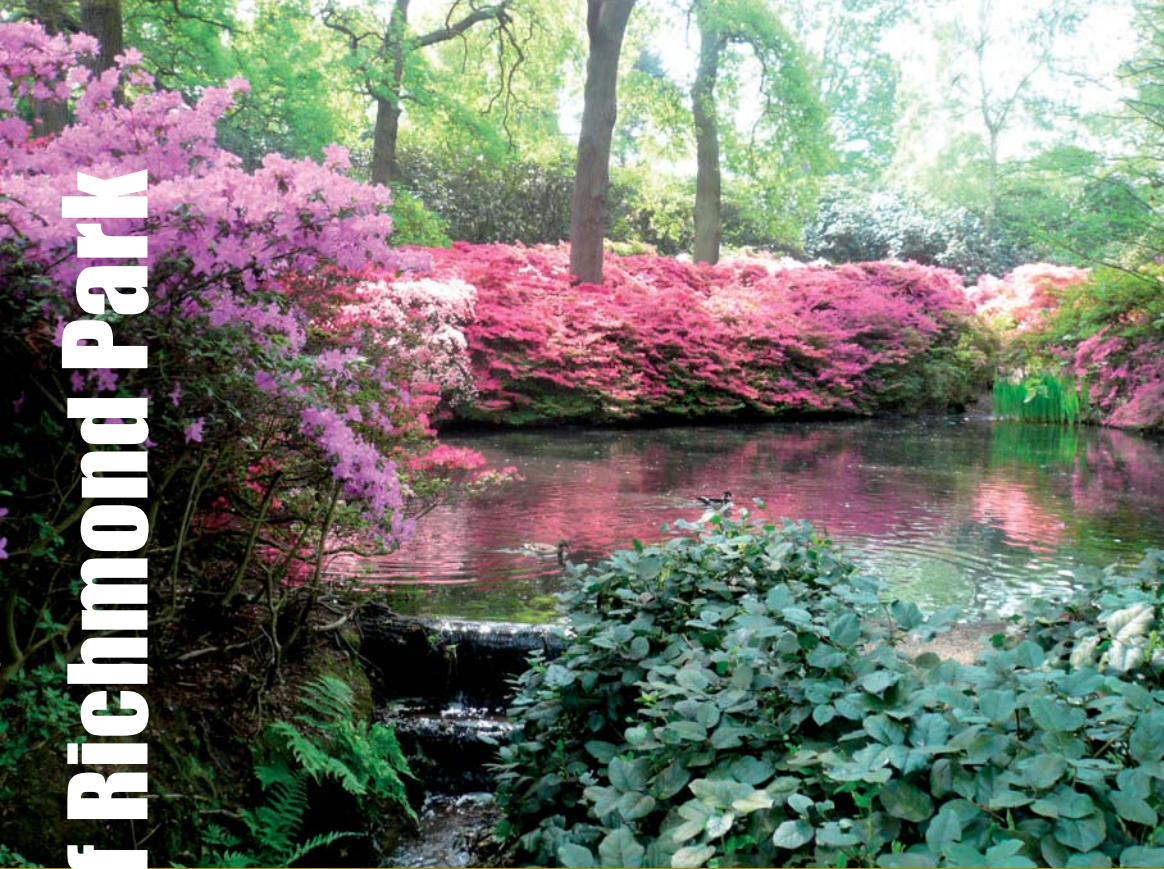


# The Friends of Richmond Park



Volunteering information

Young people's photo competition 2009

Isabella Plantation, a garden for all seasons

Snow in the Park

What will happen to this newsletter once you've read it, I wonder? Will it be filed away carefully for occasional reference? Will it be passed on to a friend who shares your interest in the Park? Or will it disappear under a pile of magazines and catalogues and eventually into the recycling bin, perhaps even to become the recycled part of a future newsletter?

None of these is a bad way to end up, but we do think that some of our features deserve a longer life than they might otherwise get, particularly those about the wild life and ecology of the Park or its history, or that answer the questions that visitors often ask (see the feature on page 10). So we have begun to save more of them on the Friends website, where they will reach a wider, different audience, some of whom may be inspired to visit the Park, to look at it, and look after it, more carefully when they visit, or even to join the Friends to help us to educate and inform about the Park, as well as to protect it.

Members will continue to be the first to read our news and articles, and it will be many months before any from this newsletter appear on the website. If you have favourites from past newsletters that you think deserve a permanent home at [www.frp.org.uk](http://www.frp.org.uk), do please let us know.

