

Heritage Festival 2018
Parks and open spaces

Did you know?
... twenty interesting historic facts about local parks

- 1 Which local park houses a memorial to the civilian casualties of Battersea in WW2?
- 2 Lots of local parks are well used and loved by dog walkers but which park was built around a Little Brown Dog?
- 3 Whose coronation is celebrated in **Coronation Gardens**, Southfields?
- 4 In 1930, the Dust Destructor was demolished over the Hallowe'en weekend. It took three days to dismantle and people took Monday off work to see the tall chimney come down. Which local park replaced it?
- 5 **Heathbrook Park** is in east Battersea. What does the 'brook' in the title refer to?
- 6 From 1917 local councils had authority to turn public parks into allotments for the war effort. Which is the oldest allotment site in Wandsworth that was created in this way?
- 7 How did **Fred Wells Gardens** in Battersea get its name? Who was he?
- 8 Which park is located over the 'lost' river, the Falcon Brook, which rises in Streatham and reaches the Thames at Battersea?
- 9 What was **Furzedown Recreation Ground** in Tooting/Streatham used for before it became a public park in 1923?
- 10 How did **King George's Park** in Wandsworth get its name?
- 11 This public space was opened in 1763 and contains a Coade stone monument. What is it and where?
- 12 In what way was the date 1 April 1971 significant for many parks across London?
- 13 These day **King George's Park** extends from Wandsworth Southside to Aboyne Road and Bodmin Street. Over many years, 'fields' have been added to the park. Can you state any previous uses of these fields?
- 14 What is the naturally shaped block of granite in **Coronation Gardens**, and who donated it to the public park?
- 15 Which local park used to feature cycle speedway, a popular sport in 1950s, including international events?

- 16 By what other name is the **Mount Nod Burial Ground** also known?
- 17 What is the York connection with Battersea that gives us **York Gardens** and York Road?
- 18 Which lane connects the old London-Portsmouth road with the Thames?
- 19 There are no bananas in Banana Park because its official name is **Falcon Park**. What does the Falcon refer to?
- 20 “The design was influenced by a move away from the very labour-intensive schemes of the Victorian era and a rise in the interest of organised sport from the 1880s onwards. This resulted in the centre of the Park being laid out as a playing field and ornamental planting being concentrated in the south-eastern corner.” Which local park is being described here?

The information given above was collected from the park management plans drawn up by Wandsworth Council Parks Service, the London Parks and Gardens Trust website on park histories, and Historic England listings.

If you have enjoyed the ‘quiz’, have a query or comment, or would like to suggest an amendment or addition to any of the answers, please contact Geraldine Kelly at parkstories2018@gmail.com. I hope you have enjoyed this ‘quiz’.

Answers

1 **Christchurch Gardens** at the junction of Battersea Park Road and Cabul Road.

Opened as public gardens in 1885, making it one of the earliest public parks in the borough, when the Metropolitan Parks and Gardens Trust leased the grounds from Christ Church and St Stephen's (built 1849). Within a few years the Battersea Vestry and then Battersea Council had taken over the Gardens. In November 1944, the Church was destroyed by direct hit from a V1 rocket. A brick shelter was erected in 1948 to commemorate the "Men, Women and Children of Battersea who died during World War Two". The shelter and memorial were Grade 2 listed by Historic England in 2015.

2 **Latchmere Recreation Ground**, opened to the public in 1906, serving the Latchmere Estate in Battersea.

The fenced walkway connecting Burns Road with Reform Street opens to a centre circle where the statue of the Little Brown Dog originally stood on a plinth. The statue commemorated the suffering and death of a mongrel terrier used for animal experiments. The National Anti-Vivisection and Battersea General Hospital was just five minutes' walk away, on the corner of Albert Bridge Road and Prince of Wales Drive. The statue and local park became the scene of fierce battles between pro and anti-vivisectionists and required 24-hour police protection. The statue mysteriously vanished overnight in 1910, its whereabouts have never been traced.

3 King Edward VII (1901-1910).

Coronation Gardens was opened in 1903 shortly after the coronation in Westminster Abbey in 1902. Sir William Lancaster, second Mayor of the then new Wandsworth Borough, provided the philanthropic donation. The park is next to Riversdale School originally Merton Road School which dates from 1890. At that time the field next to the school was a pig farm which generated great cause for concern about the health of the children obliged to study and play next door. This was remedied when Sir William purchased the land and donated it to the people of Wandsworth in perpetuity.

