

**U3A Bikers
Battersea Park
Friday 28th August 2020**

On this occasion a total of eight people had signed up for this re-scheduled ride.

The original plan was for a Tuesday ride to visit Richmond Park, starting at Clapham Junction Station for the train ride to Mortlake.

However, the weather forecast was for heavy rain showers and strong winds in excess of 40 knots (or nautical miles per hour = 1.15 mph), that is 45 mph.

On this basis, and particularly because of the strong winds, it was decided to postpone the ride until Friday and make it a shorter ride, to Battersea Park



Accordingly, we met at Brockwell Lido, not at Clapham Junction Station as planned previously, on a fine, sunny morning.

A head count revealed that we were missing one member. A phone call established that the missing rider was patiently waiting at Clapham Junction Station.....

A rendezvous was arranged at Clapham Common.

We seven set out on London Network 25, through the familiar route from Brockwell Park, Brixton Water Lane.

We crossed Brixton Hill and King's Avenue, on to Clapham Common and past Eagle Pond.

Then we were at the north side of the common, where we met our missing rider.

We avoided Queenstown Road by turning down Wixs Lane (named after a farm that was originally located here), and across Lavendar Hill.



We were then cycling along quiet residential streets.

We noted the elegant terraced houses along the way

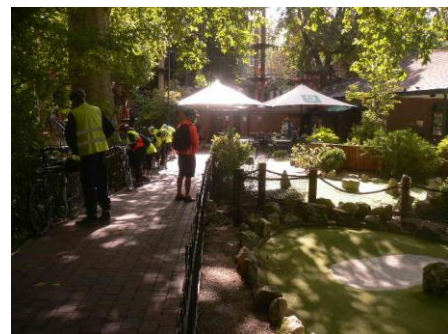
These were a part of the **Shaftesbury Estate**, dating from 1873.



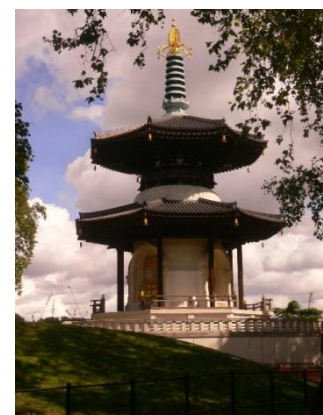
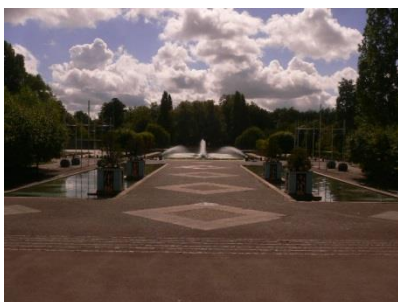
There was just a short stretch of the Queenstown Road to travel before turning off, beneath the mainline rail tracks carry Southern trains into Victoria Station.

We entered Battersea Park by the south gate and pedalled around to the "Putt in the Park" a café which provided outdoor seating for a coffee stop.

I heard some discussion on the possibility of making use of the "Go Ape" Adventure (described as a tree-top challenge, a climb in the canopy via a treetop rope course). A closer inspection of the route, and the progress of the climbers, led to a decision to defer this to another day!



The route continued around the perimeter road, past the Festival of Britain Gardens and the fountains, and then the Peace Pagoda.



Continuing along the perimeter road, we turned down to the riverside path which passes under Queenstown Road and the mainline railway line running south from Victoria.

This took us to the new development at Battersea Power Station and to what has now been called Circus Village West.



The newly-renovated **Coaling Jetty**, a part of the Battersea development was, for some reason, not open to the public, a pity. On earlier visits we had been able to look over the development from a viewing platform but this was no longer available.

We returned to the park and directly opposite the Peace Pagoda found a small area with benches, enough space for us to sit and eat our packed lunches in the sun, while observing social distancing.



The cloudscape was interesting, with rain clouds to the south; it was probably raining over Tooting. The return journey followed the outward route.