Regular contributor Michael Davison has excelled himself in this issue, partly because several pieces had been held over from previous newsletters. And just as this issue was being put together, snow blanketed the Park, out came the cameras, and the lovely pictures on page 13 arrived in my inbox. I hope that some readers will follow these examples and contribute their articles, comments, ideas and photographs – see page 5 for some advice on photography.

Marilyn Mason  
[marilyn.mason@virgin.net](mailto:marilyn.mason@virgin.net)

**Cover photos**

Front: *Isabella Plantation in spring* by Michael Davison  
Back: *"Family Outing"* by Florence Parkin, aged 9, entry to the 2008 young people's photo competition.

**History Project – Volunteers needed**

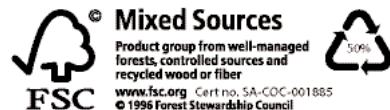
Another exciting Friends education activity is on the horizon, a History Project, cataloguing and recording the history of the Park, generously and actively supported by Daniel Hearsom of Pembroke Lodge. The information gathered will be used to develop multimedia offerings that will benefit everyone. The extended understanding and historical knowledge will also be threaded into our history walks and some new publications as well as materials for schools.

In the near future we will be needing willing helpers who can give a couple of hours per session to the project. It will be great fun and very rewarding. No specific knowledge is required for the office-based tasks, and details will be circulated to members very soon. If you think you may be interested in helping please contact Karen Rockell on 020 8439 1708 or at [forp@sky.com](mailto:forp@sky.com).

**Answer to puzzle on page 12**

RICHMOND PARK

This newsletter is printed on paper which is 50% recycled, 50% from certified sustainable forests.



Please pass it on to a friend or recycle it when you have finished with it.

**Involving the young**

I recently listened to a talk by Steve Greenwood, producer of last summer's BBC series *Lost Land of the Jaguar*, shot in Guyana, and a previous series called *Expedition Borneo*. The format of the two series is the same: choose an area of virgin rain-forest, drop into it a team of naturalists, and get them to find as many interesting species as they can in the few weeks they are there.

Greenwood's explicit objective is to show the threat to the rain-forests from logging and intensive agriculture, and to pressure governments to protect them (the more species they find, the more of a case there is for protection). However, his broader objective is to generate interest in conservation among children and young people, who (the BBC's research says) know nothing about nature and have no interest in conservation. So he uses dramatic action and camera angles, loud music, and "oh my god!" commentary to draw in his young audience and keep them interested – all very different from the David Attenborough style of measured explanation loved by an older age group.

We have found the same lack of knowledge about nature among children and young people in the Friends education work. Over the last year one of our members and her 12-year-old daughter have developed a nature table that we now take around local schools. It has photographs and specimens of fauna and flora in Richmond Park, including bird feathers, grasses, beetles, a mouse skull and even a snake skin and skeleton. We have been amazed at the reception

the nature table receives, not just from children, who have often never seen such things in real life before, but also from teachers, who say that they do not know enough to teach their pupils about nature and avoid bringing up the subject because they can't answer their pupils' questions. One girl said that the only time she had been to Richmond Park with her school, or even had it mentioned, was a trip to count cars as part of her geography project!

The primary objectives of the Friends include to "encourage the preservation of Richmond Park and the protection of trees, plant, bird and animal life". Unlike the rain-forest in Guyana or Borneo, Richmond Park is already protected as a National Nature Reserve, so that battle is already won. But we will not be successful in conserving the Park in the long term unless people, and particularly young people, understand the value of conserving it. Given the lack of basic knowledge about nature that exists today, this is a more difficult battle, but one which we are starting to tackle. If you'd like to help in the Friends education programme, please contact me.



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### Parking in the Park?

On 30 January the Royal Parks Agency (RPA) published its consultation on proposed changes to Park Regulations, including allowing Private Hire Vehicles into all the Parks, and charging for parking in Richmond and Bushy Parks. By the time you read this, you will have received a communication from the Friends about it, and you can also view the proposals at [www.royalparks.org.uk](http://www.royalparks.org.uk), or on the notice board in the Visitor Centre in the Park. The deadline for responses to the consultation is 1 May.

### Friends take on the developers

The Friends was one of several objectors who successfully opposed a recent planning application to demolish the bulk of the Stag Lodge stables outside Robin Hood Gate. The Friends objected on the grounds that the proposed development would adversely and permanently affect the character of the area and impact upon the Park.

