



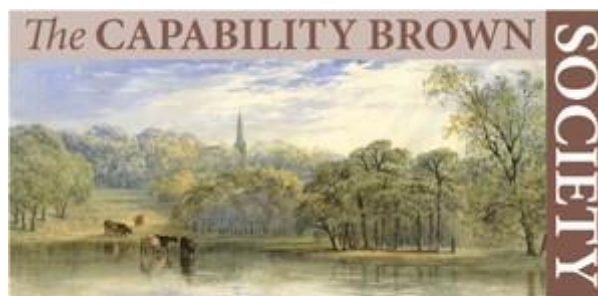
Friends of Wimbledon Park



Annual Report 2019

(Covering the period March 2018 to February 2019)

The Grade II* Heritage Landscape

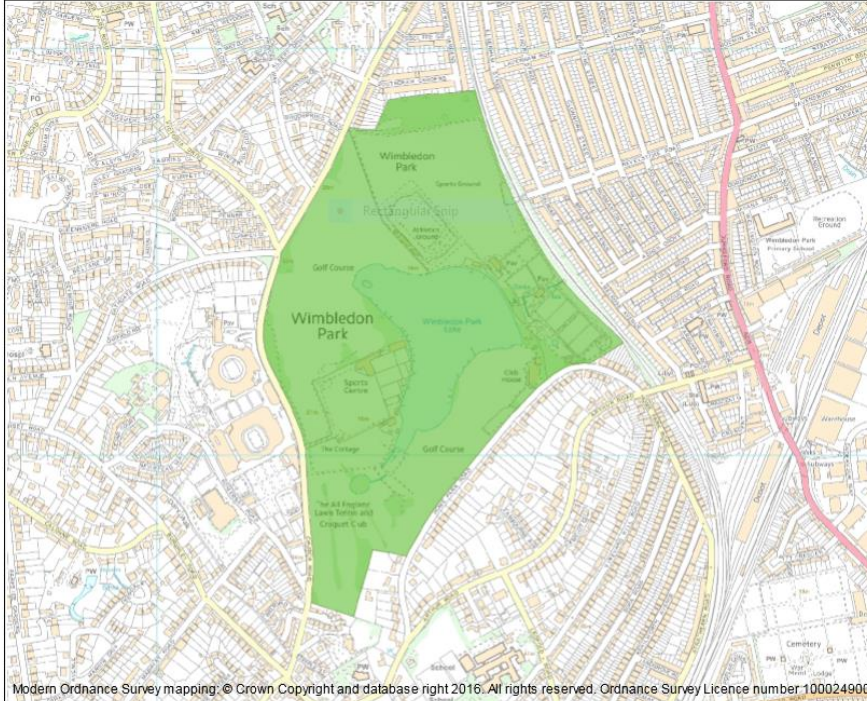


'Capability Brown's Wimbledon Park'
19th Century Water Colour Circa 1870 by an Unknown Artist



Friends of Wimbledon Park

19 January 2012 Friends of Wimbledon Park constituted
Our project is this Grade II* Heritage Park



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Heritage Category:	Park and Garden
List Entry No :	1000852
Grade:	II*
County:	Greater London Authority
District:	Merton, Wandsworth
Parish:	Non Civil Parish, Non Civil Parish

Each official record of a registered garden or other land contains a map. The map here has been translated from the official map and that process may have introduced inaccuracies. Copies of maps that form part of the official record can be obtained from Historic England.

This map was delivered electronically and when printed may not be to scale and may be subject to distortions. The map and grid references are for identification purposes only and must be read in conjunction with other information in the record.

List Entry NGR:	TQ 24703 72394
Map Scale:	1:10000
Print Date:	11 November 2016

Name: WIMBLEDON PARK

This is an A4 sized map and should be printed full size at A4 with no page scaling set.



The Golf course is owned by the All England Lawn Tennis Club (30ha)

The Wimbledon Club own the area marked TWC (4ha)

Capability Brown's Wimbledon Park (Only 61ha of the original 374ha remain) now in three ownerships.

