Grotto

The Grotto and the waterfalls were created, probably in the 1880’s, from Pulhamite stone. This is an artificial rock made from Portland stone, cement and rubble and moulded to create planting pockets for ferns. The stone was made by the Pulham Brothers who also worked at Buckingham Palace. When they died, the ‘recipe’ for the stone was lost.

Origin of Cawtes and Winnards

Holly Hill is divided into two halves, known as Cawtes Copse and Winnards Copse. The former was named after one of two brothers, William and Robert Cawte. William owned the estate and Robert rented it in 1838. Winnards is shown as Winwards Wood in the 1838 the map.

A brief history

The history of the landscaped gardens of Holly Hill goes back to the nineteenth century when successive owners extended the lakes and planted the grounds with exotic species. Most of the landscaping seems to have been done in the 1880’s by Quentin Hogg who only owned the gardens for ten years. There were rumours it was designed by Sir Joseph Paxton, who designed the Crystal Palace.

George Winn bought the lake gardens and built Holly Hill Mansion between 1905 and 1907 and also created the Sunken Garden.

The park is a haven for wildlife with butterflies such as the Holly Blue and Purple Hairstreak, which flourish in the broadleaved woodlands. Kingfishers and many species of wildfowl are regularly seen around the lakes which are filled with many colourful species of fish. There are eleven lakes at Holly Hill, all separated by rock waterfalls with islands covered with ornamental trees and shrubs, azaleas and tree ferns.

The park is designated a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation.

Planting

The Coastal Redwood is known locally as the ‘Punch Tree’ due to its soft bark. The bark is fire resistant and designed to protect the plant from the fierce forest fires of its Californian home. This tree probably dates from the 1860’s and is one of the oldest trees on the site.

Origin of woodland

Most of Holly Hill is broadleaved woodland. An old boundary bank surrounds the Alder woods along the stream which are particularly rich in wildlife. Sunny glades are created by thinning trees, allowing more wildflowers, birds and insects to flourish.

Sunken Garden

The Sunken Garden was restored in 1998, based on photos donated to Holly Hill by Miss Katharine Winn, daughter of Colonel George Winn who built the Mansion. The Camellia in the garden was planted inside a greenhouse when the house was built, but as it grew, the building around it was taken down.

River

From the viewpoint you can see the River Hamble, which is internationally important for wildlife. The meadows and the reedbed are ideal places to spot birds such as Reed Warbler, Lapwing or Little Egret.