



DO SOMETHING AMAZING TODAY

AUTUMN & WINTER 2025

NEWSLETTER NO. 123



Join the Friends today!
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With thanks to our sponsors:



FROM THE CHAIR

Mark Elliott

*Chairman,
Friends of Regent's Park & Primrose Hill*

This is our second BIG newsletter in our new routine of producing two each year – one in the Spring and one in the Autumn. A huge vote of thanks is due to our editor Robin Black who reminds us all when it is time to provide our contributions and then assembles it into the outstanding newsletter you are now reading.

The other change to our newsletter is that it is no longer sent to most of you in electronic form. Research revealed that only about 25% of you opened it and, probably, even fewer read it. So, for the second time, we will send you a paper copy unless you set an electronic version as your preference. You can read more about this in this newsletter.

The Summer weather has been wonderful with warm and sometimes hot conditions. We only cancelled 'Rambling Rosie', our visitor centre, twice, and later in the day regretted it! Bandstand concerts enjoyed almost 100% good weather with only one cancellation.

Our 'non-musical' events' programme was an amazing success with our Events Manager Viv Ward being delighted to have almost all fully booked and many with waiting lists.

Did your membership of the Friends provide you with enough choice of things to do, watch, visit or listen to this summer? In case you did not notice, here is what we offered to you, or supported. Many activities and events were free or charged only a nominal fee. You can read a lot more about them in this newsletter but here is a summary:

EVENTS

- 'The Big Lunch' on the Broad Walk – 400 came. The jazz was great!
- 'Rambling Rosie' our visitor van at the Baker Street entrance – over 5,000 visitors, 112 sessions.
- 'Non-Musical Events' included 21 guided walks, 7 Tours, 6 boating (lake and canal), 3 special events – 37 in total.
- 'Chit Chat' – the weekly Friends meeting in the Primrose Hill Café.



Illustration by Jesse Brown

- **Natural History Group** – monthly lectures, several park walks.
- Adapted bikes for disabled and handicapped – we helped transfer it to **BikeWorks** that increased numbers (Friends supported).
- Our **Annual General Meeting** at the Danish Church.

VOLUNTEERING

- **Litter Picking** – 37 volunteers, 665 hours, 19 corporate groups.
- **Bulb Planting** – 4,000 bulbs will be planted over 4 sessions.
- **Guided walks** – many volunteer guides educated and entertained us.
- **Bandstand** – More than 25,000 came to 46 concerts, overseen by more than 100 volunteers.
- **Lakeside Music Festival** – Eight ticketed concerts including some famous performers and some for children – 15 volunteers.

- **Friends Committee** – 14 volunteers.

Overall, about 250 volunteers took part in over 500 sessions. We thank them all. Without them, none of this could have happened.

In 2025 our membership grew 20% to 1,317 family members. See page 16 to see how you can get the most out of your membership.

The Royal Parks kindly offered us their Hanover kiosk. We have many ideas about what to do with it, but are always open to more. If you have suggestions, please let us know: chair@friendsofregentspark.org. See article on page 2.

Once again, we say thank you to our Park Manager Nick Biddle and to his team for the support they provide to the Friends. Also, the park contractors Gavin Jones and OCS. Whenever we asked them for help, nothing was too much trouble. All members owe them a huge vote of thanks.

FRIENDS KIOSK STARTING NEXT SPRING

As already reported, the Royal Parks are leasing a Kiosk to the Friends. You can see it if you go over the two 'blue' bridges next to the water fountain near the Hanover gate playground. For many years it was an ice cream kiosk, but being in a tree covered area, it was deemed to be no longer needed. It has been fully restored with a new roof and roller shutters, and the catering appliances have been removed.

We have decided to start off using it by allowing the park's artists to display their amazing talent there on the weekends from about June to September. Our resident artist and Friends Committee member Jesse Bevan Brown will be leading the project over the next six months to equip the Kiosk and bring it back to life. We are fortunate to have received a £5,000 donation from the

Rose Foundation who gave the same amount to the refurbishment of 'Rosie' our Visitor Centre Truck. These funds will allow us to add an awning like the one on Rosie as well as refurbish the interior and equip it to handle the art works and the needs of other pop up projects.

This art project will be a major feature of the Friends activities in 2026 and give us a kick start to develop other initiatives

Don't be shy, any and all ideas will be entertained. Get creative and get involved in our newest venture. All we ask is that it is compatible with the park, nature, sport, art, creative pursuits, picnics, family fun...

We have received many suggestions but, if you have ideas for this space we would be pleased to have them at chair@friendsofregentspark.org.



An artist's rendering of the kiosk.

FRIENDS POP-UP AT WALLACEA GARDEN PARTY

Following the publication of an invitation in our August update, a number of Friends attended a summer party hosted by one of our sponsors, Wallacea Living. It was a lovely August afternoon with live jazz provided by the incomparable Ronnie Scott's, a gelato cart, classic cocktails and fresh, summery canapés. The Friends' volunteers had an information desk set up and signed up some new members throughout the afternoon. These are people who have signed up to the new Wallacea Living complex that will open next year and is located in Newcastle Place, W2.

We look forward to welcoming these new Friends to our park and to the many walks, talks, events and activities we plan throughout the year.



Wallacea's Liz Dunning, right, welcomes Friends and others to the new complex in Newcastle Place, W2.

