

Frieze 2019

The art displayed at the annual Frieze Masters in Regent's Park ranges from the early Egyptian period to the modern era. During my student days, American abstract painting burst onto the London scene - the mighty Rothko, Pollock, Barnett Newman et al. These painters seemed to embody new possibilities, freedom of thought and the expression of powerful emotions.

Abstract Expressionism was especially well represented at this year's Frieze; as a consequence, I have included two painters, Poliakoff and Riopelle, both of whom were exponents of this influential movement.

Serge Poliakoff (1900–1969) Gris et Rouge



Serge was born into an affluent family, in Russia, the thirteenth of fourteen children.

He started painting in Moscow but fled the Rev-

olution and continued his studies in London, while earning his living as a guitarist. He then settled in Paris

where he turned to abstraction after meeting Kandinsky and other non-figurative artists. Poliakoff's approach to painting was spiritual:

"You've got to have the feeling of God in the picture," he said, "if you want to get the big music in."

Hence his canvases are large and confrontational, the contrasting colour fields have irregular, sometime jagged edges but rich, dense layering of pigments creates a sense of harmony and concord.



Jean Paul Riopelle (1923 – 2002) Joute 1956

Riopelle was the first Canadian abstract painter to receive international recognition. From early landscape, he turned to abstraction, and, in 1946, became a member of "Les Automatistes." Later, he spent time in France, where he met the surrealists, notably André Breton, the chief apologist of Surrealism and the defender of "pure psychic automatism." In the 1950's he met the great American gestural painter, Joan Mitchell. Their tempestuous relationship was characterised by passion and rivalry. In his lyrical abstraction, Riopelle used thick impasto straight

from the tube, building up clusters of jewel-like mosaics of paint. An internal tension between abstraction and landscape produces a dynamic urgency. "When, I hesitate, I do not paint; when I paint, I do not hesitate."

Pablo Picasso (1881–1973) Tarasque, ceramic

Picasso was constantly experimenting with fresh media. The liveliness of his mind demanded this. At the end of the 1940s he began his experiments with ceramics.



He, together with Françoise Gilot, visited the small Provençal town of Vallauris. There they met Susanne and George Ramié, who made available to him the tools and resources of their pottery atelier.

It was to prove a long-lasting creative collaboration. Picasso's subject matter often includes the darker side of Greek myth. This pitcher illustrates a tarasque, an amphibious beast, said to have haunted the Rhône.

Amanda Malpass

Meet the Met

The Dedicated Ward Officer for Regent's Park usually holds a 'surgery' one a week on Saturdays between 2pm and 3pm at the St John's Wood Library.

Canine Control

When using the Benugo Café in the Broad Walk members may have noticed large new display boards indicating that dog owners using the facilities must ensure that their dogs are kept on leads in the precincts of the café.

Earlier in the summer there was an altercation with some dog walkers who refused to comply with this simple request; consequently, the Park Management has felt it necessary to



underline this requirement. And yet, despite these efforts, it does appear that sadly some dog walkers still are failing to respect the notices.

Over the last few years, it has become socially unacceptable for dog owners to fail to pick up after their animals.

There's been a big improvement ensuring that the park is kept free from excrement. However, there remains a small minority of owners, who persist

in not respecting this necessity.

This selfish attitude brings the rest of us dog owners into disrepute. The Park Management is determined to keep the signage in the Park to the minimum in order not to destroy the natural appearance of the landscape.

The local canine population is substantial; Camden alone boasts some 22,000 dogs and Regent's Park remains a wonderful area in which we can exercise our four-legged friends; but this places a serious burden on all of us to ensure that the current limited restrictions are fully complied with to the benefit of all the park users.

John Malpass

Litter in the Park

Although much litter is left by our wonderful park users to be picked up by Idverde, we must remember that in the natural habitat of the fox this is their normal modus operandi. Who can blame a hungry fox for pulling tasty morsels of food carefully stowed by humans into plastic bags and left beside already-filled-up litter bins? Or even for fishing foody bits out of said

bins? Or perhaps it is the crows, magpies or gulls? Rats would give it a go, wouldn't they, if there were any? What, rats? Did you say? Yes, of course there are rats in the park and probably an awful lot of them.

