



FRIENDS of
RICHMOND PARK

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

Newsletter Summer 2019



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New Pollinator garden

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Ornate-tailed digger wasps

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Russell-Cooke Solicitors is a Putney-based top 100 law firm, working for a mix of clients, which has sponsored the Friends of Richmond Park for over 4 years.

Thames Water is the UK's largest water and wastewater services company, serving Greater London and the Home Counties.

Property Partnership is a local, award-winning estate agent representing areas spread around Richmond Park from Chiswick to Hampton.

Heathrow flight paths campaign

In January, Heathrow Airport revealed its plans for new flight paths, starting in 2021 (so, two years from now) and in full force when the 3rd runway opens in 2026. It is the first complete re-design of the flight paths for 50 years and is likely to happen with or without the 3rd runway.

The plans will have a disastrous impact on Richmond Park and the tranquil haven it provides for both people and wildlife. Depending on the wind and which runways are being used, 47 arriving flights an hour (i.e. one every 75 seconds) or up to 34 departing flights an hour would be flying low directly over the Park, with noise levels eight times the level without planes.

Our campaign had good media coverage in the Guardian and ITV News, and our formal response to Heathrow's consultation was supported by over 350 Friends members and others who responded by email (copied to us) making the same points as our response. We met Heathrow in May to discuss our concerns and understand their thinking.

The January consultation was just the first step. In mid-June Heathrow issued another consultation on their masterplan for the airport expansion and its impact on the environment (including noise) and we'll be responding to that. For more information and to keep up to date with the campaign go to our website: www.frp.org.uk

Front cover: The new Rangers © Caroline Silver-Lewis

The Rangers are here! by Ron Crompton and Nick Coleman

The Volunteer Community Rangers (VCRs or just Rangers) have arrived in Richmond and Bushy Parks. The first tranche of 29 volunteers, to cover the two Parks, were recruited in Jan/Feb (from 112 applications) and deployed in the Parks in late March. A second tranche of 25 were recruited in May and deployed in early July.

The Rangers are a good mix of people, a third of them retired but two-thirds still in work (with teachers well-represented), split evenly women and men, and with a spread of ages. All of them are passionate and knowledgeable about the Parks, and want to do something about issues such as deer harassment, dogs off lead, litter, foraging and landscape erosion.

Their role is to educate visitors about the Parks and particularly about inappropriate behaviour such as feeding deer or letting dogs off the lead in skylark or waterfowl areas. They do not enforce Park Regulations, which is the job of the police.

They are in the Parks on busy week-ends, bank holidays and some week-days through to October. They work in pairs on three-hour shifts, starting at 10 am and 1 pm (they can sign up for both or just one shift); late shifts are being considered.

Their uniform of orange polo shirt, fleece and jacket makes the Rangers visible at a considerable distance. About half of their interactions with the public are providing information and about half are about inappropriate behaviour. Often, their presence alone helps to deter inappropriate behaviour and they find that simply standing at a respectful distance from deer makes

visitors stand at the same distance.

Almost all the Rangers' interactions with visitors have been positive, and the majority have led to a change in behaviour. Occasionally people are rude

('I don't care') or become aggressive but this is rare.

Ranger Duncan MacCallum says: *"The public response has been amazing. We have bright orange uniforms so it's hard to miss us – my daughter calls me a smiling traffic cone! I like to show people why it's important for them to respect the skylarks or be extra vigilant during deer birthing season. If we want people to look after something, we have to show them why it matters."*

It's early days but all the signs are that the Rangers are making a real difference.

Photo courtesy of The Royal Parks



The Friends – how are we doing?

By Ron Crompton

The Friends celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2011, so we are now 58 years old and like everyone approaching their sixties we wonder where the years have gone and what we've achieved.

Membership

Back in 2011, we had 1680 members. We now have 2740, a growth of over 60%. And the growth is still strong – we've had 130 new members from January to May, boosted by the online application feature on our new website. This growth in membership is important as it helps with all we are trying to achieve through volunteering, conservation and education projects, fundraising and campaigning.

Volunteering

In 2011, we had around 100 volunteers, mainly in the Visitor Centre and taking part in practical conservation. Today we have over 250, with the growth coming from expanded Visitor Centre opening hours, the Adopt-an-Area scheme, Discoverers and monitoring.

Conservation and education projects

Since 2011, the Friends have raised over £360,000 for conservation projects, protection measures and education. That includes the Ponds & Streams programme (the new Jubilee and Attenborough Ponds, works on Martin's and Ham Ponds and Beverley Brook), the Elm Walk, the Attenborough educational film, protective fencing (Ham Gate Pond, Pen Ponds, Pond Plantation and gorse enclosures) and smaller projects such as Poet's Corner and the Sand Martin Nest Bank.

Finances

In 2011, the Friends had an annual income of around £12,000, all from membership fees. This has now risen to around £30,000 or so from membership fees, sponsorship, merchandise sales and small donations. Substantial additional funds for our conservation projects have come from appeals e.g. Elm Tree Walk, Ponds & Streams, Poet's Corner.

Campaigning

Our campaigning earlier in this decade was mainly about cuts to TRP's government grant, the threat to move TRP to the Mayor and cuts in police numbers – all behind-the-scenes lobbying with a lot of effort but largely unsuccessful. Since then our campaigns against litter from cyclists' gel packs and St Paul's view have become more public, with greater success. It suggests we're getting better – or luckier – at campaigning! Many of you will already have taken part in our current campaign to minimise the noise from an expanded Heathrow.