SAFETY

SAD NEWS OF THE LOSS OF OUR PARK POLICE

Mark Elliott

The Royal Park's Police force will be disbanded on 1 November and will be replaced by local police. We have been advised by the Royal Parks that that Westminster police will cover all of Regent's Park and Camden will cover Primrose Hill even though the park is split about 70/30 between Westminster and Camden. We also understand that the Lisson Grove police station will take charge of the Regent's Park policing and Primrose Hill will probably fall under the control of the Camden Police station at 25 Camden Road. Officers at

both stations will be trained to operate in the park using park regulations. As these differ from London regulations, it is likely to take time for the officers to get up to speed.

We have already seen a change in policing in the parks as it has been announced that Primrose Hill will be closed overnight on November 5th for Guy Fawkes night and December 31st for New Year's Eve.

Some good news is that on July 31, the Metropolitan police announced that up to 80 more officers will join the dedicated Westminster team to bear down on crimes that Londoners care about the most –

including antisocial behaviour, violence against women and girls, shoplifting and phone robbery. It is hoped that some of these officers will be assigned to work in the park.

The Friends are concerned about the impact this could have on the crime level in the park and are awaiting an opportunity to meet with the police to understand better how they will take over such a large area.

We are very sorry to say goodbye to our local "bobby" Christian Roberts who has been active in the parks for about four years. We shall miss his helpful presence and wish him well in his new assignment.

THE NATURAL PARK

CHALLENGING SUMMER FOR TREES

Matthew Steinmann

Arboricultural Officer

Another summer of drought and another challenge to tree health, particularly in keeping the recently planted trees watered. The bowers did their job and most of the young trees have survived.

Some mature trees have been lost, notably a silver lime to the west of the hub which failed in recent high winds. We knew it was vulnerable as we'd identified the presence of extensive basal stem decay. It was due to have its crown reduced after leaf fall but the storm got there first. We will stack as much of the wood on site which will provide wonderful habitat. There are new shoots around the stump which will be the future of the tree; it will live on as a coppice.

Elsewhere we've had to fell three red horse chestnuts near Gloucester Green playground as they were mostly dead. Their decline is typical for horse chestnuts which are vulnerable to both leaf miner and bacterial canker. They'll be replaced with the resistant horse chestnut



An Elm Ulmus 'Lobell' on Primrose Hill that has succumbed to Dutch Elm Disease and will be felled soon.

species, Indian horse chestnut; some of these have already been planted as very young trees, protected in baskets, opposite the Gloucester Green playground and are doing well.

A second elm on Primrose Hill previously thought to be resistant to Dutch Elm Disease has now succumbed to the disease and will be felled soon. Another succumbed a couple of years ago. We now understand the variety to be

tolerant rather than resistant to the disease.

Winter works otherwise will be the usual routine of deadwood removal and/or stabilisation, crown reduction and storm response work.

Every lost tree is a planting opportunity! We have plans to plant more trees over the winter months. This year we're focussing on the planting for succession of the (declining and aged) hawthorn population on Primrose Hill.

The London Tree Map

*You may be aware of the Mayor of London's 'London Tree Map'.
The Royal Parks, together with many of the London Boroughs have pooled their tree location data here.
The data is slightly out of date, but nevertheless a very good guide.*

The elm pictured is here: [London's Public Realm Trees](#)
The felled horse chestnuts and their replacements are here: [London's Public Realm Trees](#)
And the fallen silver lime is here: [London's Public Realm Trees](#)

EVERY TREE FAILURE IS AN OPPORTUNITY

Unhappily the weeping silver lime *Tilia tomentosa* 'Petiolaris' to the west of the Hub, just north of the Rugby pitch, failed in recent winds. It's here: treemap.uk/#gla928117.

I've been monitoring the tree for some time. A few years ago we identified the fungi *Kretzschmaria deusta* as well as *Ganoderma australe* at the base of the tree. Decay was therefore present in the lower stem. I had an arboricultural consultant assess the extent of the decay and we decided to reduce the scale of the crown, to decrease the load on the stem. As the tree posed a higher risk, we allowed brambles to grow around the base and placed logs at its drip line to dissuade members of the public from spending time beneath it. So, the tree stood for 5 years. This year I again had the extent of the decay assessed and we had planned to undertake a further crown reduction after leaf fall.

But our assessment was undertaken at ground level and below ground to assess the



The weeping silver lime failed in recent winds.



roots; at ground level the tree's buttresses retained good wood to an adequate extent and we believed therefore that it had a viable short term life span. Similarly, the tree's roots were intact and

functioning. However, the extent of the decay slightly higher on the stem was not assessed and this is where the tree failed. We live and learn! Every tree failure is a planting opportunity!

DECIMATION* OF WATER BIRDS IN THE PARK BY BOTULISM AFTER AVIAN FLU

Kennedy Cruickshank
Natural History Group organiser

By mid-July good crops of blackberries had already ripened after brief rain and bird ‘return-migration’ had started, further signs of altering climate. Yet perhaps the most serious development this year not hitting headlines was an extraordinary 90% wipe out of the remaining ducks and geese from the Park’s near 30-year-old collection. One of my favourites, the 22-year-old female eider (yes, of eider-down fame) who had lost her mate in the ‘bird flu’ outbreak 2 years ago, died along with another favourite, the remaining red-breasted goose. The list below, intentionally in columns as a memorial.