The Friends has also protested at development plans that will adversely affect the protected view of St Paul's from King Henry's Mound. This has had some coverage in the local press, with local MP Susan Kramer adding her voice to the protests.

### Meanwhile, the Heathrow decision...

The decision not to adopt runway alternation will spare us from the noise of landing planes in the Park throughout the day rather than just half the day. But if expansion goes ahead as planned, the number of planes taking off over the Park will quadruple, a bleak prospect for the tranquillity of the Park. The Friends submitted a detailed objection as part of the government consultation last year.

### Friends in the news

As well as on the issues above, Friends featured in the local press on the launch of the Young People's Photography Competition, and the Ramblers' Association S E Group drew heavily on Max Lancaster's article on John Lewis in our Spring 2008 newsletter for a recent feature on "unsung heroes of the access battle".

### Litter in the Park

We are assured that the impression of rather more litter than usual in the Park is appearance rather than reality, and that the team described in our Autumn 2007 issue continues its usual thorough regime. Sometimes litter dropped in summer only becomes evident in the winter as the bracken dies down, so it can temporarily look worse.

### Bird Notes



Friends monthly emails now include Bird Notes written by Jan Wilczur, a member of the Friends and of the Park Bird Recording Group (see page 14 for how to sign up). Unusual sightings in the Park at the end of 2008 included a Red Kite, a Little Egret (*photo on the left by Tony*

*Drakeford*), a Jack Snipe, a Common Snipe, and a probable Mealy Redpoll. It was a record year for sightings of Short-eared Owls and a good one for Dartford Warblers overwintering in the Park. Two large flocks of Lapwings flew over the Park in December and January, with one bird alighting on the rugby pitches. A Lesser Spotted Woodpecker was sighted in January and a Peregrine flew over the Park, both unusual. A Yellow-legged Gull was spotted on the ice of the Upper Pen Pond, and a Green Sandpiper spent a few days on Beverley Brook. A female Egyptian Goose was seen on a nest in January.

### Gerald Eades

Gerald Eades, Friends Treasurer for 30 years up to 2000, died of cancer on 17 December aged 85. Although he lived in Croydon, he loved the Park and was happy to be Treasurer, where his background as a chartered accountant was very helpful. In January Douglas Reynolds, Friends Vice-President, attended his funeral at Croydon Crematorium, and joined the family and friends afterwards at the Hilton Croydon Hotel. Gerald will be sadly missed.

### The Park on camera

by Michael Davison



Visitor Centre volunteers were given a treat last November in the form of a slide presentation by Ron Teague (*pictured on the left*), who has been taking photos in the Park for some 40 years, much of the time with Joyce Bing as assistant. His presentations to local societies have raised £1,500 to

support Holly Lodge activities. Ron's stunning photographs took us through the changing seasons in the Park, from a frosty morning at White Ash Pond, through spring daffodils and azaleas in the Isabella Plantation, herons and swans on still summer ponds, then the fiery colour of beech trees and sunsets in autumn. We ooh-ed and aah-ed at the pictures, and the amateur snappers among us had a light-hearted lesson in what goes into making a good picture – or, as Ron put it "drawing with light".

Be observant, we were advised: "Many look but few see". Don't try taking snow pictures under an overcast sky or "it'll look like rice pudding". Trees photograph best in winter, "in summer they're just green lollipops". Ron has a large range of cameras and lenses, makes much use of a tripod, and still prefers film to digital. However, he admitted that for his striking early morning winter shots, "woolly drawers are more important than a spot-on camera".

After the presentation, guests enjoyed coffee and mince pies and took the chance to chat to Ron about his photographic experiences, not only in Richmond Park but also in Burnham Beeches and even in Kenya.

*Ron Teague has kindly offered the Friends photographs from his extensive collection to turn into new products, including cards, coasters and calendars, to sell at the Visitor Centre.*

### 2009 Photography Competition for Young People opens

Susan Kramer MP, Roger Ford from sponsors Russell-Cooke Solicitors, and many of the 2008 prize winners and their families met at Pembroke Lodge on a glorious crisp January morning to launch our 2009 Photography Competition for Young People. Susan Kramer commented, "Last year's entries were absolutely stunning, and we are really looking forward to seeing more wonderful photographs from young people in this year's competition."

This is the third year of the competition but every year we use different judges to keep the competition fresh. So don't be put off if you have entered before and didn't win a prize – this could be your year! This year's judges are looking for "The Essence of Richmond Park" and are keen to see original, beautiful or striking images that show why the Park is special. As in previous years there are three age categories: under 7 years; 7 – 11 years; and 12 – 18 years (on 16 May 2009, the deadline for entries).

