



FRIENDS of RICHMOND PARK

*Protecting Richmond Park's peace and
natural beauty for future generations*

NEWSLETTER SPRING 2012



Water in the Park

Squabbling Swans

Project Parakeet

Baroness Kramer on Richmond Park

Welcome

... to our Spring newsletter. Though winter arrived as we were putting the newsletter together, spring will soon be here – according to the British Trust for Ornithology, Cuckoos were already on their way home in February. You can follow the progress of the five migrating cuckoos being tracked by the BTO at www.bto.org. Cuckoos are occasionally heard in the Park, so listen for them in April.

This issue includes many other ideas on how to enjoy the Park as the weather improves – perhaps on a Friends walk (details on page 15) or a Discoverers Trail (see page 13), or by taking up one of several volunteering opportunities featured in this issue (see pages 5, 6, 9 and 15). And you can always savour the peace and quiet of the Park, like our patron Susan Kramer (on page 12).

Traffic in the Park still provokes argument – a recent email, from Rosemary Luz, compared our Park unfavourably with national nature reserves in Argentina, where tourists may enter only the periphery, and then not in cars or on bikes, and only rangers are allowed to enter the central core: “An Argentine reserve is not deemed to be a cut-through nor a sports ground. If only we could have the same approach here,” Miss Luz wrote, and also suggested clearer marking and differentiation of cycling and walking trails.

On page 8 we return to another controversial topic, our exotic resident Parakeet population, and on page 10

and in our Chair’s report on the facing page we look at a possible problem, though one the Friends could help to solve: the water on which the Park’s flora and fauna are so dependent.

Marilyn Mason
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Queries about Friends?

See www.frp.org.uk, or contact Max Lankester, Hon. Secretary, on 020 8940 7898 or max.lankester@frp.org.uk.

Friends monthly email

If you would like to subscribe to our monthly email please email cottonbarbara@yahoo.co.uk, including your postcode.

Cover photos:

Front cover: Egyptian geese by a Park pond, taken by Michael Davison

Back cover: *Ring-necked Parakeet*, by Charlie Marsh, with thanks to Project Parakeet (see page 8)

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

Water in the Park

Richmond Park’s ponds and streams carry the lifeblood of the Park, its water. They sustain a vast array of fauna and flora (see Michael Davison’s article on page 10).

Yet the Park’s ponds and streams are often forgotten and neglected. Maintenance of them is a low priority when money is short; the renovation of Adam’s Pond is a too rare exception. They gradually become silted and the margins damaged by deer and dogs, reducing habitats and biodiversity, as at Ham Gate Pond. They also get invaded by aquatic weeds such as *Crassula*, as at Gallows and Ham Dip Ponds. The deterioration slows the Park’s lifeblood and affects all those who depend on it. Climate change also affects the water in the Park. The Victorians built channels and ditches to drain much of the historically boggy grassland, for example at Pond Slade. Today’s climate is increasingly a mix of large downpours, which quickly run off the Park along the Victorian channels, and long periods of dry conditions when water is scarce (as this winter). An increase in the area of wet mires would greatly help diversity.

We need renovation of the ponds and streams and building of new ones to retain water in the Park and improve biodiversity, and this is where the Friends come in. We, and the Visitor Centre, have surplus funds from the sale of the *Guidebook* and *Family Trails* and from a reserve built up over the years which is now too large for our needs.

So we have offered to provide £40,000 – £50,000 over the next three years as “core funding” for a ponds and streams

renovation programme. The commitment of this core funding will encourage other donors, such as companies and individuals, and can be used as match-funding for grants from trusts and public agencies. The target will be to raise £200,000 or more to fund the complete programme.

The first projects are likely to be clearing the infestation from Gallows Pond, opening up the brook from Martin’s Pond to Robin Hood Gate, and maybe creating a new pond to commemorate the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee. Other projects will be renovating Ham Gate and Ham Dip Ponds, improving Peg’s Pond in Isabella, changes to Beverley Brook to create a more natural course and improve biodiversity, renovating the pond in the grounds of Pembroke Lodge, and clearing smaller brooks and ditches. In three years’ time, the Park’s lifeblood should be much stronger and biodiversity much increased.

We hope you think that this is a good use of the Friends’ money. Many of the projects will be small enough (£5,000 – £10,000) for individual (or company) donations to make a big difference to their happening. If you or your friends would like to donate to one of them, please contact me. We will also be collecting at Friends’ events and the Visitor Centre.