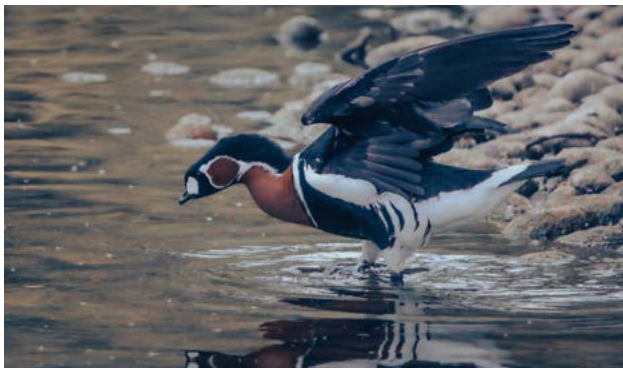
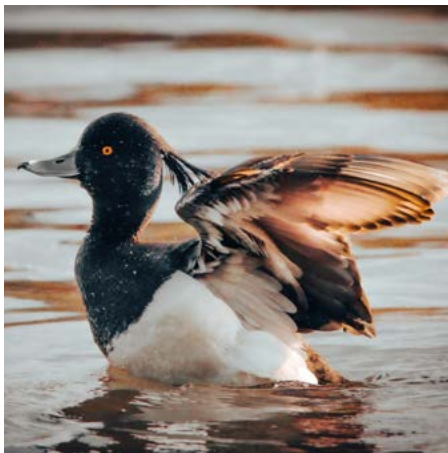
The smew and scaup, together with red-crested pochards were the charmers who regularly swam round and round by the long bridge, probably expecting food. (Not allowed!) Some red-crested are still about. There are also fewer Tufted ducks which used to be all over the lake. The board with the ducks illustrated is still up, if fading, by the viewing point.

It’s unlikely these fine ducks will be replaced because, in Magnus Andersson, now our local birding expert’s words, ‘the same fate would await any such ‘new’ introductions.’

Clearly it’s a further warning of climate-change damage that few, even though it is Government policy, are prepared to do much about. Who cares??

Meanwhile, to cheer us up, a kingfisher has been seen regularly ‘zipping’ across the lake and we’ve had some now-special passers through on their southward migration.

*(*Decimation literally meaning reduced to a tenth, not down by 10%)*



Top: the ‘late’ male (left) and female (right) Smew.
© Ari Weiler-Ofek

Above: The late female Eider (left) and male Tufted duck (right). © Sachit Handa

Left: The late Red-breasted goose (exotic).
© Sachit Handa



Spotted Flycatcher on the look-out in morning light. Front view – note streaky spotting – and side view.
© Ari Weiler-Ofek, a final year student at UCL



Above, left: A female Whinchat (© Ken Copsey). Right: A male Stonechat, in front partly hiding the female, expertly caught by Ken Copsey again. The birds’ colours muted compared with in spring.

Our mission is to have nightingales nesting in Regent’s Park & Primrose Hill within a decade

PROGRESS CONTINUES ON FLAGSHIP QUEEN ELIZABETH II MEMORIAL GARDEN

In August, we were delighted to welcome Fiona Packe as Head Gardener. Fiona brings a wealth of horticultural experience from a diverse career in the UK and abroad. Fiona will lead the establishment and maintenance of the new garden commemorating the life of Queen Elizabeth II, and other key horticultural features across Regent’s Park and Primrose Hill, overseeing a dedicated team of gardeners and volunteers. Her expertise in climate-resilient planting will be central to shaping this innovative space, helping to create a garden which is both biodiverse and beautiful.

The main paths are now complete, allowing

teams to focus on planting preparation. Weed clearance is underway ahead of autumnal planting, which will introduce more than 200,000 spring bulbs. A magnolia tree, chosen for its climate resilience, has been planted alongside other trees as the site is transformed into a vibrant garden, which will return two acres of biodiverse parkland to central London.

Sustainable design is a key feature, with salvaged steel from the former glasshouses used to create parts of the new pergola. Development remains firmly on track for a spring 2026 opening, coinciding with what would have been Queen Elizabeth II’s centenary year.



Fiona Packe ©Sebastiano Ragusa

NATURAL HISTORY TALKS

Our list of talks for the autumn-winter season is now ready and all interested are most welcome. These are especially for Friends but those who are not are encouraged to join. The talks are at 6:30 p.m. at which time parking becomes free on the Inner Circle. We gather in the Park office meeting room, right and immediately right again off the junction of Chester Road and the Inner Circle.

Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m.
Meeting Room, Regent’s Park offices
Inner Circle

21 October
‘Why survey Wildlife?’
By Dr Liz Andrew
Chair, Hampstead Heath Survey section

4 November
‘Spiders in London’s Park’
– room for more or could do better?
By Edward Milner
Spider recorder for London

9 December
‘Festive Molluscs’
By Noel Brock
Director, Frognaal Gardens

More talks to be confirmed –
watch for them in our Monthly Updates.

In Memoriam –
90% of our water-bird collection dying from botulism
in the Regent’s Park Lake, September 2025

Geese:	Ducks:	
1 Lesser white fronted (Siberia-US)	4 Smew*	1 Wigeon
2 Pink-footed*	4 White-cheeked Pintails	1 Chiloe Wigeon
1 red breasted (Siberia)	2 Pintails*	1 Teal*
	2 White-fronted whistling	1 Gadwall*
	<i>And single examples of:</i>	
	Scaup*	1 Eider*
	Scaup x Tufted Hybrid	
	Hooded Merganser (US)(Falcated)	

*Those above with the * beside them are mostly ducks found round the UK’s coasts; the others are ‘exotics’ from across the world.*

PRIMROSE HILL CLOSED ON BONFIRE NIGHT, NEW YEAR'S EVE

Primrose Hill will be closed and locked during the Bonfire Night period and on New Year's Eve as well.