On the Friends website, [www.frp.org.uk](http://www.frp.org.uk), you will find: tips on what to photograph; a competition poster to take to your workplace or school; the entry form and rules of the competition; and, for inspiration, winning photographs from previous years. Information and application forms are also available from the Visitor Centre (open on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays from 10.00 to 4.00).



*With thanks to Max Lancaster and Karen Rockell*

*Susan Kramer MP and Roger Ford of Russell-Cooke with young photographer*



### Don't try this today!

*This delightful family photograph from the early 1920s was sent to us by members Hugh and Janet Bostock. Janet's father, John Thompson, is the boy on the right, and the family think that her grandfather Walter Thompson (on the left) had a garage in Fulham with his brother at the time of the photograph. It seems that you could park anywhere in the Park in those days.*

### "Scorchers" a century ago

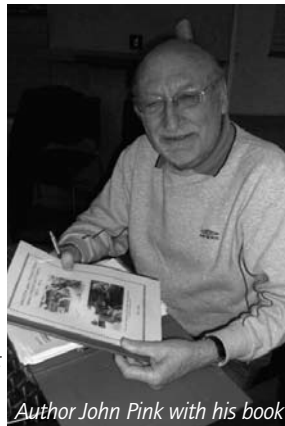
by Michael Davison

Speeding motorists and cyclists in Richmond Park, deplored by the Friends of today, are no new phenomenon. It was just the same a century ago, as we learn from a new book by Kingston historian John Pink about the early days of motoring in our part of London. In the early 1900s the speed limit in the Park was 10mph, and the park-keepers (not the police) hauled offenders before the County Magistrates in Kingston. In one year, 1907, three motorists were fined £3 each for driving at 19mph, 20mph and 21mph. Another motorist was prosecuted for towing a bicycle in the Park at 22mph: both motorist and cyclist were fined. When a young Chelsea cyclist was prosecuted for speeding, a letter from the defendant's father admitted that his son's speed had been 20 mph. He was fined £3, plus costs.

Speeding was not only the only ground for prosecution. One motorist was prosecuted for giving driving instruction "against a Park

by-law"; the Bench dismissed this as a first offence and imposed 8s 6d costs. A Richmond motorist was prosecuted for "allowing visible vapour to issue from a motor car": according to the park-keeper "the defendant puffed smoke for 300 yards and completely smothered the road". The offending driver paid his 5 shilling fine, said he had now adjusted the lubricator and added: "I thank the keeper for his observation".

*John Pink's book, "Kingston-upon-Thames Police versus London Motorists 1903-1913", is available at Kingston Museum, price £5.95.*



Author John Pink with his book

### Richmond Park Grazing Trial

by Adam Curtis, Assistant Manager, Richmond Park

Grazing with traditional beef cattle has been proven to improve the floral diversity of grassland on a number of nature reserves across the UK. Cows nibble back rough, dominating grasses, allowing greater varieties of delicate species to find their own niche. Cows were known to have roamed Richmond Park at least until 1943, and it is thought that their absence has



contributed to the decline of species diversity of the grassland. So in 2008 a trial grazing project was started to determine if this might be an appropriate management technique for the Park.

In the initial year, 2008, just two cows (British White x Gloucester) grazed a 4-hectare paddock near Holly Lodge from January to June. The area was left for the summer to allow flowering. In the second year, starting in October 2008, three cows returned for a longer grazing period. The first year was intentionally under-stocked as animal welfare and public acceptance were vital. The cows were very happy with their new residence and an abundance of food, while members of the public had nothing but positive comments for the change to their favourite walking routes.

Botanical surveys indicate that the second year's grazing is having a positive effect on the grassland, although it's far too early to

prove anything meaningful. The grass looks less dense, whilst the cows are still finding plenty of forage. The intention is to continue winter to spring grazing for five years before making a final evaluation.

Animal welfare will always be the highest priority. The cows are checked daily and water is provided constantly, though providing supplementary feed would be counter-productive as this would gradually increase soil fertility, which has an adverse effect on species diversity. We did make one small exception during the very cold weather early in 2009 and allowed the cows to have a few bales of hay to comfort them on the coldest nights.

The cows will remain until they have eaten all the grass required or the grazer needs them elsewhere. Low numbers of traditional breeds will always be used to ensure that enough palatable forage is available.

