



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

Newsletter

Winter 2015

From the Chair



I find the saying that “you never miss what you have until it’s gone” increasingly true today. This has been particularly apparent during the various discussions taking place on future policing budgets in The Royal Parks and the necessity to cut back even further the limited resources that we currently have. Thank you to those members who have written to support our case. As I write this we still do not know the outcome of the bid but we are assured that it will not be met in full (£8.8m); therefore policing levels in Bushy Park face an uncertain future. We are actively looking at different policing models and hope to share these with you all soon. Please keep checking the website for updates.

One of the key features of Bushy Park is that it is a wild park in which we have very special residents; amongst these are, of course, red and fallow deer. We are the visitors in their home and they need a degree of protection. I have been alarmed to hear of the number of deer that are killed and injured by vehicles and dogs. Deer are regularly hit by cars; this is quite often through no fault of the motorist. I would make two appeals; for cars to cut their speed when passing deer that are close to the verges and please do report if a deer is hit or you are aware of a dog attack. The wildlife team can be made aware by calling 0300 061 2250, and hopefully any suffering to the animal will be reduced.

The next newsletter will include a special edition celebrating 25 years of the Friends. We are finalising the details but it’s not too late if you have any anecdotes or photos you wish to share; contact myself or the newsletter team (details on the back page). Finally, I would like to wish you all a very happy Christmas time and a peaceful New Year.

Annie Murray

Old news

From the **Daily News and Leader** dated 15 April 1914

DAMAGE BY PHEASANTS

Allotment holders have complained to the Hampton-on-Thames District Council respecting the damage caused to crops by the pheasants in Bushey Park. The Clerk will write requesting the park superintendent to abate the nuisance.

Dates for your diary

Thursday 22 January 2015

THAMES BOAT PROJECT

Talk by Miranda Jagers

St John Ambulance Hall, Park Road,
Teddington, commencing at 8.00 pm
Refreshments will be available from 7.15 pm

Saturday 14 February 2015

EXPLORE THE WOODLAND AND WATER GARDENS

Walk led by David Ivison and Pieter Morpurgo

Meet at 11.00 am
Pheasantry Welcome Centre, Bushy Park

Friday 6 March 2015

Talk by Linda Lennon, Chief Executive of The Royal Parks & ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

(See the Agenda on page 4)
Elleray Hall, Elleray Road, Teddington,
commencing at 7.30 pm
Refreshments will be available from 7.00 pm
and during the break

Saturday 21 March 2015

ENJOY AND CELEBRATE SSSI IN THE PARKS

Walk led by Pippa Hyde

Meet at 11.00 am
Diana car park, Bushy Park

Santa Fun Run

Bushy Park took on an early festive appearance on 30 November when more than 500 Santas took part in the 5km Fun Run in aid of the Princess Alice Hospice, Esher.



Fungus foray walk



A fine day encouraged a turn-out of around 60 people for the fungus foray on 13 September. It was an informal walk, spent mainly in the Woodland Gardens area, but also included later on a wander back through the main Park where some different species were seen. The idea of the walk was to collect and examine what fungi could be found, and to explain some of the characteristics they exhibit that help towards identification. It also provided an opportunity to explain something of the enormous diversity of fungi, where they occur, and why they are ecologically so important. Fungi can be found worldwide in all habitats; they are the main agents of decay and recycling of nutrients. Many form intimate relationships with the roots of plants, termed mycorrhizas, essential to the well-being of both partners and without which plants would be unable to grow and compete successfully. Fungi are also important medically, for example as a source of antibiotics, and they are an essential food source for many mammals, insects and other invertebrates, as well as for people. Due to rather dry conditions in the weeks prior to the foray, fewer species than was hoped for were seen; 27 in all. Many more occur in the Park and there are undoubtedly many yet to discover there. A full report and list of species can be seen on our website <http://www.fbhp.org.uk>.

Brian Spooner

Birds in the Park talk

On 25 September Roger Theobald, leader of the Richmond and Twickenham local group of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, spoke to a hall full of interested spectators about the birds which live in, or pass through, Bushy Park during the year. He showed many slides, almost all photographs he had taken in Bushy, to illustrate his talk.

