

The Friends of Richmond Park



Photographic tips for nature observers

Bertrand Russell's family home

Butterflies - living off nectar & sunshine

Burnet moths - emerging & mating in the Park

Looking after our veterans

The Friends have had some great opportunities this year to learn more about the Park's ancient or "veteran" trees - one of the major factors qualifying Richmond Park as a National Nature Reserve. First, there was the walk led by Park Manager Simon Richards in February. Among other things, we learned that the definition of "ancient" depends on the type of tree. I was particularly struck to learn that the Park is home to numerous veteran hawthorns like the one pictured right. I have come to love these gnarled trees, some of which probably once formed part of hedges or boundaries.

Next came the Veteran Trees discussion at the Friends' Annual General Meeting in April. We were fortunate to have two knowledgeable speakers with us - Bill Cathcart (Superintendent of Windsor Great Park) and Mike Fitt (former Park Manager of Richmond Park and recently retired as Director of Parks with the Royal Parks Agency). The ancient trees in Richmond Park have both historical and biological significance. The Norman nobility loved hunting, explained Bill Cathcart, so there used to be a huge area of enclosed forest largely for this purpose stretching from Windsor to Richmond.

As well as oaks (the "Rolls Royce" of ancient trees), the Park's veterans include willow, beech, hornbeam and thorn, all of which are



Mike Fitt and Bill Cathcart at the' AGM



Park manager points out hawthorn

native. It is amazing to think that oaks represent an element of continuity going right back to the Ice Age. The special landscape of Richmond Park owes much to the deer that graze in it. "Oaks need the open spaces maintained by large herbivores," explained Mike Fitt.

Most recently, the committee learned more about the tree management programme from Simon Richards. Richmond Park, he explained, is "at the leading edge" in this kind of work, and the Royal Parks have recently acquired their own arboriculturist, Mike Turner, based at Hyde Park.

The tree work is concentrated in the winter months and with some 100,000 trees in the Park there is plenty to do. As well as making older trees safe, especially those close to paths, there has been some serious tree planting recently. For example, the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers helped plant 2000 new trees in Two Storm Wood (named after the big storms suffered by the Park over the past two decades). These are the veteran trees of the future.

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Photo on front cover: stags in summer
by Joanna Jackson

How many cycle paths can the Park take?

Until a few days ago I knew nothing about an implementation plan for "Cycling Greenways". I expect most Friends would be in the same position. Yet the plan could have far-reaching effects on many of London's wide (and wild) open spaces. Let me explain.

The London Mayor is committed to opening up "cycle corridors to and through key green spaces and along London's waterways". This is being managed by Transport for London's "Cycling Centre of Excellence" and the corridors are known as Cycling Greenways. They are to be routes for cyclists and pedestrians that are to be "predominantly free from motor traffic and hence off the public highway". Funding is available from Transport for London (TfL) and is provided through the London boroughs.

There is much to support in the plan and its aim of increasing cycling in London. My concern is that this must not be done at the expense of pedestrians and must not harm any of London's Parks and Richmond Park in particular with its special status as a National Nature Reserve, a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a European Area of Conservation. The plan reads as though it has been produced by cyclists for cyclists. Pedestrians and park users need to be involved and I have written to TfL saying so.

I have also written to the Chief Executive of the Royal Parks about a new Cycling Greenway in our Park between Petersham Gate and Ham Cross. The Royal Parks argue that there is a sort of path there already, that there seems to be demand for a path based on the people who already walk and cycle along that route (even though cycling there is in breach of bye-laws) and they want to co-

operate with Richmond Council and integrate with their cycling plans.

After much debate, we (the Friends' Committee) have said "no" because we believe the new path would increase the urbanisation of the Park and harm one of its few remaining "wilderness" areas. This is reason enough to oppose the plan for the new path but we have additional concerns. First, we are not in favour of

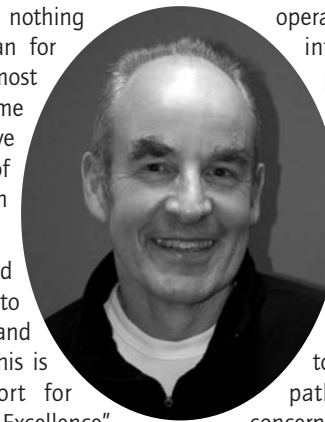
encouraging additional "routes" in the Park for either cars or cyclists on new Cycling Greenways. The Tamsin Trail already exists as a way for both pedestrians and cyclists between Richmond Gate and Ham Cross, and is not overused.

