



FRIENDS of
RICHMOND PARK

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

SUMMER 2013



Wildlife and conservation updates

The saviour of the St Paul's view

Golfing goes green

Four royal generations in the Park

Calling 101

Welcome

Spring and summer arrived almost simultaneously this year, with new leaves, bluebells, azaleas, breeding birds and deer all happening at once in the Park, it seemed. There has been a lot of human activity in the Park too, as anyone who attended our AGM in April will know. Members heard about and saw illustrations of an exceptionally busy 2012 for our Chair and the Friends (reported here and in past issues of this newsletter), and had a foretaste of plans for 2013. The year's activities relied on over 10,000 hours of volunteering from more than 200 Friends – so well done and thank you all. The AGM also heard from Park Superintendent Simon Richards about many ongoing improvements to the Park (see page 4 for just a few of them), with more to come or to be completed over the summer months.

Our regular roving reporter Michael Davison has excelled himself in this issue, contributing two fascinating features on pages 10 and 12, so a big thank you to Michael as well as to Jan Wilczur, who keeps us updated on birdlife and the Friends' conservation work in the Park on pages 8 and 9, and to all the other Friends who have sent in photos or news items – please keep them coming in.

Marilyn Mason, editor@frp.org.uk

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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@royalparks.gsi.gov.uk Website: www.royalparks.gov.uk

PLEASE LET US HAVE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS!

We now have email addresses for more than 65% of our members, who receive a monthly email containing: the latest news of the Park and the Friends; the Park Diary and Isabella Diary written by The Park Management; the Friends and Isabella Walks programme; notice of events in the Park or publications about the Park. Try it for a while and see what you think – you can always unsubscribe!

Please email Roy Berriman at royberriman@yahoo.co.uk with your name, postcode and email address.

Please note that we never give details of our members, including email addresses, to anyone else.

Cover photos:

Front cover: Deer wading across Upper Pen Pond by Max Lankester

Back cover: Another chance to see Kim Spickett's winning entry in our "Tread Lightly" poster competition.

An oasis of calm?

The early May bank holiday in Richmond Park was mayhem, as you can see in the Park News item and photograph on page 5. There were cars parked everywhere, much off-track cycling and harassment of deer – and little police presence. In the past, the Park has experienced crowds of visitors on bank holidays, but this was exceptional. What is happening?

Obviously, the Park has become more popular, driven, I think, by on-line and social media. Search "Richmond Park" online and you will find many travel sites (see Yelp or Trip Advisor) and individuals ("Bald Hiker") extolling the Park's "oasis of calm".

People are also using the Park more intensively. They play volleyball, pitch tents and picnic, cycle or run in large groups. Many visitors seem to be new to the Park on such busy days; listen and you will hear many different languages, and questions such as, "Which way do we go from here?".

The area occupied by visitors on such days is growing steadily; for example, the area between Roehampton and Robin Hood Gates alongside Beverley Brook now becomes full of people, in a way it never has been before.

The popularity of the Park and the increased access are both good in themselves. But, as Friends of the Park, we are also concerned about the impact on the ecology and character of the Park. The crowds have a direct impact on the Park's ecology. Adults get close to the deer to take photographs,

children chase them, and both feed them. Wild flowers are trampled and habitats destroyed as people move away from crowded areas to find space.

And, of course, the crowds erode the Park's character – the very peace and tranquillity that they come to enjoy. On bank holidays a large part of the Park is little different from a local park.

What should be done? First, we need short-term measures to prevent the mayhem. This means sufficient police on duty, even though it is expensive (officers are paid double time on bank holidays). It may mean physical barriers, more temporary signs to prevent off-road parking and off-track cycling, and warnings at the gates when the car parks are full.

Second, we must quickly find a way to educate new visitors to respect the Park's ecology and wildlife. The Friends' and Royal Parks' efforts are not getting the message across to occasional visitors and we have to re-think it.

Third, we may need further long-term restrictions. The capacity of the car parks already limits visitor numbers, but we may need to cordon off areas that are ecologically sensitive. It is something National Parks and other SSSIs already do. It is a pity but may be inevitable.

