



Reach out across 600 years of history in Beddington Park with this handy heritage trail leaflet.

Follow the trail around the Park to discover some of the historical structures and features that have shaped the park as we know it today. View centuries old buildings, admire historical bridges and water features, and learn about the people responsible for the park and its changing landscape.

With the exception of the stock pond, all features can be viewed from the level pathways around the park, which are accessible by wheelchair and with pushchairs.



Cover image from an original painting by local artist John Stillman RSMa
www.johnstillman.co.uk

This trail was created by the Neighbourhood Services team, with content support by John Phillips.

Images courtesy of Sutton Archives and Heritage Service

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Or please write to:

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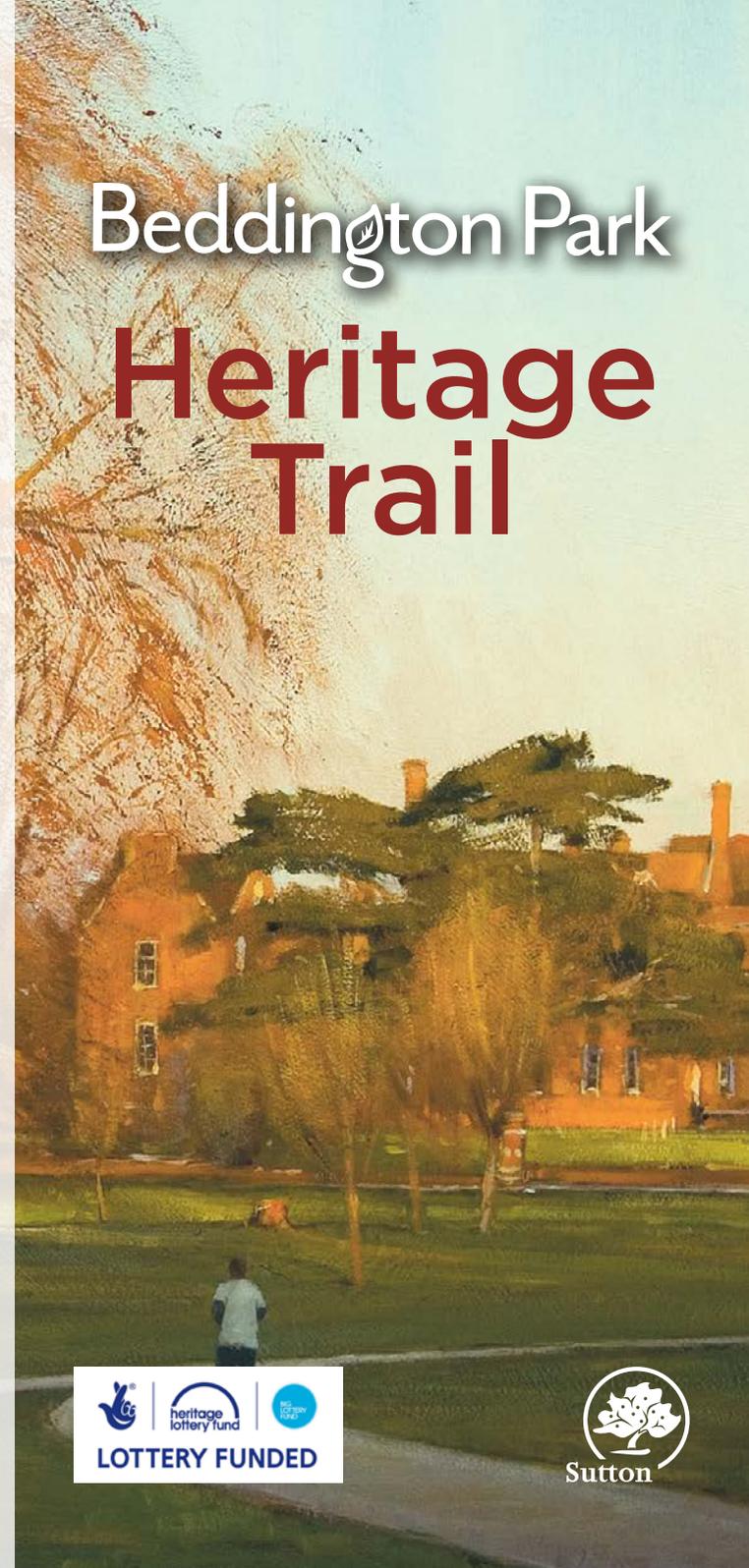
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Beddington Park Heritage Trail



Beddington Park - A brief history

Beddington Park has a rich and extensive history spanning well over 600 years.

Most of the parkland served as part of a much bigger deer park for the Carew Estate, likely created in the 15th century. The Carews' manor house still stands on the edge of the park today (although not in its original form).

This courtier family would have played host to a range of Royal visitors, including Henry VIII and Elizabeth I, who both hunted in the park. The park was briefly owned by Henry VIII after he took possession of it following the execution of Sir Nicholas Carew in 1539.



Sir Nicholas Carew (1496 - 1539)

In the 18th century, Sir Nicholas Carew, 1st Baronet, created a more formal landscape in the park, including tree avenues and lakes.



Parkland opposite Carew Manor, with the lake and avenue created by the 1st Baronet.



