



FRIENDS of RICHMOND PARK

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

SPRING 2015



Celebrating Friends' volunteers

2014 – a good year for birds

Painters in the Park

Park people...

Welcome

...to this spring issue. The survey published in January that found most visitors to Richmond Park rating it as excellent will come as no surprise to Friends who know and love the Park – but the survey and its findings do have their downsides and challenges, as our Chairman writes on the opposite page and some of the items in this newsletter confirm.

But it's not all downsides and challenges, there's good news too – and as the weather warms up we can all look forward to spending more time in the Park.

Marilyn Mason
editor@frp.org.uk

SKYLARK ALERT



Despite some better news on Skylarks last year (see page 11), it remains very important to take notice of the Park signs and rules designed to protect them and their breeding areas, this year extended to Crown Field.

Cover pictures

Front cover: “Bliss” – spring in Isabella Plantation, an entry in FRP’s 2008 Children & Young People’s Photography Competition, by Matthew Lawn, 11 years old at the time.

Back cover: Conservation volunteer in the Park – looks like fun doesn’t it? (See page 4)

VOLUNTEER WANTED

to help with design

We are looking for a volunteer with graphic design experience to design and produce our posters, leaflets, flyers and occasional presentation materials for our various activities, including: the Visitor Centre, fairs, conservation projects and public information. It does not include our newsletter or electronic media, which are handled separately. Mary Pollard has done our graphics for many years and is now concentrating on our Facebook page and calendars; she will help in a full hand-over. If you are interested please contact Mary to discuss what the role involves at frpfacebook@hotmail.co.uk.

STILL LOOKING...

... for someone to take over editing this newsletter, ideally someone who can both edit and lay out the newsletter in the existing Quark template. Thank you to those who have offered to help – but we are really looking for a bit more than help!

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.

What do visitors want?

The Royal Parks recently completed two pieces of visitor research on Richmond Park and other Royal Parks: a visitor count (done with cameras at the gates); and a visitor survey (219 face-to-face interviews).

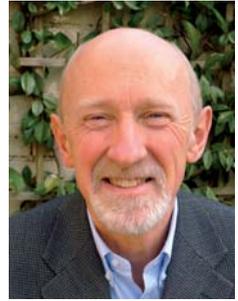
The visitor count estimates that there are now 5.4 million visitors a year to Richmond Park. This compares to 4.0 million at the last count in 2008, a 35% increase in six years, confirming what many of us have observed and showing the pressure the Park is facing. The estimates show 70% more visitors in August than in the winter.

The visitor survey results are skewed by the dates the interviews were done – two of the three were done in August (2013 and 2014) when many regular visitors are away and occasional or new visitors are at a peak – confirmed by the youngish age profile of the respondents. Indeed it is really a survey of occasional and new visitors rather than of all visitors.

Not surprisingly, 100% of those interviewed rate the overall quality of the Park as excellent or good. They also rate many aspects of the Park excellent, good or satisfactory, with the noticeable exception of the visibility of Park staff (presumably including police) which 28% rate as poor or very poor.

When asked what other “information, activities or facilities” they would like in the Park, 46% “don’t want to see any”, the highest of any of the Royal Parks (the next highest were Greenwich and Bushy at 32%). The rest mention a range of things, including music events, theatre and open-air film screenings (16% or about 30 people), cycle paths and cycle hire (12% – both of these are already available) and 8% more signs.

When asked if they would be happy for a limited number of paid ticketed events to be held in the Park if the money generated went to maintain Royal Parks, 76% said yes. This is a leading question since it includes nothing about the negatives of these events (such as the impact on the fabric and wildlife of the Park).



Nor does the research ask any questions about visitors’ knowledge of, interest in, or concerns about the Park’s protected status, ecology, wildlife, history or conservation, all of which would have given valuable context to their replies. It is a missed opportunity to find out what they know and how to convince them to respect the Park.

It is easy to dismiss these views as coming from people who are unaware of Richmond Park’s special nature and who see it as just another local park. But, as the visitor count shows, their numbers are increasing rapidly and there will be growing pressure to have more of the activities and facilities they want and can find in other London parks.