Second, erosion is an issue in many parts of the Park including some of the Tamsin Trail. Further erosion is likely to be caused along the route of the new path and by cyclists cutting down from the Tamsin Trail to this lower path.

And last, but certainly not least, speeding cyclists and the conflict with pedestrians are already a problem in the Park. We can see an increased problem if the proposed path, which is to be shared by pedestrians and cyclists, is constructed.

The next step is for the Royal Parks to submit a planning application to Richmond Council. We will probably raise our objections formally. What do you think? Please let me know. I can also email you a copy of the Cycling Greenways Implementation Plan if you contact me at the address below.

John Collier
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A little goes a long way – basic notes on photography

Text and photos by Joanna Jackson

“A bad workman blames his tools” is a saying that particularly applies to photography. A bad photographer will take a bad photo even if he or she is in the possession of the best equipment in the world. A good photographer will take a good photo with the most basic camera. Give them a great camera and they will take a great photo.

A recent late night BBC programme sent three professional photographers out on location to capture their view of an area. One was given an expensive top-of-the-range 35mm camera, one a cheap digital and one a camera phone. All came back with interesting and thought-provoking images. The only difference was in the quality of enlargements.

Photography is all about timing, light and composition.



COMPOSITION is all about making sure that the image is aesthetically pleasing. The subject matter should be arranged so that the elements within the picture complement each other and are not competing with each other for attention. Colours should be in harmony with one another or opposites in the colour spectrum. If possible, elements within the picture should lead the eye to the main subject. There are rules of composition that can be learnt and then of course, like all rules, they are there to be broken.

LIGHT - I personally think this is the single most important thing when taking a photograph. Good lighting can transform an ordinary scene into a dramatic vista. The best light is usually found at the beginning and end of the day. There is a higher proportion of yellow and red light in direct sunlight at these times which has the effect of warming the picture up, making it a more welcoming



image. Colours appear richer. The longer shadows produced by the low light of early morning and late evening help create a three-dimensional effect, giving a greater feeling of depth. Intense sunshine in the middle of the day results in harsh contrasts, short shadows and is very unflattering. Never allow your portrait to be taken outside at lunchtime!

TIMING is closely linked with light and is almost as important. When you have composed a scene that you like, think about when (what time of the day and what time of the year) the light will show the scene to its greatest advantage. The long shadows of winter are more dramatic than those in the summer when the sun is that much higher, and you have to get up so much earlier in the summer to achieve the same light quality! Isabella Plantation is at its best in the spring, the view from Richmond Hill is fantastic at sunset. Adverse weather conditions such as storms throw out wonderful angry skies and rainbows. Autumn mists and fogs provide a plethora of beautiful scenes.

Once you have started to produce decent photos with an inexpensive camera and you are hooked on photography it is perhaps time to move onto more specific equipment! Having said “a bad workman blames his tools”, I will concede that it is far easier to take a good wildlife photo with a telephoto lens, a good plant photo with a macro lens, a good landscape photo with a wide angle lens.

But again, equipment is not the whole story. Good wildlife photography is also dependent on the photographer's field craft. A nature photographer will often have spotted a bird or animal and noted its habits for ages before he or she goes out and takes the photograph. You will never get close to a timid creature unless you understand its behaviour. It is important to know and love your subject; your results will be a lot better if you do.

Joanna Jackson lives near the Park and is the author of A Year in the life of Richmond Park

Bertrand Russell, a prized tea set and a phantom room

Text and photos by Michael Davison

At the upper end of Pembroke Lodge car park, protected by an iron railing, stands an ancient oak tree with a very special history. In 1845 Lord John Russell, soon to become Queen Victoria's Prime Minister, brought his wife to Richmond in search of a country home. Strolling in Richmond Park they sat on a bench under a big oak tree from which they looked into the grounds of Pembroke Lodge. As Lady Russell later recalled: "We said to one another that would be the place for us!" To their delight, within a couple of years Queen



The "Wishing Tree"

Victoria offered the house to the Russells. "When it became ours indeed, we often thought of this, and the oak has ever since been called the Wishing Tree".

Episodes such as this from the lives of former occupants of Pembroke Lodge are recalled in a remarkable display of paintings, photographs, prints and documents which occupy five rooms on the first floor of Pembroke

Lodge. I was recently privileged to be given a guided tour of these rooms by Daniel Hearsom, who rescued Pembroke Lodge when it faced dereliction ten years ago and has spent a decade restoring it to the condition of its Victorian heyday.

