



The play industry is currently experiencing some

seismic changes. Not only has the government listened and put aside some much needed cash for play space, they are also, under the guidance of Play England, trying to revolutionise play space design for the better.

There are some detractors from this initiative, claiming that the programme is running too quickly, that independent design offers poor value for money and that natural play spaces just won't last. At Timberplay whilst we accept some things could be done better and some mistakes have occurred, we welcome the Playbuilder programme wholeheartedly.

This is the opportunity that the industry has been looking for to make that giant leap from sterile, flat and unimaginative KFC (Kit, Fence and Carpet) playgrounds, to well designed natural play spaces.

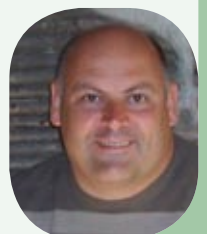
I have been hugely impressed by many local authorities, who have moved quickly and decisively to create new play spaces, already much loved by the communities that they serve. They have cast aside old fears and embraced risk in the interests of creating good play opportunities

Unfairly, some attacks have been made against the trend towards independent design. Whilst admittedly, some designers have over designed play spaces or exposed their inexperience of play, many more have delivered excellent and innovative play spaces. To focus only on

design costs is to the detriment of quality. With our in-house landscape designers we have trail blazed the approach of designing the space (rather than simply locating equipment) long before Playbuilder. However, we also understand the constraints that procurement processes place on a full design service for equipment companies. To consistently get the best quality result, we believe that design is worth paying for and advocate the use of independent landscape designers with experience in play space design.

Finally, there is the problem of maintaining natural play spaces and the safety of natural play features. Again, I accept there have been some mistakes, but if we are not careful, over-reacting to these will send us back to the bad old days of the KFC. The priority is to create good spaces for play that children enjoy and where parents also enjoy being. If we keep these fundamental priorities at the forefront of our thinking, then we will persevere with designing more natural play spaces, consequently changing attitudes, maintenance procedures and expectations. Think about it, if some flowers were stolen or vandalised in a park, would we say, "we can't have flowers in any of our parks any more" or would we say "flowers are important - we need to find a different way to manage the problem"

Paul Collings, Director Timberplay



New North Kensington adventure playground sets the pace for Pathfinder!

A Phase 1 £400,000 development in Little Wormwood Scrubs opened at the start of July and attracted a staggering 500 children on the opening day and since then has averaged around 150 children per day.

Paul Williamson, Head of Extended Services at the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea, who leads on the Play Pathfinder programme in Kensington and Chelsea, comments on why they were so excited by the Timberplay designs: -

“As Timberplay structures are constructed primarily from timber they suited the environment of Little Wormwood Scrubs exceptionally well. Their designs embraced the existing landscape, for example the nearby trees have been incorporated into the design to provide scope for climbing and exploring. Timberplay worked hard within a short time frame to deliver our bespoke playground in time for the Summer Holidays.

We are delighted with the finished playground, as are the children who are travelling from the surrounding area to make the most of the adventure playground.”



The project benefited from the input of the Children’s Forum, which brings together local children aged 5 - 13. Involved from day one, the children have been instrumental in making the adventure playground designs suitable for all, including children with disabilities. The Pyramid Structure and the Inclined Climbing Panel have been adapted to make them more accessible, and the sensory and landscape elements are enjoyable for all playground users.

This development is the first large adventure playground to be opened under the Pathfinder initiative, and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea are keen to use this project as a flagship for the wider community.

Timberplay Set Sail at Princess Diana Memorial Garden

After 8 years of exceptionally heavy use the Adventure Playground at the Princess Diana Memorial Garden was in need to some updating, so the Royal Parks called in Timberplay to carry out a £150,000 refurbishment.

Welcoming over 1 million children every year the playground needs to be able to withstand the heavy rigours it is subjected to. The centre piece of the playground is a huge wooden pirate ship, which is now in possession of a new deck and new sails, ready to take to the seas once again.

In addition to repairing the ship and rope bridges, Timberplay have also installed several new pieces of kit to enhance the play value of the park. A new tunnel under an embankment is proving extremely popular with children with a strong sense of adventure. And the water play area now benefits from a new pump. Striking new landscape

pieces include some rustic fencing and a pergola.

The entire refurb took only a month and visitors are showing their ongoing appreciation by riding the waves, swash buckling, and navigating the four corners of the playspace.



Doing it naturally at Rotherham's Clifton Park!