It will be an enormous challenge for us (TRP and FRP) to explain to and convince these occasional and new visitors why Richmond Park is special – because it doesn’t have the things that every other park in London has.

TRP’s 2014 visitor research can be found at www.royalparks.org.uk/park-management/visitor-research.

*Ron Crompton
143 Palewell Park
London SW14 8JJ
020 8876 1123
chairman@frp.org.uk*

Thank you, volunteers

One January Sunday morning new and experienced volunteers gathered at Pembroke Lodge for coffee, pastries, and the opportunity to meet each other and volunteer coordinators. They heard from Chairman Ron Crompton and Volunteer Coordinator Peter Burrows-Smith about the achievements of the Friends and Friends' volunteers in 2014 (much of it reported in previous newsletters), and were thanked for their contributions to a busy year. Highlights included the £6000 surplus from Visitor Centre sales, which had gone towards conservation projects such as Poet's Corner and Ham Ponds, and some interesting finds by History Project volunteers, such as a 19th-century print of deer being fed in the Park. Looking ahead to the rest of 2015, there would be work on Beverley Brook, the opening of Poet's Corner, an Open Day and a "Tread Lightly" campaign...

There were also displays showing the range of Friends' activities in the Park: Education, Wildlife Recording, Walks and Courses, the Visitor Centre, Conservation, Events, History, the Newsletter... offering the opportunity to find out more from activity co-ordinators, put faces to names, and, perhaps, sign up for a new activity in the Park. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact volunteers@frp.org.uk.



Conservation volunteers



You may have noticed the recent opening up of several wooded areas in the Park by the clearance by cutting and burning of the purple-flowered Rhododendron Ponticum. The conservation volunteers are working in Pen Ponds plantation at the moment, with the most obvious sign of our presence being the smoke from bonfires on a Saturday morning (see *photo on back cover*). We have to burn as we cut, as there is too much wood to be chipped or stacked. Although big chunks of the work have been done by contractors (most recently in the Driftway) the Friends' conservation volunteers assist.

The Rhododendron is being removed to improve the woodlands for wildlife. It is an invasive species which can completely cover an area, spreading by layering (when a branch touching the ground puts down new roots) and by seed. It becomes a monoculture of little value to insects, as the leaves are poisonous, or to birds, as there are no insects. The evergreen leaves also form a dense cover which excludes light, preventing any other plants from growing.

This species of Rhododendron can also be a carrier of fungal disease, *Phytophthora ramorum*, which, if it became established here, would endanger the Park's Oaks and the important collection of Azaleas and

Rhododendrons growing in the Isabella Plantation.

Once cleared of Rhododendrons the open woodland (mainly Oak, Beech, Sweet Chestnut and Silver Birch) will again host a variety of native plants including Brambles, Nettles and Foxgloves. Native shrubs useful to wildlife such as Hazel, Hawthorn, Field Maple, Holly and Sloe, which have both blossom and seed, are being planted. These are attractive to us and they are a wonderful source of nectar and food for insects and birds. Good woodland management in the future should maintain this diversity of plants. The conservation volunteers work under the guidance of Adam Curtis (deputy Park Manager) in all the projects undertaken. Other activities include removing old fences, putting up new chestnut paling fences (*photo on page 14*), planting young trees, coppicing Willow and hedge laying.

New volunteers are always welcome. At present we are working on Saturday mornings – see the Friends website for more information.

Janet Bostock



The picture on the right shows families at the Bones and Feathers workshop last November, taking apart owl pellets to investigate the birds' diet. The delightfully messy and fascinating activity was led by Susanna Ramsey, with her Nature Collection.

This January, Natural England, in association with Defra, English Heritage and King's College London, published the first part of a two-year pilot study investigating access to the natural

environment by children under sixteen, part of Natural England's Outdoor Learning Programme. Unsurprisingly, findings suggest a clear link between ethnicity, socio-economic status and frequency of access. Also, visits tended to be local, with parks the primary destination. "To play" proved the most cited reason adults gave for visiting open spaces with children, followed by "to get fresh air". Significantly, "to enjoy wildlife or scenery", and "to enjoy nature or the environment", came low down the list. The full report can be seen at www.gov.uk/natural-england.

