

| Britain |

# HOLLAND PARK

## LONDON'S HIDDEN TREASURE

Più piccolo e meno conosciuto degli altri parchi di Londra, Holland Park è un gioiello seminasconduto, immerso in uno dei quartieri più eleganti della città. La visita al parco però è gratis, ed è un vero paradiso per chi ama il birdwatching urbano. TEXT AND PHOTOS BY MARK WORDEN

C1 ADVANCED

 SPEAKER  
MARK WORDEN

 TRACK 6

### GLOSSARY

- neighbourhoods:** quartieri
- life peer:** v. Speak Up explains
- hidden treasures:** tesori nascosti
- estates:** tenute
- it all got built around:** si costruì tutto intorno
- bequeathed to the Council:** lasciata in eredità al Comune
- woodland areas:** aree boschive
- stately house:** residenza
- slightly off the beaten track:** leggermente fuori dal circuito turistico
- craftsmanship:** artigianato

**H**olland Park, which is the stop after Notting Hill on the Central Line, is one of London's most affluent neighbourhoods<sup>1</sup>. As the name suggests, it surrounds a park. Here houses can cost £10 million and residents include people like Sir Richard Branson and the crime writer P.D. James who, when she was made a life peer<sup>2</sup> in 1991, chose the title "Baroness James of Holland Park." Holland Park's residents may be rich but other Londoners – and indeed tourists – can visit the park itself for free. This is a good thing because Holland Park is one of the English capital's hidden treasures<sup>3</sup>, offering an impressive selection of wild-life. It is smaller and less well known than other parks, as Trevor Bowyer, who works as an education officer at the Holland Park Ecology Centre, explains:

### Trevor Bowyer

(Standard British/London accent)

Up until the Second World War it was one of the last private estates<sup>4</sup> around London, so it was like a big country estate originally, and it all got built around<sup>5</sup>. During the war it got bombed, and then after the war it was sort of bequeathed to the Council<sup>6</sup>, so it's just had its 60th birthday just a few months ago. And I think because of that it still retains kind of a very country feel, so you've got the nice woodland areas<sup>7</sup>, you've got the formal gardens, and ☺



Below: a statue of Lord Holland. Above and clockwise: a peacock; a dove; the Kyoto Garden; a fountain in the Garden; the Dutch Garden with Holland House in the background. Opposite page: the Kyoto Garden.

you've the old remains of the old stately house<sup>8</sup>. In terms of being undiscovered, I think it's just because we are just slightly off the beaten track<sup>9</sup>, we're kind of hidden behind houses, and the other parks are much more easy to see from buses and like, and it is quite nice for people to discover us, rather than being in all the tourist guides. So it's nice that people can find us.

### DISCOVERING JAPAN

One person who did find Holland Park was Yannick Pucci, who moved to London from his native Luxembourg in order to study at university. He fell in love with Holland Park and now he even leads tours of it. He showed us what he called "the jewel in the crown": the beautiful – and peaceful – Kyoto Garden: ☺

### Yannick Pucci

(Luxembourgish accent)

The Kyoto Garden was built in 1991 and it was part of the Japanese festival in Britain at that time, and the whole idea behind the garden was meant to celebrate the friendship between the two countries and also show off Japanese craftsmanship<sup>10</sup>, and the garden was opened by Prince Charles and also the Japanese Crown Prince at that time. The Fukushima Garden is a fairly recent addition and it goes back two years, and it's meant to ☺





commemorate the victims of the natural disaster, but also sort of celebrate the help the British provided during this **tough**<sup>11</sup> time in Japan.

### THE ITALIAN CONNECTION

If Holland Park has a Japanese Garden, then it also has a Dutch Garden, even if this was originally known as the Portuguese Garden. It forms part of the grounds of Holland House, which was built in Jacobean times in the early 17th century. The one wing that wasn't destroyed by a bomb in the war is now a youth hostel, in case you're looking for a cheap and original place to stay in London.

With a Dutch Garden and a name like Holland Park, you could be forgiven for thinking<sup>12</sup> that there was also a connection with the Netherlands. In actual fact<sup>13</sup> Holland Park was named after the Holland family, who owned it. In the park you will find a statue of Lord Holland (1773-1840), who, along with his wife, Lady Holland, entertained lavishly<sup>14</sup>: during the first decades of the 19th century Holland House was one of society's more fashionable addresses. But if Holland Park has Dutch and Japanese gardens, then we also have to thank the romantic Italians for having played a part in its story:

#### Yannick Pucci

Lord Holland, he met Lady Holland in 1793 in Naples, and at that time she was living in exile. She was known as Lady Webster back then because she was estranged from her husband<sup>15</sup>, Lord

Above Left: The remains of Holland House, which was hit by a bomb during the Second World War. Above right: ducks. Below: a moorhen.



### GLOSSARY

- 11 tough:** difficile  
**12 you could be forgiven for thinking:** potrebbe venirti spontaneo pensare...  
**13 in actual fact:** in realtà  
**14 entertained lavishly:** organizzavano serate sontuose  
**15 estranged from her husband:** separata dal marito  
**16 wealthy:** benestante  
**17 planter:** proprietario di una piantagione  
**18 she had been married off:** l'avevano fatta sposare  
**19 mismatch:** un'unione sbagliata  
**20 to settle down:** sistemarsi  
**21 Grand Tour:** v. Speak Up explains  
**22 a heron... commute:** un airone-pendolare che viene ogni giorno

Webster, and she was the wealthy<sup>16</sup> daughter of a Jamaican planter<sup>17</sup>. And at 16 she had been married off<sup>18</sup> to a nearly 40-year-old man, and so it was a clear mismatch<sup>19</sup> and the union didn't work, so she split from her husband, and decided to settle down<sup>20</sup> in Naples, of course, one of the major spots of the Grand Tour<sup>21</sup>, very popular with Brits, for example, but also it is the Italian context, so you can probably be a bit more freer there, and if she had come to London, she would probably have been more exiled and possibly ostracized as well. ☹

Le interviste continuano su video  
[www.speakup.it](http://www.speakup.it) > magazine extras

### If you go...

Holland Park is a natural habit for birds and mammals because of its woodland. There are over 60 species of birds, many of which use Holland Park as a resting point in migration. There's also a heron who does a daily commute<sup>22</sup> from Hyde Park to catch his fish! Holland Park is also easy to find for humans: just look for the Holland Park underground station on the Central Line.

Some other links:

The Ecology Centre: [www.rbkc.gov.uk/environmentandtransport/ecology.aspx](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/environmentandtransport/ecology.aspx)

Yannick Pucci's tours: [www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/yannick-pucci-2713506508](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/yannick-pucci-2713506508)

The youth hostel at Holland House: [www.hostelworld.com](http://www.hostelworld.com)

**Life Peer.** Nella *House of Lords* ci sono due tipi di *peer* (lord): quelli che hanno ereditato il titolo e quelli nominati "a vita" (che non possono passare il titolo ai loro eredi). Il *life peerage* è un onore importante.

#### Grand Tour.

Dal Seicento all'Ottocento i giovani aristocratici inglesi facevano un "grande giro" dell'Europa, in teoria per ricevere un'educazione

culturale: poteva durare qualche mese ma anche qualche anno. L'Italia era la loro meta preferita.

#### A little bit more freer.

Un po' più libero. In realtà sarebbe più corretto dire *a little bit freer*. In Italia questo errore sarebbe da matita blu, ma in inglese gli errori grammaticali non sono considerati così gravi. Infatti Yannick Pucci parla l'inglese talmente bene che fa la guida turistica a Londra.

Speak Up  
**EXPLAINS**