4 Fountain Road Recreation Ground in Tooting, also known as **Fountain Rec**.

The Dust Destructor was state-of-the-art rubbish disposal in 1890, replacing the older system of 'slop shoots' by burning the waste in an incinerator, hence it had a very tall chimney. By 1930 it had seen its best days and needed to be replaced. The Technical Services Department, Housing Department, and Parks Department of Wandsworth Council worked together to remove the works, lay out the park, and build a new housing block. Anderson House in Fountain Road commemorates Rev John Henry Anderson, local Tooting community leader, independent councillor and Mayor, who had died in 1913.

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5 Up to at least the eighteenth century it was still possible to see how Battersea had been an island in the Thames. A channel ran roughly from York Terrace towards Clapham Junction then along the foot of the hill parallel to Lavender Hill. High up on No 2 Queenstown Road, a plaster plaque states, 'Brook Tavern 1883'. From there the channel continued roughly northwards through Nine Elms and was historically the parish, parliamentary and constituency boundary between Battersea and Lambeth. The western branch of this channel formed part of the Falcon Brook as it entered the River Thames. The longer, eastern branch had largely become silted and hidden. Heathbrook Park is right on the borough boundary.

6 **Garratt Park** allotments site.

In 1916 the Defence of the Realm Act, DORA, first gave authority to top tier councils like the London County Council to dig up their public parks and turn them over to food production. LCC was not keen to do so, seeing London's parks as very necessary for recreation. However, local councillors were aware of the desperate food shortages that people faced. In 1917 a further amendment to DORA allowed all councils to turn their parks into allotments. Wandsworth Council was quick to take this up. Garratt Park was again used for 'Dig for Victory' allotments in 1939-45. The exact layout of that park and allotments site has varied since 1917.

Garratt Park was opened in 1906 as a recreation ground for children. Wandsworth Council owned land between Garratt Lane and the River Wandle which had previously been the mill pond and garden of Garratt Mill. The Rifle Club had moved there in 1903 when it was still open fields let to pasture.

7 Fred Wells was a local councillor and long-time Battersea resident. He was well respected by all who knew him for his tireless work on behalf of his local neighbours in need. The new park was created between Vicarage Gardens and the railway line in 1982, just as Fred died. The Council agreed unanimously to name it in his honour. Fred had lived in the nearby Totteridge House tower block.

8 **York Gardens** on York Road, Battersea, currently hosting the Thames Water depot for work on the Thames Tideway Tunnel to replace the Victorian sewer system.

The Falcon Brook is entirely underground, one of London's 'lost' rivers. It has two main sources – the heights of Streatham whence it crosses Tooting Common and runs along

Cavendish Road (once called Dragmire Lane) to the foot of Balham Hill. The second source runs from Furzedown south of Tooting Common. This stream formed the boundary between Tooting Graveney Parish and Streatham Parish, and is now the course of Dr Johnson Avenue. The two branches meet near Oakwood Lodge School, from where the Falcon Brook runs north along the valley of Northcote Road. At St John's Road it used to tumble through a series of small lakes, then headed west for the Thames. Early references to this stream called it the 'Hideburn'.

9 The area was tennis courts from side to side and end to end. In 1915, Mr Johns, a local photographer, took a series of pictures showing children, women and men in fine lacey Edwardian dress enjoying endless games of tennis.

Furzedown estate owner Charles Seely, MP, had died around 1900 and the estate was sold off for development. The grand house is part of Graveney School on Welham Road. The residents of these desirable new houses were obviously keen on a game of tennis.

10 A new park was created in Wandsworth in 1923 using the former ornamental gardens of the mill owner. The working title was Southfields Park until a visit by King George V was arranged which coincided with the opening. It was renamed in his honour. Since 1923, several more fields have been added to the park.

11 **Putney Old Burial Ground**, Upper Richmond Road.

Opened by public subscription in the 18th century to provide more burial space for Putney. It was closed for burials in 1854 and opened to the public as a garden in 1886. The few gravestones and tombs that remain in the grass and the several mature trees have provided appropriate back-drop for the Putney Theatre's outdoor summer performances.