With this in mind, this year Discoverers is thinking of running some open as well as pre-booked events to try to broaden the range of families who take part. By taking some activities into the Park to visiting families as opposed to signing them up in advance, we hope to contact a more diverse audience.

As always, we welcome your comments and support. For details of our events programme, go to www.discoverers.frp.org.uk and www.facebook.com/thefriendsofrichmondpark. Or email us at discoverers@frp.org.uk.

Teresa Grafton



Bad news on policing

The Autumn newsletter contained a special insert asking Friends' members to lobby the Home Office to retain the present level of funding for the Royal Parks' police. Many members did so; thank you for your help. In spite of this and similar lobbying by the other Royal Parks' Friends, local MPs and The Royal Parks agency, the present funding of £8.8m is being reduced to £6.4m for the coming year (starting in April) – a cut of 27%. This is equivalent to a reduction in the number of officers in all the Royal Parks from 105 to 77 and in Richmond Park from 9 to 6.5.

Ten years ago, when the independent Royal Parks Police was merged with the Metropolitan Police to “improve policing” there were 165 officers in all the Royal Parks and 15 to 16 in Richmond Park, so we have lost more than half our police force in that time. Meanwhile visitor numbers have increased by over 50%.

The police and the Mayor's Office, which oversees policing in London have promised to consult with us fully on their planned changes to policing in the Park as a result of the cuts, and we have our own ideas about how that might be done. By late February we had heard nothing from them.

Beverley Brook appeal reaches target

The Friends' appeal for the restoration of Beverley Brook, launched by Sir David Attenborough in July when he opened Attenborough Pond, has reached its target of £16,000, from a combination of a few large donations and many smaller ones. We thank all those who kindly donated to the appeal. Match-funding is being provided by the Friends, the Park's Visitor Centre and the conservation charity Healthy Planet to take the total up to the £30-35,000 required for the project. Detailed design

work has been done over the winter and, once the necessary environmental approvals have been received, work is likely to start in the summer.

Membership grows

The number of Friends reached 2,500 in January. This compares with 2,380 in January 2014 – an increase of 5%. In January 2010 we had 1,600, so numbers have increased by 900, or 55% in five years. A big thank you to all of you who have helped the Friends in that time.

White Lodge wedding receptions

The Royal Ballet School has restarted its plans for wedding receptions. Their website says: “You now have the unique opportunity of hosting your wedding reception not only within a Royal park, but within a Royal building. Unlike many venues with year-round availability, our wedding receptions are exclusive. Availability is restricted to the summer holiday period only (mid-July to early September), allowing for just six wedding receptions a year, making it a rare and special occasion.” The Friends will be monitoring the receptions for their impact on the Park, especially the light, noise and traffic they create in what is the darkest and quietest part of the Park, and indeed London.

Cycling in Richmond Park

In December, local MP Zac Goldsmith held a public meeting in Richmond on cycling in Richmond Park; over 400 people attended, including many Friends. The meeting was remarkably co-operative, given the strong and hostile views of many people. The meeting and Zac personally rejected some ideas such as new cycle lanes alongside the roads. Other ideas will be considered by a working group, on which the Friends will be represented. These will include: spot fines for cycling



speeding and carelessness; road-based cycle lanes (white lines) in some areas of the park, particularly on uphill sections, to protect cyclists; a code of conduct for all Park users; traffic-calming measures at key crossings to help pedestrians and slow traffic generally; allocated time slots both for competitive and family cycling groups early on weekend mornings. The Friends is concerned at the idea of time slots for competitive cycling on weekend mornings, which we think will lead to higher speeds, greater difficulty for people and deer crossing the road and the Park becoming a velodrome. There is already a code of conduct for road users in the “On the Road” leaflet on our website, prepared by the Parks’ Police Panel two to three years ago.

Isabella Plantation website

The Royal Parks website has a section devoted to Isabella Plantation, where you can find monthly plant diaries (the ones we include in the FRP monthly e-bulletin), search the plant collection, learn about the biodiversity and history of the Plantation and see how to “Tread Lightly” when you are there. For a fascinating read go to www.royalparcs.org.uk/parks/richmond-park/richmond-park-attractions/isabella-plantation.