They steal from the allotment garden as well as from the bins. And all the animals have the good luck to be fed several times a week by the various

animal lovers who appear with bags of old bread and scatter it here and there (much against the requests of the park's staff).

Meanwhile Mr and Mrs Human visitor are generally good citizens and clean up after themselves. Noticeably the area around the Bandstand is left perfectly clean (apart from the ever-present goose poo) after the band

The Friends of Regent's Park & Primrose Hill

Newsletter - Winter 2019

Issue 102

From the Chair

Welcome to your December newsletter. I hope you enjoy catching up with news about the Park.

I must begin by thanking Ianthe for the smooth handover before she left for deepest Kent, and for all she has done for the Friends over the past three years. I hope she will continue to take an interest in the Park and Primrose Hill and share with us her extensive knowledge.

As your new Chair, I have been looking at how we compare with the other Royal Parks. Regent's Park is certainly the 'market leader' in entertainment. We have the wonderful Open-Air Theatre, a world class Music Academy, a summer Bandstand festival, open air opera and Shakespeare, the joyous Klezmer Festival and music festivals held in nearby churches.

But we do not compare well in other areas; for example, we are the only park without a Friends Visitor Centre or Kiosk (other than Greenwich that is awaiting approval of its request for lottery funding).

Other parks have volunteer Rangers to help visitors under a trial scheme being promoted by the Royal Parks and, overall, we have the fewest vol-

unteers. Each park is different, but Richmond for example has over 230 (gardeners, walk guides, litter pickers etc.). We have a long way to go to catch up!

Your committee has done a great job supporting Ianthe (and before her Connal and Malcolm), some as committee members for over 20 years. To avoid losing their skills we have created the position of 'Advisor'. Stephen Crisp, who has an encyclopedic knowledge of flora, is stepping down but has agreed to remain an advisor, as has our zoo man James Wren. Robin Das, the treasurer, will hand the books back to Richard Portnoy, who returns as treasurer after an absence of six years, and John Malpass has decided that it is time for him to pursue other activities.

We thank them all for the commitment they have shown to the Friends over many years. Ed Kellow joins the committee to lead our gardening efforts. Ed has spent the last five years as a volunteer 'nursing' the St John's Lodge Garden (The 'Secret' Garden). His work means that this peaceful corner of the park is a delight to visit and sit quietly in the tranquility it offers.

End of Season Review

The 2019 end of season review took place 28 October 2019 at St John's Wood Church Hall. There were 55 attendees.

The Chair, Ianthe McWilliams, started with a review of the year's activities in the Park. There has been an expansion of the Bandstand Festival over the summer led by Mark Elliott; lots of dog walking on Primrose Hill and the Hub continues to be the centre of the Park's sporting activities. The Avenue Gardens are being renewed; the area will be drained to enable conifers to grow.

Taste of London was a success. Bird feeding had been a problem but has now declined. Frieze also took place with their earlier display of sculptures in the English gardens. Ianthe then presented the results of her recent survey focusing on what people enjoy about the Park and being a member

of the Friends. The top three priorities for the Friends were 'Supporting the Park to preserve its beauty', 'Pedestrian safety including clear routes into the Park' and 'Improving air quality and quality of the lake water'.

The 100th edition of the Friends newsletter was published in the summer and Allison Kemp and Gillian Young have created an Instagram account for the Friends.

Jacky Erwtaman's retirement as Committee Secretary was marked with a presentation of flowers. Adrian Jackson was welcomed as the new Secretary.

Ianthe then introduced Mark Elliott as the new Chair. He thanked Ianthe for all her hard work and presented her with a gift to reflect the Committee's appreciation.

Peter Jeffcote, a retired lawyer, joins us to cover legal matters and, over time, will update our antiquated constitution! Incidentally, our 1993 constitution imposes wide ranging responsibilities so we will be looking for energetic people who enjoy volunteering and who are willing to lead!

