

Painters in the Park *Mary Pollard & Rachel Hirschler*



The delightful scene above is an aquatint by Thomas Sutherland, in the Hearsurn Collection at Pembroke Lodge. It was published way back in 1819, with the image taken from a drawing by John Gendall. Depicted are a typical variety of people enjoying the Park at Richmond Gate: children playing on the grass, someone walking his dogs, a group of figures gathered together enjoying some music, and others having a stroll – much as they would do today. In that era reproduction through engravings was a very popular means of sharing an image with a wider audience.

Today we are aware of a variety of paintings and prints of the Park dating back to the 17th century, many of which you can find listed on the Wikipedia page for Richmond Park. These tell a story of a timeless environment, with the Park today not too different from the Park then. It is reassuring that we can see quite similar images of the Park almost every day on the Friends' Facebook page, where the immediacy of photography enables the artist to

capture moments in history as they occur.

Photographs of the Park are prolific, popular and, thanks to modern technology, dispersed with rapid and widespread accessibility. It is interesting therefore to see someone slow down and reverse the process. Just as the drawing by John Gendall was made into an etching, we see a parallel process in the creation of the more recent painting

(pictured below) by the artist David Stribbling. He has translated a digital image by photographer Paul Sawford into oils, creating a traditional artefact from leading-edge technology.

The Hearsurn Collection of historical material relating to the Park hopes to conserve and preserve artistic works of all kinds for future generations to enjoy. The team is developing plans to open a Heritage Centre in the Park, where its history can be made available to all. You can find out more at www.hearsurncollection.org.uk.

