



Newsletter

Spring 2018

From the Chair

Visitors to Bushy Park come in their millions over a year, although visitors to Home Park are substantially fewer in number. So why do they come to the parks? Dog walkers come to exercise their dogs and themselves, carrying their little bags of warm deposits. Park Runners keep fit, hoping their times are not too awful and they won't pull a muscle again. Cyclists come knowing their Lycra-clad bodies do not look quite so appalling when hidden by trees. Bird watchers stand to spot that elusive subject and keep coming back because it remains elusive. Photographers arrive to catch the dawn or dusk light and an exceptional image, and instead



catch a cold from the early start or late finish. Cricket and rugby teams train and play in competitions, hoping that victory not defeat is the result. Model boat club members sail their craft across the pond imagining it is the full-size version on the Caribbean Sea. Rambler groups mark off another trail on their list and discover the park is more interesting than they expected. Families seek some fresh air, to let the kids play and stop arguing in the house. Young mums with their babies meet other mums to have an adult conversation and discover that their child is not so bad at sleeping/eating/whatever. Sunday morning walkers set off at a pace to gain an appetite for lunch, hoping that the slow cooker was left turned on. Grandparents take grandchildren to feed the ducks, see the deer and squirrels, finding ways to fill the interminable-seeming time before the parents can relieve them. Tourists wander in to the park, having spent part of the day at Hampton Court Palace, and are surprised to discover there is somewhere in London that has free entry.

Our parks serve many different purposes for visitors, and we

Dates for your diary

Thursday 26 April 2018

GRACE AND FAVOUR RESIDENTS AT HAMPTON COURT PALACE

Talk by Ian Franklin

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

Refreshments will be available from 7.15 pm

Sunday 6 May 2018

CHESTNUT SUNDAY

Parade starts at 12.30 pm

from Teddington Gate, Bushy Park

Saturday 26 May 2018

TREES OF BUSHY PARK

Walk led by Ray Brodie, park manager

Meet 11.00 am

Pheasantry Information Point, Bushy Park

Thursday 28 June 2018

TRAVELS WITH "THE SKY AT NIGHT"

Talk by Pieter Morpurgo

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

Refreshments will be available from 7.15 pm

Friday 13 July 2018

A SUMMER EVENING AT THE PHEASANTRY

6.30 to 9.30 pm, Pheasantry Café, Woodland Gardens, Bushy Park

(See enclosed invitation - for FBHP members only)

hope they all enjoy and respect the parks. To help them, the Friends of Bushy and Home Parks have produced a revised Tread Lightly leaflet with some simple things visitors can do to help protect Bushy Park and its beautiful wildlife. Our messages encourage good behaviour, for example, what ducks like to eat and why bread is harmful; why deadwood is left undisturbed as the habitat for rare invertebrates; how litter is deadly for deer and should be properly disposed of; and many other informative notes, reinforcing the positive to avoid the negative. If you visit the Information Point ask for the leaflet. You may learn something, or you can pass it on to a new visitor. Enjoy the parks in your own way and tread lightly in them our way.

Colin Muid

'Encounters in Bushy Park - a photographic record' talk



Iggy Tavares is a very keen photographer and, as became apparent from his descriptions of trips to Bushy Park, also a very patient one. He was so pleased with the pictures from his first visit in early 2017 that he returned several times as he became increasingly adept at reading situations with wildlife as they developed in front of his camera.

As Iggy displayed a series of photographs illustrating his encounters with wildlife and the confrontations between various inhabitants of the park, he explained that he uses one camera with a good zoom lens and often takes multiple shots as a scene unfolds. He only visits if the weather is good, he tries to identify a likely location, then sits and waits for the action to take place.

There were several photographs of swans, at times fiercely defending their young and later in the year swimming serenely with their cygnets. Some pictures showed encounters between human and canine park visitors with the wild inhabitants. Iggy spent most of his visits near Leg of Mutton, Heron and the Boating Ponds, and captured some particularly spectacular shots of deer as well as birds. To many in the audience who like to record photographically the life of Bushy Park, Iggy's images offered inspiration.

A walk around Twickenham Riverside

Our walk, on 17 February, was preceded by a visit to St Mary's church where Diana Wells, member of the Friends, is archivist. She gave us a brief history from its pre-medieval origins, the collapse of the building in 1713, its replacement by a city-style church attached to the older tower and the many changes, especially to the interior, which have taken place since.

Then Johanna Coombes led us on a guided walk along Church Street and the riverside, through York House gardens, into Orleans House gardens, past Montpelier Row and ending in Marble Hill park. On the way we heard about many residents and visitors, including Alexander Pope, Thomas Twining, Mary Wallace, Ratan Tata, local ferrymen, Nellie Ionides, Lord Tennyson and the French royal family. Several stories showed how some of the open areas we value today have been saved from development, and even long-time residents of the area were taken to previously undiscovered lanes and passages.



'The Royal Parks in the 21st century' talk by Loyd Grossman



Prior to the Annual General Meeting on 2 March we welcomed Loyd Grossman as both chairman of The Royal Parks (TRP) board, and a fellow Friend, to give his views on the challenges facing those charged with managing these important green sites in London. Loyd is also president of the Arts Society, chair of the Heritage Alliance and chair of the Churches Conservation Trust; so he has wide experience in this area.

Since July 2017 TRP have been run as an independent charity, giving greater flexibility in financial planning than when they were part of a government department bound by Treasury accounting practices. The patron is HRH Prince Charles and the charity's objects are to protect, conserve, maintain and care for the eight parks and one cemetery, often with the help of Friends groups. The parks play an important part in the quality of life of the 77 million Londoners and tourists who visit them each year. A careful balance must be struck between the right to free access at all times and the pressures that large numbers of people can bring. There are also environmental challenges, and pests and diseases to consider. Funds need to be raised without allowing too much commercial activity in the parks, and the sometimes-conflicting requirements of the many stakeholders have to be taken into consideration.