One of Rotherham's biggest and best-used parks is currently undergoing a massive redevelopment and using Timberplay to provide some of the key pieces central to the project. Clifton Park has received significant funding from both the Big Lottery Fund and the Department of Children, Schools and Families as part of their Path Finder initiative and is using this to create a series of fantastic play areas throughout the park.

Andrew Cottage from LDA Design, a leading UK landscape design consultancy, is managing the project on behalf of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council. He comments: -

"Clifton Park has been a great attraction for families in Rotherham for many years and this new Path Finder funding has enabled the Council to freshen up the park and the play facilities. The new style of the park is very inclusive and accessible. The distinct areas are



woven into the natural landscape of the park, exploiting the landform and existing trees to provide fantastic opportunities for play. Age groups are not segregated so that children can play in areas where they feel most comfortable with the level of challenge provided and are not separated from their siblings."

Highlights of the new park include the sand area, which includes Timberplay's building stations, diggers and waterpumps, and a waterplay area.

Frasdorf trip provides plenty of inspiration for all

Timberplay made another trip to Germany earlier this year, taking a lucky group of clients, landscape architects and planners along to see play space design, German style. The hub of the trip was a visit to the Richter Factory in Frasdorf to meet the team behind the innovative product range.

Liane Kavanagh, Landscape Architect at Roger Griffiths Associates Ltd.

The factory visit and the trip to the Playmobil Fun Park were real highlights for me. On arrival at the Fun Park I instantly reverted to my childhood antics. Dizzy with excitement and set free to discover a whole world of delights, I happily clambered, slid, and swung all day until I felt nauseous!

The visits to various play spaces gave us designers a first hand opportunity to experience the play value of products we often see in catalogues. It also gave us time to observe how children, teenagers and adults play together if given the opportunity. As a play space designer it is important to have the ability to see a space through the eyes of many different age ranges and user groups.

Plenty of inspiration to take back to the office and the drawing board!

Kevin Barton, Landscape Architect at White Design.

The case studies we saw in Germany showed just what could be achieved by quality integrated play spaces and a thorough understanding of what makes children tick. The possibilities of Timberplay's product range could sit well within many of our consultancy's projects, particularly our sustainable school and public building projects.

Meeting Julian Richter was an amazing experience. The way he talked so knowledgeably and passionately about his company and natural play was truly inspirational.

There was a great synergy between the philosophy of Richter and White Design – great to see how they have developed such a successful model for their company.

Thanks for a great trip Timberplay.



big love to the wood!

and big love to timberplay and richter for their incredible hospitality and inspiration

Inclusive Play comes to The Metrocentre

Children visiting Europe's largest Shopping and Leisure Centre, The Metrocentre in Gateshead can now let off some steam in the new playspace which features Timberplay equipment.

The new playground represents the best in inclusive play, providing challenging play opportunities for younger children. Key items are the wheelchair carousel, dance chimes and the central tower unit, which incorporates a climbing wall, ropes, a fireman's pole, and leads into a suspension bridge.



Call now for your new brochure!

3 new, updated brochures are now available from Timberplay. Movement by Climbing, demonstrates many of the climbing products available from Timberplay and how they can be used to enhance any play area.

Acoustic and Play, brings together many of the sound elements offered by Timberplay that will give a unique flavour to your play park.

In addition, the new Graubner catalogue is now available showcasing all sensory pieces of equipment from Richter.

All catalogues are available in either hard copy or on disc. To order your copy call 0845 458 9118.

CPD in Children's Play!

Timberplay is offering CPD courses FREE to any Landscape Architects interested in managing their learning and growth in the area of children's play.

Paul Collings, MD at Timberplay will be running the courses which are focused firmly on the benefits that this professional development can bring to Landscape Architects involved in designing children's play areas.

The short course looks at the latest trends in children's play including the Play Strategy and the impact of Pathfinder, Playbuilder.

"We have run several CPD sessions so far and the feedback has been very positive. We run the FREE courses because there are some very interesting and fast moving developments in children's play design that everyone involved in play should be aware of. We very much believe that it is not what is learnt on the course that is important but how people use what they have learned that matters," says Paul.

If you are interested in the FREE CPD sessions call 0845 458 9118.

Wedded Bliss

Timberplay, Sales and Design Manager, Ben Harbottle is in a celebratory mood after marrying his girlfriend of 2 years Claire. We would all like to raise our glasses to the happy couple and wish them all the best!



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