Welcome to Cremorne Gardens

This book of activities has been designed by Sarah Butler as part of Word Garden, a commission by UP Projects for the Secret Garden Project. Feel free to do as much or as little as you like, and if you’re happy to share your imaginings please upload your writing onto the Word Garden blog: secretgardenproject.wordpress.com (go to Cremorne Gardens) and email any photos to wordgarden@upprojects.com so we can put those online.

Sarah Butler

Exploring Cremorne Gardens

Sarah Butler

What’s the most important journey you’ve made in your life?

BALANCING

Walking on thin air, the papers shouted. Miraculous. Sensational.

“They’re calling me the Female Blondie,” Annie told her mother, who rolled her eyes and fumed at her face, and said she couldn’t think where a daughter of hers had picked up such ideas.

“I’ll be the first person ever to tightrope walk across the Thames,” Annie said.

And why would a person want to do such a thing?, her mother replied. Annie considered telling her what it felt like: to walk across a thread of rope, fifty feet high, to feel the pull and glide of the wind, to defy the laws of the world. It’s not so hard, she considered telling her, once you get the hang of it. It’s all about concentration.

IT’S ALL ABOUT BELIEVING YOU CAN DO IT.

“You’ll fall off and kill yourself,” her mother said. “And don’t go saying I didn’t tell you so.”

ANNE WOULD HAVE LIKED HER MOTHER TO COME AND WATCH.

It would be a thrill; her daughter high up above the boats, on a bridge of her own, crowds clustered on both sides of the river – at Cremorne and Battersea – cheering her on. “The Great Blondie” crossed the gorge at Nags, she said. “One time with a man on his back.”

Another time he sat down and cooked an omelette.

“WELL, I’VE NEVER HEARD ANYTHING LIKE IT,” HER MOTHER SAID.

“I hope you won’t be making breakfast half way across the river with your underwear on show to the world,” Annie sighed. “I’ll just be walking, mother,” she said. Just walking.

What’s the most successful risk you’ve ever taken?

Feel free to do as much or as little

Much more at secretgardenproject.wordpress.com.

Word Garden is commissioned by UP Projects for the Secret Garden Project.
Can you find this seat?

It's known as the poetry seat. Often people leave books here for other people to find and enjoy.

What book would you leave here?

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This book of activities was created to complement a story walk, led by Sarah Butler, as part of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea's InTRANSIT Festival. A commission by UP Projects for the Secret Garden Project. www.secretgardenproject.co.uk www.secretgarden.wordpress.com
Where is your perfect nesting place?

Walk out to the end of the pier and imagine yourself walking across a piece of rope to the other side. What can you see and hear? How do you feel?

Tightrope Walking

In 1861 a woman called Miss A. Young - billed as Madame Genevieve, or the Female Blondin – was the first person to tightrope walk across the Thames. She started at Cremorne Gardens and walked across the river to Battersea.

Pleasure Gardens For Birds

In July 2010, the artists London Fieldwork’s created a new habitat for birds in Cremorne Gardens, inspired by the local architecture. Can you find it?

If you were a bird, where in Cremorne Gardens would you build your nest?
When it comes to defying the odds, cunning gets you further than muscle.

In the competition between the birds, it was the wren who won, not the eagle. As the tiny bird hid in the larger bird’s tail feathers. When the eagle had flown so far as its strength would take it,

THE WHEN REVEALED ITSELF, AND FLUTTERED UP ABOVE THE EAGLE’S HEAD TO BE CROWNED KING OF THE BIRDS,

King-Bird. Little King, Bruin’s Bird. Jenny Wren. Take a feather to ward off disaster, or drowning.

but disturb a nest at your own peril
– it is based on Tacitus, and he is liberal in his use of lightning.

In Latin. Troglodytes troglodytes – cave dweller to you and me. The wren favours dark holes and hidden corners. The female demands a choice of nests from her mate,

SHE TAKES HER TIME DECIDING WHICH TO CALL HOME.

Before they nested here, dooks of their images paid for admission tickets, fortune tellers, shellfish, champagne. There was a girl called Jennifer, who counted up stalks of tawny feathers at the end of each long, colourful night.

THEY WERE WORTH THE LEAST, WEIGHED THE MOST, BUT THEY WERE HER FAVOURITE
– her namesake – short-tailed stubby birds stamped onto the side opposite the king.

WHERE IS YOUR PERFECT NESTING PLACE?

Send your answers to wordgarden@ipprproject.com, or visit Cremorne Garden at www.wordgardenproject.wordpress.com

and then come along to our free story walks at 11.00 & 1.45pm on Monday 17th July.

Wood Garden is commissioned by UP Projects for the Secret Garden Project. www. secretgardenproject.com

Entertainment

Cremorne Gardens was once a much bigger site: a vibrant and popular Victorian Pleasure Garden. Entertainments ranged from a monster oyster-shell grotto, to a scale model of the Swiss Alps, from dancing to theatre, concerts to firework displays, mock battles on the Thames to hot air balloon ascents.

Can you invent a new form of entertainment for the gardens in 2010?
What’s the most successful risk you’ve ever taken?

Ballooning, Balancing, Balconies and Birds are four new texts written by Secret Garden Project writer-in-residence, Sarah Butler.

The texts have been designed to echo the handbills printed for entertainments at Cremorne Gardens when it was a Victorian Pleasure Garden.

They were temporarily installed in Cremorne Gardens from 15 – 27 July.

The texts can be read online and downloaded from www.secretgardenproject.wordpress.com

The texts are printed on the following pages along with related questions for you to answer.

BALLOONING, BALANCING, BALCONIES AND BIRDS