Tower blocks all around?

Some Friends, particularly those who live in Kingston, will have noticed that new developments in Kingston, particularly a proposed 21-storey block in the town centre, are likely to be visible from parts of the Park (*like the Roehampton estate pictured above*). Encroachment on the Park’s views seem increasingly probable, given the London Plan’s pressure on the suburbs to grow and provide more housing – something else for the Friends to keep an eye on.

Park Open Day

There will be an Open Day in the Park on Sunday 13th September in the Holly Lodge yard, an opportunity to see how the Park is managed and to visit nature-related stalls. There will also be activities for children and walks and talks. It will be open to all, free and very popular, so put the date in your diary.

Spending 20 pennies

In March, The Royal Parks introduced a 20-pence charge to use the toilets at Richmond, Sheen, Kingston and Robin Hood Gates. This is to prevent closures and to help towards the ongoing cleaning and maintenance of the facilities. Accessible toilets for people with disabilities and those at playgrounds and Park cafés will still be free.

Mushroom pickers prosecuted

The Park police successfully prosecuted two mushroom-pickers over the winter. Both were given six-month conditional discharges and ordered to pay £45. The police often stop people who are removing large quantities of mushrooms, either for sale or for restaurant use, but there is no fixed penalty notice (FPN) available, so they have to be prosecuted, with all the police and court time that involves; the Friends would like to see a new FPN to cover fungi-picking. A recent letter in the *Richmond & Twickenham Times* berated the police for prosecuting people who have taken a mushroom or two, but those prosecuted are usually caught with bags full of assorted fungi, some of them rare or endangered species.

Murder in the Park

Local author P J Thurbin has published his latest book in the Ralph Chalmers Mysteries series, "Murder in the Park". The Park is, of course, Richmond Park and the book has a dedication to the Friends of Richmond Park.

Jim (1983-2015)

Jim was a Dutch-born Shire Horse, solid as a rock, mature and safe, perfect to start work at Hampton Court Palace some ten years ago. He pulled the tram, showing younger horses how it was done, and he spent his summers cutting grass or rolling bracken. He became world-famous for maintaining the Olympic rings, cut 300 metres wide – the Games' organisers acknowledged this was their most popular publicity item. In semi-retirement Jim excelled in a new therapeutic role, connecting with people, be they company executives or young people diagnosed with autism on our website – a "gentle giant" indeed.

Ticks

A reminder that the peak season for ticks in the Park is between late spring and autumn (April to October). Ticks

feed on the blood of animals and sometimes people, and prefer slightly moist, shady areas such as bracken, bushes and leaf litter, in both long and short grass. The ticks that may carry Lyme disease are common in parks with deer, such as Richmond and Bushy Parks. The symptoms and how to prevent tick bites can be seen in the leaflet at www.frp.org.uk/park/ticks-and-lyme-disease.

Drones

Drones are remote-controlled aeroplanes, helicopters or other flying models, often fitted with a camera. Increased affordability has brought increased popularity, but in the Park their use is only permitted on the Flying Field. Laws relating to privacy, photography and model aircraft apply to drones.

Deer cull figures

Comparative culling figures for the past decade were published recently, revealing that an average of 203.1 deer were culled each year from 2004–14 in Richmond Park. The numbers of male and female deer culled each year varied, depending on the balance of the sexes and natural mortality. "We also take into consideration the age profile of deer and birth rates in assessing the size of the cull to achieve the optimum herd numbers," said a Park spokesperson.

Writer and naturalist George Monbiot told a large audience in Richmond recently that sheep and deer reduced biodiversity wherever they were allowed to roam, graze and breed freely – though his proposed solution, introducing top predators to our uplands, might not go down too well in the Park! You can watch a 15-minute version of his talk on "rewilding" at www.ted.com/talks/george_monbiot_for_more_wonder_rewild_the_world.

With thanks to Ron Crompton, Richard Gray and Park Management for news items, and Peter Mason for the photo.

Painters in the Park *Mary Pollard & Rachel Hirschler*



capture moments in history as they occur.

