

Wandsworth Council

Parks time line

There are many large green open places in south west London. The commons of Barnes, Battersea, Clapham, Putney, Streatham, **Tooting, Wandsworth** and Wimbledon date from 'time immemorial'. Though largely comprising the wastes or heathland of a parish, the commons were integral to mediaeval land settlements and were owned by lords of the manors. As London developed during the nineteenth century the land was increasingly developed for housing. Several legal battles took place to defend the commons as open land. **Garratt Green** had long been 'defended' by the infamous Mayors of Garratt elections.

Listed below are the green places in the Borough of Wandsworth that are managed by Wandsworth Parks Service. Further historic information can be found in the individual site management plans.

- 1858 A Royal Commission into housing recommended creating **Battersea Park**, Kennington Park, and Victoria Park in Hackney with formal and informal gardens as a way offering moral improvement to an area. Health was a matter of fresh air, exercise and diet, rather than one of medical resources.
- 1885 Battersea Vestry created **Christchurch Gardens** as 'an outdoor drawing room'. The shelter and memorial were added after 1945.
- 1886 **Waterman's Green** was created by the Metropolitan Board of Works as part of the approach to the new Putney Bridge when it was rebuilt in stone. It was not publicly accessible.
- 1888 Battersea Vestry owned the parish wharf and created **Vicarage Gardens** as a promenade, complete with ornamental urns on plinths along the river wall. During 1990s it was included in flood defence schemes.
- 1903 **Leader's Gardens** and **Coronation Gardens** were created as public parks by private donation from two wealthy local individuals. Both retain vestiges of their original Edwardian design.
- 1906 **Wandsworth Park** was laid out by the London County Council on allotments and market gardens. Grade II listed, this park exemplifies changes from Victorian to modern design, with large areas of playing fields and smaller more concentrated ornamentation at to one end.
- 1906 **Garratt Park** was laid out as 'a recreation ground for children' on the former council depot that had previously been the garden of Garratt Mill. Today's park has extended from the original area.
- 1906 **Latchmere Recreation Ground** followed three years after Battersea Council built the Latchmere Estate on former allotment land. The park showed off the original Brown Dog statue.
- 1912 **Tooting Gardens** was created from on part of a former Council 'slop shoot' or rubbish depot. The other half of which is now the swimming pool. The Gardens were opened following new housing development on Totterdown Fields which increased the Tooting population by several thousands.
- 1914 Land was urgently sought for growing food. After the war, allotment sites were created under 1920s allotments legislation at Magdalen Road and Garratt Park. The Roehampton Estate was built with three integral allotment fields.
- 1922 At the junction of Dromore, Rusholme and Holmbush Roads a triangular green was provided as public open space by Wandsworth Borough Council
- 1923 **King George's Park**, originally called 'Southfields Park', was laid out by unemployed soldiers. Formerly Grade II listed, the ornamental area around the lake was the garden of the Watney family of mill owners.

- 1924 **Furzedown Recreation Ground**, also part of the Unemployment Relief Scheme, was close to Furzedown House later to become teaching training college and Graveney School.
- 1930s **Swaby Gardens** and then **Godley Gardens** were developed as part of the streetscape in the development of local housing estates.
- 1932 **Fountain Road Recreation Ground** was created on the derelict site of the borough's former 'dust destructor'. It was created along with Anderson House to replace slums and to provide council residential accommodation in Tooting.
- 1940s During World War 2 many houses and streets were demolished through bomb damage. Some became temporary open spaces, including allotments, until as late as 1970s. Other open spaces were developed for housing.
- 1950s **Putney Vale Allotments** were created adjacent to the new extension to the housing estate, for the use of the residents.
- Fields along the Wandle valley were gradually and successively taken into **King George's Park**, the New Field and the Henry Prince field.
- 1970s **Bramford Gardens** grew out of the road developments by Wandsworth Bridge roundabout.
- 1970s **Dorothy Gardens, Montefiore Gardens**, and **Queenstown Road Open Space** were all former bomb sites retained as local parks.
- 1971 **Tooting and Wandsworth Commons, Falcon Park** and **Shillington Street Open Space, Wandsworth Park** and **Garratt Green** were transferred from the Greater London Council to Wandsworth Council.
- 1972 **York Gardens** was laid out on cleared land. A community centre was built at the same time, later to house the local library.
- 1976 Derelict land that had formerly been Victorian terraced streets was handed over by the GLC and the council chose to open it for public recreation as **Heathbrook Park**
- 1980s **Harroway Road Open Space** was developed using 'planning gain' money when the timber yard was built following the demise of Lombard Road power station on land bought by Battersea Vestry in 1897.
- 1982 **Fred Wells Gardens** was laid out on the converted site of former light industrial yards, including a bomb-site known as Orville Road Open Space. Fred Wells was a former councillor who lived nearby and who died in 1982.
- 1980s Two small allotments sites were created, one in **Ravenslea Road** on former railway sidings/yard, and one at **Herlwyn Gardens** in the new council housing estate.
- 1990 The Wangas site was the latest field to be added to **King George's Park** to extend the public open space along the Wandle.
- 1990s Land between the Royal Victoria and Patriotic Building and the railway line was returned to **Wandsworth Common**
- 2001 The Causeway and **The Spit** were laid out at the mouth of the River Wandle through the work of the Wandsworth Challenge Partnership.