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Oak Processionary Moth alert

In early May, when OPM caterpillars were on the move, there was some pesticide spraying in the Park, and over the summer months surveying to locate and remove nests continues. If you come across the caterpillars or their webbed nests please do not touch them, keep children and pets away, and report sightings to the Park office on 0300 061 2200.

Works in the Park

Friends who attended our AGM in April heard Park Superintendent Simon Richards' long and impressive list of recent improvements to Park infrastructure despite a very muddy winter and spring, the most striking development perhaps being the new golf clubhouse (see page 10). Other works include a new pedestrian bridge over the Beverley Brook near Robin Hood car park, leading to an extension of the Tamsin Trail to Chohole Gate at the eastern point of the golf course, repairs to the worst potholes on the Park's roads, and three new raised crossing points: two at Pembroke Lodge car park and one at Robin Hood car park. Robin Hood Gate has been tidied up, and car parks have been improved with more bays for the disabled and better drainage. Some of this work has been paid for by LOCOG as part of the post-Olympics restoration and legacy. Playgrounds have been improved with funding from the Marathon Trust.

Alongside this, conservation work continues, with rhododendron-bashing (see page 8), tree planting, hedge-laying and the construction of ponds and ditches to retain water in the Park. There will be a full report on the new ponds in our autumn issue, by which time the work should be complete.

Isabella Plantation update

The first major stage of work on the ponds and streams in Isabella Plantation was completed in May, part

of the £1.5 million Isabella Plantation Access Project funded by the BIG Lottery Fund, the Heritage Lottery Fund, The Royal Parks, a £120,000 grant from SITA Trust, and £6,000 from the Friends. Peg's Pond has been extended with pontoon decking included whilst all three ponds (Peg's Pond, Still Pond and Thomson's Pond) have been de-silted with reed-beds added to create additional habitats. The streams have been improved with the addition of waterfalls and flow diverters to create pooling and scouring to add further habitat value.

There have also been improvements to the toilet block, and the removal of considerable areas of Rhododendron Ponticum, with further upgrades to the Plantation, which celebrates its 60th birthday this year, on the way.

Dogs in the Park

In April, Park Management introduced licensing for commercial dog-walkers. The licences cost £300+VAT per year, walkers will be issued with a coloured armband, changed annually, and will be allowed to walk no more than four dogs at a time, bringing the Royal Parks into line with most London councils. The Friends lobbied for licensing and are delighted at its introduction. There's more information at www.royalparcs.org.uk.

Early in June, Park Management advised dog-walkers to keep away from the Park during the deer birthing season, for their own safety as well as for that of the young deer. The long cold spring resulted in less cover than usual for the fawns, and does that think their young are threatened can become aggressive.

Dog walkers and others were also asked to keep to the paths and put their dogs on leads around Lawn Field, the area between Pen Ponds and White Lodge where Skylarks breed. Since the introduction of the protection area, the numbers of nesting skylarks has grown significantly.

On a more positive note, the police would like to hear from dog-walkers interested in helping to police the Park via the Dogwatch scheme. If you are interested, please contact PC Paul Barber at richmondpark@met.police.uk.

A load of rubbish

A recent audit of litter revealed that the Park deals with around 150 tonnes of rubbish per year, of which 47% is dog waste, 34% is recyclable and 19% non-recyclable. The Royal Parks hope to increase the recycling rates or send more waste to energy recovery facilities.

Ride London

On Sunday August 4th two cycle races will pass through the Park. The first, the "RideLondon-Surrey 100", is a mass ride of 20,000 amateur cyclists, starting from the Olympic Park in Stratford in waves between 6.00am and 8.00am and passing through the Park between 6.30am and 10.00am. The second, the "RideLondon-Surrey Classic", is a race between 150 of the world's top cyclists, and will start at the Olympic Park at 12.30pm, reaching the Park at around 12.45pm to 1.00pm. The route for both races will be from Sheen Gate via Richmond Gate to Kingston Gate; the return will be through Wimbledon, not the Park. Park roads will be closed to traffic, and crossing them, even on foot, will not be allowed during the races; there will also be some disruption on the previous Saturday. Spectators will be far fewer than for the Olympic road

races and the Friends will not be providing an information service at the gates on the day. This year's London Duathlon will take place in the Park on Sunday September 15th, and some roads will be closed, as in previous years.