Photographs of the Park are prolific, popular and, thanks to modern technology, dispersed with rapid and widespread accessibility. It is interesting therefore to see someone slow down and reverse the process. Just as the drawing by John Gendall was made into an etching, we see a parallel process in the creation of the more recent painting

The delightful scene above is an aquatint by Thomas Sutherland, in the Hearsam Collection at Pembroke Lodge. It was published way back in 1819, with the image taken from a drawing by John Gendall. Depicted are a typical variety of people enjoying the Park at Richmond Gate: children playing on the grass, someone walking his dogs, a group of figures gathered together enjoying some music, and others having a stroll – much as they would do today. In that era reproduction through engravings was a very popular means of sharing an image with a wider audience.

(pictured below) by the artist David Stribbling. He has translated a digital image by photographer Paul Sawford into oils, creating a traditional artefact from leading-edge technology.

The Hearsam Collection of historical material relating to the Park hopes to conserve and preserve artistic works of all kinds for future generations to enjoy. The team is developing plans to open a Heritage Centre in the Park, where its history can be made available to all. You can find out more at www.hearsumcollection.org.uk.

Today we are aware of a variety of paintings and prints of the Park dating back to the 17th century, many of which you can find listed on the Wikipedia page for Richmond Park. These tell a story of a timeless environment, with the Park today not too different from the Park then. It is reassuring that we can see quite similar images of the Park almost every day on the Friends' Facebook page, where the immediacy of photography enables the artist to



2014 - a good year for the Park's birds (and bird-watchers)

A concerted effort by the Park's birdwatchers helped produce a record total of the number of species seen in a year in the Park. Around 115 species are usually seen annually, but 127 were recorded in 2014. The extra effort resulted in a few more unusual species being seen. The two rarest were a Spotted Redshank and a Wryneck (*pictured below right*). The former, only the second recorded in the Park, was spotted flying low over Pen Ponds by one fortunate observer. The latter was seen by a handful of birdwatchers but missed by the small crowd of assembled twitchers. This species was last seen in the Park 57 years ago, coincidentally the age of the finder.

A feature of the year were waders, a group of birds normally scarce in the Park because of the lack of undisturbed habitat. When they do appear it is usually early in the morning and this was the case with a remarkable series of records of Little Ringed Plovers at Pen Ponds. Another amazing record was the over-flying flock of 27 Whimbrel. The observer was alerted by a relay of phone calls from Barnes where the flock was first seen.

Other rare, or less than annual species, included Goldeneye, Oystercatcher, Redshank, Greenshank, Pheasant, Tree Pipit, Redstart, Dartford and Grasshopper Warblers, and Bullfinch. Birds of prey were well represented with the highlight being an Osprey. This was a new bird in the Park for the observer (a "Park tick" in birders' parlance) after some 50 years of birding in the Park. Two separate Marsh Harriers were unusual, as was a Honey Buzzard.

A few Short-eared Owls were seen, and a Barn Owl stayed several weeks until, sadly, its remains were found.

Several species were seen only once in the year and by a single observer: Red-legged Partridge, Jack Snipe, Curlew, Nightjar, Raven, Rook, Crossbill, and Black Redstart. These illustrated how awareness, diligence and a little luck can reward the alert birdwatcher.

Another feature of the year was the high numbers of scarcer species in the Park, usually on autumn migration. Day totals were recorded of 33 Skylark, 140 Meadow Pipit, 14 Whinchat, 20 Stonechat, 4 Ring Ouzel, 3 Sedge Warbler, and 34 Reed Bunting.

The number of species breeding in the Park was also probably a record with 60 species breeding or strongly suspected of doing so. Highlights were a pair of Meadow Pipits breeding successfully for the first time since 2008, and a pair of Stonechats also breeding – only the second occasion in the last six years. Several breeding species were only represented by a single pair. These included Collared Dove, Kingfisher,



Wryneck
Painting by Jan Wilczur

Pied Wagtail, Grey Wagtail, and Hobby. A family of the latter performed spectacularly at Lower Pen Pond in the late summer. A pair each of Buzzard and Shelduck, which have never bred in the Park before, were seen displaying and, in the case of the latter, searching for a suitable nest-site. The continuing presence of the former gives hope for breeding in the near future.