## A garden for all seasons

Text and photos by Michael Davison

Walking round Isabella Plantation in the glory of azalea time last year, I was amazed by the ease with which my guide, gardener Dick Farr, could put a name to one after another of the hundreds of different species which line the paths and flank the lawns. Does he know the name of every one of them? "Only those I point out," he grinned – but I think he was being modest.

Dick is a member of the team who look after one of the most visited areas in all London's Royal Parks. Behind its railings, safe from grazing deer, plants flourish undisturbed. Five gardeners work full time to maintain the Isabella Plantation as a garden for all seasons. If azalea time in early May attracts the most visitors, at every time of year there is something to catch the eye. In chill January the wych hazels near the north gate hold out promise of spring to come. In April camellias and magnolias burst into flower; as the azaleas fade, bluebells carpet the ground in Wilson's Glade; then come the late rhododendrons; and autumn brings a blaze of colour from maples and beeches.



Garry Scarffe and Dick Farr

Dick Farr has worked in the Isabella Plantation for 33 of his 52 years and has become very much the public face of the Isabella team through the regular guided walks he has been leading for the last five years. Last year alone, more than 400 visitors enjoyed Dick's quick-fire



chats about the plants in season. He likes to feature a particular seasonal plant with what he calls the "wow factor"; on a summer walk, the star was the handkerchief tree, with its long fluttering white bracts. Dates of Dick's walks are posted on car park notice boards and in the Visitor Centre at Pembroke Lodge.

At their mid-morning break I joined Dick and the rest of the Isabella team: charge-hand Garry Scarffe (20 years in Isabella), Lee Cottington, Toby Vane and Nigel Smallwood. Their work is supplemented by part-timer Barry Ede, and by Damian Black who combines conservation work in the Park with warden duties when Isabella's 40 acres are crowded at weekends. The team starts work at 7.30am, and how the day progresses varies from season to season. When I left for my walk with Dick, Lee was off to mow one of the plantation's grassy areas, Toby to stabilise the stepping stones in the Bog Garden, Nigel to prune the rhododendrons, Barry to tidy up the mess room. Garry himself planned to do some spraying (organic spray only, of course, since 1992) to rid the oak trees of the tortrix moth caterpillars which shred the young



leaves and dangle from the branches like flies caught in a web.

The team agree that the main attractions of the job are the open-air life and the enthusiastic response from visitors. How do the public behave, I asked, aware of the litter problem in the wider Park tackled by the team working from Oak Lodge. Fairly well, it seems. Generally they take their litter home (any that is left is collected by one of the gardeners on a daily scavenger), and if children sometimes have to be discouraged from climbing trees their parents are usually understanding - Dick again: "If not, I just give them a stare."

In addition to the routine tasks of clearing winter plants, mulching, replanting and weeding, there are occasional emergencies. The havoc caused by the storm of January 2006, though costing only 14 trees, took six weeks to clear up. There is also behind the scenes work in the plantation's nursery. This contains the National Azalea Collection, deriving from species collected in China by Ernest Wilson. Here also are the beds and polytunnel in which new plants are grown from seed or cuttings, ready for planting out

to replace failing specimens in the public areas. New plants are bought in from nurseries across the country: a "wish list" of wanted plants includes the parent species of some of the hybrid rhododendrons.

For long-serving gardeners like Dick and Garry, there is the satisfaction of seeing plants they have themselves sown or potted gradually maturing to take their place in the public areas, and seeing the plants in their care win awards year after year at Royal Horticultural Society shows (five Firsts and five Seconds last autumn, and the coveted Rosse Cup for a display of autumn foliage from three of the Plantation's conifers).

The logo on the gardeners' fleeces has changed four times since the Royal Parks assigned garden work to private contractors. Their employer is now fountains, based at Oak Lodge, but operations at Isabella, like those at Pembroke Lodge, are under the control of assistant park manager Jo Scrivener. To Jo falls the responsibility of maintaining the Plantation as an amenity for the public, while ensuring its conservation as part of a National Nature Reserve. I could see that he has the support of a team who know their plants and delight in their work.



Members of the Isabella team in the wintry gardens. Left to right: Damian Black, Lee Cottington, Nigel Smallwood, with Toby Vane in front.

## The first two years at Richmond Park Visitor Centre

Text and photos by Michael Davison



*Left to right outside the Visitor Centre: volunteers Raymond Garrett, Rachel Hirschler, Brian Baker, Sheila Hamilton, Beryl Jones, and Cynthia Akid*

On Boxing Day 2008, no fewer than 214 visitors to Richmond Park called at the Visitor Centre at the gates of Pembroke Lodge. Around Christmas and New Year the average attendance figure was around 100, and in normal times the average figure for each of the three weekend opening days has been around 60. This means that since the Visitor Centre opened at Easter 2007, in its first two years of operation some 20,000 people have sought information about the Park from one of our volunteer staff, and perhaps bought a book, card or souvenir.