12 The Greater London Council transferred most of its parks to the local boroughs. London County Council was transformed in 1965 to take on new responsibilities. In the new guise of the GLC it would no longer look after the smaller local parks and commons. In Wandsworth these included Tooting Common, Wandsworth Common, Wandsworth Park, Garratt Green, Shillington and Falcon Parks, Heathbrook Park. Battersea Park was not handed over until 1986.

13 The meadows were lammas fields – either rent was due on Lammas Day, some time in August, or this was the day that livestock were allowed to graze the meadows after the hay harvest

- The field by Longstaff Road was used for prefabs
- An underground bomb shelter was dug here in WW2
- From 1939 the Metropolitan Parks and Gardens Trust ran allotments in the field south of Kimber Road during WW2
- A donkey pasture
- A coal depot for Wangas

– Wangas sports ground

14 The block used to be a water drinking fountain with cast metal art deco style fittings. It was donated by the sisters of Sir William Lancaster, former Mayor of Wandsworth, who gave the land to the people of Wandsworth for a public park.

15 **Garratt Park** off Siward Road near the junction of Burntwood Lane and Garratt Lane.

The cycle track remains as a dust circuit and is still used by many children to learn and practice cycling. The railings, shelter and starting gate have been removed and it is no longer used for racing. The nearest active speedway cycle track is in Newham in east London.

16 The **Huguenot Cemetery** at the top of East Hill.

This graveyard was opened around 1687 as a burial ground for the French Church, located opposite the parish church in Wandsworth High Street. Huguenot refugees from France had settled in Wandsworth in considerable numbers after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, begun in 1685 and continued until 1787. The burial ground later became known as Mount Nod. It was enlarged in 1700 and again in 1735, closed for burials in 1854, and later reopened as a public garden. It is currently open by request due to the state of some of the tombs there.

17 The Archbishop of York had a London palace in Battersea before the time of Henry VIII.

The palace stood close to York Gardens, near where the Falcon Brook enters the River Thames. Lawrence Booth, Bishop of Durham, built it as a fortified manor house in 1474 in the Manor of Bridgecourt between Battersea and Wandsworth. He later became Archbishop of York and bequeathed the palace and manor to the See of York. The building was demolished some time in the 18th century and nothing now remains of it above ground.

18 **Putney Park Lane** runs from Putney Heath down to the Upper Richmond Road. This Lane is almost entirely a non-made-up road with a loose gravel surface and is intended for pedestrians, horses and cyclists. It maintains a rural character, a far cry from its west London setting. The Lane may be a remnant of a medieval lane which once provided access to The Pleasance, the site of the Archbishop of Canterbury's hunting lodge. By the early C18th it was a formal tree-lined drive for a house built on the site of the former hunting lodge and later became the access to several grand houses including Granard House, Putney Park House and Dover House.

19 'Falcon' is a common name in the area, used for Falcon Lane, Falcon Terrace, and Falcon Grove, Falcon Road, and the Falcon pub.

The Falcon Pub is located near the point where the main road from London to Wandsworth, Putney and beyond, crosses the Falcon Brook on its way from Streatham to the Thames. It is possible that the brook took its name from the famous pub, as in earlier

records refer to it as the Hideburn or Hydaburn. Or maybe it was the other way round, and the pub was named for the nearby stream.

Another commonly given answer is that the falcon featured on the St John family coat of arms. The St Johns were Lords of the Manor of Battersea from 1644 to 1763. St John's Hill, St John's Road, the former Sir Walter St John grammar school and playing fields, Grandison Road and Bolingbroke Grove, all take their names from this family.

The modern park is situated between the curves of two railway lines which give it a 'banana' shape.

20 **Wandsworth Park**, Putney Bridge Road, description in the Historic England listing.

Opened in 1903 by LCC to the design of Lt Col JJ Sexby. As Parks Superintendent of the Metropolitan Board of Works and then of the London County Council, Sexby was involved in the design of many of London's finest Victorian and Edwardian parks. The meandering circulation path was another of his key features. Wandsworth Park retains much of its original lay-out and as a result it is Grade II listed.