



Newsletter

Summer 2017

From the Chair

The summer is here and we all love our parks more in the warm weather. More visitors come to the parks to enjoy them which is a good thing, but more visitors add pressures on the parks and the parks can suffer.

There are more vehicles; competition for parking; polluting air quality; and disturbance to wildlife. People have picnics, leave litter, and play games in unsuitable areas. Unwitting visitors get close to deer and worse, feed them; not realising the deer are wild, will act aggressively if feeling threatened, and deer health will be ruined by eating human food. Dogs enjoy space to run free but do so in the areas where ground-nesting skylarks are trying to rear their broods; dogs chase deer; owners claim their dogs are well-behaved, but other creatures do not know that. Children feed waterfowl with bread that sinks to pond bottoms and pollutes the water as it decays; unaware that bread is unhealthy food for ducks. Children run through flowerbeds, climb ancient trees, swing on branches, ride scooters off paths, pick flowers, move deadwood around to build dens not knowing the wood is where the rare and endangered insects live; parents do not realise these repeated actions over time will destroy the park they bring their children to enjoy.

We all want the pleasure of the parks, clean air, open spaces, places to play and picnic, wildlife to experience and scenery to admire. Future generations will want that, too; so 'Tread Lightly'. Take nothing out of the park and leave nothing behind, except memories of a grand day out.

Colin Muid



News from the Treasurer

The Friends hold their bank accounts at NatWest, Teddington branch. Unfortunately, this branch will close in October 2017 and our accounts will be transferred to NatWest, Twickenham branch. Fortunately, we will retain the existing account numbers and sort code in the new branch; so there is no need for members to change the bank details on their Standing Orders when paying subscriptions and donations. If you have any queries please contact me, on jandaelrick@btinternet.com or on 020 8979 7512.

John Elrick

Dates for your diary

Friday 14 July 2017

SUMMER PARTY

Pheasantry Café, Woodland Gardens, Bushy Park
(For members with tickets only)

Monday 7 and Tuesday 8 August 2017

MISSION: INVERTEBRATE

Bushy Park (see below)

Saturday 26 August 2017

LITTER PICK IN BUSHY PARK

Meet at 2.00 pm at Diana car park, Pheasantry Information Point or Hampton Hill New Gate
For details contact Jane Cliff:

walksandtalks@fbhp.org.uk

Saturday 2 September 2017

GUIDED WALK IN HOME PARK

Meet at 11.00 am at Lion Gate, Hampton Court

Thursday 28 September 2017

LANCELOT 'CAPABILITY' BROWN AT HAMPTON COURT AS SEEN THROUGH THE EYES OF HIS SURVEYOR, JOHN SPYERS

Talk by Terry Gough

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

Refreshments will be available from 7.15 pm

Mission: Invertebrate

This summer The Royal Parks will be holding Mission: Invertebrate family days of fun to help visitors understand more about the grassland minibeasts living in the parks. Look out for their giant snail caravan packed with activities for all the family. The Bushy Park events will be on 7 August at The Pheasantry and on 8 August at Hampton Court Gate playground, both from 11 am to 3 pm. Booking is not required. See:

www.royalparks.org.uk/be-involved/mission-invertebrate



The Royal Parks Foundation

The Ponds of Bushy Park walk



On 25 March, a beautifully sunny Saturday morning, about 70 people turned up for the event. Jane Cliff planned the walk and those who stayed the course, over two hours and several miles, thanked her for leading the way. By then they had visited the Boating Pond, Heron Pond, Leg of Mutton Pond, Diana Fountain, Triss's Pond, Fisher's Pond, Waterhouse Pond, River Lodge Pond, the Water Gardens, with Hampton Hill Pond and the Canal Plantation viewed from afar (there were some flagging by now) and finishing at Barton's Pond. The weather could not have been kinder and the ponds were gleaming with a clear blue sky above.

Colin Muid

National Physical Laboratory walk

Following the popularity of the first wellness walk organised by the Friends for the staff of NPL last autumn, a second one was held on 25 April. On this occasion Pieter Morpurgo and David Ivison led a group of more than 40 people from Teddington Gate via the World War II memorials and Diana Fountain to the Pheasantry, pointing out aspects of the history and ecology of Bushy Park.



Children's Nature Trail

On 29 April a group of children gathered in the Woodland Gardens to take part in tree naming, water bird spotting and bug hunting, led by Diana Lewis. There was a wildlife quiz and along the way the children collected items that were later used to make 'crowns'. An enjoyable time was had by all; youngsters and adult helpers alike.



Birds of Prey talk

Alan Greenhalgh has been keeping birds of prey since he was 12 years old. When he arrived for the talk he did not bring a PowerPoint presentation on a memory stick – just a set of variously-sized black boxes. As Alan opened each box in turn he introduced us to 10 of the 24 birds, all bred in captivity, that he currently looks after at his home near Heathrow.