Last year an estimated 30,000 people visited Primrose Hill to view the Mayor of London's New Year's Eve firework display. Metropolitan Police Officers were on hand to ensure public order and safety. However, in part due to the closure of The Metropolitan Police's Royal Parks Operational Command Unit in November this year, the capacity to manage crowds of this size in open parkland will be severely diminished.

Each year Primrose Hill closes on Bonfire Night at 10:00 p.m. to limit anti-social behaviour and this year the closure will be enforced from 10:00 p.m. each night from 31 October to 9 November.

Visitors are reminded that organising large gatherings without permission and setting off fireworks or lanterns is in breach of The Royal Parks' regulations, which are enforced by the Metropolitan Police.

In addition to the Bonfire Night closures, Primrose Hill will be closed on New Year's Eve. Following an increase in visitor numbers and a need to ensure public safety, the park will be closed on 31 December. It will reopen the following day on 1 January.

The Hill will be closed off with a perimeter fence on Wednesday 31 December and will reopen on Thursday 1 January.

'The safety of all park visitors is our priority,' said a spokesperson for The Royal Parks. 'With the potential for such a large number of attendees, and the absence of the dedicated Royal Parks Police, we are unable to support the necessary safety and crowd management arrangements. Closing Primrose Hill overnight is the only responsible course of action.'

Visitors are advised to make alternative arrangements to celebrate the New Year.

Park closure will be enforced from 10 p.m. each night from 31 October to 9 November

Primrose Hill will be closed on 31 December and reopen on 1 January

THE ACTIVE PARK



The Sports Hub and Grounds teams were honoured with the Grounds Team of the Year Award 2025.

NEWS FROM THE SPORTS HUB

Benjamin Ladipo
Sports Development Officer

During this past summer season, April to August, we successfully completed our summer programme, hosting over 450 corporate events for local companies.

Recently, we have begun Friday evening sessions for Turning Point, a leading social enterprise delivering services in areas such as substance use, mental health, learning disability, autism, sexual health, homelessness, and more. Chelsea Football Foundation are kindly hosting these sessions free of charge on our pitches. The sessions include football and multi-skill games.

Ollie Anderson, myself, and the Grounds Team were honoured with an award for Grounds Team of the Year 2025. The award from London Football Association (FA) recognises the inclusive football provision offered in Regent's Park, in providing some of the highest quality sports pitches in London.

The operation is managed by a small team of three full-time Grounds Staff, working with a core team of three Active Sports Officers, two Development Officers, and the Sports Manager. Together, they oversee 25 pitches, with 24 currently rated 'Good' or better, and 17 at 'Advanced' standard.

Each week, Regent's Park hosts around 4,600 football players, with over 140 matches played every weekend across its pitches. This includes 34 women's and girls' matches in winter with additional matches midweek and during the summer. The summer season includes 12 extra fixtures as part of the Summer Girls League, and three weekly mixed ability football matches, comprising 20 teams.

Since the installation of a second hybrid pitch in April 2024, the venue has become one of the UK's prime locations for women's and girls' football. The girls' football league in Regent's Park has increased from 36 to 72

teams in just 12 months. This is predicted to rise to 90 girls' teams for the upcoming 2025-26 season. The Inclusion Football League has grown from eight to 20 teams in the same timeframe.

The increase in provision comes as the Lionesses celebrate their win at Euro 2025.

Nick Biddle, Park Manager of Regent's Park and Primrose Hill, The Royal Parks, said:

"Our urban green spaces are crucial for so many reasons, including sports and exercise, and it's wonderful to be recognised by the London FA for this award. A huge thank you to everyone involved in making this happen."

"To go from having very few women's and girls' teams to now welcoming so many on a regular basis, including four that will call the park their home ground this season, is a huge point of pride for the whole team."

"Staff have told me that they've had some of the most rewarding days in their career whilst working on the free half term football programmes for children from low-income families, or the mixed ability Sunday league for those who face barriers to participating in team sports."

More details can be found [here](#).

On Monday 8th September, we partnered with Westminster Council to host our annual Stepping to the Beat 3k run. It was another fantastic community event.

Over the summer, we worked closely with Camden Council, providing access to our pitches (specifically, the new hybrid pitch that we received funding for) for half-term camps. One of our sports facilitators delivered weekly sessions on Mondays, with different youth groups from Camden joining us for rounders and traditional sports day activities. Across three weeks, we engaged with around 200 children. All in all an extremely successful season of which the team are incredibly proud.

CYCLING FOR EVERYONE IN REGENT'S PARK WITH BIKEWORKS' ALL ABILITY CLUB

Zoe Portlock

Co-CEO / Co-Founder, Bikeworks

Earlier this year, the All Ability Cycling Club opened in Regent's Park and it's already making a difference.

Every week the club welcomes people who are disabled or have limited mobility, together with their friends, family, or carers. With skilled instructors on hand and a wide range of specialist cycles, everyone can experience the joy of riding in Regent's Park.

Bikeworks, together with The Royal Parks and the Friends, are opening up cycling for everyone. Since launching, the club has gone from strength to strength, with more people joining from the local communities of Camden, Westminster and beyond.

One of the most popular additions has been the Ride Side-by-Side. Two people cycle next to each other, pedalling together and chatting as they go. It's proving to be a favourite for friends, carers, and family members alike.

The impact is best described by the people who take part. As one rider shared, 'I didn't think I'd ever cycle again. The Ride Side-by-Side let me ride with my daughter. We talked the whole way round and I felt completely at ease. It was just fun.'

With the support of the Friends, the All Ability Cycling Club is now part of the park's community making sure cycling is open to all.



