

## Birkenhead Park

The moon admires its reflection on a Victorian lake  
The silence is stirred by the sound of a fatal mistake  
A flutter of feathers, an assassin's claws  
A field mouse is swept away by an irresistible force

A world that is seldom seen & very rarely heard  
The kingdom of the hedgehog, the bat & the bird  
The night is getting sleepy & it won't be long  
Before we are awoken by the blackbirds' song

The sun peeks through at the start of the day  
The wind steadily sweeps the clouds & the cobwebs out of the way  
An air of anticipation of what today will bring  
As dew drops dance down the chains of the swing

The nocturnal activity of the Tawny Owl  
Has been substituted by the shouts of the Sunday morning fowl  
The grounds man looks with pride at his well prepared wicket  
As a "staff" chases a squirrel which just isn't cricket

A murmuration of starlings deciding on a vote  
While the moorhens & swans nonchalantly float  
Pigeons wait greedily but I'm afraid they're out of luck  
The last crust of bread is gobbled up by a duck

A sanctuary, a haven for humans & wildlife alike  
A place to reflect on thoughts of modern life  
Vibrant, picturesque, functional & fun  
An idyllic setting for a winter walk or just basking in the sun

I'd arrived in pursuit of personal pleasure  
Not realising the wealth of hidden treasure  
Once visited it leaves on the mind an indelible mark  
The landscaped beauty which is Birkenhead Park

James Dillon  
Oak first prize

## The World in Birkenhead Park

Birkenhead Park was meant to be stunning – to wipe away local despair,  
Offer space, peace, texture and colour, another world from urban nightmare.  
The hallowed space, had to make worlds of difference, open minds, and offer real  
hope,  
show that everyday life, could mean more than survival, and to help working folk,  
cope.  
Birkenheadians, could feel, sense and wonder, special trees grown in far away sands.  
Climb into alpine ravines and touch architecture from strange textbook lands,  
In the soil would be trillions of insects, toiling away, in their vast insect worlds,  
The Park sheltered their drives and perceptions, allowed courtship twixt, their  
boys and girls.

Now through the Triumphal Arch, come all the tourists, and students of  
landscape design.  
They've flown in from New York and Osaka, to visit the famous shrine.  
The birthplace of all public places, offering flora, to dark urban towns,  
A place where the environment's cherished, by folk in denim, or Parisian gowns.  
Now here come the ladies in saris, and African men with elan,  
Birkenhead has become multi-racial, reflecting Paxton's complex world plans.  
Now here come all nations of children, escaping their harsh urban yards,  
stepping into magnificent world of adventure, that softens the normally hard,  
life - that they lead, and offering sinuous lakes, that sparkle in radiant sun,  
With hints of the great seas and oceans, that makes us all one....WORLD  
One world in Birkenhead Park

John Cocker  
Oak second prize

## Googling the park

As I sit at my computer and type Google Earth,  
I find where I was born, Birkenhead my place of birth  
It's incredible to look at on the Wirral peninsular turf  
Surrounded by two rivers, and waves of Irish surf  
And when you zoom a little closer, the park where I had played,  
with child and adult memories, such grand expanse displayed  
And now I look in wonder how the vision was to be  
The history of the people comes flooding into me  
How brave was Wirral then, the courage to explore  
The possibilities of happiness, had opened many doors  
Now all the people from years gone by, who trod on worn out paths  
Had trailed the area of Birkenhead of Wirral's thorny grass  
Vikings from a land so far, trudged footprints in the ground,  
And Saxons with gold they pillaged, left traces of lives behind, hidden  
In the silt and sand, centuries past for us to find.  
The land lay low, with marshland spread, in bleak and sober light  
And bracken hilly crofts abound, harsh life, and winds would bite  
Laden with the birch trees, that took over the ground,  
The name place of the birk and head was made, and so forth truly found  
The birk was meaning of the birch, were abundant on our lands  
Chopped down dramatically with strong and forceful hands  
A park now called Birkenhead was then a small idea  
It became the dream the world renowned so far and yet so near  
Communities of every kind were formed, with clapping hands  
They'd sing and dance, and walk and talk to the music of the bands  
Today in twenty ten the vision still remains, the first people's park is lush and  
green  
With happy memories treasured.  
Pauline Coughlan  
Oak third prize