



Newsletter

Summer 2005

PO Box 16860, London SE21 7ZQ

Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) works to Dulwich Park

The engineering company, Geoffrey Osborne Ltd, was appointed as the main contractor for the HLF work following a detailed tendering process. It is a large experienced engineering company which has recently completed successful projects for BP and the Diana Memorial Garden.

The contract started at the end of May work and is expected to take just under one year. Osborne's has already set up a contractors site on the tennis courts near the café and a smaller compound on the field beside the Court Lane entrance. Temporary haulage roads have been built to access these two areas and these will be removed at the end of the contract and the grass re-instated. The Court Lane Gates have been removed to allow lorries to enter the park. Temporary fencing has also been erected around all the working areas. New permanent and temporary underground services are being installed from the College Gate entrance to the tennis courts and the cricket pavilion. Unfortunately, the trench for these services was dug too close to mature trees and may have damaged their root systems. The trench has now been covered over and Land Use Consultants (LUC), who are overseeing the project, are inspecting the area.

Work has begun on some of the buildings. The toilet block by the café has been closed and temporary toilet facilities have been set up on the café green. External repairs have begun on Rosebery Lodge and so the Rosebery Gate entrance has been closed – pedestrians are using the Fireman's Alley entrance instead.

The draining of the lake to remove the silt has been postponed because of nesting birds and their young. (The bird scarers on the island do not appear to have been very effective!) The latest plan is to take the silt away in sealed trucks rather than trying to dry it in the park first. Over in Belair Park where the silt was removed from the

lake, it took over a year to dry out. It is hoped that this work will be completed by the end of September and specialist contractors will be employed to rescue all fish, reptiles and amphibians to other sites.

The squirrel enclosure, behind the café, is being extended to provide a larger nature conservation area. The site has been closed while footpath and fencing work is carried out. Work has also started on the edging to the horse-ride.

Plans for the park after the Lottery works

In the planning stages of the park's restoration, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) asked DPF to provide more contingency for the scheme than had been originally budgeted for. In allowing for this extra contingency, a number of items had to be cut from the scheme.

However, through careful budgeting, a number of items can now be brought back on board. These include the new boating kiosk and the refurbishment of the WCs. We are optimistic that the scheme can cope with a few last minute thoughts and additions. Ideas include a kingfisher bank by the lake and conduits so that we can install web cams in nests on the lake so their progress can be monitored from the new Francis Peek building [see article on Liz Johnson's new book to find out why Francis Peek was so important to the park].

But we're thinking even further ahead. There are all sorts of small additions we would like to incorporate which do not fall within the scope of a heritage restoration. These will need to be carefully designed so they are compatible with the works being undertaken. We have asked LUC for an estimate for the design of a package of extra bonuses that we hope to implement over the next five years. The package would include:-

- the refurbishment of the American Shelter
- a glade of trees in the sports field
- a walkway through the extended squirrel enclosure
- a wild flower meadow by Rosebery Gate
- a fountain in the lake.

We are discussing the funding of these designs with Southwark Council and may need to do some fundraising, but we feel it would be sensible to take advantage of the existing design team while they are around.

Application for CCTV for the Pavilion Café

DPF has applied for a grant from Southwark's 'Cleaner, greener, safer' programme for CCTV to be installed at the Pavilion Café. The café, which is owned by Southwark Council and leased out to café operators, underwent a major refurbishment in 2003 costing over £300k. Since its re-opening, it has been attacked regularly with graffiti and has been vandalised. In the last year, over 20 windows have been smashed, doors forced and bins burnt. The police recommend that CCTV be installed. We believe that infra red CCTV would deter the vandals and make the general public feel safer. CCTV has been successful at the London Cycle Recumbents (near College Gate) in the park where there have been very few incidents.

Butterflies return to park

The creation of a countryside walk around the perimeter of the park has proved a great success. It is attracting more birds and butterflies and provides a distinctive and refreshing experience for park users.

The decision to leave a strip of un-mown vegetation up to 8-10 metres wide around the edge of the park was agreed by Southwark and by the contractors (Quadron) after a walkabout with representatives from DPF and the Dulwich Society in April. The idea was to retain longer grass and bushes – the so-called 'understorey' – to increase wildlife habitat. This initiative was vindicated in early July when a Dulwich Society butterfly walk provided sightings of species including holly blue, meadow brown, gatekeeper, comma and speckled wood. Malcolm Bridge, Surrey recorder for butterfly conservation, who led the walk, says Dulwich Park now contains twice as many species as a typical 'green desert' park such as Crystal Palace, where grass is kept closely mown and the understorey is regularly cut back.

DPF is now asking Southwark not to mow the edge at all this year, with the aim of further increasing biodiversity – and also saving on staff and petrol costs, and global warming emissions.

Dulwich Park Friends needs new members!

DPF has a current membership of 210 households which has remained constant for some time. We want to increase membership by at least 25% over the next 6 months, so that we have more clout!

DPF is an important local charity set up to enhance and regenerate ‘the people's park’. The Heritage Lottery Fund investment now underway makes it even more important that we have an active membership that can truly represent all park users.

In the early autumn we will be asking all current members to sign up a new member (forms will be provided – look out for them please). There will also be a stall in the park to encourage new members, a door-to-door mail-drop and local advertising. Please play your part to support the DPF membership drive!

Dulwich Park: a park for the people forever

DPF member, Liz Johnson, has published a fascinating and detailed account of the history of Dulwich Park. It is the first time that a history of the park has been written, and *Dulwich Park: a park for the people forever* serves the park well in detailing its past, present and future.

A chance comment claiming that Dulwich Park was built as a buffer to the rest of South London led Liz to wanting to find out more about the park's origins. Liz's reservations about the park being created to combat the fast-growing South London sprawl were right: Dulwich Park was in fact the only Victorian park not created as a response to combat the poverty and slums of the surrounding area. The park came about as a philanthropic gesture by Francis Peek, a multi-millionaire tea merchant.

Liz's research unravelled a labyrinthine tangle of local politicking, replete with counter-moves and parries which leave the reader's jaw dropping at the audacity of the then Estates Governors and other local politicians. Once the park is opened (with great fanfare by Lord Rosebery standing on a cane-bottomed chair), Liz goes on to describe how the park developed and evolved in the twentieth century, culminating with a description of the restoration of the park in the twenty-first century.

Dulwich Park is, according to *Southwark News*, “an excellent new book” – in its first two months of publication it has already sold over 500 copies. It is available from local book shops priced £7.50.

The Committee

Chair	Emily Montague	020 7501 9120
Vice Chair	Juliet Filose	020 8693 5336
Secretary	Averil Batchelor	020 8693 7025
Treasurer	Sigrid Collins	020 8693 1223
Members:	Stella Benwell, Robert Johnson, David Nicholson-Lord, Angela Wilkes	

Please write to us at: PO Box 16860, London SE21 7ZQ.