Roger and his group undertake surveys in the Park in February, May, August and November to monitor the numbers and species of birds across the seasons and years. There are 156 species which have been seen in Bushy; some live there all year while others spend a short time when migrating, and some are native while others, such as parakeets, have been introduced.



Notable species are the breeding pairs of skylarks (see photo) which inhabit the bracken; jackdaws, year-round residents, which can sometimes be seen plucking fur from the deer; and the buzzards which bred in Bushy Park for the first time this year. For more information about types of birds and where to spot them see: <http://regentsparkbirds.blogspot.co.uk/>. This is updated by Tony Duckett, wildlife officer for The Royal Parks.

Tagg's Island talk



Dave Raven has lived on a houseboat at Tagg's Island, situated in the River Thames between Hampton and Hampton Court, for more than 30 years. His interest in the history of life on this small area of land, now linked to the Middlesex bank by a bridge, was evident as he listed the many commercial ventures that have failed to generate a profit.

Thomas Tagg was from a local family of watermen and in 1868 started renting boats to visitors arriving by train at Hampton Court. By the 1880s the island was surrounded by houseboats, but in 1904 the family firm was bankrupt. In the early 1900s Fred Karno, a music hall impresario, had a luxury houseboat, called Astoria, built and in 1913 he opened the Karsino, an 800 seat concert hall and hotel designed by

Frank Matcham. The next owner brought in sand and palm trees for the launch of Palm Beach in 1926, followed two years later by the opening of Thames Riviera, including tennis courts and an ice rink. In 1935 Charles Clore opened the Casino Hotel, but it was damaged by a fire in 1961 and finally demolished in 1971.

There are now 62 houseboats with about 120 residents. To see and hear more about the story of Tagg's Island on the web, go to: www.vimeo.com/47930620.

Teddington Lights Up and Hampton Hill Parade



The end of November was a busy time for the Friends' volunteers with our stall at Teddington Lights Up on Thursday followed on Friday by taking part in the 50th Hampton Hill Christmas Parade and market. Many thanks to Turfsoil for letting us sit in their trailer pulled by the much-admired tractor. Our Christmas cards and calendars sold well at both events.

Restoration update talk



Pieter Morpurgo has been closely involved with various restoration projects in Bushy Park and on 23 October he gave us the benefit of his knowledge by providing an update on recent work on the Diana Fountain and the Water Gardens.

The history of the restoration of the Water Gardens is well documented in "How the Water Gardens were Saved!" (available from the Information Point at the Pheasantry). Pieter explained that although the landscaping work was completed in October 2009, there were still some details to be added. Since then, steel finials have been added on top of the brickwork and the metal reeds in the lower pond have been reproduced. The remaining missing features, which the Friends would like to add, are the two paintings which were in the arches to each side of the cascade. The originals gave the impression of a tunnel running beneath the cascade, between the two arches.

The statue of Diana was created in 1637 for Somerset House in London, moved to the Privy Garden at Hampton Court in 1689 and set on the current base in 1712 as part of a design by Sir Christopher Wren. The first major restoration was undertaken in 2009 and Pieter produced a video of the work (also available from the Information Point). Efforts to keep pigeons and seagulls away from Diana have not been very successful and a survey earlier this year showed that more cleaning was required. The Royal Parks have also taken the opportunity to refurbish the 400 metres of stonework edging the pond (see photo). In 2009 it cost £6,000 to gild the statue of Diana. Pieter has recently found an invoice from Wren showing that the charge in 1714 for gilding all 13 bronzes on the fountain was £104 and 8 shillings.

Planting in the Woodland Gardens



On 8 November a group of Friends joined Bushy Park staff to plant bulbs purchased with a bequest from the will of Gillian Oosterhuis who was a keen member of the Friends.



Using some of this year's appeal money the Friends have funded a range of British native plants to continue the establishment of the 'living hedge' along the southern fence line. In time these will provide a valuable habitat for birds and insects.

