



1990 THE FRIENDS OF BUSHY & HOME PARKS 25th ANNIVERSARY 2015

Newsletter

Spring 2015

From the Chair



Welcome to the spring newsletter; as I write this the temperature stubbornly refuses to move upwards but evidence of spring is all around. Notably it is that time of year when, on days with clear blue skies, the song of the skylark can be heard. It is quite often heard but rarely seen; the male rises to incredible heights

as he tries to stake a claim on a territory and, of course, to attract a female. He will then parachute back down to the ground where especially in Bushy Park, as there is an abundance of anthills, he will sing from the top of a favourite mound. There are two main areas where skylarks can be seen; south of Upper Lodge Road which is a large area of acid grassland, a habitat that this species requires. It likes to build its nest well-hidden under a grass canopy. The other area where they are found is the corner south of the Oval Plantation; here signs have been erected asking for dogs to be put on short leads and the public to keep to pathways. Last year the park had at least 18 pairs present and breeding was confirmed at 12 sites.

Looking ahead, we are finalising the details of the special Summer Party on 24 July which will celebrate our 25th anniversary. We are delighted that our patron Cleve West is able to join us and share his work developing the award-winning sensory garden at the Spinal Treatment Centre in Salisbury. This project was initiated by Horatio Chapple who died in truly horrific circumstances at the North Pole, but whose legacy is inspirational. Following the talk there will be a wide choice of food and drinks supplied by the Colicci café team along with a special musical accompaniment. It has all the makings of a very memorable evening; hope to see you there.

Annie Murray

25th Anniversary Supplement



Included with this newsletter is a special supplement to celebrate 25 years of the Friends of Bushy and Home Parks. All our chairs describe the highlights of their terms of office and those managing the parks offer their perspectives. We hope you will enjoy reading about past achievements while hearing about present activities and looking to the future.

Dates for your diary

Thursday 23 April 2015

BRICK BY BRICK - THE BUILDING AND BUILDINGS OF HAMPTON WICK

Talk by Ray Elmitt

St John Ambulance Hall, Park Road, Teddington, commencing at 8.00 pm

Refreshments will be available from 7.15 pm

Saturday 2 May 2015

MINI BEAST WALK FOR CHILDREN

Meet at 10.30 am at the Information Point, Woodland Gardens, Bushy Park

Pre-booking essential: contact Jane Cliff on

020 8287 4609 or jane.cliff@blueyonder.co.uk

(Suitable for children between 5 and 11 years old accompanied by a responsible adult)

Sunday 10 May 2015

CHESTNUT SUNDAY

Parade starts at 12.30 pm

from Teddington Gate

Saturday 16 May 2015

HOME PARK PADDOCKS

Walk led by Nicholas Garbutt

Meet at 10.00 am at Lion Gate, Hampton Court

(This walk is over uneven ground and will last approximately 3 hours)

Thursday 28 May 2015

SSSI IN BUSHY PARK

Talk by Julia Clark

St John Ambulance Hall, Park Road, Teddington, commencing at 8.00 pm

Refreshments will be available from 7.15 pm

Saturday 13 June 2015

OLD HAMPTON VILLAGE

Walk led by Johanna Coombes

Meet at 11.00 am at St Mary's Church

Thames Street, Hampton TW12 2EB

(There is a £3 per head charge for this walk)

Friday 24 July 2015

25th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

With a talk by Cleve West

Pheasantry Café, Woodland Gardens, Bushy Park

(See enclosed invitation)

The River Thames Boat Project talk



When Martin Emerson was Mayor of Richmond he wanted to increase people's use and knowledge of the River Thames which runs through the borough. In 1988 he started a charity which bought a Dutch barge, the Thames Venturer, for £1 and had it fitted out with a galley, bunks and disabled access.

On 22 January Miranda Jagers, executive director of the River Thames Boat Project, gave an illustrated talk about their current work. The barge is moored in Kingston and can go up river as far as Shepperton and down to Putney on day trips. The educational programme includes school and teacher training visits in fixed locations. It is also used for residential voyages by, amongst others, disabled ex-servicemen and young people with cancer.