My contribution to the newsletter would not be complete without paying tribute to Ivor Kamlisch who died on 30 October after a short illness. For the past 25 years Ivor has been a huge contributor as producer of the newsletter. A professionally trained artist, Ivor was never without his sketchpad, camera, or laptop to record events around the park, and many of his works you will have seen in our newsletters. His funeral was held on 17 November and was attended by many of the Friends who had come to pay their respects to this charming gentleman. (NB from your editor - A celebration of his life will be included in the next newsletter.)

I wish you all joyous holidays and a Happy New Year and look forward to seeing many of you at our AGM at St John's Church hall on 18 March 2020.

Mark Elliott

Mark made his incoming Chair presentation that focused on entertainment in the Park. There are 87 bands on his list for next year's Regent's Park Music Festival to be held next summer as an activity of the Friends. He thanked the organisations and people that had supported the programme both financially and with their time and outlined what will be new for 2020.

Ianthe then introduced the evening's guest speaker, Julie Smith, who was until recently the Supervisor of the Allotment Garden. She spoke on 'An edible oasis for people & nature - The Regent's Park Allotment Garden'. She explained how the allotment was started, the involvement of Sustain and Capital Growth, and later the Park and Capel Manor College. She reviewed what has been achieved and plans for the future.

In answer to 'what happens to the

produce?' Julie explained that the volunteers take it home.

As for the decline of insects Julie explained how they have managed to counter this on the basis that insects prefer untidy spaces. The last part of the evening was Q&A with a panel. The panel comprised Ianthe, Justin Mckie (Chair of Regent's Park and Primrose Hill Safer Parks Panel), Mark Elliott and Nick Biddle (Park Manager).

Nick opened by discussing the Park's current projects - the Gloucester Gate playground, the Primrose Hill café and the Boathouse. The Sports Hub is thriving as is the hedgehog population.

In the Gardens

Primrose Hill Café



This beautiful new café operated by Benugo, located between the Trim Trail and the playground, opened on Saturday 8 December. Don't forget that Friends receive a discount in the cafes.

Gloucester Gate Playground

After years in the planning, work started on 29 July facilitated by a generous public donation and a grant from the London Marathon Charitable Trust. Work is progressing well, and the aim is to complete in January subject to weather conditions.

Path Improvements

The footways on Chester Road are being resurfaced, which explains the drastic reduction to the hedgerow there.

Avenue Road Ramp

A Tfl funded project to improve access to the canal towpath for pedestrians and cyclists will hopefully be going out to tender shortly. The Canal and River Trust are leading on this process, working with the royal parks landscape and arboriculture teams.

Avenue Gardens Irrigation Improvements

This winter the old and failing irrigation system in the Avenue Gardens will be replaced.

The gardens are built around four

Justin McKie spoke about the Regent's Park and Primrose Hill Safer Parks Panel and addressed the issue of accidents to cyclists in the Park. He used as an example a recent cycling accident on the Inner Circle involving an SUV. He further explained how he works with cyclists to ensure that other Park users' concerns are dealt with. He said that less damage is done by cycling than by vehicles in the Park but that cyclists should adjust their speed to reflect the time of day.

A Member asked why the CEPC had not increased the number of hours some of the Park gates are closed, as TFL had proposed. Mark Elliott (an ex-Commissioner of the CEPC) explained that the CEPC is limited in what it can

do in reducing traffic flow in the park because of the statutes under which it was created. It controls the gates to the Park but is obliged to work in conjunction with Transport for London and Westminster Council, and could be held liable if it closed the gates without their backing. This was confirmed by Loretta Balfour (Chairman of CEPC).

PC Richard Taylor confirmed that steps had been taken to prevent the use of fireworks on Primrose Hill on 5 November.

At 8:45, Ianthe thanked the Committee for their hard work over the last twelve months, closed the meeting and thanked the presenters and attendees.

avenues of trees, which William Nesfield inherited from the original Nash design, and the two inner avenues will be drained.

Nesfield used "Lombardy Poplars planted at regular distances" as "when regularly pruned, form a good substitute for the upright Cypress, which does not grow well in London" (*The Gardeners' Chronicle and Agricultural Gazette 1874*).

The mid 1990s restoration of the avenue gardens used Italian cypress for the central avenues which worked well initially but over time succumbed to the very heavy clay around the pits in which they were planted.