Notice of Annual General Meeting

7.30 pm, Friday 6 March 2015
Elleray Hall, Elleray Road, Teddington, TW11 0HG
AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 7 March 2014
3. Matters arising
4. Annual Report for 2014
5. Financial Report and adoption of the Annual Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2014
6. Election of the Committee of Trustees comprising the Officers and other Committee Members
7. Appointment of auditor
8. 2015 Appeals
9. Any other business

Turfsoil and Bushy Park - a new partnership

Turfsoil Ltd, a company celebrating its 70th anniversary in 2015, is delighted to have been awarded the contract for the landscape management of Bushy Park. This runs initially for a term of seven years, with a possible extension to ten and, with other similar awards for Richmond and Greenwich, completes a very special portfolio of Royal Parks work.

Currently headed by chairman John Newton, the grandson of the founder, and with his daughter Laura Bellhouse also involved, Turfsoil remains a determinedly 'family' company with the highest principles of fair dealing and quality service at its heart. The company, which has been associated with Greenwich Park since 1992, has tried on two previous occasions to win the Bushy Park tender, each time narrowly failing to do so. On this occasion however persistence paid off, largely thanks to the extreme efforts of Mick Tolhurst, managing director, and Andy Freeman, area manager, in familiarising themselves thoroughly with the geography of the Park and the aspirations for it of the client, The Royal Parks, before submission of the bid.

Turfsoil is fortunate to have inherited a highly skilled and well-motivated workforce, many of whom have served in Bushy Park for a considerable period. To fill the sole vacancy, they have introduced one of their own long-servers, Mark Holman as contract manager, and with the deployment of nearly £300,000 of new equipment the contract has got off to a very satisfactory start. In Mark's own words: "If you can go to work and enjoy what you do and the environment that you are working in, then you are lucky, and I feel that I am very lucky. The views, history and wildlife certainly add to Bushy Park's attraction, plus the fact that it is likely soon to be confirmed as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, with all the maintenance challenges that will bring. Coming into any new contract is a step into the unknown. However, the team that we have inherited and The Royal Parks management have been most helpful and welcoming to us, and I thank them for this."



With skilled gardeners, predominantly in the 50 to 60 age range, Turfsoil are keen supporters of The Royal Parks Apprenticeship Scheme as a means of replenishing the declining skill base. Their current apprentices are Adam Watts (left in picture), who is in his second year and acts as liaison between all the apprentices and the Royal Parks Guild, and Oliver Harper (right), who is mid-way through his first year. They are supervised by Petra Kugla (centre), head gardener at the Woodland Gardens, and rotate between there and the rest of the Park in order to experience a wide range of horticultural and estate management tasks. Projects that they are involved in include the cutting back and removal of rhododendron ponticum in the Woodland Gardens, the installation of heavy duty metal tree crates in Lime Avenue to prevent browsing by deer, the clearing of reeds in the Queen's River and the renovation of the fine turf in the Water Gardens.

The entire staff of Turfsoil, from Head Office down to grass roots, are really happy to be associated with Bushy Park and are looking forward to developing a mutually beneficial relationship there over many years to come.

John Newton

News from Bushy Park

- All the metal tree crates have now been installed along Lime Avenue and Chestnut Avenue.
- At a follow up meeting for Oak Processionary Moth survey volunteers, held at Richmond Park in November, it was announced that 700 nests were found and treated in the oak trees at Bushy Park. This is three and a half times the number found last year.
- The buildings in the Stockyard area used for educational and accessibility purposes have been refurbished with new doors and windows.
- A new landscaping scheme has been implemented at the Pheasantry car park.



News from Home Park

- A species of cave spider (*Meta bournetii*), never before recorded in Hampton Court, has been found under a drain cover in the grounds of the Palace.
- During September a mammal survey was carried out in the Paddocks. A total of 15 types of small mammals, including six bat species, were recorded by 15 volunteers.
- Electro-fishing and seine netting of the Long Water Canal have been carried out to assess fish stocks in order to inform future restocking and ecological management.