That visitors have enjoyed their experience is proved by the generous comments they have added to our visitors' book: "Thank you for the friendly warm reception"; "Wonderful to find out more about the Park we've been visiting for 50 years"; "A great centre for information"; "A wonderful addition to a much-loved Park".

The Visitor Centre's establishment in purpose-built quarters was a joint venture between the Royal Parks and Hearsom Family Limited. Brian Baker, Honorary Secretary of the Friends, and Sheila Hamilton, Membership Secretary, were the

organising geniuses who worked with the Royal Parks to fit out the Centre and persuaded members of the Friends to volunteer their services to staff it.

If visitors speak well of their experience, the enjoyment is shared by the volunteers. "It's a pleasure to share your knowledge of the Park with others," says regular volunteer Alan Sherriff. "It gives you a warm feeling to hear visitors praising the Park, just as if it belongs to you." Says former Friends chairman Douglas Reynolds: "I've never come away from the Centre feeling I've wasted my time. People show such interest, and ask such interesting questions."

What sort of questions? After "Have you a map?" which is easy to answer, one of the commonest is "Where can we find the deer?" (not so easy, until we fit the deer with GPS tags). Others ask: "How long is the path round the Park?"; "Is there a children's playground?"; "Why do the deer have to be culled?"; "Where is the view of St Paul's Cathedral?"; and even "Can you swim in the ponds?" Volunteers have dealt with lost dogs, a lost child, a lost eternity ring, even a lost husband, all successfully reunited with their owners.

Local visitors delight in a Park they've known all their lives and make new discoveries, as they record in the visitors' book. "The Park is as beautiful now as always"; "I'm always finding something new and spectacular"; "For me this Park is the best place in the world". Visitors from abroad who sing the Park's praises hail from as far away as Ontario ("Saw a deer: wonderful!"), Chicago ("Beautiful gardens, right in London!"), Boston ("A fabulous oasis!"), Seoul ("The most beautiful park we've ever seen"), Vancouver ("What an unexpected surprise, so close to London!"), Brazil ("I never knew a park could be so interesting"), and Sydney ("We can't believe there's a park this big in London").

Early this year the band of volunteers numbered around 60, a dozen of whom are called on each weekend to present a friendly face to the Park's visitors. What encourages Friends to volunteer for their three-hour spell of duty? The opportunity to pass on their own knowledge of the Park is a motive expressed by many. There is also the feeling, expressed by Joan Wheeler-Bennett, that "having had so much pleasure from the Park for 50 years, it's good to feel you can give something back."

The same wish to give something back was what motivated Rachel Hirschler to accept the job of Office Manager at the Visitor Centre, an appointment reflecting the professionalism with which the Centre is run. Rachel responds to the feedback sheets filled in by volunteers, monitors cash takings and advises Linda Wadeson of leaflets and sales items that need re-ordering between Linda's monthly stocktaking sessions.

Assessing the first two years of operation, Brian Baker said the Centre had come well up to expectations. Sales of Park-related merchandise are going well, and profits are ploughed back through the Richmond Park Charitable Trust into improvements to the Park. However, Brian and Sheila don't

intend to rest on their laurels. Freed by Rachel's appointment of some of the day-to-day management, they intend to widen the range of merchandise and make the Centre "better for visitors, better for staff." They plan more social events for volunteers, and are keen to use modern technology to make the Park's attractions more relevant to younger visitors, through video displays in the Centre and even audio-guides they can download to their iPods. There may also be joint projects with visitor services at Bushy Park.

In particular, the search is on for further volunteers to enable Brian and Sheila to achieve their aim of daily opening of the Centre. Why not join them? You'll get a day's appropriate but not arduous training, an attendance certificate, and a handsome T-shirt and name badge. You'll work with like-minded colleagues in congenial surroundings, and have the satisfaction of being part of a community enterprise that's already a proven success, and going on to even greater things.

Brian Baker awaits your call on 020 8546 3109, or e-mail [briangbaker@greenbee.net](mailto:briangbaker@greenbee.net).



