

# Thornton Heath Recreation Ground

## history

Thornton Heath Recreation Ground was one of the earlier open spaces to be acquired by the Council. The first part of the ground was acquired in 1884 to serve the built-up area of Thornton Heath, however, by 1891 one of the clubs using the ground was complaining that it was "miserably small" for cricket and it was argued that the Council as a safety measure should forbid half the games played there on Saturdays.

In 1894 a further 5 1/2 acres of ground were acquired and laid out. The footpath that runs through the Park from Melfort Road to Bridport Road provides the divide between the two land acquisitions and is a right of way.

Beside the footpath, on the site of the childrens playground, there used to be a bandstand where visitors to the park would gather in the summer to listen to visiting bands. The Park was so well used that it was reported in 1948 that "the ground has been used to such an extent that it is now bare of grass and in order to reinstate it to its former condition it must be closed for at least 9 months."

Running along the western boundary of the park in a deep concrete channel is Norbury Brook, most of the time the brook is fairly shallow but during heavy rainfall water quickly drains from the adjacent built up areas and the water level rapidly rises. In July 1987 a new ornamental garden was opened by the Mayor of Croydon. While staff were constructing the garden they located a number of underground tunnels which had been built during the last World War to serve as air raid shelters.

More recently investment in the park through the 'Parks to be Proud of' initiative has allowed substantial improvements to the childrens playground, games courts, the provision of a nine station outdoor gym and artificial cricket wicket.