Every Wednesday, 10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
Regent's Park, The Garden Lodge
Inner Circle, NW1 4NR

All cycles and helmets are provided, and no previous cycling experience is needed. Carers and supporters are always welcome.

To find out more or to book a place, visit bikeworks.org.uk/all-ability or phone 020 8980 7998

ZOOTOWN IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE OPENS

Lucy Colomb

London Zoo Senior Press Officer

London Zoo is excited to announce the opening of Zoo Town. This immersive, role play experience for curious kids 3-8 years of age allows children to play their way through the adventure, learn new skills, and get hands-on with a whole host of costumes, toys and interactives.

Booking is now open. All tickets are bookable [online](#) in advance, up to three days ahead of your visit, and cost just £1!

The vibrant miniature town represents all the goings-on at London Zoo. Stepping into the shoes of zookeepers, conservationists, scientists, vets, posties, presenters and more. Imaginations at the ready, kids will be flying around the world to track animals in the Field Camp, carry out vital health checks in the Vet Hospital, deliver the zoo mail, get their hands dirty in the Keeper Kitchen... and lots more!

Each ZooTown session lasts 45 minutes, starting at the time of your booked slot. Visitors will need to arrive 5-10 minutes before the start of their play session.



Zoo Town allows children aged 3-8 to experience all facets of life at the zoo.

EVENTS PAST

MORE THAN 35 EVENTS KEEP FRIENDS BUSY

Viv Ward

Events Manager

Within its burgeoning programme of more than 35 events, we enjoyed many new events including Plants, Philanthropists and Physicians and a Canal Boat Trip on the Pirate Prince. Both events were sold out.

The first event was a walk arranged with the tour company Discover Medical London.

We met our guide, Berwyn, on a beautiful sunny June day outside the Royal College of Physicians, where he started our walk by explaining some of the architectural features of the building. I thought that I was familiar with the R.C.P but his analysis of the building's features was eye-opening.

The planned route for the walk had to be modified due to the closure of York Bridge and the Taste of London event. An explanation of the Diorama building and why Harley Street became the centre of private medicine was our first port of call. We walked past many buildings with plaques, notably commemorating the liver specialist, Dame Sheila Sherlock and Dr Ernest Jones, who arranged Sigmund Freud's escape to London. At each plaque Berwyn succinctly and entertainingly explained their medical significance. Unexpectedly, he even included Mary Poppins's medical connections and more expectedly talked about many of the various monarchs' ailments.

I am being deliberately vague about our precise route and Berwyn's explanations as I plan to offer this walk again next year, so I do not want to give too much away so that I spoil things for others. Suffice it to say that my wife and I enjoyed the walk so much we did it twice, once in June and again in September and, yes, we do pay!

You do not need knowledge of medicine to enjoy this walk, the interest is in the people, the personalities and the history entertainingly



In June, Friends aboard the Pirate Prince cruised to the London Canal Museum at King's Cross.

told. Do join us in 2026 for this walk. You will not regret it.

The second new event was aboard The Pirate Prince a 55-foot long, 12-foot-wide canal boat licensed for up to twelve passengers. It has open decks both at the bow and at the stern, with places to sit out, whilst if it rains, there is room to sit inside. Facilities include a kitchen and a toilet.

The Friends chartered the boat in June and we cruised from its base at the Pirate Castle to the London Canal Museum at King's Cross, where we moored. En route Robin Black, our Newsletter Committee member, helped work the locks and steer the boat whilst the rest of our group watched the world go by at the leisurely pace of the waterway. No matter how well you think you know the Park and the Canal, you experience a totally different and enjoyable perspective when travelling on the canal.

We were met at the Canal Museum by one of the curators who introduced us to the museum

and the icehouse, before we spent an hour exploring the museum. For those of you who may not have visited this museum I would urge you to do so. Canals were once the highways of England with a floating workforce of families who lived and worked aboard the canal boats in conditions that would today be unthinkable. We learnt about the people, the boats, the cargoes they carried, their arts and crafts and the care of the horses. We explored how canals climb hills and obtain their water. Did you know that canal locks were designed by Leonardo da Vinci? The icehouse and the ice trade is another story.

After our museum visit, we retraced our outward journey, which gave us time to eat our picnic lunches outside in the sunshine.

Since the boat is only allowed twelve passengers, we had a wait list of people we could not accommodate so we will include this event in our 2026 programme and hope the weather for this trip will be as good it was this year. An event not to be missed.

ON EVENT PLANNING AND BOOKING

Viv Ward

Events Manager

Arrangements for non-musical events for the Friends of Regent's Park are made at the end of a year before being published as a booklet and loaded onto our website early in the following year. These arrangements will normally include the name of the event, the date and time it starts/finishes, a brief description of the activity, the total number of places available, the cost and when and where to meet. Between first publication of events and the actual event, unforeseen circumstances

may necessitate changes to the arrangements.

When you book an event, you will immediately receive confirmation of your booking. Three or four days before the event you will receive an email with everything you need to know - who, what, where and when. These arrangements may differ slightly from the original information in the written programme and the on-line programme too. Please be advised that the information contained in this final email supersedes any of the information published previously. This email provides the definitive information you will need on the day.

*Become a Friend
TODAY!*

*For events and membership information,
visit: friendsofregentspark.org*



THE CULTURAL PARK



The revival of Brigadoon was a 'truly magical' highlight of the summer.

EXCITING SEASON FOR OPEN AIR THEATRE

Laura Arends

Director of Communications and Audiences

The 2025 Season at Regent's Park Open Air Theatre marked an exciting new chapter for the theatre as the first programmed by our new Artistic Director, Drew McOnie. We welcomed over 176,000 visitors, including 79 school groups to Drew's inaugural Season.

