hops changed its diet, as a caterpillar, to nettles, which grow everywhere. The Brown Argus used to be quite rare, feeding on Common Rockrose found on chalk and limestone, but then began to feed on Cranesbill, much more common and widespread and was able to it's expanding its territory. The Marbled White feeds on

Red Fescue and other fine grasses of a traditional hay meadow, and can be seen in places such as Burgess Park, Brockwell Park, Tooting, Mitcham and Cannon Hill Common. The White Letter Hairstreak, is not so often seen as it lives in the top of Elm trees. But elms can sometimes be seen in hedgerows, with their slightly darker leaves. In Spring, their blossom is distinctive (many in Battersea Park)



The White Letter
Hairstreak

A recent visitor the Jersey Tiger Moth, once seen only on the continent and channel islands then spotted around 2007 in Forest Hill and now spread throughout London and the South-East.



Simon showed us a video of two White Letter Hairstreak butterflies spiralling up into the air; this shows two male butterflies fighting for territory. In Peckham Rye an avenue of disease resistant Elms have been planted which amongst other benefits, cater for the butterflies.

Two indicators for health of a species: distribution and number. The general trend for butterflies and moths is increase in distribution but decrease in numbers. The recipe for more butterflies in parks is; wildflower areas, more hedges and scrub, caterpillar food plants, more oaks elms, and blackthorns, and a water feature, less chemicals, less mowing. To help butterflies we need to provide them with places to feed, breed and shelter. Nectar plants for the adults, native trees and shrubs, grasses, brassica, nettles, trefoil, nasturtiums, sorrel, dock and herbs for caterpillars and shelter from the wind and cold, ivy being ideal. Peat free, pesticide free and places that are permanent. Simon demonstrated that a low fertility soil is needed for a wildflower meadow. To create this in our own garden grass needs to be cut and collected.

How to get involved: register your garden, submit your sightings, see it online and compare your garden with others. Or take part in The Big Butterfly Count in July and August, by siting in an open space for 15 minutes and noting what is seen of butterflies and report it so the data can be collected nationally. Also good for well being! Monitoring butterflies or just creating a more welcoming space for them, good for nature, good for us.

Urban Bee-keeping and The Community Bee Barnaby Shaw

Barnaby Shaw gave his talk under difficult conditions as the library was unable to give us the use of a working screen, so he was unable to illustrate his talk for us. Kennington Park is the site of Bee Urban. Having growing spaces, fruit trees, herbs, nectar rich flowering plants and bee hives.

The garden setting gives pleasure to people of all ages and lifestyles. They can take part in many projects; gardening, beekeeping, carpentry, cooking, candle making, willow making for examples. Poetry reading days are also held. They take part in the Lambeth Country Show and go out to craft festivals. Workshops are held for children and vulnerable adults. A group of autistic college students have made frames for the hives. Volunteers attend Fridays and Saturday from 10 – 6pm and in winter 10-2pm to help with maintenance of the site.

We were told some of the best plants to attract bees were single (simple) flowers, lavender, winter bulbs, ivy, lime. Bees will continue foraging into the evening if light. There is no evidence that bee keeping is detrimental to wild or solitary bees.

A worker bee lives 8-9 weeks, a queen bee 4-5 years. Bee Urban will collect swarms of bees if notified in time. Their honey is processed and sold in the cafe and at the venues they attend. Although we were denied the illustrations it proved to be very interesting and informative.



The Herb Garden

There is a wild flower meadow which emerges in spring and fills with hollyhocks. At the top is the orchard with medlars and quince, apples and pears and soft fruit, gooseberries, blackcurrants raspberries and redcurrants. The charming herb garden is signed and there is a small pond and places to soak up the peaceful atmosphere. There are vegetable beds, sheds with green roofs and insect hotels. They are plants being grown as fabric dye, woodworking and a bees group, as well as the patronage of a group of musicians. There is a traditional pizza oven, and a decked area protected by an awning, and beautiful sunsets. There is also a new holiday scheme for children, where they can be dropped off and an open studio known as the barn. On weekends a shop sells plants and jams, tea, coffee and cake. They have a table every year at the Lambeth Country Show. So that's it in a nutshell although I've missed bits out. All the activities are advertised on the website.



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We must also maintain the confidence and enthusiasm of our members. The role includes chairing monthly (10pa.) committee meetings and representing the organisation at various internal and community events. In return we can offer a dedicated and hard working committee, a loyal membership, great connections with Lambeth and the West Norwood community and a vision for future growth. If you would like to discuss this role further in confidence please contact Tony Chair@lambethhorticulturalsociety.org.uk

Lambeth Horticultural Society Contact Lists

Chairman
Tony Pizzoferro
Flat 2, 1 Chatsworth Way
West Norwood
SE27 9HR

pizzoferrotony@gmail.com
020 8761 5543

Secretary & Membership
Rhiannon Harlow Smith
32 Chatsworth Way
West Norwood
SE27 9HN

secretary@lambethhorticulturalsociety.org.uk
020 8244 9317

Show Secretary
Bob Tydeman
58 Gipsy Hill
SE19 1PD

showsecretary@lambethhorticulturalsociety.org.uk

Trading Secretary
Eveline Cragg
8a The Woodlands
Beulah Hill
SE19 3EG

evesjardin@icloud.com
0742 113 6968

Outings Organiser
Sarah Bailey
sarahbailey@gmail.com

Publicity and Promotions
Gabrielle Garton Grimwood
publicity@lambethhorticulturalsociety.org.uk

Newsletter Editor
Heather Miranda
36 Clarence Crescent
Clapham
SW4 8LJ

heathermira567@gmail.com
07742253444

Webmaster
Hillary Box

www.lambethhorticulturalsociety.org.uk
Keep up to date on events and associated
groups on Facebook, Twitter and now
Instagram

Any contributions for the newsletter
please e mail or post to above

Nb. The Hut is open Saturdays 2 – 4.30
pm and Sundays 10am – 12.30 from mid
February to mid December. Last days
open 2023 10/11th December. Look out
for special events.

Good deals on gardening equipment,
plants and seeds as well as a library, and
proceeds go directly to LHS. There are
also contact details of available gardeners