Walking in the Parks



The eagle-eyed among you will have noticed some small discs in various places in Bushy Park. These are waymarkers that indicate the route of the London Outer Orbital Path (LOOP). The LOOP is a 150 mile circular walking route around London, set up in the 1990s. It passes through as much green space as possible. One section starts at Kingston Bridge and ends at Hatton Cross. It enters Bushy Park at Hampton Wick and passes by the Leg of Mutton Pond. After crossing Chestnut Avenue, the LOOP enters the Pheasantry and Waterhouse Woodland Gardens. It goes alongside the fence by the conservation area and around Upper Lodge, leaving the Park at Laurel Road.

The Borough of Richmond is fortunate in having two other long distance paths passing through. One is the Thames Path that borders Home Park in the course of its 184 mile meanderings. The other is the 78 mile Capital Ring that encircles London but is not as far out as the LOOP and passes through Richmond Park. For those who prefer shorter walks in company there are the Health Walks. Over the past ten years, groups of people have walked from Laurel Road gate on Friday mornings in all weathers for an hour or so in Bushy Park. These walks are part of a programme set up originally by Richmond Council with the aim of getting people to walk regularly to improve their health and fitness. The programme provides fairly short walks in social groups, led by trained volunteers. The walks are free and walkers are encouraged to go at their own pace.

There are also Health Walks on Sunday mornings, setting off from the Welcome Centre. Bushy Park is a wonderful place to walk because it has a good network of paths that cover varied terrain and give a wide choice of routes. Many of the walkers feel motivated to undertake longer walks. There is the option of going into Home Park or the grounds of Hampton Court Palace and along the Thames towpath. The Richmond Health Walk scheme is part of the countrywide Walking for Health Initiative that covers over 600 local schemes. Details of the Richmond walks may be found on the website www.walkingforhealth.org.uk/richmond. Also, leaflets are usually available at the Welcome Centre information point.

Diana and Vic Lewis

From the Membership Secretary

Thank you very much to the large number of members who have already renewed, either by using the renewal form in the Autumn Newsletter or by setting up a Standing Order. For those members who choose to wait till the New Year we have enclosed a second renewal form which I would be very grateful if you could return to me, ideally with a stamped addressed envelope to defray our increasingly high postage costs. Please ignore this form if you have already renewed.

I have sent out cards to all those members who we are aware have set up Standing Orders – the majority come out of bank accounts on 3 January. If you have not received a card but have a Standing Order please let me know at jean.smith@fbhp.org.uk and I will send a membership card to you as soon as possible, and also update our records as it can take some time for our bank to pass on that information.

The membership numbers continue to grow each year; so thank you to our loyal, long-standing members and to the new Friends who have joined us in the last few months. Best wishes for 2015.

Jean Smith

Information Point



We have had a busy year at the Information Point where the volunteers continue to provide their knowledge of both Parks to visitors. The photo above shows volunteers at our social gathering in September. The introduction of a nature table with sets of fallow and red deer antlers is a great hit with the children, along with the other items on show. Sales of our merchandise have held up well throughout the year. The Friends have taken over the printing of several leaflets that are no longer being produced by The Royal Parks and we are in the process of updating them as we go along. They are educational and very popular with visitors so it's important that we continue to make these available. My thanks to all our volunteers for your commitment over the year and may I wish you a very happy Christmas and New Year holiday.

Rosemary MacColl

It is with great sadness that we announce the unexpected death in November of **Sue Griffin**. Sue was a long-standing supporter of the Friends and the Parks, as well as a willing volunteer. Moreover, she was a truly lovely lady and will be very much missed.

We are sorry to report the recent passing of **Douglas Rowland**. For the past 12 years Doug had volunteered at the History Room in Bushy Park answering questions, organising the memorabilia and producing displays. We will miss his kindly manner and knowledge of the Park.

Advice from the Parks

Please do not take fungi, such as mushrooms or toadstools, as picking them will damage the delicate ecological balance of the Parks. (See page 2)

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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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