Other columnar species have been tried without success due to the heavy clay, but decent drainage should solve the problem.

The failure of these avenues in recent years has blighted what is otherwise a wonderful Italianate formal garden so we are grateful for this significant investment by the Royal Parks.

The Tennis Pavilion

The toilets and changing facilities are to be improved and some of the internal areas will be reconfigured to make better use of the space.

Cherry Tree Planting

Thirty-six flowering cherry trees have been planted at the southern end of the lake, to the east of Clarence Bridge.

In September 2017 former Prime Minister, Theresa May, formally accepted a gift to the UK by Japan of what was originally intended to be 1,000 flowering cherry trees as a lasting celebration of the ever-growing friendship between the two nations.

There are now 6,500 trees being planted across the UK. The Royal Parks are receiving 125 trees in total which will be planted in Bushy, Rich-

mond and St James's Parks, as well as in Regent's Park.

Staff Changes

Phil Edwards, who joined the Regent's Park team just over a year ago as Assistant Park Manager has recently been appointed Park Manager for Bushy Park, following the retirement of Ray Brody after a lifetime in The Royal Parks.

Ray will be greatly missed but we know that Phil will do a terrific job at Bushy as he has done in his time with us in Regent's Park. We will miss him here and wish him all the very best in his exciting new role.

Nick Biddle, Park Manager

Wildlife

Hedgehog surveys continue. September results show that 27 individual hedgehogs were recorded over the two weekends, thirteen adult females, five adult males and nine juveniles of which five were female, one was male and three were unknown (they were too small to unroll).

Unfortunately, two of the hedgehogs were taken to the ZSL vets with serious injuries and had to be euthanised. Numbers are down slightly but the good news is that the majority of animals found appeared to be healthy and a good weight.

Bird News



Cetti's warbler juveniles were seen and thus bred for the first time in the park.

Tawny owls are breeding in Leafyard Wood and are heard in the evenings. Little owls bred in the large poplar by the cricket pen and kestrels bred in the nest box in the wetland pen. Reed warblers are doing well, with breeding pairs in almost every reedbed.

Sedge warblers bred for the second year in a row. Only three pairs of herons bred on Bandstand Island, but they did better on Heron Island with fifteen successful pairs.

A pair of gadwall raised two youngsters, which is a first for the park. A pair of great crested grebe had an unusually late chick hatch in late September. It is still alive and with the

parents. On 30 October a red-throated diver was seen on the lake for the first time ever, which can only have been blown off course.



It was very weak and not eating so Tony and Dave rescued it, fed it with

small rudd from the lake in St James's Park until it was well enough for Tony to release in Norfolk this week. It was last seen swimming out beyond the surf line towards a group of other red-throated divers a little further out.

The 'Rail Ditch' at the edge of the reedbed on the mainland just east of Hanover Island has been opened up recently, providing a good view from the blue bridge. Two water rails have been heard calling to each other. We believe that the convolvulus hawk-moth seen on 27 September is probably the first record of this species in the park.

Dave Johnson, Wildlife Officer

The 1830 Story of a Giant Pyramid Planned for Primrose Hill

Planning permission can be sought for highly unusual buildings, even if the designers of these do not own the prospective building sites. I remember seeing a television interview with two Oxford undergraduates who had put in for planning permission to build a full-size replica of the Great Pyramid in Christ Church Meadow. When asked why, they said it would make a suitable future burial site for themselves.

In the past many ambitious architects and developers have proposed grandiose and extraordinary schemes. A favourite site in London for what have remained fantasies was Primrose Hill, overlooking the West End.

Amongst unbuilt plans were those for a full-scale replica of the Parthenon, a Casino and a giant statue of Shakespeare, with eyes two feet wide, through which those inside the head could look out over London 'through the eyes of Shakespeare'.