The Public park is owned by the LB Merton (27ha including 9ha lake)

Dave Dawson



Friends of Wimbledon Park

Dear Members and Associates,

Takeover of WPGC by AELTC

The most significant event of the year was the AELTC takeover of Wimbledon Park Golf Club on the 21st December 2018. *WPGC will continue to operate as an 18-hole golf course until 31 December 2021, with at least one further year as a 9- or 10-hole golf course on a rolling basis subject to a 12-month notice period.*

Johnny Perkins (AELTC) said:

- 1) *We will now begin to consider our plans for the land as part of a broader new Championships Master Plan. As we have stressed throughout this process, any future development proposals will protect and celebrate the heritage of the park, be guided by our landscape advisers who have closely studied the significance and history of the land, and importantly, be delivered in partnership with the local community.*
- 2) *For the avoidance of doubt, there never has been and never will be any plans to build multi-storey car parks and shopping villages or any other structures that would be completely out of character for the AELTC and The Championships.*
- 3) *Over time, we plan to migrate the Qualifying Competition onto the land in order to elevate the event to world-class standards.*
- 4) *At a community level, it is our long-term ambition to offer increased public access to the park outside the two weeks of The Championships. In the meantime, we will continue to work with the local authorities and local community to assist the beneficial management of the park as a whole.*
- 5) *We anticipate being able to share further details in the spring of 2019.*

Managing change in the heritage park

We encourage the 3 owners (LBM, TWC, AELTC) to set up an ‘Owner’s Group’ which will lead to developing a ‘Master Plan for Heritage Wimbledon Park’. We met them and passed over a bundle of documents which included papers on the lake and special places for nature. This sets an agenda for a constructive dialogue.

We hoped to meet LB Wandsworth, who are the regulatory authority for the northern part of the Heritage Park but do not own any of it, but we haven’t had a response from them yet.

The bundle of documents handed over:

- 1) *Conservation Management Plan for the Grade II* Heritage Landscape known as Wimbledon Park version 05 November 2016 (CMP05)*
- 2) *Capability Brown Society:*
 - a. *It’s objects*
 - b. *Capability Brown Festival Weekend 8th/9th September 2018.*
- 3) *Historic England*
 - a. *Grade II* status for Wimbledon Park Historic England map 12 April 2016*
 - b. *On ‘At Risk Register’ for Heritage Wimbledon Park.*
- 4) *Wimbledon Park Lake, Dave Dawson, October 2017.*
- 5) *Special species and special places for Nature, draft Dave Dawson*
 - a. *Supplement concerning the introduction of beneficial water plants, Tony Borkowski.*
- 6) *Greenspace Neighbourhood Planning 03*
- 7) *Capability Brown’s Wimbledon Park ‘A History’, Dave Dawson, August 2016.*

A brief comment on highlights, background or issues is made from each paper in the bundle of documents as they are passed over. This includes:

- 1) *The lake remains essentially as designed by Brown, and is still set in green surrounds. One of Brown’s views was from the dam towards St Mary’s Wimbledon on the crest of a wooded slope and this is the best surviving view today. Other views remain, but most are compromised by ugly lakeside buildings, tall hedgerows and the great mass of buildings on the All England Lawn Tennis grounds.*
- 2) *Among the recommendations made when the Site of Importance for nature conservation was recognised were to bring the streams that feed the lake above ground, to establish marshland vegetation, and to restore the southern arm of the lake. It was suggested that the southern arm could be developed as a minimally disturbed nature feature.*



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- 3) The presence of non-breeding Grey herons, Great-crested grebes, Kingfishers and Cormorants suggests that the fish and other animals in the lake provide a food supply for these species but that nesting habitat is not sufficient. Similarly, Swifts, House Martins, Swallows and Sand Martins visit, but again none breed locally.
- 4) Ashen Grove is a remnant of a much larger ancient wood. It should be protected, managed appropriately and judiciously expanded.
- 5) Owl Copse is also mentioned with a request that a Management Plan be developed.
- 6) Our report on bats.
- 7) Suggestion to AELTC that fallen leaves be composted rather than burnt.

Trees and woods

With the help of Tree Warden Group Merton led by Jane Plant we have continued planting trees in the Public Park. Since February 2016 to February 2019 we have:

- 1) Planted 2000 trees in Horse Close Wood
- 2) Created The Glade in Horse Close Wood
- 3) Fenced in the Veteran Oak by the Old Bowling Pavilion. This veteran oak began its life around 1780 in a hedgerow between arable fields in Earl Spencer's Wimbledon Park. King George III was half way through his long reign and the American Revolutionary War was drawing to a close. The Oak has real conservation value. We plan to keep it healthy and upright. Protecting the area about its roots is very important, and this is the reason why it has got a fence around it. Holes and dead wood are part of the natural character of such old trees and provide shelter for bats and nesting birds, and places for rare insects and fungi to thrive. We hope to enjoy this fine old tree for many more years.
- 4) Planted a copse southeast of Wimbledon Park Brook
- 5) Planted 11 hornbeams along the Northern Railway Paths to replace the aging hybrid black poplars

The management plan for Horse Close Wood is being revised and one is being drawn up for the ancient woodland Ashen Grove.