Drew also directed and choreographed our revival of the classic musical, *Brigadoon*, 'a truly magical evening' (WhatsOnStage). A retelling of the classic Malorie Blackman novel, *Noughts & Crosses*, 'striking – full of heart' (The Independent), also made Regent's

Park Open Air Theatre history as the first directed in the park by our Associate Artistic Director, Tinue Craig. Corn-tastic American musical, *Shucked*, was the first Broadway hit to come directly to the Open Air Theatre for its UK premiere, 'This clever screwball musical is perfect escapism', (The Times), and Rodgers & Hammerstein's *Dream Ballets: A Triple Bill* was the first piece of dedicated dance programming at the theatre.

This year, we maintained our commitment to family programming as we welcomed *The Enormous Crocodile* back to the Park, also hosting a series of workshops for children and their families. With our inaugural Theatre

Dance Lab programme, we supported early-career choreographers through mentoring, creative access, industry connections and the opportunity to present a showcase of their work. And finally, we have just announced Treehouse Project, designed to give five early-career theatre creatives space to develop their craft and shape their practice. We were also delighted to be able to increase our offer of £15 tickets across the Season to 36,000 this year.

Keep an eye out for our announcements about our plans for 2026 over the next weeks and months. We look forward to welcoming audiences back to the theatre next year.

FRIEZE SCULPTURE 2025, ‘IN THE SHADOWS’ – EXPLORING CONCEPTS OF DARKNESS, MEMORY, THE UNSEEN, THE UNKNOWN

Anne-Marie Craven
Friend/Blue Badge Guide London

It is great to see another interesting and challenging group of artworks in the 2025 Frieze Sculpture in the park. This is the third exhibition curated by Fatoş Üstek, and her theme and title is ‘In the Shadows’. She is hoping that we shall see how ‘memory, material and myth intersect’. Fourteen artists make up the show and here is a small selection.

Four works have been created specifically for the show and for one of these *The Tale of the Eye, the Snake and the Seed* by Lucia Pizzani three artists perform with the pieces and sing in a very haunting fashion (opposite, top middle).

My favourite is *Fibredog* (right, top), where the windy weather had helped remove some of animal's hair. The is a work created especially for the park from a London collective called **Assemble** at their workshops in Bow. They enlisted a master thatcher, Mark Harrington, to create the pelt of sedge grass thatch, ‘sharp as wire’, and a professional basketmaker, Mollie McMillen, who created the nose.

Next we have a wonderful, silvered rhododendron *Last of the Wild and Free (Rhododendron Calophytum)* by Timur Si-Qin (opposite, middle). As his agent says, his upbringing in a German, Mongolian/Chinese and San Carlos Apache Native American family in the American Southwest gives much hidden feeling to his work where he attempts to create a ‘New Peace’ challenging the natural vs cultural, the human vs non-human and perhaps more importantly the organic vs synthetic. Just look at the plant's roots!

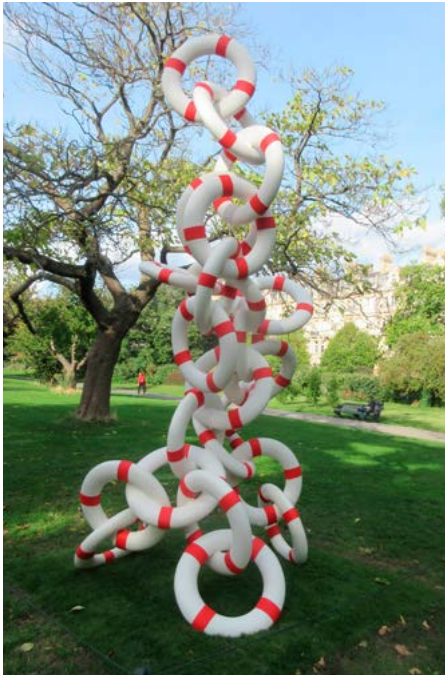
The first piece to be seen when entering from *St Andrews Place* is *Life Rings, fig.3* by Michael Elmgreen and Ingar Dragset (far right). Made from stainless steel rather than plastic or foam, and stacked together, they appear more solid and permanent than floating life buoys. The artists have collaborated since 1995, working in Berlin and they blend sculpture and architecture in their work. You may remember their boy on a rocking horse selected for the Fourth Plinth in Trafalgar Square in 2012 (*E and D Rocking Horse, right, credit Gautier Deblonde/GLA*).

When I visited the park for the opening last week I met the artist, **Simon Hitchens**, whose work is *Bearing Witness to Things Unseen* (opposite, bottom left). This was originally exhibited in Chichester Cathedral in 2022 and took six solid months of work undertaken during the pandemic and was ‘hard work’. It fits well with the Shadows theme this year. Simon went to a local quarry to find the stone,



the height of a human being. One end is flat and polished and the other is a cave-like void, perhaps the craggy cast of a boulder, the shadow of an ancient rock cast by the rising sun on the equinox. An extraordinary sight in the cathedral nave compared to the grass and trees of the park. This is one of the pieces where he says touching is very important and he hopes it gives a sense of awe, a bit of magic but also confusion. Definitely one to walk around and peer inside.

Grace Schwindt, When I Remember



Through You, 2025 (opposite, bottom right): This is an extraordinary work where somehow the leaves and the branch help to settle the figure in this part of the park. Grace is a London-based, German artist and this is part of a series combining plant and body in bronze and ceramic creating a sense of trauma and perhaps injury but with the promise of a transformation to create a source of renewal and strength. Look at the shiny shoes. An earlier work, Remembering Home, was created



for the Imperial War Museum reflecting on a conversation with a refugee from conflict.