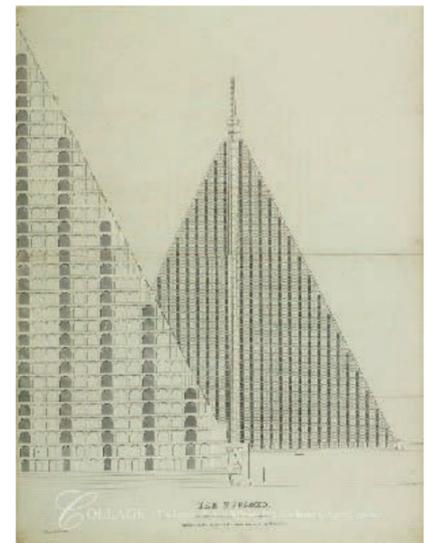
If not the most attractive of the schemes put forward for Primrose Hill, certainly the most megalomaniacal was a scheme by an architect, Thomas Willson, offering a solution for the problem of adequate burial space in the ever-expanding London of the day.

Willson published his scheme in 1830 as *The Pyramid: A General Metropolitan Cemetery to be Erected in the Vicinity of Primrose Hill*. His plan was for a pyramid at the centre of a large, landscaped cemetery.

Its exact proposed location is unclear, but Willson, whose address was given as 11 New Cavendish Street, Portland Place, stated that 'the site has been wisely chosen in the vicinity of Primrose Hill, where it will possess the advantage of being equally accessible from every part of the Metropolis'.

At its top, a circular stone staircase would terminate in a small astronomical observatory, surmounted by 'a plain and appropriate obelisk'. "To

Italy, rather than on any of those in Egypt, but with an obelisk on its summit. It was the stupendous size proposed that set it apart. Described by its architect as "a massive, imposing and awful structure, surpassing in magnitude the great pyramid of Egypt", the pyramid had ninety-four stories, two underground and ninety-two above.



It was to be nine-hundred-foot square and higher than St Paul's Cathedral. With four entrances, and approached by a 'lofty Egyptian portal', it was designed to have 215,296 catacombs, each holding twenty-four coffins. In all, when full, the pyramid would contain 5,167,104 bodies.

Willson was confident in the attractions of his scheme. "It will rise in solemn majesty over London's splendid fanes and lofty towers, to proclaim by its elevation, the temporary triumph but final overthrow of Death, teaching the living to die, and the dying to live for ever."

At its top, a circular stone staircase would terminate in a small astronomical observatory, surmounted by 'a plain and appropriate obelisk'. "To

trace the length of its shadow at sunrise and at eve, and to toil up its singular passages to the summit, will beguile the hours of the curious, and impress feelings of solemn awe and admiration upon every beholder".

It would be "ornamental to the Metropolis, an impressive memento mori to every passing age, and an object of pious veneration to posterity".

The architect had few doubts about the commercial attractions of his design: "While it is the mightiest work that was ever undertaken, it is the **only one** that can meet the exigencies of the case, and that is at the same time **practicable, economical, and remunerative**".

Providing an excellent public task for the unemployed, it would cost £2,500,000 to build, but would earn £15,000,000 for its shareholders in a century. Alternatively, an early freehold sale of individual catacombs and niches would realise a profit of £10,764,800.

The bodies from the city churches could be moved there as early customers, while good drainage and ventilation would assure its salubrity. "The present is not an age when a scheme is to be rejected, because it is stupendous, and soars beyond the comprehension of the multitude. The grand Mausoleum will go far towards completing the glory of London!"

Willson was also prescient in recognising the attraction of the skyscrapers of the future to their developers:

"The base comprehending eighteen and a half acres, being multiplied by the several stages to be erected one above another, when required, will generate nearly 1000 acres! self-created out of the void space overhead, as the building progresses upwards."

Martin Sheppard

concerts in spite of over 15,000 attendees this summer.

Footballers, runners, baseball players, rugby nuts, theatre goers, families, birthday party throwers all bring food and drink into our parks and take

away the remainders. It is always great to see the picnickers on Primrose Hill carefully packing up their rubbish and making sure it is properly disposed of when they go home.

“Even the end-of-exam-celebrators in

the summer and the New Year’s Eve and Guy Fawkes’s night revellers in the winter?” Well, no, perhaps not them but then the wildlife might have been to blame; just a little!

Alison Kemp

Zoo News

ZSL London Zoo is pledging 100,000 subsidised tickets to ensure the Zoo is accessible to all people who currently face barriers to visiting and have the opportunity to connect with wildlife. The Zoo will also be looking at other ways to improve accessibility.