Dead wood on the ground or in trees has long been appreciated as an important habitat for specialist invertebrates, lichens and fungi. It is critical to the biodiversity value of wood pasture and parkland which is a priority UK habitat. Dead wood is found, particularly, on the ancient and veteran trees of the heritage landscape, most of which stand in grassland, with a few in the woodlands.

When safety considerations permit 'standing deadwood' (dead branches within trees or completely dead trees) should be left *in situ*. This is the most ecologically valuable form of deadwood and should not detract from the visual amenity of the landscape because in natural landscapes occasional dead or 'stag-headed' trees are normal.

Where standing deadwood is not possible, timber should be left on the ground as close to the point of origin as possible and in pieces as large as possible. Smaller pieces of timber dry out quickly and are less valuable to wildlife.

Wimbledon Park Lake

'Wimbledon Park Lake was the central feature of Wimbledon Park in the eighteenth century, and remains central in the surviving part of that park today. That surviving area is a heritage landscape of historic importance, with designed vistas and rich biodiversity. The lake and its surrounds are a Grade II* heritage landscape, retaining many features from Lancelot Brown's design. They also support a rich diversity of wildlife, long recognised in local planning documents. It is the most important wetland wildlife site in a surrounding area of 35km²'.

The above description is taken from Dave Dawson's important paper 'Major works are proposed at Wimbledon Park Lake' February 2019. This paper is on our website.

Merton Borough, who own the lake, have a "Wimbledon Park Lake Reservoir Safety and Desilting Project". A summary of the key points of their meetings are posted on:

https://www2.merton.gov.uk/environment/openspaces/parks/parks_in_the_wimbledon_area/wimbledon-park/wimbledon-park-lake-project.htm



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Conservation Management Plan version 05 (CMP)

Our constitution requires us to support the implementation of a Conservation Management Plan for the heritage park. It became clear that this was an important item and that we would need to write it ourselves. We have completed this task and Conservation Management Plan for The Grade II* Heritage Landscape known as Wimbledon Park version 05 was issued in November 2016.

*Central to our thinking is that landscape, biodiversity and habitat are our responsibility.
Bearing our accountability in mind, what are the capabilities for people in the heritage park?*

Four topics are identified as key issues the Conservation Management Plan must cover. These are wellbeing, study, sport and community:

- **Wellbeing** includes health for all, regardless of age, as well as the feel-good factor for individuals.
- **Sport** includes physical activity and games.
- **Study** includes lifelong learning, research and self development.
- **Community** is a self-organized network of people with common agenda, cause, or interest, who collaborate by sharing ideas, information, and other resources. Importantly this includes volunteering.

It should be noted that *each topic is treated as of equal importance and they provide a different perspective on how to approach different tasks. This ensures a balanced view with fair outcomes and respect for the CMP*

The improvement of the heritage park is our project and within this there are numerous tasks that need examination such as the lake, the landscape, stadium and arena, Ashen Grove (ancient woodland) and Horse Close Wood. These can be described as programmes within the project.

Our role is to collect and file information based on evidence, observation and opinions that best reflect what could be done, how it is sustained and how it fits within the Conservation Management Plan. A lot of groundwork has been covered in diverse areas and results are beginning to show.

Special places for nature in Wimbledon Park

In respect of nature conservation sites on and around Heritage Wimbledon Park Dave Dawson explains:

- *Much of Heritage Wimbledon Park is identified as of Borough importance (the Golf Course, Lake and Horse Close Wood). The railsides to the east of the park and the adjacent hedgerows are also of Borough Importance. Other nearby Borough sites are along other rail lines, the lower River Wandle, King George's Park and parts of Wandsworth Common.*

Wimbledon Park Notes

We're fortunate to have two monthly Wimbledon Park Notes provided by Dave Dawson. Well worth a read both can be found on our website. Extracts from **28th February 2019**:

- a) **Management**: 'There was a black VW car left in the Revelstoke Road car park overnight. Extensive cutting down of Ash trees on the western and northern boundaries of Horse Close Wood took place ten days earlier. Many of them had hollow trunks, but one without enabled a ring count of 140, showing that it began life around 1880, when Horse Close Wood was part of Lake Farm'.
- b) **Natural History**: 'There was much bird song. Chaffinches, Dunnocks, Goldfinches, Great tits, Robins, Song thrushes, Stock doves, Wood pigeons and Wrens were all singing, Great-spotted woodpeckers drumming and Green woodpeckers yaffling'.