Erwin Wurm, Ghost (Substitutes), 2022 (top right). Here we have only the clothes and shoes without the body but standing almost three metres tall. It is intended to make us ask what defines a person – the body, the clothes or something else entirely. Part of a series created in 2022 Wurm wrote, ‘The question that has pervaded my work for four decades now is the following: Can I use the idea of the sculptural to

process everyday life and our time and to gain a new perspective or a new possibility for interpretation?’

In **Andy Holden's, Auguries (Lament), 2025** (top, left) three tall telegraph poles topped with bronze figures represent the waveforms of a bird's call. Andy's father, Peter, taught him so much, as he worked for 40 years for the RSPB and was the resident ornithologist on Blue Peter. A much larger version of this trio can be seen in the Kroller-Muller Museum garden in Otterlo, the Netherlands. However, should



you be interested, Sothebys has priced them at £15,000 each for £40,000 for the group!

There is a lot of food for thought in the exhibition's works this year. It continues in the English Garden until 2 November. Once again Bloomberg Connects gives excellent information via the QR codes found near each sculpture.

Frieze London & Frieze Masters returned to Regent's Park from 15 to 19 October.

VOLUNTEER

'ROSIE' VOLUNTEERS SHARE EXPERIENCES

Robin Black

Newsletter Editor, Van Manager

To volunteer or not to volunteer. We want to do it, but it is often difficult to find the perfect fit in terms of our interests, and time constraints. If this sounds like you, might you consider signing up for a session or two on our visitor van, 'Rambling Rosie'?

From mid-June to almost the end of September she is stationed near Clarence Gate. What a gorgeous setting, opposite lush gardens and with a clear view of excited park-goers anticipating the theatre, a picnic, a boating adventure, the rose gardens and more. Or perhaps, they have no idea what adventures await them and that is what the volunteers can help with. We give directions, share our insider knowledge of the park, direct people to the free music on the bandstand or the Broad Walk, point them in the direction of the Zoo, playgrounds, cafés or Primrose Hill where a little effort uphill yields, arguably, the most iconic view of the whole of the London skyline. It is a satisfying experience to be sure.

We have four Van Managers, Debbie, Freda, Ronwen and me who take it in turns to oversee the operation of 'Rosie' each weekend. We recruit, remind, and share our experiences so that everyone soon feels totally at home, giving

Here is what some of our volunteers have to say:

'If you are a 'people person' this is the perfect volunteer job for you. I have had so many interesting conversations with people from around the world of all ages and learnt a lot about their countries too, so if this profile fits you, please do volunteer in 2026.'

- Freda

'I would just like to say a big thank you to Jessie Brown for his amazing artwork which has brought the Van to life and is a credit to the Friends and to the volunteers who operate the 'visitor centre'

- Gerald

'I have been volunteering at the gazebo (now 'Rambling Rosie') every summer for the past few years and I really look forward to it every time. My teenage daughters have joined me a few times and so if it appeals to a teenager, it shows how much fun it is!'

'We get to meet wonderful people from around the world who really appreciate the beauty and variety of our Royal Parks, which in turn makes me so grateful that we are lucky enough to enjoy them all the time. I would highly recommend anyone to volunteer-it is a way to give back a little to Regent's Park and is a lot of fun. I can't wait until next summer!'

- Sunita

directions, selling cards, mugs, etc., signing up new members and advising the huge benefits to be had for a mere £20 per year, per household. It is exciting to see how each volunteer makes the session their own respecting of course, certain protocols. These will be shared in a training session in the Spring. If you are interested in this volunteering opportunity, sign up at

newsletter@friendsofregentspark.org. You will be contacted about the training dates where you will get to explore Rosie, see how we work, learn new skills and meet a lovely group of people who just want to share their love of the park. One session or ten, I guarantee you will come out of it the better for three hours some sunny Saturday or Sunday.



LITTER PICKERS UNITE TO KEEP PARK CLEAN

Mike Baker

Volunteer Manager, Litter Picking

Once again the intrepid Friends volunteer litter pickers have excelled themselves.

Nominally there are 37 of us active volunteers, but as with the normal distribution of every bell curve, some of our members are super active and others are part of a very long tail. It's to be expected, and even with a couple of hours' contribution in a season, it still adds up.

By my count we have done 390 hours as the Friends (and I know that is an underestimate because of under-reporting). We have found all manner of exciting (and sometimes disgusting) things in the undergrowth, from used fireworks to half full Champagne bottles, discarded trainers, picnic blankets and even tents, used condoms, doggy poo bags, syringes and all things in between. All human life is there. One day I picked up four £1 coins. It's better than detectorism!

A couple of years ago we started advertising to corporate groups, supporting them with all the equipment they need, and those sessions have increased to 19 this year. These entities vary from global companies like BDO, EY, Salesforce and KPMG, to local businesses, government, and educational establishments such as Marriot Hotels, London Business



Some of the Friends who contributed to the nearly 400 hours spent litter picking this summer.

School and Ipsos Mori. The best thing about them is that they tend to keep coming back. The photos they supply after the event tell of people not just cleaning up, but having fun together doing it together. It really makes a difference.

The corporates have added another 275 hours of effort, making 665 hours total. That's the equivalent of more than 16 weeks of full

time effort. I am sure I speak for The Royal Parks and their contractor Gavin Jones in thanking all the volunteers for their efforts to keep the Park in good shape.

