South Park Gardens is a beautifully restored Victorian decorative model residential park, designed in 1899, constructed in 1900 and opened in September 1901. It was restored in 2008/9 with a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. It is registered Grade II on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens and is situated within the South Park Conservation Area in Wimbledon.

Managed and maintained by the London Borough of Merton in partnership with the Friends of South Park Gardens, it provides a much needed and well used green space in the heart of the South Park community.

There are over 150 trees in the Gardens, including over 40 different species. Around 20 trees were either transplanted or removed as part of the restoration project. Some of the trees, which were removed, were diseased or dying. This has had the effect of opening up the Gardens and has improved the sight lines throughout.

Several new trees were planted including four, which were planted by four local primary schools - The Priory, Holy Trinity, St Mary’s and Pelham - to commemorate the restoration. The four trees – Silver Maple – Acer saccharinum (Holy Trinity); Purple Leaf Flowering Plum - Prunus cerasifera ‘Nigra’ (St Mary’s); Japanese Crab Apple – Malus floribunda (The Priory) and Hupeh Crab Apple – Malus hupehensis (Pelham) have plaques to identify them.

- Strawberry tree to the right of the ladies’ toilets. Rare in England, more plentiful in Ireland. It has dark green glossy leaves with a serrated edge and has panicles of white bell-shaped flowers in the autumn.
- Judas tree to the right of the outer path between ladies’ toilets and Kings Road gate. The bark is purplish and ridged with fine brown fissures. Leaves are small and alternate and vary from yellowish to dark green.
- Deodar Cedar in the circle at Kings Road/Trinity Road junction – the largest tree in the Gardens. Unlike the Cedar of Lebanon, which has level branches, these sweep down to the ground. The spiral set leaves are dark green and curved.
- Tortured Willow in opposite corner of the Gardens; beautiful shaped tree with interesting, twisted leaves and branches. A cultivar of a once very rare species, from China, now more common and sometimes called “contorted”, which describes it very well.
- Caucasian Wingnut tree close to horse trough. Rare specimen, has fabulous bright gold/yellow foliage in October. It has large pinnate leaves and catkins. Most of the 8 species originate in China.
- Sweet gum tree on the right of the path between the ladies’ toilets and Kings Road gate. Leaves generally unfold in May and are similar to a maple and provide good colour in the autumn.

We hope that you enjoy your visit to the Gardens. Please help us to look after the trees and wildlife by keeping your dog on a lead, picking up after it and using the dog waste bins. Please also take your litter home with you or use the bins provided. Thank you.

Welcome to South Park Gardens Trail Leaflets

This is one of a series of trail leaflets that have been produced for South Park Gardens as part of the Heritage Lottery Fund restoration project. These leaflets will help visitors to the Gardens explore a wide range of flora, fauna and the history of the local area.

The others include:
- Local History of South Park Gardens
- Birds in South Park Gardens
- Wildlife in South Park Gardens

To order more copies of this leaflet or others in the series, go to the website and download the order form. Schools may also order work sheets and book visits to the mini-beast sanctuary.

Details of our next guided tours of the Gardens will also be posted on the website.

Alternatively contact Jil Hall (Community Park Warden) on 07742 633760.

A Victorian Pleasure Gardens

South Park Gardens is a beautifully restored Victorian decorative model residential park, designed in 1899, constructed in 1900 and opened in September 1901. It was restored in 2008/9 with a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. It is registered Grade II on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens and is situated within the South Park Conservation Area in Wimbledon.

Managed and maintained by the London Borough of Merton in partnership with the Friends of South Park Gardens, it provides a much needed and well used green space in the heart of the South Park community.

There are over 150 trees in the Gardens, including over 40 different species. Around 20 trees were either transplanted or removed as part of the restoration project. Some of the trees, which were removed, (mostly conifers, which were later additions to the Gardens) were diseased or dying. This has had the effect of opening up the Gardens and has improved the sight lines throughout.

Several new trees were planted including four, which were planted by four local primary schools - The Priory, Holy Trinity, St Mary’s and Pelham – to commemorate the restoration. The four trees – Silver Maple – Acer saccharinum (Holy Trinity); Purple Leaf Flowering Plum - Prunus cerasifera ‘Nigra’ (St Mary’s); Japanese Crab Apple – Malus floribunda (The Priory) and Hupeh Crab Apple – Malus hupehensis (Pelham) have plaques to identify them.