*Volunteers Peter Watson, Karin Lejveahl and Douglas Reynolds*

*Volunteers and other Park-lovers are invited to send in articles for this newsletter's occasional "My Richmond Park" page – typically around 450 words about what the Park means to you, with a photo, preferably in the Park.*

# Young Friends of Richmond Park

## LEAF BUDS — a poem to help you identify trees in winter

On the **Chestnut** buds you stick;  
 Buds of **Beech** are sharp a prick;  
 Buds of **Ash** are always put,  
 In tidy pairs as black as soot.  
 In a jumble **Oak** buds grow  
 A most untidy twig they show,  
 Reddish-brown are buds of **Plane**;  
 On the **Elm** twigs look again,  
 See the leaf buds small and brown  
 Growing up the **twigs** and down,  
 Flower buds you see as well,  
 Brown and bead-like as they swell,  
 Bud of **Sycamore** shows green,  
 A big one at the top is seen,  
 But small down the twig they **grow**;  
**Lime** buds ruby red will glow;  
**Poplar** buds in single line,  
 Down the twig in crimson shine,  
 Thus may all the trees be known,  
 In winter by their **buds** alone.

## Wander the Web

### For the under 5s

Find out about tree buds at <http://eden.uknoc.co.uk/~under5s/sprgtree.pdf>.

### Over 5s

Why are sticky buds sticky? See the Wild About Britain website, <http://www.wildaboutbritain.co.uk/forums/wildflowers-plants-and-treeforums/24480-why-sticky-buds-sticky.html>.

## How to identify birds

<http://www.rspb.org.uk/wildlife/birdidentifier/index.asp>

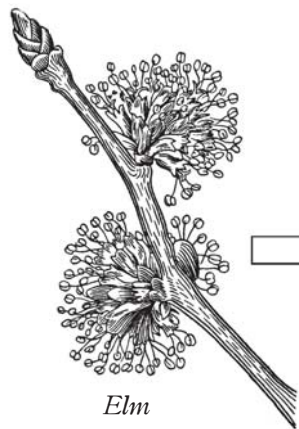


## PUZZLE

Using the words in **bold type** in the poem fill in the boxes below to find the missing words.  
 Answer on page 2.

Author Unknown

(Please tell us if you know who it is)

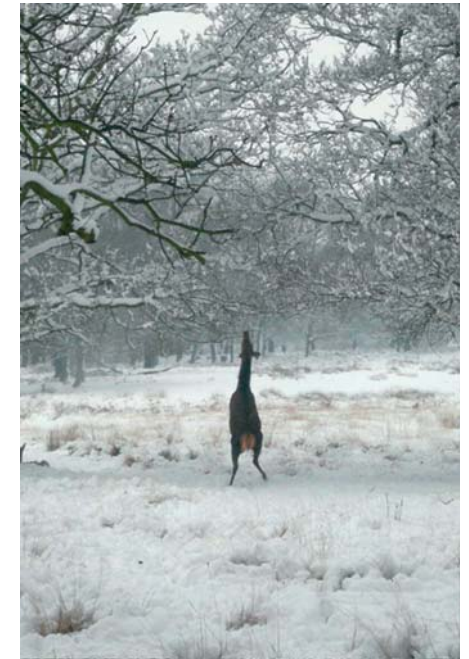


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## In case you missed it...

Snowfall in the first week in February closed the Park to cars, and early morning walkers enjoyed the tranquillity and monochrome beauty. Later, families enjoying a day off played in the snow.



The Park is usually 2 or 3 degrees colder than surrounding areas, as our photographers found. The Park deer are fed nightly in winter with hay (cut in the Park in summer), maize, and deer pellets containing essential vitamins and minerals. This regular feeding trains the deer to go to the feeding stands so that when it snows the feed can be increased accordingly. The visiting cattle are also fed when it snows .



Photographs:  
 Deer in the snow (above) and Playing in the sunshine (left) by Michael Davison  
 By Holly Lodge by Max Lankester

## Friends wildlife walks and courses

by Peter Burrows-Smith

Friends walks continue to be very popular with people interested in the Park's wildlife, particularly birds. We had a great Boxing Day event with over 100 walkers, including many new visitors to the area. (Googling "Boxing Day Walks" on Christmas Day produced 210,000 hits, with three items on our walks on the first page!)

This was followed on January 3rd by our regular monthly walk when the wildlife option walkers were fortunate enough to see a pair of kingfishers ahead of us along Beverley Brook. We all had an excellent sighting when one of them flew back past everyone. The October walkers also spotted a gannet flying overhead near Adam's Pond – a most unusual bird in the Park as gannets rarely come inland and this one was way off its normal flight path!