The charity now has four members of staff as well as many volunteers who maintain and crew the barge. It is used so much that they are now hoping to acquire another, smaller, vessel to increase their work which is so greatly appreciated. Further details can be found at: www.thamesboatproject.org

Explore the Woodland and Water Gardens walk



On 14 February David Ivison and Pieter Morpurgo guided us on a walk of two parts. Starting from the Pheasantry Café, David led the walk through the Woodland Gardens pointing out some of the more interesting trees and explaining what made them so special. He also highlighted some of the works that the Friends had been involved with over the last year such as the purchasing and planting of a new hedgerow and an area of bulbs.

Pieter took over to visit the Water Gardens and gave an update on one further piece of work to be done. The 18th century painting "A View of the Cascade, Bushy Park Water Gardens", used as the inspiration for the restoration, shows that the inner walls of the arches were painted to give the effect that there was a tunnel behind the waterfall; this was purely a painted illusion. Discussions are currently underway with an artist to reproduce a similar effect. Money has been found to create these paintings and, although we are struggling with the budget despite a very generous donation, we are hoping that they will be in place later this year.

The painting "**A View of the Cascade, Bushy Park Water Gardens**" from the studio of Marco Ricci is now on show in an exhibition called "Painting Paradise: The Art of the Garden" at The Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace from Friday 20 March until Sunday 11 October 2015.

Annual General Meeting talk by Linda Lennon



When Linda Lennon, Chief Executive of The Royal Parks, came to talk at the Annual General Meeting on 6 March it was the final engagement of a long, busy day. She has happy childhood memories of Bushy Park and had been delighted to spend the whole day being shown the current situation by Ray Brodie, the park manager.

Her talk highlighted issues, particularly those concerning Bushy Park, from the recent Ipsos MORI visitor survey of The Royal Parks. The budget for running the eight Royal Parks is £35 million. Of that £250,000 was the cost of work to control the oak processionary moth nests in Richmond and Bushy Parks. It seems that current government expenditure plans are for more funding cuts. Linda expressed her very grateful thanks for the work of all volunteers in the Parks.

Linda sees her job as trying to balance the needs of the many inhabitants and users of the Parks. She was pleased to say that varied habitats are being maintained and that a fungus new to Bushy Park, the bearded tooth fungus, has recently been found. The ongoing challenge is to satisfy those seeking peace and quiet, as well as those wanting to follow active pursuits.

Red Boat Swings in Bushy Park

Readers may remember the photograph of Walter Bishop standing next to a swing boat printed in the Summer 2013 issue of the newsletter. Here his granddaughter gives us more details of her research into the family's history.

In 1892 part of a letter addressed to HM Office of Works, responsible for the running and upkeep of the Royal Parks at this time, said: "Sir, I beg respectfully to ask the favour....to erect 1 set of children's swings in Bushy Park where the Children's School Treats are held, and for them to stand for the season". (Works 16/1532, The National Archives, Kew) The 'respectful' request was made by Mr George Bishop, a local man. This was the commencement of a yearly agreed licence for the boat swings to appear in Bushy Park. They were still in existence well into the 1960s! Many people, their children and grandchildren, will remember the bright red boat swings and the thick cords and tassels. It appears in records of 1897 that the swings were sometimes hired out to school parties of children but it was preferred generally to pay the individual price per turn (of five minutes) which was ½d (a ha'penny in old money) for children under 14 years old using the small swings and 1d (a penny) for the use of the large swings. Initially Mr Bishop paid £2 for the season's 'leave' to erect swings which was agreed in those days by the Bailiff of the Parks. In 1914 the annual charge to George Bishop was £6 compared to £110 for 'similar privileges' on Hampton Court Green. It was pointed out that "In Bushy and Petersham there is never a crowd of well-to-do people and no stalls are allowed to be sublet. The swings are used chiefly by poor children who come down for school treats throughout the whole summer and the charge is only ½d. Such a class cannot afford to spend much on amusement, and I think it would be a great pity to disturb the present tenant who takes an interest in the children..." These children came mainly from East London.