May Mayhem

The first sunny bank holiday in May brought huge numbers of visitors to the Park and widespread flouting of Park regulations. Car parks were full, with long queues causing traffic chaos, and several hundred cars ignored signage and parked illegally on roadsides, horse tracks, and any accessible grass area, illustrated in the shocking picture below – "because everyone else is", according to one driver accosted by a Friend. Cyclists ignored "No Cycling" signs, some drivers and walkers harassed and frightened deer, and people were also observed climbing trees and having barbecues. Thank you to the 25 members who were in the Park and told us of their anger and dismay at what was happening via Facebook and email.

There seemed to be few police about on May 6th, but for some sound advice on what to do if you see breaches of Park regulations, see page 14. The late May bank holiday saw fewer visitors and a much larger police presence, with widespread use of "no parking" cones and penalty notices given out for off-track cycling and dog fouling, all of which kept the situation under control. You can read more about it at www.frp.org.uk/news.



Posters in the Park

The winners, runners-up and specially commended entries from the Posters in the Park competition can now be seen in glorious A3 technicolour in Pembroke Lodge Gardens in Richmond Park. The display, located in the Gardens close to King Henry's Mound, shows some of the best entries received in last year's successful competition which challenged the creative-minded to depict the theme "Tread Lightly In Richmond Park", the conservation slogan adopted by the Friends. A smaller version of the excellent winning entry by Kim Spickett can be seen on our back cover.

Friends online

Pdf versions of FRP newsletters since mid-2005 are now available to read at www.frp.org.uk/friends/newsletter. Future newsletters will appear on the website some months after publication, so members will still receive them well ahead of the general public. We will also continue to publish selected individual articles in the appropriate sections of the website, where they can be easily found for reference purposes, and the most recent Chairman's Letter will appear as a news item.

The FRP Blog has also recently become more accessible to anyone visiting the website as it is now a visible

menu item on the "About the Friends" page of www.frp.org.uk. It will have postings about the Park and the Friends, with a particular focus on the wildlife and history of the Park as the History Project team and the Conservation and Ecology Group will post items regularly.

May walk

An hour before David Attenborough launched "Tweet of the Day" with a Cuckoo on BBC Radio 4, around 50 Friends were up with the lark (literally) for the annual dawn chorus walk. Led by Jan Wilczur and Peter Burrows-Smith, the group (pictured on page 9) was joined by a cameraman and reporter from the US media company CBS News. In the early morning light they heard or saw one or more Common Whitethroat, Blackcap, Little Owl, Wheatear, Reed Bunting, Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler, Mistle Thrush, Song Thrush, Long Tailed Tit, Blackbird, Robin, Wren, Skylark, Magpie, Parakeet, Swan, Great Crested Grebe... but sadly no Cuckoo! The best came at the end when some of the group had excellent views of a female Little Spotted Woodpecker and heard its unique call and drumming: "My best contact ever in the Park with this elusive species!" reported Peter Burrows-Smith.



Friends out and about this summer: stalls at Richmond Fair in May (left, above) and Ham Fair in June (right, above), with their nature displays and photos, proved popular.



DISCOVERERS

For families exploring Richmond Park

At the time of writing, planning for the Discoverers event on June 23rd was under way, the date coinciding with the traditional celebration of mid-summer. However, it felt far from summery walking through the Isabella Plantation, keeping eyes peeled for the flying and crawling insects and water-life that were to be the theme. There was hardly a butterfly to be seen and only the odd bumble bee. Peering under leaves and logs revealed very little movement, and ponds and streams appeared similarly devoid of life. And a survey of the state of UK nature had just reported a serious decline in many species, with one in ten facing possible extinction. The prospects seem bleak for our wildlife and raise questions about what the future holds for our Park and what we can do.