Greenspace Neighbourhood Planning

Special places for nature and some buildings need attention and Greenspace Neighbourhood Planning allows discussion on items such as:

- 1) The lake is declining; water lilies mostly gone, eels unseen and the fish count is well down. Lake margins need attention and the water quality needs monitoring.
- 2) Bigden, Rushmere & Wimbledon Park brooks.
- 3) Horse Close Wood has a management plan and is being attended but still work to do.
- 4) Ashen Grove is ancient woodland and needs a management plan.
- 5) Owl Copse following the unfortunate clearance in December 2018 needs to be revamped.
- 6) Bowling Pavilion needs refurbishing
- 7) Water Activities Centre needs to be re-sited to restore vistas.



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- 8) Courts 11-20 are in poor condition. There is an option to make these a level artificial surface so that hockey and football could be played.
- 9) Stadium needs replacing with a building that can cater for everybody.
- 10) Improve Revelstoke Road entrance.
- 11) Veteran tree preservation

Historic England 'At Risk Register'.

The Grade II* Registered Park and Garden (RPG) has been included in the Heritage at Risk (HAR) Register for London. Chris Laine (Historic England) has given the following guidance on removing RPG from HAR:

"The starting point is Historic England's letter to the landowners dated 06 June 2016, in which my predecessor (Zosia Mellor) stated that the RPG had been included in the HAR Register due to the following issues:

- *Uncertainty around the future [of the entire historic landscape];*
- *The impacts of divided ownership on landscape management;*
- *Obscured designed views; and*
- *The deterioration of the Lake.*

The above issues would need to be addressed before the RPG could be removed from the HAR Register, and the responsibility for removing the RPG from the HAR Register lies with the landowners.

All of the landowners are already around the table during meetings of the Wimbledon Park Lake Technical Steering Group set up by LB Merton to discuss remedial works to the Lake required under the Reservoirs Act. There is tremendous scope for this project to deliver additional heritage, amenity and biodiversity benefits, and I have been representing Historic England at these meetings to ensure that the RPG's significance remains part of the discussion, and to ensure that every opportunity is made to improve the poor condition and appearance of the Lake as the principal feature of the RPG -- a key determinant in the RPG's inclusion in the HAR Register.

While the discussion is focussed on the Lake at present, this Group represents a forum through which Historic England can engage all of the landowners and set up those important discussions about the wider RPG, its HAR status and how to remove it from the HAR Register".

It's understood that discussions are ongoing to agree a Memorandum of Understanding between the 3 owners, The All England Lawn Tennis Club (AELTC), LB Merton (LBM) and The Wimbledon Club (TWC).

Green Flag award

We have started work with Andrew Kauffman (idverde) towards the Green Flag award for public parks.

- Purpose and Aims:
 - ❖ To ensure that everybody has access to quality green and other open spaces, irrespective of where they live
 - ❖ To ensure that these spaces are appropriately managed and meet the needs of the communities that they serve
 - ❖ To establish standards of good management, and to promote and share best practice amongst the green space sector
 - ❖ To recognise and reward the hard work of managers, staff and volunteers
- This involves addressing a field assessment of:
 - 1) A welcoming Place
 - 2) Healthy Safe and Secure
 - 3) Well Maintained and Clean
 - 4) Environmental Management
 - 5) Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage
 - 6) Community Involvement
 - 7) Marketing and Communication
 - 8) Management

Capability Brown Society (CBS)

A Capability Brown subcommittee was set up by the FOWP EC to prepare and run the Capability Brown Tercentenary celebrations in August 2016. This was very effective and showed the value of a related organisation managing time consuming functions. After the celebrations the National Organisation running the Tercentenary Celebrations closed down. Chris Baker took the opportunity to incorporate The Capability Brown



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Society Ltd, on 20th October 2016. CBS now manages events for FOWP, has a local and national remit and has made an application to the Charity Commission for Charity status. Strong links are maintained by the same individuals being in both organisations.

Wandle Valley Fortnight Saturday 9th September to Sunday 24th September 2018.

- i. We participated in the Wandle fortnight with Capability Brown Society (CBS) weekend which included schools presenting music, dance and song, a bat walk and a Capability Brown walk.
- ii. This year the Wandle Fortnight runs from Saturday September 14th to Sunday September 29th 2019. It begins over the first [Heritage Open Days](#) weekend and closes with [World Rivers Day](#).
- iii. Last year local groups and organisations put on over 60 different events and activities last year, including the 30th anniversary of the Wandle Trail, Capability Brown Weekend, Mitcham Heritage Day, a Wandle exhibition at the Honeywood Museum and the first viewing of a revitalised Merton Priory Chapter House.
- iv. We plan to participate again with CBS taking the lead. Planned are:
 - a. Schools performances for Saturday 14th.
 - b. Schools inter sports fun gala is being considered for Sunday 15th September.
 - c. Capability Brown walk Sunday 22nd September from Wimbledon Park road through the Public Park and then via the Golf Club to TWC.
 - d. All the above dates and times are subject to various permissions, proposals from participants and sufficient volunteers and resources.