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New Chief Executive

From March 1st The Royal Parks which manages Richmond Park, has a new Chief Executive, Linda Lennon (pictured left), previously Chief Executive of the

Parole Board. Mark Camley left at the end of 2011 after more than 6 years in the job to become Director of Park Operations at the Olympic Park Legacy Company. Linda will be speaking at our AGM, so please come along to listen and ask your questions.

Park maintenance

Spring brings some Park maintenance projects, including repairs to a central stretch of horse track, woodland thinning and chipping in Queen Elizabeth Plantation, and an overhaul of the fence around Isabella Plantation.

Honeysuckle is being planted where it can trail over the Park wall and the deer cannot reach it, in the hope that it will provide sustenance for White Admiral butterflies in the summer.

Planning permission for Park Golf Course

In December, Richmond Borough Council granted Richmond Park Golf Club planning permission for a scheme which will replace existing buildings with a single building in the far south-east of the site. The Friends broadly welcomed the proposals, which include: a green roof reflecting and extending the acid grassland habitat of the golf course and Park; 20 cycle parking spaces; a new pond, enhancements to existing ponds and buffer zones to the existing

water courses; reduced light spillage; and installation of a ground source heat pump and photovoltaic panels to ensure the new development reduces the club's CO2 output by 20%. Relevant documents can be viewed on Richmond Council's website.

Isabella Plantation Update

A team of volunteers from the Friends began working fortnightly in the Plantation last autumn, and by the beginning of this year had contributed over 300 hours of work between them. During those months they worked with the Isabella gardeners to clear a large area between the Heather Garden and the Deer Sanctuary Gate which had been completely overtaken by Rhododendron Ponticum, swamping some of the other, more important, Rhododendron specimens and blocking light from the woodland floor. The volunteers' hard work has helped to give the area a lighter, brighter, fresher feel, and there are plans to replant it with native woodland species.

If the Isabella Plantation Access Project succeeds in its main phase bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Horticultural Volunteer programme will probably be expanded as work continues on improving and maintaining the health of the plant collection – more on this in our next issue. In the meantime, the Project thanks the volunteers for all their hard work and for being guinea-pigs in its trial phase.

If you'd like to be updated on the Isabella Plantation Access Project please contact isabella@royalparks.gsi.gov.uk.

The deer in winter

Park staff report that the mild autumn and high acorn yield led to less interest than usual from the deer in the winter supplementary feeding that started in

mid-December. One or two of the stags were still bellowing in December, two months after the height of the rut, perhaps because of the exceptionally mild weather then and the abundance of high energy food.

The deer cull took place again in February. This always causes some controversy; the reasons for the cull were explained in our Autumn 2010 newsletter, and there is also an explanation on our website at www.frp.org.uk/news/101-controlling-deer-numbers.

Shire horses rationalised

It was proving difficult to justify a full-time Richmond Park team of shire horses, so eight-year-old Massey and 18-year-old Jed have been relocated. We will still see Massey occasionally, as he joins the Hampton Court shire horse team which will be contracted in to carry out Park work such as mowing and bracken-rolling; the team will also offer tourist carriage rides and transport for weddings in The Royal Parks. During 2012 Jed will retire to the Working Horse Trust in Buckinghamshire. We wish him a long and happy retirement.

Litter in The Royal Parks

An interesting experiment was carried out last summer to find out what would happen if litter was not collected from part of Hyde Park for a weekend and to highlight the cost of litter collection. By the end of the weekend a half tonne of accumulated cigarette butts, food, packaging, bottles and nappies were strewn across the experiment area, and it took 20 people two hours to collect it all. Park visitors were divided in

their reactions: some were appalled, though others admitted to dropping litter and thought staff should clear up after them. Collecting litter costs The Royal Parks £1.4 million annually, making a big dent in funds.

Oak Processionary Moth update

In January The Royal Parks finalised its 2012 strategy for managing the invasive Oak Processionary Moth (*its caterpillars pictured below*). Control of the moth in the core outbreak zone of south west London and the surrounding 10km buffer zone is under the remit of The Forestry Commission but individual landowners are responsible for outbreaks on their own land. The Royal Parks has worked closely with the Commission since the initial outbreak in Richmond Park in 2009; as the Park is a Site of Special Scientific Interest Natural England is also consulted.