Jan Wilczur

Also spotted: Smew on Pen Ponds



Photo by Nigel Jackman, with the striking male Smew on the right

Probably only between 100 and 400 of these migrant ducks are seen in the UK each Autumn/Winter. They are the smallest of the so-called “sawbill” diving ducks, related to Mergansers and Goosanders. The Smew’s nearest usual wintering grounds are in the Netherlands.

Nigel Jackman

And spring 2015...

Spring can be the most exciting time of the birdwatching year, and Richmond Park is no exception. Quite apart from the influx of summer visitors, it is the breeding season and birds are in full song. Most of the song comes from the male – establishing a territory, warding off other males and attracting a mate. Typically, 50 to 60 different bird species breed in the park each year and birdwatchers are looking out for the 4 stages of success, SM/PR/NB/FY:

“singing male”/ a “pair” (male and female) together/“nest building”/and finally “feeding young”.

Last year, we were delighted that Meadow Pipits were back breeding again, joining the other recent new breeders: Common Tern and Hobby. But, what next? Maybe a new raptor such as a Common Buzzard?

Why not come on one of our regular Friday morning informal bird-watching walks, or join us on the Dawn Chorus walk or other special events. We look forward to seeing you, whatever your birdwatching knowledge!

Peter Burrows-Smith

Skylark update

There was a welcome increase in Skylark territories in 2014. There was, however, a marked difference



between the two main breeding areas. The protection area of Lawn Field (beside Lower Pen Pond) only attracted a single pair which did not breed successfully. At the current stronghold for this species in the Park, Crown Field (next to the Rugby pitches), there was a substantial increase to ten territories. These included several pairs, some of which, at least, were breeding. The Flying Field also hosted an increase and there were a few scattered pairs elsewhere in the Park. In 2015 the protection scheme will extend to Crown Field, an area previously rather anonymous and rarely visited but nowadays certainly an important feature on the Park map. The first Skylark singing this year was heard on 16th February at Crown Field.

Jan Wilczur

Picnics under the elms

Michael Davison



Ann Bott (pictured above) recalls childhood days in Richmond Park.

Brought up in a newsagent's shop in Richmond Road, Kingston, Ann Bott and her brother Stephen revelled in the open spaces of Richmond Park: "To a child it was vast. It had everything, hills, valleys, woods, ponds – and in those days few people about."

Ann, now 85 and living only half a mile from her childhood home, recalls being taken to the Park by her mother and grandmother. Through Ham Gate they went uphill past a long line of magnificent elms: "Nothing changed the character of the Park more than the loss of those elms." They picnicked in the Park, dragging their supplies on an old pram chassis which they called their "prairie schooner". "Grandma would make herself comfortable with a book, and we were free to roam." They played in the streams and bathed in Pen Ponds. Another favoured spot was a pond they called the Sandpit Pond, behind

Thatched House Lodge. At every gate there was a Park Keeper, to admit vehicles, "somebody nice to welcome visitors."

The war restricted access to the Park. From late 1940, Ann recalls, inside Ham Gate only a strip 200 yards wide below the brow of the hill remained open to the public: "We could walk inside the wall between Kingston Gate and Petersham Gate, but not venture further. As teenagers we sometimes shinned over the wall at night and roamed about in the dark."

Job-hunting after the war, perhaps inspired by helping on her parents' wartime allotment, Ann Bott answered an advertisement: "Ex Land Army girl wanted." This led to a career in horticulture, including work at Hampton Court, at Carters Seeds based in the grounds of Ham House, and later with Richmond Council. After retiring, Ann kept an allotment until 1997. A keen horsewoman when young, she took up riding again at the age of 60. She is still a keen cyclist, and can often be seen cycling along the towpath between Richmond and Teddington.

"What a blessing the enclosure by Charles I proved to be," says Ann. "I love the way the Park rises above the surrounding landscape, giving glorious views and pure air. What a further blessing it is that the Park has so many Friends, to help to keep it like this for ever."

In a future newsletter, Stephen Bott will recall a risky wartime adventure of his own in Richmond Park.