CBS Activity events 2018

We had:

- 1) The CBS weekend Saturday 8th and Sunday 9th September:
 - a. We had good feedback on the structure and content but generally low attendance. Worthy of comment were the music & dance from the students from St Cecilia's Academy, Southfields Academy and Rickards Lodge.
 - b. It included Sport, Music, Song and Dance, an Information day, Bat walk and Capability Brown walk.
- 2) CBS Arts Competition & display on Saturday 1st and Sunday 2nd December.
 - a. Eight schools participated:
 - b. Five secondary schools, St Cecilia's, Southfields Academy, Rickards Lodge, Wimbledon High and King's College.
 - c. Three primary schools: Riversdale, Wimbledon Park and Albemarle.
 - d. A number of independent entries were also received.
 - e. This was a great success
- 3) These events are being scheduled for this year.

Other events attended joint FOWP & CBS

- Attended Merton Heritage Discovery day at Civic Centre, Saturday 12th May 1230-1630.
- Attended Southfields Harvest at St Barnabas Church, Saturday 29th September.

Crime

Crime report for Heritage Wimbledon Park shows a total of 8 crimes in 2018 (18 crimes in 2017). Total stop & searches 16. Details are sent separately (our thanks to Clive Williams for this compilation).

Note: Wimbledon Park is located in three wards in two London Boroughs, Wandsworth & Merton [West Hill (LB of W): Village (LB of M): Wimbledon Park (LB of M)] and Information extracted from the Crime Maps for West Hill, Village & Wimbledon Park Wards from www.police.uk

BBQs

BBQs feature in social media. Amelia Obertelli-Moriarty who runs our Facebook page reported over 3100+ hits with a wide range of opinions in relation to a petition to stop BBQs. In the Public Park it's unregulated and the number of BBQs in use increase yearly. Last year due to the drought the London Fire Brigade advised Park Authorities to ban BBQs because of the heightened risk of fire spread. LBM adopted this advice but implemented it poorly. For example instead of using the standard no BBQ sign they chose to use an A4 green & white notice which many didn't see. We anticipate more controversy on BBQs this year.



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We have a Position Paper on BBQs written in 2015 although rather dated it covers most of the issues. This can be found on our website.

Website

This is being overseen by Gerard Sebastian and he is working to put right some of its defects.

Facebook

Amelia Obertelli-Moriarty reports that the average level of followers of FOWP FB page now totals nearly 820.

FOWP Forum

- The Executive Committee (EC) continued to improve its knowledge and expertise. Jill Lovett, Jill Hopper, Nigel Martin and Mike Caswell left during the year and we thank them for their input and help.
- There are four London Borough Council wards surrounding the park. To provide further free flow of information 11 of the 12 councillors are ex officio members of the FOWP Forum.
- Leonie Cooper, GLA member for Merton and Wandsworth is an ex officio member.
- Dave Dawson (our environment and ecology adviser) is an ex officio member.
- Sarah Gould (Service Manager (Heritage & Local Studies) an important link with LBM has recently joined as an ex officio member.
- Gerard Sebastian handles our website and is an ex officio member.
- Johnny Perkins has recently become our main contact with AELTC is an ex officio member.
- We're pleased that the Rt Hon Justine Greening (MP for Putney) and Stephen Hammond (MP for Merton) have again agreed to be Honorary Friends of FOWP.
- We continue to liaise with park officers (LBM & idverde) both formally and informally. These interactions will become more important as community involvement in the park increases

A word on associate membership

Under our constitution, we have a membership category called 'associates'. This includes: individuals in an organisation which joins as a corporate member; park officers; and members of the three local residents' associations (Southfields Grid, Wimbledon Park and Wimbledon House, the founding members of the Friends of Wimbledon Park). We would be delighted if associate members would consider upgrading to full membership, which will entitle you to a vote at our AGM and to receiving our quarterly email newsletter. You can find out how to join by visiting our recently redesigned website <http://www.friendsowimbledonpark.org.uk>

Wimbledon Park is remarkable for the number of assets it contains and our job is to ensure that these are not lost or wasted but are enhanced. This requires the owners and community to work together on implementing the Conservation Management Plan.

Nick Steiner
Chairman FOWP March 2019