Last year staff, together with 35 volunteers, detected 1927 nests which were removed by specialist operators and incinerated. However, following the pattern of population spread in Europe, it is expected that numbers will rise again in 2012 and the help of



volunteers in limiting this spread will continue to be invaluable. After training in May, each volunteer is allocated an area of the park and then systematically works through it, checking all the Oak trees for caterpillar nests. This onerous but crucial task must be completed by the beginning of August, when the adult moths start emerging from the nests to lay eggs for the following year. If you would like to volunteer please contact Gillian Jonusas on 07785 346 230 or at gjonusas@royalparks.gsi.gov.uk.

Other conservation work

Friends will soon be extending our current programme to include a midweek session and some new volunteers. Whilst our work is currently based on clearing rhododendron in the Pen Ponds Plantation, there should be other work during the summer months. We are currently meeting every two weeks and have at last been allowed to start burning the cuttings (see *picture below*), though this is only allowed in the autumn/winter. Could you start a fire in damp weather with just one match?



“FENTON!!!!”

One of our members, Graham Clifton, watched the YouTube clip of the “Fenton incident” in the Park with a little frisson, and e-mailed to say: “In the late 1950s my parents had (unwisely) acquired a dachshund called Jerry. It once chased the deer, followed at a gallop by my dad, except that you could not see Jerry in the long grass; the dismaying spectacle was of my dad chasing a herd of deer!”

“What a Wonderful World”

If you haven't yet seen Friends Patron Sir David Attenborough celebrating nature on the BBC, enjoy it on YouTube at <http://tinyurl.com/bl6byty>.

Birdsong – good for the soul?

Surrey University's Department of Psychology is testing out our intuitions about the restorative effects of bird-song, which up till now have had no empirical supporting evidence. Is it the song or the walk in the countryside or Park that lifts the spirits? The study, commissioned by the National Trust, may tell us.

Queen to visit the Park

The Queen will be visiting Richmond Park as part of her Jubilee celebrations on the afternoon of May 15th. Richmond is one of four London boroughs she will be visiting, and although the celebrations will be in the Park, all the surrounding boroughs will be participating. The theme will be London's parks and gardens. There will be displays and demonstrations on the sports pitches near Roehampton Gate car park, and she will visit there and Holly Lodge, being in the Park for a couple of hours that afternoon. We are looking for volunteers to help, particularly with stewarding the route and at the sports pitches. It should be a great afternoon.

Friends on Facebook

The Friends are now on Facebook. We hope that this will provide up to the minute information and responses to events, and a forum for talk about the Park that reaches non-members as well as Friends. Please become a friend of our Facebook page and post your thoughts, comments and photos at www.facebook.com/thefriendsofrichmondpark.



Friends of Richmond Park Calendar

The Friends are producing a calendar for 2013 and would like to use images of Richmond Park donated by members. If you would like one of your favourite seasonal pictures to be considered, please send a 6 x 4 inch print (colour or monochrome, landscape or portrait) to Anna Price, 10 York Road, Richmond, Surrey TW10 6DR by April 30th – no more than three previously unpublished pictures please. If your image is chosen, we will contact you for a digital file. Please write your name, email address and telephone number on the reverse of the photograph, together with the month the picture was taken if known. We regret we cannot return photographs. If you have queries please contact Anna on 07530 426625 or at zoomwithaview@gmail.com.

Poems on show

Following last year's highly successful Poems in the Park competition, which attracted over 650 entries from poets of all ages, Richmond Park management will be displaying a selection in the Park over the next few months. From early February some of the shortlisted poems have been displayed on Park notice boards, and from the end of March

there will be a full display of all winners, runners-up and commended poems at Poet's Corner (*pictured left*) in Pembroke Lodge Gardens.

Richmond Council has also agreed to display the shortlisted poems at the Reference Library in the Old Town Hall, and then they will go on tour to other libraries in Richmond and, we hope, Kingston.

Park bats under threat?

The Royal Parks has added its voice to those concerned about the effects that a proposed development of Surbiton filter beds will have on the local bat population. Bats forage over large areas and the Surbiton bats will include some that feed in Richmond Park. All bats are protected by law, and Daubenton's bat, one of the species that roost at the filter beds, is quite rare.