While coping with all the problems of restoration, which involved complex negotiations with numerous authorities, Daniel has also found time to build up a collection of more than a thousand items of memorabilia relating to the Lodge, tracked down from all over the world to him a true "labour of love".

Even in five rooms devoted to three main periods in the Lodge's history, there is space to display only a fraction of the collection. In selecting items for show, Daniel Hearsom and his design consultant Tony Leitch worked to a simple principle. "I didn't want this to be a museum of lifeless artefacts", Daniel explained, "but a gallery that gives an insight into the character and activities of the people to whom Pembroke Lodge was a family home".

Thus in walking round the two rooms comprising the John Russell Suite I not only read the story of the Wishing Tree, but I also saw Lord John on his feet in Parliament, relaxing with his wife and family in the Pembroke Lodge gardens, caricatured in political cartoons of the day, and resplendent in a full-length portrait, Reform Bill in hand, the original of which hangs in the National Portrait Gallery. The dining table and chairs are those used by the Russell family, and given by Conrad Russell.

Next we moved into the two-room Bertrand Russell Suite, named after the philosopher and mathematician who, orphaned at the

age of four, was brought up by his grandparents Lord and Lady Russell at Pembroke Lodge and lived there until he was 18, growing accustomed, as he later recalled, to "wide horizons and an unimpeded view of the sunset".

A fine portrait presented by Conrad Russell, Bertrand Russell's son, is the introduction to a display of photographs, letters and cartoons that reveal Russell in his many roles, as writer, pacifist, campaigner against nuclear weapons and Nobel Prize winner. A bookcase contains copies of many of Russell's 115 books, some of them first editions.



Daniel Hearsom with Bertrand Russell looking on

My eye was caught by a chart on one wall that details Russell's active love life, which embraced not literally! not four wives and seven mistresses. Many of the items in the Bertrand Russell Suite were discovered by Daniel Hearsom during a week spent at the McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, home to the Bertrand Russell archives.

The door of the fifth room bears the intriguing title "The Phantom Room". Any ghosts encountered within, I discovered, will be those of members of the Phantom Squad, a little-known military regiment whose headquarters and training centre occupied Pembroke Lodge during the Second World War. The Phantom Squad was set up to train motorcycle riders equipped with radios to patrol the battlefield and relay up-to-the-minute intelligence to the commanders of Allied units. Among Phantom Squad officers who trained in Richmond Park was the film actor David Niven, whose portrait is instantly recognisable.

Surviving members of the Squad hold an annual reunion at Pembroke Lodge, and have generously given photographs, shoulder flashes and other items to augment this unique collection.

As well as recalling the lives of the Lodge's past occupants, these rooms have a present-day functional purpose. All are available for hire for family celebrations and meetings of local amenity groups and charities – the Friends of Richmond Park held its annual lunch here last November. These rooms, unused for 28 years, have become again a lived-in part of the Lodge. An original feature which makes life easier for party guests is a series of glass shelves above the radiators where they can rest their plates and wine glasses.

In amassing his huge collection, I asked, did Daniel have a "Eureka moment", when a particular prized artefact came into his possession? Yes, he said. The trophy that he holds in especially high regard is Lord John Russell's fine bone-china tea set, bequeathed to the collection by Conrad Russell – like so many objects in this collection – on his death two years ago, and soon to be put on display on the shelves of the Russells' own cabinet.

"Pembroke Lodge has long been known as a tea-room", said Daniel, "so what could be more fitting than to have the Russells' very own tea set back home once again?"



Part of the Russell family tea set

For security reasons, general access to the upstairs rooms is not possible, but Daniel says groups from such organisations as the Friends are welcome to visit them by prior arrangement. Meanwhile, never one to rest on his laurels, Daniel is already planning the next addition to the attractions of Pembroke Lodge. This will be a permanent exhibition, on the walls of the downstairs cafe where all can see it, dealing with the history of Pembroke Lodge since the 18th century, and with Richmond Park and its wildlife.

In preparing this exhibition, Daniel will have the support of The Royal Parks, as indeed he has at every stage of Pembroke Lodge's restoration. Daniel is at pains to stress how much he owes also to English Heritage, to Richmond Council and the Richmond Society - and of course to the Friends of Richmond

Park. He foresees an opportunity for the Friends to play a major role in raising public awareness of the importance of Richmond Park as a National Nature Reserve when a fully-manned Information Centre takes its place beside the new Lodge gateway.