- Strawberry tree to the right of the ladies’ toilets. Rare in England, more plentiful in Ireland. It has dark green glossy leaves with a serrated edge and has panicles of white bell-shaped flowers in the autumn.
- Judas tree to the right of the outer path between ladies’ toilets and Kings Road gate. The bark is purplish and ridged with fine brown fissures. Leaves are small and alternate and vary from yellowish to dark green.
- Deodar Cedar in the circle at Kings Road/Trinity Road junction – the largest tree in the Gardens. Unlike the Cedar of Lebanon, which has level branches, these sweep down to the ground. The spiral set leaves are dark green and curved.
- Tortured Willow in opposite corner of the Gardens; beautiful shaped tree with interesting, twisted leaves and branches. A cultivar of a once very rare species, from China, now more common and sometimes called “contorted”, which describes it very well.
- Caucasian Wingnut tree close to horse trough. Rare specimen, has fabulous bright gold/yellow foliage in October. It has large pinnate leaves and catkins. Most of the 8 species originate in China.
- Sweet gum tree on the right of the path between the ladies’ toilets and Kings Road gate. Leaves generally unfold in May and are similar to a maple and provide good colour in the autumn.

We hope that you enjoy your visit to the Gardens. Please help us to look after the trees and wildlife by keeping your dog on a lead, picking up after it and using the dog waste bins. Please also take your litter home with you or use the bins provided. Thank you.

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Tree Trail Walk

Follow the instructions below to explore the trees in the Gardens, walk clockwise around the outside path, starting at the horse trough.

1. Starting at the gate opposite 3 Dudley Road, bear left at the horse trough and take the outside path, past the ladies’ and disabled toilets. In the grass circle on your right there are 4 silver pendent lime trees and a chestnut tree (g) with trunk branches sweep majestically right down to the ground, providing excellent shade. Around it are several witch hazel saplings.

2. In the grass circle on your right there are 4 silver pendant lime trees and 2 new lime saplings. These have leaves which are dark green above and white underneath. You can see from the lichen on the branches that it is a silver lime.

3. To the left of the Kings Road gate is another holm oak (c) used as a climbing tree by local children. The lower branches have been trimmed to facilitate this. Then there are further oaks and yews followed by a nice silver birch just before the wild flower circle. In the circle with leaves around it is the largest tree in the Gardens – a Deodar Cedar (d). It is nearly 30 metres tall and has a spread of 12 metres. The lower branches move majestically right down to the ground, providing excellent shade. Around it are several witch hazel saplings.

4. As you come around that circle, there are mostly oaks, maples and yews on the border. The path is another popular limb climbing tree; a Lawson cypress – Chamaecyparis lawsoniana, which younger children like to clamber over. Going past the Trinity Road gate there is a small circle and just past the silver maple planted by Holy Trinity School there is a Hampshire oak – Quercus robur. There is a laurel and some yew trees and a large horse chestnut tree. Behind the horse chestnut is a strawberry tree – Arbutus unedo – this has three to four branches with a serrated edge and has panicles of white bell-shaped flowers in the autumn. It appears on the logo of Madrid (with a she-bear).

5. In the border alongside Dudley Road are more oaks, maples, a laurel, holly and a silver birch. Opposite them is an alder and a sweet gum tree - Liquidamber styracifluar, then on each side of the path two evergreen (holm) oaks – Quercus ilex1976.

6. To find a Judas tree (f) – named after Judas from where it comes (although some believe Judas Iscariot hanged himself from one). Then in a bed on the right there are a few oaks and another horse chestnut on the left, followed by a group of holm oaks. Opposite them is a silver birch and a sweet gum.

7. There is a laurel and some yew trees and a large horse chestnut tree. Behind the horse chestnut is a strawberry tree – Arbutus unedo – this has three to four branches with a serrated edge and has panicles of white bell-shaped flowers in the autumn. It appears on the logo of Madrid (with a she-bear).

8. In the grass circle on your right there are 4 silver pendant lime trees and a chestnut tree (g) with trunk branches sweep majestically right down to the ground, providing excellent shade. Around it are several witch hazel saplings.

9. At the Dudley Road gate is a large lime tree – Tilia platyphyllos (e) – has been given a circular bed of its own. Just beyond it on the right is the cherry plum tree which is given a circular bed of its own. Next to it is a quince – Cydonia oblonga – this has lovely autumn colour. A little further on there is a Colonial tree with distinctive five pointed leaves. A little further on the left is a Chines privet - Ligustrum lucidum ‘Erectum’, followed by an oak and a yew.

10. To the right of the Kings Road gate is another holm oak (c) used as a climbing tree by local children. The lower branches have been trimmed to facilitate this. Then there are further oaks and yews followed by a nice silver birch just before the wild flower circle. In the circle with leaves around it is the largest tree in the Gardens – a Deodar Cedar (d). It is nearly 30 metres tall and has a spread of 12 metres. The lower branches move majestically right down to the ground, providing excellent shade. Around it are several witch hazel saplings.

This concludes the tree trail walk.