An alternative to “Boris Island”?

Member Alan Sherriff sent us the following extract from an early 1920s business prospectus for the proposed building of “The Venetian Palace Hotel, Richmond on Thames”, on the former site of Cardigan House on Richmond Hill: “It would probably be the most popular place for a honeymoon anywhere in the London district. It cannot be long before there is an aeroplane station in Richmond Park to which people will make flights to and from all parts of England.”

With thanks to Peter Burrows-Smith, Graham Clifton, Ron Crompton, Richard Gray, Max Lankester, Alan Sherriff and Richmond Park Management for news items and photographs.

Parakeets – where do they come from, where do they go?

Project Parakeet, based at Imperial College, is currently researching the Rose-Ringed Parakeet, and the project website, www.projectparakeet.co.uk, is full of fascinating information about this familiar visitor to Richmond Park and beyond. Originating in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, this “established exotic” is now reported to be the most widely distributed parrot in the world, found in 35 countries on every continent except Antarctica. Parakeets are highly adaptable and long-lived, factors which contribute to their success, and have been established in Britain for over 40 years, most probably as the offspring of escaped pet Parakeets.

There is much still to discover about the size, distribution and predicted growth of the UK Rose-Ringed Parakeet population, as well as its ecological and economic impacts. Though there are many stories about how they arrived in the UK, no one knows which, if any, is true, and the jury remains out on whether they are, or could become, the agricultural pests they are in their native habitats and whether they affect other birds negatively, for example by competing for nesting holes. There have been few reports of Parakeet damage to UK agriculture, perhaps because so far they are found mostly in towns and suburbs.

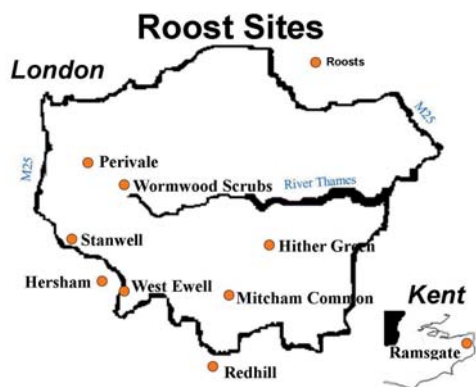
The Project Parakeet researchers thank Friends who have volunteered to take part in their year-long garden bird feeding experiment, intended to find out how competition from Parakeets affects other bird visitors to feeders. An earlier study, using a captive parakeet, concluded that garden birds forage less in the presence of a Parakeet, and this experiment will build on those findings.



West Ewell roost, photo by Ian Owens

Other research continues alongside that project, and you could help.

10 Parakeet roost sites have been located across Greater London and Kent (see map below). If you know the



location of other roosts (where 100 – 15,000 Parakeets gather in trees after dusk) please inform the researchers. Roosts provide an accurate means of estimating the population size, and if all roosts were located the entire population could be counted. For more information on reporting a roost see www.projectparakeet.co.uk.

Since January 2010 researchers and helpers have been counting the total population of parakeets in the UK,

currently estimated to be over 30,000, and volunteers are needed to help with the quarterly roost counts (next once coming up in April). This involves volunteers standing at all known roosts at the same time and counting the Parakeets as they fly into the trees. If you are interested in helping, please contact parakeet@imperial.ac.uk.

Researchers are also interested in their economic impacts, and if you have seen Parakeets eating crops or damaging buildings, or observed any agricultural or horticultural impacts, please contact parakeet@imperial.ac.uk.

Meanwhile, University of Kent PhD student Hazel Jackson is investigating the genetic origin of the UK Parakeet population and the prevalence of disease, by extracting and analysing the DNA from their feathers. If you find Parakeet feathers please post them, with details of where you found them, to her at the Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology, School of Anthropology and Conservation, Marlowe Building, University of Kent, Canterbury, CT2 7NR. See www.wildparakeetsuk.co.uk for more information on her project.

With thanks to Hannah Peck and the Project Parakeet team for information and illustrations.



Rescued cygnets at their new home on the Thames; photo by Ann Aitken-Davies

...and other birds

For Friends interested in less showy native birds the winter months were relatively quiet – but a highlight on an early January walk was a handsome male Goldeneye, spotted on Lower Pen Ponds by member Rosemary Rivers. This was only the second time the duck, which had probably been blown inland by the strong winds that week, had been seen in the Park over the past ten years; it seemed quite relaxed and was content to preen itself in the mid-morning sunlight – a great sighting!