The first magnificent bird was 5-year-old Dora, a rare, white gyrfalcon. In contrast, the next bird was a small, dark brown Sunda Scops owl, a native of Malaysia. The tawny owl is the most common in Britain and this was followed by a beautiful barn owl which, despite its camouflage colouring and silent flight, is endangered in the wild. The great grey owl, with its yellow eyes, usually lives in the Arctic Circle and hunts by day and night. The Siberian eagle owl with its ear tufts and huge feet came next. Alan explained that great care is taken to keep the birds at a suitable weight, especially the female kestrel. The peregrine falcon was an 8-year-old male. They are the fastest creatures in the world and hunt other birds. The American Harris hawk is unusual as it can hunt in a pack.

The final creature to emerge from its box was not a bird of prey but a kookaburra who brought a wonderful experience to a close with its laughing; see Paula Redmond's kookaburra video on our [Facebook page](#). For more information about the birds see www.firstclassfalconry.com



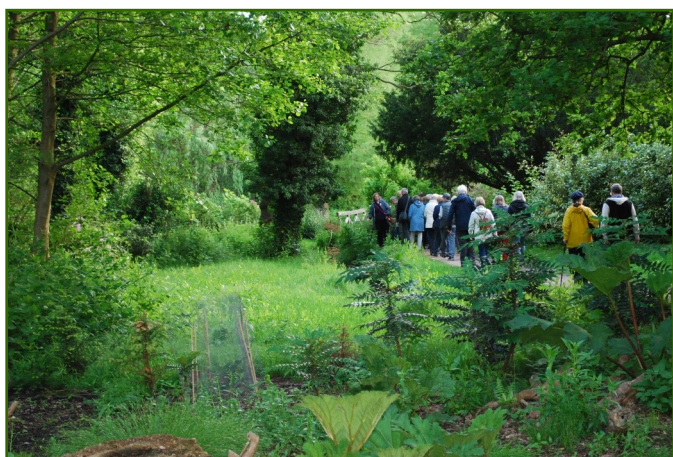
Chestnut Sunday

Volunteers from the Friends once again took our place in the parade down Chestnut Avenue, but this year some of our number pulled an 80-year-old barrow decorated with balloons. The barrow has been restored from a dilapidated condition by its owner, one of our members, John Previte. It was a glorious day and we were grateful for the generous donations dropped into our buckets. Our marquee, with the smart new display material, had many visitors and Pat Dickinson was pleased to enlist some new members.



Woodland Gardens walk

As a group of more than 30 strolled through the gardens on a Saturday evening in May, several people remarked how different Bushy Park is at that time of day; it was quieter, making us more aware of the birdsong. Pippa Hyde led us on a circular walk from the Pheasantry as far as the bridge in Duke's Head Passage, pointing out interesting plants along the way, interspersed with personal reminiscences and aspects of the history of the area.



Woodland Gardens in the past

The current head gardener, Sharon Evans, is keen to know how the Woodland Gardens looked in years gone by. If you have any old photographs, she would be pleased to see them so she can use them to inspire her future planting designs. Please send them to her at The Royal Parks, The Stockyard, Hampton Court Road, Hampton TW12 2EJ or by email to:

sevans@royalparksgsi.gov.uk

From the archive

James Stewart MacGregor was appointed superintendent of Bushy Park on 24 April 1919. He had been working in the Royal Parks since 25 March 1906 and in the 1911 census he was 39 years old and living at the Foreman's Lodge, Bushy Park, with his wife Celia.

On 7 August 1912 James was promoted to assistant superintendent of Richmond Park on an annual salary of £100 and 5 shillings, with accommodation in Whiteash Lodge. His return to Bushy Park was not without incident as it is noted on his file at The National Archives that on 7 July 1921 he was *"To lose two increments owing to neglect of duty through drinking"*.

Bushy House open day

The National Physical Laboratory will be opening Bushy House to the public on Sunday 17 September between 10.00 am and 5.00 pm as part of Open House London.



Parks - Our Shared Heritage exhibition

Prior to Irish independence, Phoenix Park in Dublin was a 'Royal Park' under British administration. Its size and free-roaming deer made commentators compare it to Richmond Park in London. 'Parks - Our Shared Heritage' will display the history of London's Royal Parks and Dublin's Phoenix Park through illustrations, maps, photographs and artefacts. It is the result of collaboration between The Royal Parks, the Hearsam Collection and the Office of Public Works in Ireland.. This follows a reciprocal exhibition held in Dublin earlier this year. The London exhibition will be held at the Mall Galleries, The Mall, London, SW1Y 5BD from 27 July to 11 August. Entry is free and it will be open from 10 am to 5 pm daily (except 3 August closing at 12.30 pm). See: <http://www.mallgalleries.org.uk/whats-on/exhibitions/parks-our-shared-heritage>.



Volunteer workshop



At the end of March, 30 Information Point volunteers were welcomed to the long gallery at the Bushy Park Stockyard by Colin Muid and Rosemary MacColl for a morning workshop. Between the opening icebreaker, which helped us get to know fellow volunteers, and the final quiz, we heard about various aspects of The Royal Parks. A session entitled 'Who does what in Bushy Park and The Royal Parks?' was followed by Ray Brodie, park manager, describing the champion and veteran trees in the park. Volunteer Peter Critten led a discussion about why people volunteer and the skills they have to offer. Following general agreement that it was a useful and enjoyable meeting, a further session is planned for the autumn.