Loyd's commitment to maintaining TRP as the best urban parks in the world and continuing the important role that they play in the life of the nation, was evident from his presentation. The upkeep of the land and buildings has to be carried out in a financially sustainable way now and in the future. Loyd, and more than 60 Friends who attended his talk, were thanked for making the journey to the excellent lecture theatre at the National Physical Laboratory in such inclement weather conditions.

News from Home Park

- The estates team have been planting additional trees within Home Park. They include the British native species of oak, hawthorn, aspen and lime.
- The estates team have also been working with the Thames Landscape Strategy and the Swingbridge Project to plant a new length of native hedging within the Paddocks near to Surbiton Passage; see <http://www.surreycaretrust.co.uk/our-programmes-home/community-boats/enviroboat/>
- The cold weather has led to an increase in lapwing sightings in the local area including in Home Park and the Paddocks.
- One of the poplars on Barge Walk which shielded the park from a view of Kingston has collapsed and been cut down; unfortunately cutting back was not an option as the tree was diseased.
- Due to recent snow falls, supplementary food has been provided for the deer.

February bulb planting

Hampton Wick Association had a large number of bulbs that were surplus to requirements and at risk of being composted; so we volunteered to take them off their



hands and plant them in Bushy Park. Under the direction of Sharon Evans, head gardener, and Shorty the dog, a small but hardy group gathered in sub-zero temperatures on 5 February to plant daffodils and narcissi in and around the car park area at the Pheasantry. This will certainly bring some springtime cheer to this location.

Annie Murray

Home Park walk

A group of over 30 entered Home Park on 24 March through Paddocks Gate and Russell Downs, wildlife officer, stopped by a map to point out the 'goose foot' design formed by the Long Water and two avenues. As we walked alongside the Long Water, Russell talked about his role and identified the planting to which the Friends have contributed from 2017 appeal funds. The walk continued round to Stud Nursery where we admired a group of fallow deer. Then we went into the Paddocks area to see the Barn Owl Manor and camera, eel traps and sand martin bank; money from appeals have also contributed to all these projects and it was good to hear that barn owls are making good use of their new accommodation.

Jane Cliff

News from Bushy Park

- Bushy Park has a new apprentice gardener working in the Woodland Gardens. Marciel Lima Dalmasio started The Royal Parks' two year course last November following his transfer from Richmond Park.
- The common rhododendron *Rhododendron ponticum*, that can be host to the disease called Sudden Oak Death, continues to be cleared from around Bog Garden and Waterhouse Plantation. Its removal will help reduce the threat of the disease affecting our woodland oak trees.
- Desilting of the Longford River from Pantile Bridge to the Water Gardens has been completed with silt being deposited on the banks.
- One of the veteran oaks on the park's perimeter by Sandy Lane has fallen across the footpath. The park's tree officer is investigating the reason for its collapse.



March shrub planting

On 10 March a group of volunteers gathered to hold our postponed planting session on Triss' Island in the Woodland Gardens. In an area not open to the public, the



planting gave us a unique opportunity to explore the island and see its habitat potential. The shrubs are a selection of rhododendrons and azaleas that the Friends have purchased via donations received for such projects. Ray Brodie, park manager, and Sharon Evans, head gardener, were there to give a guiding hand.



Colin Muid

Skylark protection areas



Skylarks have been spotted in both Bushy Park and Home Park staking out their territory and preparing to breed. Skylarks are ground-nesting birds and walkers are asked to stick to the cut pathways in open grassland, and those with dogs to keep them on a lead, when walking through the areas. Signs have been erected in the bracken and grass area in Bushy Park adjacent to the Hampton Wick cricket ground to make people aware of the birds.

Old news from The Brisbane Courier, 5 August 1914

Whistling to Royalty

The Queen and Princess Mary were walking recently in Bushy Park [London], when the Princess dropped her handkerchief. A Sunbury resident picked it up, and whistled loudly after the Queen and the Princess. As this failed to attract attention, he ran after them, and restored the lost handkerchief, for which he was thanked. The man's surprise can be imagined when he was informed that the Princess Mary was the owner of the article, and that her escort was the Queen.

From the Membership Secretary

Greetings to all our members and welcome to those of you who have joined us this year. We are very pleased to see the gradual increase in our membership, reflecting a growing appreciation and support of our lovely parks. Many thanks to those members who have paid their subscription for 2018, and extra special thanks to those who have included a donation. You will have received your membership cards for 2018 listing all the interesting walks and talks for the year. There's always something new to learn; so be sure to update your diaries, and we look forward to seeing you there.

Those members who have not yet renewed their membership for 2018 will find a reminder letter and renewal form delivered with this newsletter. We hope you will take the opportunity of continuing your membership by filling in the form and returning it to me with your subscription as detailed on the form. Please remember that the membership year runs from 1 January, with subscription due on 3 January; so if a membership subscription is not paid within six months of the due date then unfortunately we must terminate that membership and cannot send further newsletters. If you have decided not to continue your membership, we thank you very much for your support in the past which is much appreciated.

With best wishes to all.

Pat Dickinson

Training courses in Bushy Park

The Field Studies Council (FSC) have published their new London Region natural history courses for 2018. The FSC hold courses in several of the Royal Parks, including Bushy Park where they have a training centre based in the park's Stockyard that is situated off Hampton Court Road. For full detail of their courses see;

<http://www.field-studies-council.org/centres/londonregion/london/learn/natural-history.aspx>

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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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