Swans are very territorial and at this time of year have to “evict” the previous year’s cygnets so that they can concentrate on raising a new brood. This can result in distressed young birds hanging about on neighbouring land, very vulnerable to dog attack. This situation seemed to be developing at Adam’s Pond in late January, when the resident pair were trying to reject four cygnets. In order to pre-empt undue stress, a volunteer from Shepperton Swan Sanctuary stepped in to rescue the young birds and take them to join a large swan flock on the Thames at Walton, where they appear to have been quickly accepted – see photo on the left. Nature can be ruth-less, and it is sometimes necessary to intervene to help these magnificent birds.

In contrast, the resident pair at Lower Pen Ponds had to defend their territory in late January from at least five marauding adults seeking a new breeding territory.

Meanwhile, the new Sand Martin bank on Upper Pen Pond was completed in December, and we hope it will be occupied when the birds return from Africa in April. You can see it from the causeway, to the left of the reed bed to the south west of the pond.

Peter Burrows-Smith

Water in the Park

Our Park's great scene-stealers are its rolling grasslands, its great Oaks, its herds of deer. Yet underlying all these is a resource without which no plant life or animal life could exist. The lifeblood of the Park is its water. Rainwater seeping underground through layers of gravel, trickling along beds of clay, welling up in springs that feed streams and ponds: it is water, seen and unseen, that creates the landscape we cherish and the flora and fauna it sustains. A single Oak tree can suck up 200 gallons of water a day; grass and bracken send their roots down into damp soil that is never far below the surface; deer drink and wallow in the ponds; midges that breed in the bogs feed birds and bats; Willows and Alders adorn the riverbanks.

The Park's two most visible areas of water are the two Pen Ponds and Beverley Brook. The ponds originated in a trench dug in the early 17th century to drain a boggy area; later in the century this was widened and deepened by the extraction of gravel for local building. The Ponds today take in water from streams flowing from higher ground around them, and release it down an open watercourse to Beverley Brook. Spillways have recently been built at the northern end of both ponds to prevent an exceptional flood breaching the pedestrian causeways.

Beverley Brook has its source in Worcester Park and enters the Park at Robin Hood Gate. Its water, once polluted by outflow from sewage treatment works, is visibly improved nowadays, and several species of fish have been seen there – if not the beaver which gave the brook its name

Michael Davison

in medieval times. The brook has been artificially straightened over the years: there is a plan to introduce artificial "berms", or half-barriers, to simulate natural meanders, create eddies and encourage a wider range of flora and fauna.

While most streams drain into Beverley Brook, a ridge of higher land across the south-western corner of the Park forms a watershed beyond which one important watercourse drains westward towards the Thames. This rises in a spring above Dann's Pond, then flows down through Ham Dip Pond and Ham Gate Pond to join Sudbrook, on the Park boundary.

Dann's Pond itself is undergoing carefully managed clearance, supported by the wildlife charity Froglife as the home of the Great Crested Newt. Ham Dip Pond and Ham Gate Pond are in urgent need of similar attention. As Park Deputy Manager Adam Curtis explained: "Over the years the ponds have become clogged with silt from rotting leaves and duck droppings: as a result the water is starved of the oxygen that fish and other water life need for survival."

The de-silting of ponds of this size is expensive, but the results can be seen from the success of a recent project elsewhere in the Park. Adam's Pond, near Sheen Gate, was suffering from years of neglect at the time Adam Curtis came to the Park seven years ago. Its restoration became one of his first projects, and today's serene waters, graced by wildfowl and ringed by reeds that encourage dragonflies and damselflies, are a conservation triumph.



Pen Ponds reflections
Photo by Sue Fernandes

Another watercourse, this time draining northwards, is a stream that rises north of Sidmouth Wood and meanders through Conduit Wood towards the Park boundary near Bog Gate. Here two veteran Black Poplars, Britain's rarest native tree, flourish in the boggy soil.

How many ponds are there in the Park? Probably about 30, though the exact total depends on the time of year. Some are permanent features, man-made to drain the land or provide water for livestock; these include Barn Wood Pond, Bishop's Pond, Gallows Pond, Leg of Mutton Pond, Martin's Pond and White Ash Pond. Others are no more than shallow depressions which dry out in summer: these form a wildlife habitat for plants and creatures which, though primarily aquatic, can tolerate dry conditions for part of the year.