Charities, community-interest companies and groups working with older people, people with additional needs and disabilities and low-income families in Camden and Westminster will be able to apply for an allocation of tickets for their members until 2023.

For more information and to apply, please visit: www.zsl.org/cas

The Magic of Christmas at ZSL London Zoo

From Saturday 30 November to Monday 24 December, the Zoo is inviting kids to become Keepers’ Little Helpers by joining Santa’s elves in preparing Christmas surprises for some of the 18,000 animals to enjoy.

Meet Santa in his magical grotto at the heart of the Zoo, taking home a festive family portrait and special gift. Go to *12 Animals at Christmas*, one of the festive animal talks featuring the Zoo’s residents opening their very own Christmas presents. Or watch free festive movies every afternoon at the Zoo including family favourites

Arthur Christmas, The Polar Express, Elf, The Muppets Christmas Carol and more.

Find out more and book tickets online now at www.zsl.org/zsl-london-zoo/whats-on/the-magic-of-christmas.

Every item purchased in our Zoos or online enables the conservation charity to continue active conservation projects in more than 50 countries and its two Zoos.

Buy a Gift Membership package before 24 December and get 15% off, visit zsl.org to find out more.

Stephanie Deas, Press Officer, ZSL Regent’s Park

Park Gates Damaged by Lorries

Two accidents in the same week damaged the gates to Queen Mary’s rose garden and the gates into Park Square East. In both cases the gates were hit by lorries. New gates and plinths are to be made, but as the only supplier who can make the gates to the Heritage design is based in Scotland and as the plinth stone is only obtainable from a particular quarry, the repair is likely to take time.

Correction

We wish to apologise to our former Chair, Malcolm Katetz following an inaccurate statement in an article that appeared in our Autumn Newsletter.

The action to oppose the Goals soccer football site was masterminded by Malcolm and Conall McFarlane with Valerie mobilising the Primrose Hill residents.

For the Diary

Wednesday 18 March 2020

FRP&PH AGM

6.30 for 7pm At St John’s Wood Church with speaker, Mat Bonomi, Head of Transport and Access, Royal Parks.

Saturday 4 April 2020

Introduction to Plant Morphology
9.30am-4pm (Fee: £40.00) Book via the Field Studies Council (FSC)
Helen Robertson, Head of Centre. Tel: 01306 734 501

Saturday 25 April 2020

How to use Plant Identification keys
9.30am-4pm (Fee: £40.00) Book via the Field Studies Council (FSC)

Saturday 2 May 2020

Urban Wild Plants
9.30am-4pm (Fee: £50.00) Book via the Field Studies Council (FSC)

Saturday 16 May 2020

Common British and Irish plant families
9.30am-4pm (Fee: £50.00) Book via the Field Studies Council (FSC)

Saturday 30 May 2020

Tree Identification – Summer
9.30am-4pm (Fee: £50.00) Book via the Field Studies Council (FSC)

The Friends will be publishing a list of volunteer organised Walks and Talks for 2020 in our next edition.

Membership Drive

Members have received an email and notices have been posted on Next Door websites suggesting that buying a 2020 membership for friends or family is a nice way to make a gift. A family membership only costs £20 per year. To make a gift you need to:

1. Print and give the card attached to the email to the gift recipient.
2. Log on to the link provided in and enter THEIR details & email address and pay the £20 on their behalf by credit card or direct debit.
3. Wait until the gift has been received before doing step 2 as our membership system will send a ‘welcome’ message as soon as the registration is complete.

We hope you find this a nice way to solve your last-minute gift requirements!

Useful Numbers

Police:

Emergency - 999
Park Regulation Offences - 101
Crime Reporting - 020 7706 7272
Non-urgent Matters - 020 7161 9701

Park Office: 020 7486 7995 (Mon-Fri 9am-4pm)

Friends of Regent’s Park & Primrose Hill

Chair: Mark Elliott

Treasurer: Richard Portnoy

Secretary: Adrian Jackson

Membership Administrators: Alan & Stella

Newsletter: Anne-Marie Craven

Website: www.friendsofregentspark.org

(See website for email addresses)