Projects such as Discoverers that set out to improve awareness about the natural world seem particularly urgent. In October, we plan to take part in the Campaign for Drawing's annual Big Draw Festival. This year's theme is "Draw Tomorrow". The initiative involves more than 1400 UK organisations and participants from 20 other countries in a huge month-long community arts project. Those taking part include museums, galleries, libraries, heritage sites, parks, schools, care homes, hospitals, shopping and community centres. Our aim is to come up with an idea that encourages participants to explore and communicate through art their visions of the future landscape of Richmond Park.

In particular, we hope to involve families that do not know or visit the Park. By the time this newsletter is printed, plans



Nest handling at the "Meet the Birds" event in April. Photo by Brendan Blake.

for FRP Discoverers Big Draw Day should be more advanced and publicity starting to appear on our website and Facebook page, as well as on the Campaign for Drawing's website. The Discoverers team is always looking for ideas, so please let us have your comments or tell us if you would like to get involved. An event on this scale is going to need a good number of helpers in the run-up period as well as on the day. Discoverers needs you – and, thinking of the state of UK nature, so does your Park!

Teresa Grafton, discoverers@frp.org.uk
www.discoverers.frp.org.uk
 Find Discoverers on Facebook at www.facebook.com/thefriendsofrichmondpark.
 Campaign for Drawing, Big Draw 2013, is at www.campaignfordrawing.org.

With thanks to Lesley Crompton, Ron Crompton, Nick Coleman, Teresa Grafton, Richard Gray, P J Greeves, Mary Pollard, and Park Management for news items and photographs.

Pond Plantation Project and Friends' Conservation Volunteers

Jan Wilczur

Regular visitors to Pen Ponds may have noticed changes on wooded shoreline on the east side of Upper Pen Pond. Over the last three autumn-winter periods, overgrown Rhododendron has been gradually removed, eventually to be replaced by a naturally vegetated open shoreline, backed by a belt of native shrubs. Originally planted as a screen for the enclosed woods and for its large, ornate, purple flowers in summer, it has become widespread in the Park. It is a very invasive non-native evergreen which can dominate the under-storey of a wood, casting deep shade, allowing no other plants to develop, preventing tree regeneration and significantly reducing biodiversity. It is also known to be a carrier of Sudden Oak Death.

It may appear sometimes like a battlefield, with jagged stumps and fallen and scrawny trees. But the water birds of Upper Pen Pond have quickly taken advantage of the clearance to build nests and rest on the shoreline, undisturbed by people and dogs; reeds will be planted in the fenced off sections to provide more nesting cover. Rarer visitors to the Ponds, such as Little Egret, Lapwing, Redshank and Green Sandpiper, have been found in this area, and wintering Gadwall and Widgeon have fed nearby. Kingfishers have used the stumps by the water's edge to fish from.



A Grey Heron takes advantage of the cleared shoreline to feed. Photo by Oscar Dewhurst.

Opening up the woodland canopy allows sunlight onto the shoreline which until recently had been buried under deep shade, and new vegetation is starting to develop. Removal of Rhododendron has also improved access for the deer that shelter in the wood (see our front cover picture). Eventually, a belt of native shrubs will be planted in an arc just inside the wood to act as a screen to the area of open shoreline; this will have to be protected from browsing deer by fencing that will extend into the pond to dissuade the deer from entering the open shoreline,

although it will be impossible to prevent them from entering altogether. The impact of any that do, it is hoped, will be minimal.

Most of the clearance work has been carried out by a group of Friends Conservation Volunteers, assisted by the Park's managers who also arranged for the heavier work to be done. Work on the Pond Plantation shoreline continued till March, but is now taking a break until autumn to allow birds and deer to breed in peace. Conservation volunteers are also involved in other Park projects such as hedge-planting and coppicing, while other Friends' volunteers do horticultural work in Isabella Plantation and Oak Processionary Moth detection. In this way Friends assist Park Management with work that could not otherwise be done due to the severe financial constraints imposed on The Royal Parks in recent years.

Spring birds

Winter held the country in an icy grip delaying the avian visitors usually associated with March, which proved to be one of the coldest ever recorded. Those migrants that made it to the UK were caught out by freezing temperatures and many perished. Winter thrushes and Woodcock delayed their departure until mid-April. There was an intriguing report of 11 Waxwings in Isabella Plantation on April 1st; this species invaded the UK in huge numbers this winter, but is still very rare in the Park.