The grand opening of the park to the public in 1925

The park was bought by a housing developer, Joseph Borsley, in 1859 and Borsley set about building on the park. Thankfully the park was saved by Canon Alexander Henry Bridges, who at the time was rector at St Mary's Church, Beddington. A number of features in the park can be attributed to Bridges.

The Council acquired the park in stages, with the first section of public park formally opened in 1925.

The Grange Garden

The history of the area known as The Grange Garden is more recent. Until the mid-1800s it was a boggy area which, in the early 19th century, was likely used as a calico bleaching field.

The land was bought in the 1850s by Alfred Smee, surgeon to the bank of England. Smee set about creating an elaborate and notable garden which he described in loving detail in his 1872 book 'My Garden'.

This area of land was subsequently bought, in 1915, by William Mallinson, who is responsible for many of the features in the Grange today, including the small pond and surrounding stonework.



The ornamental pond in the Grange Garden

The Grange was the last area to be purchased by The Council, in 1935, to give us the area of parkland we know today.

In 2017/2018 the park underwent a £3.7m restoration and improvement project, largely funded by the Heritage Lottery and Big Lottery Funds. Work was undertaken to dredge the lake and restore and improve heritage features such as the Grange Garden, the bridges, the stock pond and tree avenues.



The restored stock pond

1. St. Mary's Church

There is mention of a church on this site in the Doomsday book. The current church is not the original. The font dates from about 1180 but the oldest bits of the building are 14th century. A number of changes were made to the church in the 19th century, particularly by Canon Alexander Henry Bridges, who was Rector at Beddington from 1864–1891.



“The font dates from about 1180 but the oldest bits of the building are 14th century”

2. Carew Manor

A house has stood on this site since at least the late 14th century, when Nicholas Carew became established as the 1st Carew of Beddington. The building that stands today is visually Victorian, created in 1864 as the Lambeth Female Orphanage asylum. Beneath the exterior lies older structures, including the original Grade I listed hammer beam roof in the Great Hall, built in 1520. This image shows Carew Manor in the 19th century, with changes made by Sir Nicholas Carew, 1st Baronet, around 1707, including a lake to the east of the building. You can see the dip where the lake once sat, on the area of parkland opposite Carew Manor.



3. East Lodge

The East Lodge was created for Canon Alexander Henry Bridges as an entrance lodge to his park. It was designed by architect Joseph Clarke. It is dated 1877. Joseph Clarke also designed the lych-gates to the churchyard and extension, additions to St. Mary's Church and the original park (tennis) pavilion, which was demolished by 1960. This picture depicts East Lodge and the old park gates in 1931.



4. The Dovecote

The Dovecote was probably one of many additions to the estate in the early 18th century, attributable to Sir Nicholas Carew, 1st Baronet. The pigeons would have been used as food for the household. It is listed Grade II* and a scheduled ancient monument, containing many of the original nest boxes. Periodically it is opened to the general public.



5. The Terracotta Bridge

Also known as Canon Bridge's Bridge, the terracotta bridge was built for Canon Alexander Henry Bridges, likely in the 1870s. It is made of brick, moulded terracotta and Portland stone. The picture shows the aftermath of the great storm of 1987, in which the west side of the terracotta bridge was destroyed by a falling tree. It was rebuilt in 1990.



6. The Stock Pond

The 'Stock Pond' was created sometime between 1868 and 1896, most likely for Canon Alexander Henry Bridges, who owned the parkland from 1871. It is also known as the balancing pond, probably a more appropriate name as there is no evidence to suggest fish stock was reared here. This image shows children sliding on the frozen pond in the 50s. Following heavy silting and overgrowth the pond was restored in 2017/18 thanks to Heritage Lottery Funding.



“Beneath the exterior lies older structures, including the original Grade I listed hammer beam roof in the Great Hall, built in 1520”

7. The Flint Bridge

The flint bridge (the representation adjacent taken from Alfred Smee's book, 'My Garden') appears to have been constructed sometime around 1871, likely for Canon Alexander Henry Bridges. The bridge is faced with flint and limestone in a 'gothic' style.



“You can still see the path that ran through the fernery, as well as the small pond that sat within”

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8. The Fernery and Smee's Stone

Alfred Smee established his garden, in what we now know as The Grange, in the 1860s. His dedication stone can be seen where his fernery once stood. The fernery is one of the few original features of Smee's Garden with remains still visible. This was a glass house used to cultivate ferns. You can still see the path that ran through the fernery, as well as the small pond that sat within.



9. The Rockery

The origin of the rockery is uncertain. The bridge and rockery pictured were likely created for William Mallinson, who owned the garden in the Grange from 1915 until 1935. It appears to be a development of Smee's fern glen area. This space looks similar today but the bridge was replaced by the Council sometime after 1935.



10. The Lake

With the important role that the River Wandle played during the Industrial Revolution, naturally the river through the park linked a number of important mills. The lake in the Grange Garden was originally the mill pond for Wallington Mill. The first record of the mill is early 18th century when it was used for making dyes. In 1792 the lease was bought by William Kilburn, who was a leading textile printer with works just north of the Grange on the west side of London Road. Kilburn demolished Wallington Mill and built a new cotton spinning mill. Subsequent uses included the making of flour, paper and animal feed. It finally became a chocolate factory, which was closed in 1960 and soon made way for the present day car park. Like the stock pond the lake was dredged in 2017/18 as part of the Heritage Lottery Funded project that took place at that time.

