

# Lloyd Park history

Lloyd Park is named after Frank Lloyd, a newspaper magnate who died in 1927. His father Edward Lloyd founded the Lloyd News, later known as The Sunday News, and also the Daily Chronicle. He lived in Coombe House on the Coombe Estate for thirty five years.

Coombe is an ancient home, first recorded in 1221, when the land was held by Richard of Coombe. In the 15th century it was called the Borough of Coombe and by the time of Elizabeth I was known as Broad Coombe. In the 17th century it was owned by Matthew and Daniel Harvey, brothers of William Harvey who demonstrated the circulation of blood. William frequently stayed at the house and had caves made in the grounds in order to gratify his habit of meditating in the dark.

A well in the grounds of the house was said to be used by pilgrims on their journey to join the Pilgrims Way at Titsey. The 1800 plan of the estate shows the owner as James Bourdieu Esq. The plan also shows the field names such as Lower Pit Field, Vineyard Field, Little and New Great Field, Hammonds Hill and Ricketts Hill. There was a small woodland below Hammonds Hill.

A field on the northern boundary of today's park is called The Squashes. This was the name given to a line of springs which emerged between the Thanet sand and underlying chalk. Most of the springs still flow during wet weather but Rippingill is the most frequent one. The water soon soaks through the chalk subsoil which is under most of the park.

On the side of Hammond Hill is a predominant plough bank which was formed in the past by the plough turning around. Little New Field has a similar feature, but this is exaggerated by the change in geology.

Running across Lloyd Park is the Fairfield Footpath which ran from the fair field in central Croydon to the outskirts of the town. The Half-Holiday Handbook (1884) described the route crossing some meadows, fragrant with wild thyme, and terminating at Coombe Lane. This direct route has now been cut off by Lloyd Park.

The late Frank Lloyd, before he died, had the idea of presenting some of his land to the Corporation for playing fields and prepared a plan. After his death the land passed to his daughter Mrs. J.R. Garwood, and she decided to make a gift of the land and so carry out her father's wishes, and at the same time provide some memorial to him which would commemorate his associations with the town.

The parkland contains many old trees and the conditions of the gift included that they should be retained and preserved where possible. Also the Croydon Adult School was to continue to lease land for sports; they still use part of the park today.

During the Second World War the council ploughed some of the land up for planting crops; this was done with the help of the Women's Land Army. When the Parks Committee visited the site in 1946, they were told that 10 acres of land was being cultivated.

The nursery that had served the estate was also used by the Parks Department, for tomatoes during the war, and chrysanthemums at other times.

Lower Pit Field contained a chalk pit which was still visible just after the war, but it had been filled with rubbish and was levelled in the early 1950s.

A pavilion was built in 1963 to accommodate the various sports which take place in the park and in 1969 the children's playground was opened. The playground featured a long slide which went down into one of the old chalk pits.

A new pavilion was constructed in 2008/2009 as part of an agreement between Croydon Council and The National Grids Croydon Cable Tunnel Project. The tunnel runs for 16 kilometers carrying 415kv electric cables.

Following investment from the 'Parks to be Proud of' initiative substantial improvements to the park have been made including:

- Improved access, pathways and signage
- Childrens playground
- Outdoor gym