

## Did you know?

- Brockwell Park is the second largest public open space in the Borough of Lambeth and is full of fascinating buildings and features which tell us about its rich history.



- Brockwell Park itself has existed on this site for over 120 years but records of its past ownership and use go back as far as the 12th Century.
- Brockwell Park was once part of the 'Great North Wood', a dense forest which stretched all the way from the Weald of Sussex and Kent to where Brixton and Dulwich are today.
- The land the park lies on was once owned by the Archbishop of Canterbury and then by a monastery which founded the famous St. Thomas' Hospital in Waterloo.

- Brockwell Park's creation is associated with Lt-Colonel J. J. Sexby, who was also involved in designing many other historic parks in Lambeth and other parts of London such as Dulwich Park, Ruskin Park, Peckham Rye Park, and Crystal Palace Parks.



- The largest of the three ponds found on the western side of Brockwell Park used to be an open-air bathing pond, with a diving board and changing rooms!
- Lots of famous and influential people have lived around or used Brockwell Park, such as Vincent Van Gogh, Charlie Chaplin and David Bowie.

For more information on Brockwell Park, its restoration and management, please contact Lambeth Council on **020 7926 9000** or at **parcs@lambeth.gov.uk**. To find out more about Brockwell Park, including downloading a copy of this and other guides, please go to the Lambeth Council website at **www.lambeth.gov.uk**

## Brockwell Park history trail

Introduction to the history of Brockwell Park

Brockwell Park is one of London's greatest and most loved public parks, containing not just some fantastic views across the city but also popular features including a walled garden, ponds and a range of sports and play facilities. The park has recently been restored with funding including from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), The Big Lottery and the London Borough of Lambeth, in partnership with Brockwell Park Community Partners and a wide range of other stakeholders. The objective has been to provide residents and visitors with a park that is safe, welcoming and sustainable, and meets the needs and aspirations of both present and future generations.

### Acknowledgements

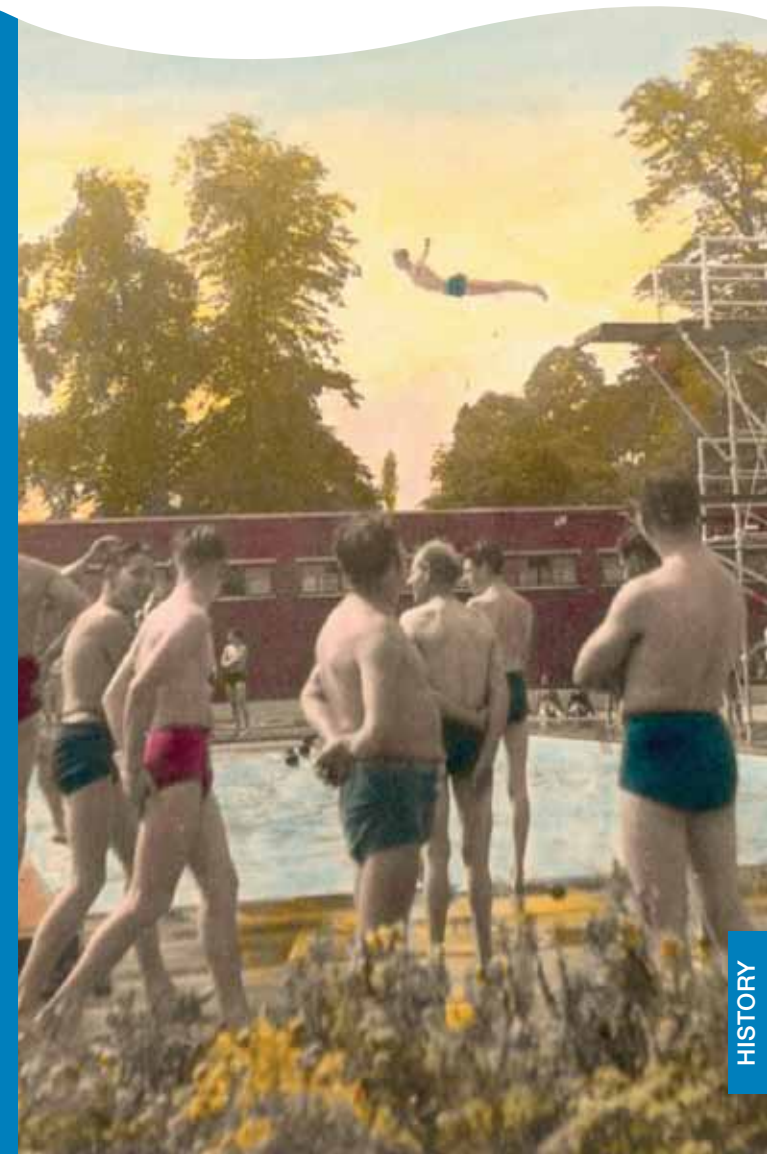
The following organisations have contributed to not only the production of this guide, but also the management of Brockwell Park to conserve its many wild plants and animals and promote it as a place for everybody to see and enjoy wildlife throughout the year.