This spring and summer there are several mid-week and speciality walks (see the programme on the next page) in addition to the regular monthly programme.

### New Conservation and Ecology group

The Friends is setting up a Conservation and Ecology group, aiming to have a greater input to such issues in the Park. We are looking for people with some experience in the field who are willing to volunteer some time to the group's activities. The experience might come from working in the field, from teaching it in a school or college, or as a student. It could include people who have now retired. The amount of time and role can be tailored to your availability and interests. If you think you could be interested, please email peter.burrows-smith@virgin.net or phone 020 8392 9888.

### Queries about the Friends?

For more information about The Friends of Richmond Park see our website, [www.frp.org.uk](http://www.frp.org.uk), or contact Brian Baker, Honorary Secretary, on 020 8546 3109.

### Friends monthly email

If you would like to subscribe to our monthly email highlighting Friends activities, together with the Park and Isabella Diaries by Simon Richards and his staff, and Bird Notes, please email [cottonbarbara@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:cottonbarbara@yahoo.co.uk).

### Subscriptions & membership

Subscription rates: £6 individuals, £10 households and societies. All membership enquiries to Sheila Hamilton on 020 8876 2623. Application forms can be downloaded from [www.frp.org.uk](http://www.frp.org.uk).

### Queries about Park Management?

If you have any observations or concerns about the way the Park is being managed please contact Park Manager, Simon Richards at:

The Royal Parks, Holly Lodge, Richmond Park, Richmond, Surrey, TW10 5HS  
Tel: 020 8948 3209  
Fax: 020 8332 2730  
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Police telephone number: 020 7706 7272

### Friends Committee

Chairman: Ron Crompton  
Vice-Chairmen: Peter Burrows-Smith (Walks and Courses) & Sheila Hamilton (Hon. Membership Secretary)  
Vice Presidents: Richard Carter, David McDowall, Douglas Reynolds, David Thorpe, Mary Thorpe  
Other committee members: Brian Baker (Hon. Secretary); John Collier; Alison Donaldson; Max Lankester; Jack Maunders; John Repsch; Karen Rockell (Education); John Waller (Hon. Treasurer)  
Patron: Lord Rix, CBE

## Events

**Saturday April 25**  
Kings House School,  
Kings Road, Richmond

**Friends Annual General Meeting.** See enclosure with this newsletter for details.

## Friends walks and courses

### Walks

All welcome. Most walks start at 10.00am from a car park.

**\* Wildlife Courses** are typically a 30-minute talk indoors followed by a 2-hour walk. Courses are for Friends members only and places must be booked – please call Sue on 0208 549 8975. Coffee/tea provided. There will be no charge.

### See also

[www.frp.org.uk/walks](http://www.frp.org.uk/walks)

There are also free guided walks in Isabella Plantation led by Park staff throughout the year. These walks last about one and a half hours and are publicised on Park notice boards.

Date	What and where
21 March, 10.00am	COURSE: <b>Spring Birds &amp; Bird Song*</b> . Pembroke Lodge
4 April, 10.00am	WALK: including <b>Skylarks</b> . Meet Roehampton Gate car park
15 April, 10.00am	WALK: <b>Midweek</b> (Wed). Meet Pembroke Lodge car park
18 April, <b>8.00am</b>	WALK: <b>Spring Birds</b> . Meet Pembroke Lodge car park
29 April, 10.00am	WALK: <b>Midweek</b> (Wed). Meet Broomfield Hill car park
2 May, 10.00am	WALK: Meet Broomfield Hill car park
4 May, <b>5.00am</b>	WALK: <b>Dawn Chorus</b> . Meet Sheen Gate.
16 May, 10.00am	COURSE: Dr Nigel Reeve on <b>Park Wildlife*</b> . Pembroke Lodge
6 June, 10.00am	WALK: Meet Sheen Gate car park.
20 June, 10.00am	COURSE: Mike Turner on <b>Trees*</b> . Pembroke Lodge
4 July, 10.00am	WALK: Meet Pembroke Lodge car park.
11 July, 10.00am	COURSE: Ray Garrett on <b>Butterflies*</b> . Pembroke Lodge.
18 July, <b>8.30pm</b>	WALK: <b>Summer Evening</b> . Meet Sheen Gate car park.





**The Friends of Richmond Park**  
**[www.frp.org.uk](http://www.frp.org.uk)**

Richmond Park is  
a National Nature Reserve  
& Site of Special Scientific Interest