Despite the low temperatures, some resident birds prepared to breed. Bird-song, however, seemed to be lacklustre. Amongst the early migrants expected in March there was a typically shy male Ring Ouzel (picture above right by Jan Wilczur) which took up temporary residence late in the month. A Curlew flying low over the Pen Ponds on March 10th was a rare occurrence. Equally rare and rather more spectacular was a male Marsh Harrier battling against a stiff north-easterly on the 28th.

Most summer visitors were forced to suspend their passage north until winds and temperatures became more favourable. When they did so on April 15th, three Redstarts, unusual spring visitors, appeared along with an unprecedented fall of 44 Wheatears. One of the male Redstarts stayed for

Jan Wilczur



another day in Holly Lodge paddocks and was joined by a female Black Redstart.

Birds of prey were well represented with Red Kites, Peregrines and the returning pair of Hobbies. A notable passage of Buzzards occurred on May 7th with up to 17 sightings. Amongst these was at least one Honey Buzzard, a rare spring sighting of this apivorous [bee-eating] raptor. A Red Kite lingering in the Park for more than an hour on May 20th hinted at what is hoped to be a future breeding bird.

That acknowledged harbinger of spring, the Cuckoo, was at last heard, but not seen, on April 23rd. The disembodied voice was heard again two days later, and seemed to encapsulate the sad decline of this iconic summer visitor. A hundred Swallows sheltering from wind and rain in a tree on the island on May 10th presumably did not represent the making of summer. A lone Spotted Flycatcher on May 14th was yet another example of a once common summer visitor that has dramatically declined in the UK.

A fuller version of this article and occasional updates can be seen at <http://blog.frp.org.uk>.



Dawn birdwatching in May, with media team - see page 6. Photo by Richard Gray

Where golfing goes green

Michael Davison



Photo courtesy of Park Management

The turf dome of Richmond Park's new golf clubhouse peeps above the ground like a raised eyebrow. It grows so naturally out of the landscape that one almost expects a hobbit to emerge from the door rather than a golfer with his or her bag of clubs.

The green roof is no mere gimmick, but a visible statement of the eco-friendly features that are integral to the clubhouse's design. It is made from the acid grassland for which the Park is renowned, and reflects the rough grass around the courses that await the golfer's misdirected stroke. The building's timber-clad walls match its wooded setting, and its single storey offers little interruption to the view across the parkland beyond.

Inside, a single open-plan area accommodates a restaurant and shop: a light and airy place flanked entirely on one side by glass. No ordinary glass, this is "smart glass", which reads the external light and temperature and adjusts the passage of light and warmth accordingly, so obviating the need for expensive air conditioning.

A wide pond in front of the clubhouse, as well as enhancing the view, is a concealed energy source. Hidden

underwater is an array of coiled pipes, called "slinkies" after the children's toy, that absorb energy from the surrounding water for use in heating the building. Glendale Golf, who constructed the building as part of a 25-year

management contract, are proud of the innovative technology it incorporates.

On a buggy ride around the 400 acres he administers, Jon Dummett, Glendale's Head of Golf, pointed out the work that is going on to reorient and landscape the two public golf courses – on which, in the words of a poster advertising the opening ceremony of 1923, "artisans and royalty are equally welcome". The same Hawtree family firm that designed the original courses in the 1920s has been involved in the new layout.

For the non-golfer, the good news is that walkers and cyclists, for long excluded from a sixth of the Park, will now be able to pass along the edge of the golf course by a half-mile wooded path leading from a new bridge over Beverley Brook, near Robin Hood Gate, to the golf club's new entrance at Chohole Gate, off the A3.

Park Manager Simon Richards recalls that it was in 1997 that an official review recommended a rethink on the management of the golf course. The negotiations have been long and tricky, but 16 years later his faith in their eventual happy outcome has been vindicated.