And such is the popularity of litter picking and the Friends volunteers that we even had the PM team from Radio 4 come to Primrose Hill and try it out for themselves. Their conclusion? It's a love story, nothing less.

THE SUMMER LIFE OF A BANDSTAND MANAGER

Mark Elliott

Every summer from mid-June to mid-September, the music festival arranges 46 concerts on two bandstands. The main bandstand at Holme Green and the 'rustic shelter' near the Broad Walk café. Each concert requires a Bandstand Manager (BM) and, for larger events, one or two Bandstand Assistants (BA).

Every spring we invite BM candidates to a training session where they are shown round the facilities at the main bandstand, taught to set up the public address JBL system, and learn the rules they need to follow to supervise the arrival and departure of the bands and the management of the site during the concerts. This involves being familiar with the park regulations and being aware of the safety procedures.

Some events are more difficult than others. The annual Bandstand Memorial Day that is held every year on the Sunday closest to 20 July when the bandstand was bombed in 1982, involves greeting many dignitaries



Helen Cadiou and her bandstand team

including the Lord Mayor of Westminster and the Mayor of Camden. Also, a number of important military personnel. This year, despite the rain, over 250 people attended. We expect it to grow into a much larger event in future.

BAs require very little training as they must follow the BM's instructions. They are also given our job specification that can be found on the website, friendsofregentspark.org/the-friends/volunteering/.

When they arrive on the day they are provided with a green jacket and asked to help set up the bandstand (banners, chairs, etc.), take a tally of the audience size and help the audience to enjoy the concert.

This summer we received 14 applications for BMs and 12 attended the training session. Many of them had the benefit of doing the job in past summers. Once trained, we ask BMs to select dates when they will be available to manage concerts. We are always flexible if problems arise and attendance must be cancelled, but the team works together, and we always find a solution.

The music festival is indebted to the following BMs for taking on this important work this summer: Helen Cadiou, Simon Webb, Gerald Hyam, Nancy Janin, Louise Fletcher, John Fletcher, Linda Taggart, Tom Thomson and Freda Pashley. Without them there would be no bandstand festival!

If you would like to apply to be a future BM for the 2026 season, please contact info@regentsparkmusicfestival.org.uk.

THE SUMMER THAT WAS IN REGENT'S PARK...



The Big Lunch



Feathered friends



Live music in the marquee and at the Bandstand



'Opera Brava' at the Lakeside Series



The Mardi Gras Jazz Band at the Big Lunch



Facepainting fun at The Big Lunch



Another feathered friend



Visiting and volunteering at 'Rambling Rosie'



Exploring and enjoying our beautiful park

Photo courtesy of @mchbourne_girls in London

SAVE THE DATES

CHRISTMAS PARTY

Thursday 11 December 2025

Bar & Kitchen Restaurant

Inner Circle

Queen Mary's Garden

London NW1 4NU

6:30-9 p.m.

Family is the focus for this year's End of Season Review with a family-oriented Christmas party. We should always remember that your membership is for all the family and applies to all living in the same household. So why not have some fun and involve the kids? Expect all the traditional fun for young and old - lots of Christmas fayre to eat and drink, carol singing, games for the kids and maybe a visit from Santa, definitely not Mr Scrooge!

CHIT CHAT

Every Tuesday

11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Primrose Hill Café

Our amazing Chit Chat get together is gaining a greater following week on week, year on year. Open to all Friends, it is sponsored by Wallacea Living and Benugo who provide a welcome warm drink and piece of cake. It is a drop-in centre for people on their own, couples, students, moms with kids or dog walkers looking to have a chat and meet new friends. When the clocks go back after 26 October, we will meet at an earlier time 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. at the Primrose Hill Café. Give it a try. It's free and friendly, of course. Visitors are welcome but after a trial are encouraged to join the Friends to enjoy all the benefits that you get for £20 per year membership for everyone in your household.

NATURAL HISTORY GROUP TALKS

Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m.

Regent's Park Offices

Meeting Room, Inner Circle

See page 4 for more information on all upcoming talks.

Thanks for a great summer!



BENEFITS OF A FRIENDS MEMBERSHIP

There are lots of perks to being a Friend of Regent's Park & Primrose Hill. It costs only £20 per year and the benefits apply to all members of a household living under one roof.

Not only do you get a copy of this bi-annual newsletter posted to your home (unless you choose to opt out), you can also find a copy on the website. You get access to Friends-only events and preferred rates to all our events, musical and non-musical alike.

There are numerous opportunities for volunteering too, helping at the Music events, litter-picking, manning our Visitor Information Van, and planting bulbs and shrubs too.

In addition, we have a raft of special offers such as:

- 25% discount on food and drink in all the cafés in the Park
- 20% discount on Off-Peak tennis court at Park Sports, Regent's Park
- 20% approximately for boat hire at peak times, varying during the season
- 30% discount on a concession rate season ticket for deckchair hire
- At the Open Air Theatre Box Office, £35 on Price Band A-B available to purchase in person 2 weeks prior to the performance (excluding Saturday evenings, maximum 2 tickets per transaction)

GET INTOUCH

Chair: Mark Elliott chair@friendsofregentspark.org

Secretary: Pamela Henry secretary@friendsofregentspark.org

Treasurer: Liz Whittaker treasurer@friendsofregentspark.org

Newsletter: Robin Black newsletter@friendsofregentspark.org

Membership: Jo Faktor membership@friendsofregentspark.org

Events: Vivian Ward events@friendsofregentspark.org

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