Ann and Stephen

John Bartram receives Conservation Award

John Bartram, one of Richmond Park's wildlife officers, has received the Royal Parks Guild's annual Conservation Award. The Guild's members have been or are still associated with The Royal Parks and they actively support apprenticeships and horticultural excellence in the Parks.

John has been managing deer in Richmond Park for almost 30 years since 1986 and has worked under three Park superintendents: the late Michael Baxter-Brown, Michael Fitt and Simon Richards. The citation for the award said that John learnt his craft from the late Dave Smith and has become a recognised expert in his field. The Richmond Park deer herd is amongst the finest in the country – a direct result of its careful management by John and his colleagues over the years. We congratulate John on the award.

Simon Richards, Richmond Park Superintendent writes:

"He has brought many qualities to his role over the years and above all his sense of calm and patience when



John Bartram (right) with Colin Buttery, Deputy Chief Executive of The Royal Parks.

dealing with those who know far less about park deer than he does when explaining practices in the Venison House stand out, as recent Chief Executives would testify. For many years we have worked with the British Deer society and particularly with Peter Green, their Honorary Veterinary Officer who supervises our activities and practices... and who confirmed to me that the Richmond Park deer herd is amongst the finest in the country and the quality of the herd is a direct result of the careful management implemented by John and his colleagues over the years.

Of course, John is not solely concerned with the deer and has, in recent years, not only supported many wider wildlife conservation initiatives – such as the successful introduction of Tern rafts – but also the dreaded computers and other modern irritants. He has also played a key role in helping to manage Oak Processionary Moth."



John Bott paddling in the Park

Membership and Subscriptions

The annual subscription is £10 for individual members, and £15 for household members. Members will need to amend their current standing orders. All members are also required to complete a new Gift Aid declaration form, where this is appropriate, to comply with recent changes imposed by HMRC.

Chris Mason

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 Friends?

See www.frp.org.uk, or contact secretary@frp.org.uk.

Police non-emergency telephone number: 101

Friends' Conservation volunteers making fences in the Park

Trustees

Chairman: Ron Crompton

Vice-Chairmen: Peter Burrows-Smith (Conservation & Ecology; Walks; Volunteering, with Sheila Hamilton), Sheila Hamilton (Newsletter Mailing; Volunteering, with Peter Burrows-Smith)

Other Trustees: Nick Coleman (Website, Campaigning), Teresa Grafton (Education), Richard Gray (Marketing), P J Greeves (Events), Rachel Hirschler (History Project), David McLaughlin (Hon. Treasurer), Chris Mason (Membership), John Peake (Visitor Centre), Richard Polson (Hon. Secretary)

Vice-Presidents: Brian Baker, Richard Carter, John Collier, Max Lankester, Douglas Reynolds

President: vacant

Patrons: Sir David Attenborough, Baroness Kramer of Richmond Park, Lord Rix CBE, Dame Jacqueline Wilson



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 members of the Friends only and places must be booked – please contact Sue: 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
4 April	10.00am	WALK: meet at Roehampton Gate car park
6 April (Monday)	<u>5.00am</u>	WALK: Dawn Chorus , meet at Sheen Gate
18 April	<u>8.00am</u>	WALK: Spring Birds , meet at Sheen Gate car park
2 May	10.00am	WALK: meet at Broomfield Hill car park
16 May	10.00am	COURSE: Reptiles and Amphibians
6 June	10.00am	WALK: meet at Sheen Gate car park
4 July	10.00am	WALK: meet at Pembroke Lodge car park
11 July	<u>8.00pm</u>	WALK: Summer Evening , meet at Sheen Gate car park
18 July	10.00am	COURSE: Butterflies
1 Aug	10.00am	WALK: meet at Kingston Gate car park
+		

Other dates for your diary

Sat 18 April **Friends' 2015 AGM**
King's House School, Richmond

Fundraisers for the Holly Lodge Centre, tickets from 020 8940 8730:

Sat 16 May 7.00 for
7.30pm Neil Latchman, featuring the Deco Ensemble, in **Tango Sensuel** St Mary's Church, Ealing, £15

Tues 10 June 7.00 pm **Richmond Park Reflections**, an evening of musical entertainment £45, including welcome drink,



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