The building that started life as a humble molecatcher's cottage, and came to play a part in English public life in peace and war through two centuries, is entering upon another epoch in its long history.

Daniel Hearsom welcomes members of the Friends of Richmond Park to give him their views on Pembroke Lodge and its services.

*You can contact him via:
daniel@pembroke-lodge.co.uk*

Nectar and sunshine are all they need

by Alison Donaldson

On 15 June Piers Eley (Chair of Richmond Park Wildlife Group) treated us to some of his stunning butterfly photographs at the Mayo Hall in Kingston. The beauty of photographing butterflies, he reminded us, is that it provides a record without killing a creature.

What struck me especially about the life of the butterfly was its fleeting nature. They have just two sources of energy: sunshine, and nectar from flowers. As Piers explained, "The caterpillars do all the eating, so the butterflies don't have to".

Also impressive is the long distances that butterflies cover. The Red Admiral, for example, comes all the way from the South of France in May, to breed here and then travel further north. The Painted Lady (see right) even comes from Africa. It seems that the wind helps to blow them for hundreds of miles.

Piers introduced us to four groups of butterflies we can find in the Park:

- o Brown
- o Skippers
- o Blues (including Coppers and Hairstreaks)
- o Harlequins.

He then gave us plenty of tips about where we might find particular types. For example, Skippers are grassland butterflies - during June, we can expect to see Large Skippers on foxgloves and Small Skippers on thistles. To spot a Purple Hairstreak, on the other hand, you need to take a pair of binoculars into the Park at the beginning of July and look up to the tops of oak trees, since that is where their

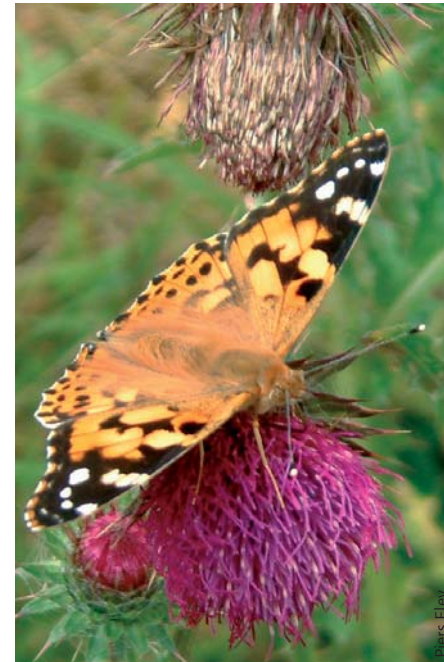
caterpillars feed. Small Heaths and Small Coppers like yellow flowers such as ragwort.

Piers also explained that there is a whole team of volunteers recording sightings of butterflies in the Park. Each butterfly recorder is allocated a 1km by 1km National Grid Reference square.

There's also something known as a "transect walk" starting from Holly Lodge. This has eight segments, each of which is designed to represent a typical environment in the Park. This walk is completed every week

by one of two or three people and the information goes into Surrey and South London Conservation Records.

Piers Eley also revealed that he first came to Richmond Park when he was four years old at the end of the Second World War!



Painted lady

Speeding in the Park

Letter to the editor from Richard Evans

I cycle through the Park from Robin Hood Gate to Roehampton Gate three mornings a week these days, and back again in the late afternoon.

Each time I ride through I am passed by cars and motorbikes doing I guess well over 20mph. Yet in the last 18 months I have seen just two motorists stopped by police, whether for speeding or not I do not know. I get the sense that the new 20mph speed limit is not strictly enforced.

It would surely be a simple matter for the police to catch and prosecute large numbers of speedophiles, if they wanted to, by simply timing motorists' journeys between gates, and issuing fines and points on licences, just as they do when people are caught speeding elsewhere. This would only catch out flagrant speeders, as to be caught this way would necessitate maintaining an AVERAGE speed of over 20mph over quite some distance.

If the parks police do not want to act on this idea, perhaps the Friends could do so... although we would sadly not be able to issue the fines and points! Rather than that, the Friends would publish results of our speeding survey to the local press, the Royal Parks Agency, the parks police, the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, etc.