Have you seen a stag beetle?

The stag beetle is Britain's largest land beetle and is entirely harmless. London remains a hotspot for the beetle and the south-west of London is where they are most commonly found. Stag beetles are active from May until late July so there is still time to spot these fascinating creatures.

To record a sighting follow this link to the Greenspace Information for Greater London's 'Staggering Gains' and fill in the code given on the page to proceed to the recording form. <http://www.gigl.org.uk/online/submitrecord.aspx>

Farewell to a familiar tree



Friends who have been on our mistletoe walks, or strolled along the Barge Walk by Hampton Court, will remember the robinia (false acacia) tree (see left) near the west front of the Palace. Following a recent internal decay test to evaluate the structural condition of the timber, which gave rise to significant concern regarding its continued stability, the decision was taken to remove the tree. The work was undertaken by Gavin Jones Ltd on 15 June. A replacement tree will be planted this winter; hopefully a species that will again host mistletoe.



News from Home Park



- New interpretation boards have been erected at both ends of the Barge Walk to display maps and local information to those using the pathway.
- The four new fallow bucks brought in from Norfolk to provide genetic diversity in the park's deer herd (see Spring edition) are settling in well.



- Signs have been placed in the park to remind visitors to keep dogs on a lead when walking near deer.
- Sand martins are continuing to use the artificial nest bank created for them.
- It seems to be a good year for grass snakes in the park as many have been seen by estates staff.

Ticks and Lyme disease



Bracken and grass provide habitat for ticks that can attach themselves to deer, dogs or humans, potentially causing Lyme disease. Whilst the chances of contracting the disease are low, symptoms can be serious; so it's worth taking sensible precautions. Wearing long trousers and long-sleeved shirts, and using insect repellents can help to minimise risk. Detailed leaflets are available from Bushy Park office (at the Stockyard) and the Pheasantry Information Point, or

follow this link to gain further advice: www.nhs.uk/conditions/lyme-disease

Tick removal tools are now available at the Pheasantry Information Point for £3.

News from Bushy Park

- Volunteers have been surveying oak trees in the park for caterpillars of the oak processionary moth. This is an important annual survey to track and monitor the spread of this pest. See the alert below.
- The local fire brigade was called out to a bracken fire at the Leg of Mutton Pond at the beginning of April. The firefighters were able to douse the flames before too much damage was done.



- The gardening volunteers have been busy weeding in the Bog Garden, pulling out Himalayan Balsam (a very invasive weed) in the Woodland Gardens and tidying beds and stream sides.
- New beds have been designed and planted up around the Witches Pond in the Waterhouse Gardens.

Oak processionary moth

The oak processionary moth is a major defoliator of oak in Europe and is a risk to human health. The caterpillars of the moth are covered in hairs that contain a toxin and contact with these hairs, or their inhalation, can result in skin irritation and allergic reactions.

The Royal Parks are actively controlling the caterpillar colonies and in the near future teams of specialists will begin removing the 'nests' from the trees.

If you come across the caterpillars or their webbed nests do not touch them, and keep children and pets away.



Friends' support for the parks



Our latest support for the Parks was made at the suggestion of Sharon Evans, Bushy Park's head gardener, who felt that it would be good to enhance the Woodland Gardens by labelling some of the trees and plants there, especially as we have some fine specimens not often seen elsewhere.

The Friends very much agreed and we were happy to buy a supply of professional 'Alitags' for Bushy Park's gardening team, together with a jig and boxed sets of character punches used to permanently write the aluminium labels. If you venture into the Gardens you should see the labelling beginning to be used.

Barry Purdon

Bushy Park Information Point news



We are pleased to announce that Sue Robertson (left) has taken up the position of Information Point manager with Rosemary MacColl continuing as volunteer coordinator. Rosemary will organise the staffing of the facility while Sue will be responsible for the content and appearance of the space.

In June half-day first aid sessions were run for volunteers by Darien Skinner, a member of the Friends, who is a volunteer community first responder and who trains people in conjunction with the London Ambulance Service. It was a most informative and useful experience.

From the Membership Secretary

Welcome to all our new members who have joined or rejoined us this year and welcome back to all existing members who have renewed their membership. We very much appreciate your interest and support in our efforts to care for our two lovely parks. It was a pleasure to meet so many of you on Chestnut Sunday.

The membership year runs from 1 January, with subscriptions due on 3 January, and a review of the membership records shows there are some members who have not renewed their membership so far this year. In case this is merely an oversight, those members will find a renewal form included with this edition of their newsletter. The lower half of the form can be used to set up a Standing Order which will help automate the process of renewal in the future. A Gift Aid Declaration form is also included. If you would like to renew, please send your completed form to me as detailed on the form.

Those who, for whatever reason, do not renew their subscription, will shortly be removed from our membership list and so this will be their last newsletter. We thank them for all their support in the past.

Pat Dickinson

2017 - 2018 Committee

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<https://www.facebook.com/FriendsBushyAndHomeParks/>

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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