Sadly, George died in 1915 but his wife Christina Bishop, who lived to be a week short of 104 years, and her sons continued the business/tradition of annually renewing the licence to erect swings for the London children as well as the local community. The Bishop family were very concerned that the children could look forward to coming to Bushy Park each year. Re-building and maintenance of the red boat swings were carried out by the Bishop sons, Walter and Will in particular who were carpenters like their father, all of whom were able to carry out work to a high standard as required by the authorities. Out of season the swings were stored in the Pheasantry and short term storage in season was in the 'Pavilion enclosure'. As far as the present Bishop family is concerned, the swings are long gone but it would be interesting to learn what finally happened to them. If anyone knows anything of the swings or can provide photos it would be greatly appreciated.

Gill Cook (great granddaughter of George and Christina Bishop)

Celebrate the SSSI walk

On Saturday 21 March Pippa Hyde led a walk from Diana Fountain car park around the ponds to Millennium Wood and across the acid grassland of Hare Warren. Bushy and Home Parks were designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest in September 2014 and await formal confirmation from Natural England.



Pippa stressed that the designation should not have any impact on people's enjoyment of the parks, but will however put a responsibility on the parks' staff to consider how they will manage the landscape without causing undue harm to the flora and fauna.

The other Bushy Park

A few months ago while searching online for some information about Bushy Park, I realised that ours was not the only one in the world! A recent holiday to New Zealand



gave us the chance to visit the other one. It is in the north island, near the town of Wanganui, about three hours drive north from Wellington. The historic Bushy Park Homestead, which provides B&B accommodation, is set in a 240 acre sanctuary surrounded by a pest-proof fence. This protects rare birds living in the native forest. See www.bushyparksanctuary.org.nz for further information.

Claire Ivison

The Royal Parks visitor survey

The Royal Parks commissioned Ipsos MORI to conduct visitor counts and interviews across all eight Royal Parks during 2013 and 2014. The research results have recently been published and show that over 77.7 million visits were made during the year from November 2013, with 98% of interviewees rating the quality of the parks as Excellent or Good. The full report can be found on The Royal Parks website:

<https://www.royalparks.org.uk/park-management/visitor-research>

The research conducted in Bushy Park identifies several points which readers may find noteworthy:

- The total number of visits to Bushy Park over the period of research is reported to be 2.38 million, which is the lowest number among the eight parks.
- 99% of visitors interviewed scored Bushy Park as Excellent or Good on park quality overall.
- The park is rated Very Safe or Quite Safe by 99% of visitors.
- Most visits to Bushy Park are for durations of 1 to 2 hours, mainly for reasons of relaxation, exercise and getting fresh air.
- Bushy Park scores highest of the parks for Peace and Quiet.
- The quality of the natural environment in Bushy Park scored 98%.
- The research reports that 63% of visits involved travel by car to the park.
- Bushy Park scored lowest of the eight parks among interviewees for its Signposting and Maps, for Information on Park Features and for Visibility of Park Staff.

The findings will help The Friends of Bushy and Home Parks to identify matters of interest to us about the Park's environment and management, and will aid our dialogue with The Royal Parks.

Colin Muid

New committee member



We welcome Colin Muid as a member of the committee. Colin has been a resident of Hampton and denizen of Bushy Park for over 40 years. A former senior civil servant and IT professional for 30 years, he worked for the Metropolitan Police, Home Office, Treasury and Cabinet Office. He then became managing director of an IT consulting company, and a non-executive director of HM Prison Service and the National Offender Management Service. Colin is now retired and walks in Bushy Park at least twice a week all through the year regardless of the weather. He is also an Information Point volunteer.

Advice from the parks

The flying of drones or model aircraft in Bushy Park is prohibited.

The deer have started casting their antlers and you may see what appears to be bleeding from the roots; this is quite normal.

Committee 2015 - 2016

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Electronic newsletter

We would encourage as many Friends as possible to sign up to receive the quarterly newsletter electronically. Please email your request to newsletter@fbhp.org.uk

If you have any comments about this newsletter or information you would like to share with us you can email newsletter@fbhp.org.uk

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