I think serious action on speeding would help the Friends achieve at least three worthwhile objectives:

- * the obvious: improve road safety for pedestrians, cyclists, dogs, horses, deer and other wildlife... even of course for other motorists!
- * cut traffic levels in the Park (tough action on speeding might encourage some rat-runners back onto the road network outside the park where they belong)
- * cut traffic noise - tyre and engine noise both increase exponentially at higher speeds.

I look forward to seeing the police response to this suggestion.

Yours sincerely

Richard Evans

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Gardener Dick Farr leads walk in Isabella Plantation



Douglas Reynolds

Friends' first walks leader remembered

by Douglas Reynolds

John Feltham

It is with great sadness that I let you know that John Feltham passed away on 24 April 2006, aged 78. John became a Friend of Richmond Park soon after the society was formed in 1961. When the committee decided to organise an occasional walk so that members would have a better knowledge of the Park, John was the walks leader. Eventually the walks became monthly for anyone to join, particularly members.

Although John decided in 1995, after being a walks leader for 10 years, not to continue, he still led the occasional walk, particularly those held on Boxing Day. At the Friends' AGM in 1996, as well as thanking John for his interesting and varied walks, the committee elected him as a Vice President.

John was also a keen photographer and often showed pictures during the walks to illustrate some point of interest.

His funeral was on 3 May 2006 and I and the chairman before me, Roy Smith, both attended.



John Feltham

Gardeners' walks

It's well worth catching one of the gardeners' walks that take place regularly in the Isabella Plantation in spring and summer.

On the second Friday in May I joined about 40 people interested in the Isabella Plantation for a conducted walk by one of the gardeners, Dick Farr.

Most of the camellias, magnolias and rhododendrons were still in bloom - late because of the cold weather - and the bluebells were out.

Dick pointed out many interesting trees and shrubs, such as the Tibetan Cherry, and told us their Latin names as well as the ones more familiar to most of us.

The gardeners' walks last for up to two hours. Details can be found at the entrances to the Isabella Plantation. I recommend them to anyone interested in the trees and shrubs that grow in this 42 acres of the Park.

Douglas Reynolds is a former chairman of the Friends and is now one of our regular walks leaders as well as a Vice President.

The Burnet moth

Text and photos by Piers Eley

The Burnet Moths have to be the most colourful and dramatic of the daylight-flying moths that we find in Richmond Park. Fortunately, they are also one of the most numerous.



There are two varieties in the Park. The Five-spot Burnet, shown on the left, which emerges early to mid June and lasts until mid July, and the Six-spot Burnet, which emerges in the first part of July and lasts into early August.

The two species usually overlap for a week or ten days, with the earlier Five-spot variety looking distinctly shabby in comparison to its glossy new neighbour by that stage.



As I hope you can see from the two photographs above, the difference is in the number of spots towards the tip of the wing - i.e. furthest away from the body. The Five-spot has just one in this position. The Six-spot has two. In other respects they appear to be identical.

The Caterpillars of the Five-spot Burnett we have in the Park feed on Greater Bird's Foot Trefoil (*Lotus uliginosus*), which is found in damp areas. Those of the Six-spot Burnett live amongst the anthills and feed on Lesser Bird's Foot Trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), which grows in that drier environment.

Here, on the right, is one doing just that! When fully grown, which this one must nearly be, it will climb a stout grass or reed stem, like the one below, and spin its



characteristic silken cocoon in which to pupate. You may have noticed these yourself as you have walked through the grasslands. Maybe you



have even wondered what they were?

The newly emerged moths are dressed in the most brilliantly shiny livery, which they put to good use at once in pursuit of a mate. Because, unlike most butterflies, they carry their colours on the outside of their wings, even when these are folded, they are particularly vulnerable to the rain.

Each of these insects needs the heat of the sun to dry the outside of their chrysalis and make it brittle so that they can emerge from their cocoon and use the sun's heat to pump blood into their wings and then to enable these to dry out and harden for flight. This is exactly what is happening to the Six-spot Burnet on the left.

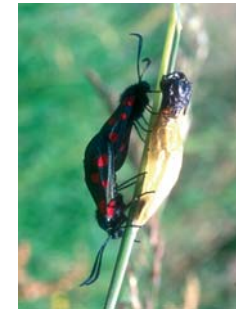
On the next page we have two pairs of newly emerged Burnetts immediately getting down to business, clinging to their freshly vacated

cocoons, before there is any chance of rain stopping play.

Top right we have the five-spot team, on a green rush stem, while below them the grass stem on which the cocoon of the six spots was placed, a month or so later, is already brown...