Isabella Plantation has its own separate water system developed in the 1950s.

Fed by water pumped during the day from the upper Pen Pond, the central brook trickles downhill through Still Pond, Thomson's Pond and Peg's Pond, supporting a huge variety of water-loving plants. From Peg's Pond a conduit takes the water into the Park, where it is absorbed into the ground and eventually percolates back to Pen Pond. The linked ponds and tinkling brook of Isabella show how water can be harnessed mainly to please the eye.

Elsewhere in the Park human hands have over the years tapped natural springs and built reservoirs for the practical purpose of supplying water to buildings within and outside the Park. Water is at once a main feature of the Park's landscape and one of its most important habitats. Its proper management is as important a responsibility for today's custodians of the Park as any other aspect of its conservation.

Susan Kramer (Baroness Kramer of Richmond Park)

Nothing is more peaceful than the Park early in the morning before the traffic starts especially when the mist is still hanging over the grass. When my husband John was still alive we would go as soon as we woke on a Sunday, taking a flask of coffee and sometimes the newspapers, heading to Isabella Plantation. Still Pond, reflecting the brilliant colours of the surrounding azaleas, is my favourite spot anywhere. Like others, I have quietly told my children to scatter a handful of my ashes there (illegally, I am sure). I keep a video on my phone of the Grebes swimming through the shadows, which I play quietly to myself when the pace of life in Parliament gets out of hand.



I have been really privileged to know many of the people who keep the Park so special, not just the Friends who have brilliantly defended the Park for the community, but Simon Richards and the staff, Pat Ealey and others at Holly Lodge who make sure the wonders of the Park reach people with all kinds of special needs, and the Hearsam family who so brilliantly restored Pembroke Lodge. They have taught me to respect the diversity of life in the Park and its history.

John Lewis (the brewer, not the retailer) is one of my heroes for forcing Princess Amelia in 1758 to restore access to the

Park for all pedestrians, not just her cronies – direct action of the best kind!

When I walk through the Russell rooms at Pembroke Lodge I remember the story that the Cabinet met here and made the decision to enter the Crimean War, to the surprise of those who had fallen asleep after a fine dinner and missed the discussion. Conrad

Russell, a great friend and a great-grandson of the Prime Minister John Russell who lived at Pembroke Lodge, told me how Queen Victoria had given John Russell the home as a “grace and favour” when he got into financial difficulties to hide the fact that she disliked him so much (he was known as “peevish Johnnie”).

Now that I have more time in my life I intend to repeat a past pleasure of joining a dawn chorus walk through the Park. I would love to be able to identify the different bird songs. But unlike many, I refuse to hate the invasive Rose-Ringed Parakeet, not least because its formal name is “Psittacula Krameri”. I guess Kramers just love Richmond Park!

When it was time to choose a title as I was introduced into the House of Lords the decision was obvious: I chose a place I love at the heart of a community I was honoured to serve. Richmond Park will always be part of my life.

DISCOVERERS

For families exploring Richmond Park



Following the success of the Poetry competition last year, which attracted a very enthusiastic response from schools and young people, the Friends are launching Discoverers, an activities programme to encourage more families and young people to get to know and become involved in Richmond Park.

Initially the project will target the 5 – 11 age group and a Discoverers newsletter, which will be regularly updated, has been added to the Friends website. This will carry news of events and spotlight particular Park-related themes and issues. There will also be space for contributors' own creative ideas and experiences.

Discoverers was launched in style with an exciting competition. Richmond Park management generously offered two winners (together with family members) a night-time safari by Land Rover to observe wildlife in the company of Simon Richards, Park Manager. Winners' accounts and pictures should make interesting additions to the new web pages.

The next development will be a series of Discoverers Trails based on *Family Trails*, the book of walks written by Susanna Ramsey and published by the Friends last year. These will be run like the Friends courses – pre-booked and limited in numbers. We also intend to

organise some themed trails featuring particular aspects of Park life, for example bats and fungi, with the assistance of Friends and others with special skills and interests.

At the outset of the project, we are very open to suggestions as to what the Discoverers Programme might include. Schools in all three Park boroughs – Richmond, Kingston and Wandsworth – are welcome to get involved, as are families and young people themselves. Email your ideas and comments to discoverers@frp.org, and keep an eye on the Friends website for news about our plans and upcoming events.