I paused for a moment to photograph a blue plaque at the junction of Clapham Common North side and Cedar Road where the Norwegian composer Edvard Grieg stayed when he was performing in London. He would also have met his publisher during these visits.



The weather favoured us and we all returned home before heavy showers arrived in the South London area.

Distance covered: 13 miles

Riders:

Martin Goffe; Mike Lock; Gisela Robinson; Peter Saunders;
Irene Skiadopoulou; John Clements, Sarojini Ariyanayagam, Jane Evans

Acknowledgement: source material from Wikipedia

Ride leader: Peter Saunders

Report by John Clements, 29th August 2020

Other photos



Battersea Park



Battersea Park



Chelsea Bridge & cloudscape

Notes

The Shaftesbury Estate

In the Middle Ages the area was known as Pig Hill because of the large number of piggeries in the area. The Domesday Book says that brickmaking was carried on in some fields on Pig Hill. Cattle breeding also flourished to some extent in the area. Pig Hill formed part of Latchmoor Common, an area of common land belonging to the parish for the common good. Under the power of the Inclosure Act dating back to William IV, the overseer of any parish had the power to enclose waste or common land, less than 50 acres. Taking advantage of this Act, the churchwardens and overseers of Battersea enclosed about 16 acres of Latchmoor Common and let it out in allotments, to the residents for the cultivation of vegetables.

At the start of the seventeenth century, the allotments were flourishing and Battersea had become famous for its market gardening. The gardeners were known for their quality produce which fetched high prices in the London markets and were the first growers to cultivate and introduce asparagus. The gardens were most probably improved by the Huguenots who settled in Wandsworth in 1639.

In the 1870s, it became residential when a housing co-operative founded in 1867 by William Austin, built several thousand small homes on it.

The company was dedicated to providing decent accommodation for the working classes at a time when overcrowding and squalid living conditions were rife amongst the poor. Money was raised to undertake small developments for sale, the proceeds of which were then invested in larger estates, like Shaftesbury Park, for renting.

The land for the Battersea estate was purchased in 1872. The original concept was to combine new housing of various classes with social facilities such as meeting rooms, school rooms, a wash house and baths, and to provide integral open space. One facility certainly not to be provided on the estate was a public house, which was an attempt by the reformers behind the scheme to avoid the social problems of cheap alcohol.

At the same time as the conception of the estate, the social reformer and peer Anthony Ashley-Cooper, 7th Earl of Shaftesbury was pushing legislation through parliament to improve the living and employment conditions of working people and sponsoring philanthropic efforts to provide schooling for their children. Under Shaftesbury's guardianship new so-called Ragged Schools were established providing free education in 1844. On 3 August 1872, Shaftesbury laid the foundation-stone of buildings at the estate, thus giving it a name.

The estate was built between 1873 and 1877 and comprises about 1,200 two-storey houses with gardens laid out in wide tree-lined streets. The estate houses are of four basic types or classes distinguished by the number of rooms (only the highest class originally had bathrooms). The street elevations are varied slightly to avoid monotony, creating generally attractive street frontages.

They are consistently of stock brick with red brick dressings and pitched slate roofs, which gives the estate a sense of identity and distinctiveness. The grid layout, with streets of varying lengths, allows for easy movement throughout the estate. There is a sense of formality in the townscape arising from the grid layout and the repetition in the building frontages.

The Peabody Trust owns most of the estate, but many homes are already privately owned, and the number continues to rise as the Trust gradually releases more units for sale.



The Coaling Jetty

The 110 metre long Coaling Jetty was constructed between 1929 and 1932 as part of the Battersea Power Station. As the name implies the Coaling Jetty received the coal from barges, known as Flatirons, on the River Thames. Coal was then transported via cranes, hoppers and a series of conveyors to the Boiler House. It was decommissioned in 1983. Playing an important role in the overall masterplan for Battersea Power Station, it is an extension of the river walk at Circus West Village.