Four royal generations at White Lodge

Rachel Hirschler

The Friends History Project has uncovered another fascinating event in the story of Richmond Park. The year 1894 saw a grand christening at White Lodge, then the home of the Duke and Duchess of Teck. The Duchess, known as "Fat Mary" because of her generous waistline, was a first cousin of Queen Victoria and mother of Princess May, who was married to the future King George V (and became Queen Mary). For the birth of her first child in 1894, May went home to White Lodge to be with her mother.

The baby was to become King Edward VIII (who reigned for only 11 months in 1936 before abdicating). His christening at White Lodge was a prestigious affair attended by Queen Victoria herself, the Prince of Wales (the future Edward VII), and European royals connected to the British royal family, such as Prince Louis of Battenberg and the heir to the Russian throne, Czarevitch Nicholas Alexandrovitch, later Czar Nicholas II. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Edward Benson, performed the ceremony, using a font brought from Windsor for the occasion. The future Edward VIII was christened Edward Albert Christian George Andrew Patrick David.

Victoria was proud of the way her succession was assured and the event was marked by a photograph of the Queen and her three heirs: her son, the future Edward VII, her grandson, the future George V, and her great grandson, the future Edward VIII. She noted in her journal about the christening:

"16th July 1894... The child was very good. There was an absence of all music, which I thought a pity... afterwards we were photographed, I, holding the baby on my lap, Bertie and George standing behind me, thus making the four generations."



Not only was this an extraordinary occurrence in 1894, but it seems that history is due to repeat itself in 2013 when the birth of a royal baby will once again secure four generations: Queen Elizabeth II, her son the Prince of Wales, her grandson Prince William, and his heir, male or female.

James Batten, Saviour of the St Paul's view

Michael Davison

One of the commonest questions at the Visitor Centre is, "Where can we see the view of St Paul's Cathedral?" The existence of a view that attracts visitors from far and wide is largely due to the detective skills and devotion of one man, James Batten.

It was James Batten who, in 1976, following a clue on an 18th-century map, rediscovered the "keyhole" vista of St Paul's Cathedral from the top of King Henry's Mound created soon after the Cathedral was completed in 1710. Neglected over the centuries, the vista was obliterated by growing bushes and trees during World War II when gardeners were on wartime service.

James, now 85, had his interest in Richmond Park aroused when, from the balcony of his family home in Strawberry Hill in the 1930s, he looked across the Thames towards the long wooded ridge on the skyline. "It reminded me of the hills around Srinagar," he says, recalling the first five years of his childhood in Kashmir as the son of a Gurkha Army officer. Closer acquaintance with the Park, however, had to wait a number of years. After HIS education at Wellington College, James saw military service in Palestine. After graduating from Cambridge he held posts as ADC and Private Secretary to the Governor of Western Australia and, later, to the Governor-General of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. He returned to England in the late 1950s, working as assistant secretary with the UK branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and living in a cottage on Ham Common. Now he had the opportunity to explore Richmond Park, and to pursue his



particular interest in King Henry's Mound.

One of his prized possessions was a copy of a 1746 map of London by John Rocque (pictured above). In Richmond Park this showed an avenue of trees leading east from the Mound towards a further hillock, now lost, that is marked as Oliver's Mount. During holidays in Rome, where his mother was living, James had observed how vista lines lead the eye across the city from one feature to another and, studying the Rocque map in the 1970s, he speculated that the line of trees it showed might well follow one of these: "Soon I was up in the Park and realised that the dense holly hedge on the east side of King Henry's Mound must hide a view of St Paul's." He forced his way through the hedge. "It was a blood-letting experience, fighting through prickly growth and tearing my trousers

on the rusty remains of an arbour. As I stepped over it and parted the remaining holly, there it was: Wren's masterpiece."

Having rediscovered this 300-year-old vista, how was it to be saved? A proposed development at Liverpool Street Station, which would have formed an unacceptable backdrop to the Cathedral, was opposed and rejected. Further campaigning, with The Royal Parks and the Friends as allies, resulted in 1992 in statutory protection for "the strategic view and its viewing corridor". James had the whole-hearted support of the then Park Superintendent Mike Fitt, who initiated steps to enhance the Mound and its views.