Teresa Grafton, Trustee (Education)



You could spot one of these!
Photo by Will Coleman

Gift Aid, Membership and Subscriptions

We have received a very good response in completed Gift Aid forms as a result of our special exercise in January targeting those of you not yet signed up – 290 of you had responded by the end of January. Gift Aid provides a big fillip to our subscription and donations income, because for every pound we receive we can claim back 25p from HMRC. You will see how much in total we claimed for 2011 in the annual accounts (summary enclosed in this mailing). Thank you very much indeed.

This is important, as postage alone on our three standard mailings per year is 36p a time, and more for the April mailing.

Thank you very much too to all who made additional donations with your subscriptions. Apart from necessary expenditure in running our activities, our aim is to put as much money into the Park as we can, especially with the cutbacks in central grants. You will read elsewhere details of the projects we have funded recently, and what plans we have for future funding.

Each year a few more of you convert to paying by Standing Order. This is another way in which you can help us: it is easier to administer, it is cheaper as no postage is involved once the mandate is set up and there is no risk of fraud or loss. It is entirely under your control, as the charity has no power to alter a mandate.

By the time you read this, our membership will have exceeded 2000, the highest total for some time. I suspect we are heading to 2200.

Subscriptions: £6 for individuals, £10 for households and organisations. All enquiries to me on 020 8876 2623.

*Sheila Hamilton,
Hon. Membership Secretary*

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: 0300 061 2200
Email: richmond@royalparcs.gsi.gov.uk
Website: www.royalparcs.gov.uk

Queries about the Friends?

For more information about the Friends of Richmond Park see www.frp.org.uk, or contact Max Lankester, Hon. Secretary, on 020 8940 7898 or max.lankester@frp.org.uk.

Police non-emergency telephone number: 0300 123 1212

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Friends walks and courses**WALKS**

All welcome. Most, though not all, walks are on Saturdays and start at 10.00am from a car park.

Please phone Peter Burrows-Smith on 020 8392 9888 in advance if you need special support or help with the walk, and please keep dogs under control.

* **COURSES** are typically a 30-minute talk at Pembroke Lodge followed by a 2-hour walk. Courses are for Friends members only and places must be booked — please contact Sue on 020 8549 8975 or sue.gibbons@npl.co.uk. Coffee/tea provided. There will be no charge.

See also www.frp.org.uk.

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	Time	What and where
17 Mar	10.00am	COURSE*: Spring birds and bird song (Peter Burrows-Smith)
7 Apr	10.00am	WALK: meet at Roehampton Gate car park
14 Apr	<u>6.00am</u>	WALK: Dawn Chorus . Meet at Sheen Gate
5 May	10.00am	WALK: meet at Broomfield Hill car park
7 May	10.00am	WALK: Spring Bird . Meet at Pembroke Lodge car park
12 May	10.00am	COURSE*: Ecology of Richmond Park (Dr Nigel Reeve)
2 Jun	10.00am	WALK: meet at Sheen Gate car park
16 Jun	10.00am	COURSE*: Grasslands of Richmond Park (Karen Rogers)
7 Jul	10.00am	WALK: meet at Pembroke Lodge car park
14 Jul	<u>8.30pm</u>	WALK: Summer Evening . Meet at Sheen Gate car park

Other events

Saturday 28 April

Friends AGM, details enclosed with this newsletter

Saturday May 12

Richmond Fair

Tuesday May 15

The Queen visits the Park

Saturday June 16

Ham Fair

Saturday July 14

St Margaret's Fair

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED AT SUMMER FAIRS – if you can help at any of those above, please notify Karen Scott by April 15th, at k.m.scott@syncrexis.co.uk or on 020 8546 2480, or by post to 14 Wolverton Avenue, Kingston KT2 7QD, saying which fair you can help at and whether you'd prefer a morning or afternoon.

VOLUNTEERS ALSO NEEDED for a Friends information and book stand in the Park during spring and summer weekends, dates and times to be decided. Training and support will be given. Please register your interest with Karen, as above, by April 15th.



Registered charity No. 1133201

www.frp.org.uk

*Richmond Park is a National Nature Reserve, a Site of Special Scientific Interest
and a Special Area of Conservation*