Friends of  
Brockwell Park



Brockwell Park  
Community  
Greenhouses  
Registered Charity no. 1140990

Brockwell  
Park Community  
Partners





## Description of key points of interest

### 1 A Rural Idyll

In the 12th Century the land occupied by Brockwell Park was once in the Manor of Lambeth which belonged to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Before 1537 it was owned by St Thomas's Hospital, a monastic establishment, until seizure of their estates by Henry VIII. Until the middle of the 18th Century the southern half of Lambeth was dominated by woods and commons with a few villages.



### 2 A Glassmaker's Estate

Until the 1650s the site belonged to the Tulse Family and by 1807 the eastern side of the original estate was owned by John Blades, a glass merchant who demolished the old hall close to Rosendale Road. The surrounding fields were laid out as a private park for the new Brockwell Hall on top of the hill, and houses in Brixton Water Lane were built for estate staff.

### 3 A Changing Landscape

Joshua Blackburn, grandson of John Blades, inherited the estate in 1860. Taking advantage of the Herne Hill railway station (built 1862) he added new buildings including Clarence Lodge and a line of houses along the south side of Dulwich road.



### A Park for the People

In the 1880s the Brockwell Estate came up for sale and Thomas Lynn Bristowe, first MP for Norwood, led a campaign to purchase it for public benefit. In 1891, 33 hectares were secured with contributions from the local council and community, with London County Council (LCC) buying the largest share. The park was opened on 6th June 1892 by Lord Rosebery but sadly Thomas Bristowe collapsed and died on the steps of the hall during the opening ceremony.

### 4 A Growing Place

Brockwell Park has been open to the public since 1892 and the original landscape expanded in stages. In 1895 over 3 acres were purchased on the north side and another 43 added in 1901. The enlarged park was formally opened in 1903; the landscape designer Lt Colonel J.J. Sexby created formal bedding areas including the Walled Garden as well as adding trees, ponds and pathways. In 1933 the Brockwell Lido opened to accommodate a growing fashion for healthy outdoor bathing through the year.



### 5 The Park at War

Brockwell Park was unaffected during the Great War but during the Second World War the Army, Air Force and Civil Defence used it for training exercises. Air raid shelters were built around the perimeter during the London Blitz, searchlights and sound locators were placed outside Brockwell Hall, and barrage balloons were anchored to the ground. Large areas of the park were used as allotments and temporary buildings for medical research into vaccines were built near where the Lido is today.



### Hard Times, Modern Times

Following WWII Brockwell Park returned to public use; management passed to the Greater London Council in 1963 and since 1970 Lambeth Council have been its custodians.

### A Coming of Age: Restoring Brockwell Park

In 2007 following extensive consultation Lambeth Council in partnership with the Brockwell Park Management Advisory Committee (MAC) secured £6 million of funding, with the bulk coming from Heritage Lottery Fund's and Big Lottery Parks for People programme. For the first time in over a hundred years the park is benefiting from substantial funding to restore and improve its landscapes, listed buildings, play facilities and wetland areas. Its restoration also increases the diversity of green corridors, improved wildlife habitat and access to safe space for the benefit of all of Lambeth's residents and visitors.