The battle seemed to be won – until developers greedy for land proposed a high-rise development which would have severely truncated the view. With the advent of Boris Johnson things took a brighter turn as the new Mayor promised to respect the view's protected status. However, celebrations were muted when it was learned that a



James Batten on the bench marking his achievement. Photo by Park Management.

large development near Victoria Station had already been given the go-ahead. As Friends' planning adviser Max Lankester commented: "This seems a case of closing the stable door long after the horse has rampaged its way across our cherished landscape."

The development now proceeding will leave the drum and dome of St Paul's Cathedral unobstructed, with the sky as its background, but extend into the lower right-hand corner of the view. The small section of the new building visible at this point could possibly be masked by allowing more foliage to develop in the line of sight. "We cannot turn the clock back," says James, "but this must not become the thin end of the wedge; we must remain vigilant against any further threats to the view."

The contribution of James Batten to preserving this treasured feature of the Park is honoured by a bench bearing his family name at the summit of the Mound, and the panel showing the westward panorama is James's own work.

A fuller version of this article will appear on the Friends' website.



James Batten (left) with author Michael Davison

Calling 101

One often sees something in the Park that is “not right” and wants to do something about it even though it’s not serious enough for a 999 call. The answer is to call 101. 101 calls go direct to a Metropolitan Police Call Centre (when your mobile is in the London area) so do not use it for emergencies.

What sort of things should you report? Infringements of Royal Park Regulations or the Wildlife & Countryside Act such as picking mushrooms and chestnuts, removing or bringing in things like logs, frog-spawn, birds’ eggs and the like, fires or barbecues, chasing or stressing deer, and breaking trees. It’s not always practical to report things like speeding or cross-country cyclists as they could be miles away by the time your call is processed.

You’ll need to give your name, location and details of the incident. Be as precise as you can on the location in the Park using prominent features such as main gates, ponds, car parks, and cafés. You may not be able to describe skin colour or gender but even from a distance you may be able to describe clothing well enough for police to spot the offenders. Give your mobile number as the police may want to call you back for clarification. It can be useful to have photographs or film of the incident as evidence but beware of getting too close or confrontation. If photos are needed, they can be emailed later.

Once the details of your call are recorded, the information is sent to Park police. They decide whether a rapid response is needed or possible. Having made a call, I sometimes hang around discreetly at a distance, as being able to indicate the miscreants can help. If unsure whether to report something, make the call and let the

police decide what action it merits. Even if your incident is not handled directly it will be recorded in statistics.

As an alternative you can report incidents by email to RichmondPark@met.police.uk and/or richmond@royalparks.gsi.gov.uk, attaching any photographs to substantiate your allegation.

I log incidents online – see a sample item at <http://tinyurl.com/mqbkaof>. The statistics I collect are presented at the Police Panel quarterly meetings, and I would welcome readers’ help to build up a fuller picture.

Jack Birrell
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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 two-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
20 July	<u>8.00pm</u>	WALK: Summer Evening , meet at Sheen Gate car park
3 Aug	10.00am	WALK: meet at Kingston Gate car park
7 Sept	10.00am	WALK: meet at Robin Hood Gate car park
5 Oct	10.00am	WALK: meet at Sheen Gate car park
12 Oct	10.00am	COURSE: Deer (Peter Burrows-Smith)
19 Oct	10.00am	WALK: Autumn Birds , meet at Pembroke Lodge car park
2 Nov	10.00am	WALK: meet at Pembroke Lodge car park
16 Nov	10.00am	COURSE: Fungi (Janet Bostock & Elizabeth Cheesman)
7 Dec	10.00am	WALK: meet at Kingston Gate car park

Membership and Subscriptions
Subscription rates are £6 for individuals, £10 for households and societies. Membership enquiries to me please, at membership@frp.org.uk or 020 8876 2623.
Sheila Hamilton, Hon. Membership Secretary

Police non-emergency telephone number: 101

Queries about Friends?
See www.frp.org.uk, or contact secretary@frp.org.uk.



TREAD LIGHTLY IN RICHMOND PARK



www.frp.org.uk/pdf/news/174_Richmond_Park_Tread_Lightly_Leaflet_Oct_2011.pdf

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