Look out for these beautiful creatures of our acid grasslands as they re-fuel at the thistle bar in preparation for their next sortie. You will find them at the end of June and the beginning of July wherever you can find big thistles in the park. Good Hunting!

Piers Eley is Chairman of the Richmond Park Wildlife Group. He will be co-leading a butterfly walk on 29 July - see events on inside back cover.



News about Richmond Park

Who closes the Park gates at night?

Responsibility for closing the Park's gates at dusk was handed over to contractors from 1 April this year, so it is no longer the task of the police. This should mean more punctual closure, according to Park Manager Simon Richards. Do let us know whether you notice a change or not.

Cycle racks at last

Until now it has been hard to find a suitable place to lock up your bicycle in the Park - for example, if you want to drop into Pembroke Lodge for a cup of tea during your bike ride. This is all about to change, according to Simon Richards. Cycle racks are to go into all the Park's car parks, and will be paid for by Transport for London.

Green Flag for the Park?

First there was the Blue Flag award for clean beaches, now there is a Green Flag for parks and green spaces in England and Wales (see www.greenflagaward.org.uk). Simon Richards

From the Friends' membership secretary

We are signing up new members at a steady rate; leaflets in Pembroke Lodge disappear very quickly, so we have now introduced an identification system to measure how many new members use a leaflet that they found there.

On the renewals and revisions front, things have settled down a bit, with only a trickle now reaching me. Once again, thank you to all who rejoined or revised their Standing Orders at the bank.

tells us that about five of the Royal Parks, including Richmond Park, are hoping to win a Green Flag and Richmond Park will be going through the process this summer. This means park management will be updating some of its policies. Also, one of the criteria for winning the Green Flag is apparently community involvement - e.g. the presence of an active Friends group.

Future information centre

As we reported in our Summer Bulletin recently, the old toilet block in the Pembroke Lodge car park is to be completely refurbished to include new toilets either side and a 5x5 metre information centre in between. It will provide information about the Park's wildlife as well as details about the Park's operations. There will also be a small amount of Park-related sales - things like compost, charcoal and books.

The centre is to be manned by volunteers and the intention is to get this service up and running during 2007.

Friends Committee

Chairman: John Collier; Vice Presidents: Richard Carter, Douglas Reynolds, David Thorpe

Other committee members: Brian Baker (Hon. Secretary); Alison Donaldson (Newsletter Editor); Sheila Hamilton (Hon. Membership Secretary); John Waller (Hon. Treasurer); Ann Brown; Peter Burrows-Smith; Ron Crompton; Jackie Grimes; Joanna Jackson; John Repsch; Karen Rockell; Mary Thorpe

Patron: Lord Rix, CBE

Events

29 Jul, starts 11am:
meet at Pembroke Lodge

Guided butterfly walk: heathland butterflies in Pond Slade. Walk leaders: Piers Eley/Raymond Garrett. No entry fee and no need to book. However, please arrive in good time, bring binoculars if you can and wear long trousers and walking shoes or boots.

17 September, c. 9am:
starts near Roehampton Gate

The second London Duathlon takes over the Park. This run, bike, run event offers competitors various distances to choose from. Spectators welcome. Richmond Park closed to vehicle traffic on this day. For more information, see: www.royalparks.org.uk/events/event.cfm?id=735

16 November, 12.30 for 1pm:
Pembroke Lodge

Friends' annual lunch with guest speaker: more details nearer the time.

Walks

Anybody is welcome to join these free guided walks. There is usually a choice between a wildlife and a history option. Most walks begin at 10am and finish around midday at the car park or gate shown. Please keep dogs under control.

For further details, ring Peter Burrows-Smith, 020 8878 4022.

Date	Starting and finishing at
5 Aug, 10 am	Kingston Gate car park (incl. butterfly option)
2 Sep, 10 am	Robin Hood Gate car park (incl. Pen Ponds nature trail option)
7 Oct, 10 am	Sheen Gate car park (incl. deer option with Simon Richards)
14 Oct, 10 am	Pembroke Lodge car park (autumn bird special)
4 Nov, 10 am	Broomfield Hill car park (incl. fungi option)
2 Dec, 10 am	Kingston Gate car park (incl. Christmas wildlife option with Adam Curtis)
26 Dec, 10 am	Roehampton Gate car park
6 Jan, 10 am	Sheen Gate car park (incl. winter wildfowl option)



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