Unfortunately, the threats to the peace and natural beauty of Richmond Park continue and it's wonderful to have more resources to pursue our objectives of protecting and conserving the Park and educating the public about it. We are very grateful to all our members, volunteers and sponsors who have helped in these endeavours.

Dogs-on-lead at Pen Ponds now year-round

For over ten years TRP have asked that dogs be kept on a lead at Pen Ponds during the summer months, to reduce disturbance to birds during the nesting season and allowing them a better chance of raising young.

In recent years, with the Park becoming much busier, the water birds have struggled; last year some swans in Pen Ponds were severely injured, and one killed, by dogs. Dog walkers were also routinely ignoring the signs in the summer months. As a result, TRP now require all dogs to be kept on leads around Pen Ponds year-round. To coincide with the new signs going up, the police patrolled the Pen Ponds area in March. They gave verbal warnings to 36 dog walkers, and formal written warnings to five. Police will continue to patrol over the summer and it is also a priority area for the new rangers.

Restrictions in the skylark nesting areas will remain seasonal, with dogs-on-lead signs in place between March and August. Isabella Plantation remains a dogs-on-lead area year-round. And Pembroke Lodge gardens, the playgrounds and the small fenced gardens at the park gates are no-go areas for dogs.



Litter picking for DofE Award

By Steve Sandham

When the Friends set up the Adopt an Area litter picking scheme, we didn't anticipate being involved in the Duke of Edinburgh Award. The 'DofE' challenges young people aged 14 to 24 to develop themselves, gain a sense of achievement and make a valuable contribution to worthy causes. In its 70 years existence, countless young people have benefited from it. It's not only tremendously rewarding to do but also an impressive addition to any CV.

One of the sections to be achieved in the Award is volunteering, but for candidates at the younger end of the age spectrum it's sometimes a struggle to find volunteering activities they can participate in whilst being under 18. Not so with litter picking (however, we do insist that they pick with a parent or responsible adult).

After we took on our first DofE volunteers as 'roaming' litter pickers, word has got round and we are now proud to have 18 DofE candidates and their parents litter picking in the Park, helping the regulars to keep it looking pristine. It's given a youthful boost to Adopt an Area and we are delighted to assist these young ambassadors on their journey to fulfilment.

Photo by Steve Sandham: Ben Rowe and dad Scott Rowe

Richmond Park designations

Richmond Park is a SSSI, NNR, ESAC, Grade 1 Landscape, MOL. They are descriptions we use regularly, but what do they actually mean and how do they affect the Park?

All of them are statutory designations that recognise the value of the Park and protect it against developments. The first three specifically mention ancient trees and dead wood habitats; the invertebrate 'assemblage' (especially stag beetles, which are globally threatened and are a UK priority species) and lowland acid grassland (a UK priority habitat).

SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) is designated by Natural England, primarily under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Richmond Park was designated an SSSI in 1992 and is the largest in London. Under the SSSI the Royal Parks (TRP) has a duty to conserve and enhance the Park; it is the greatest statutory constraint on how the Park is managed. For example, TRP is expected to maintain the acid grassland in 'favourable condition' and, to do so, has been reducing bracken coverage and trialling grazing by cows (which encourages wildflowers).

NNR (National Nature Reserve) is also designated by Natural England under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. England has 224 NNRs. They are designated primarily for their value for nature conservation and wildlife habitats, as 'outdoor laboratories' for scientific research and for public recreation. Richmond Park was designated an NNR in 2000 for its wildlife habitats and as a recreational resource for London.

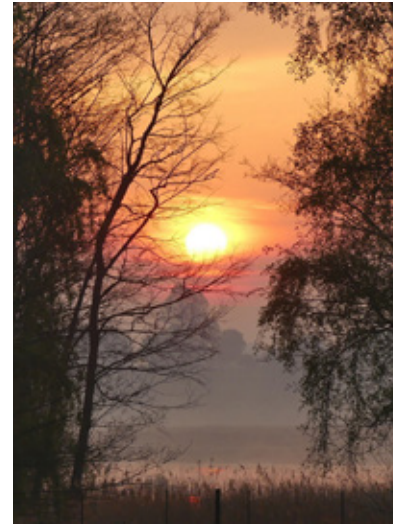
ESAC (European Special Area of Conservation) is designated under the EU Habitats Directive and forms part of a Europe-wide network of protected sites supporting Europe's most important habitats and species. A major project in a SAC must have an appropriate assessment to determine whether it will have 'an adverse effect on the integrity of the site'.

Grade 1 landscape. The Park was registered in 1987 on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. Grade I means 'of exceptional historic interest'. There are also 11 listed buildings in Richmond Park, of which one is Grade I (White Lodge) and ten Grade II (the wall, Richmond Gate, a game larder in Holly Lodge grounds, the barn and stables at White Ash Lodge and six lodges). Any modification to them requires approval.

Finally, Richmond Park is designated as **MOL (Metropolitan Open Land)**, which is a designation unique to London and protects strategically important open spaces. New building is only allowed on MOL in 'exceptional circumstances'.

Dawn chorus walk

By Alison Glasier



The light in the eastern sky grew brighter through the gentle mist shrouding the ponds, all was still and the group waited with bated breath for the first birdsong to herald the dawn. The deep blue of the sky was tinged with pink, orange and gold merging into the western darkness.

A tawny owl! Clearly heard across the shimmering pond. Followed by robins, blackbirds, thrushes and as the avian orchestra swelled into action, the sun started to appear behind the trees, its golden rim illuminating the water until it appeared fully, a majestic flaming ball of red and gold. For a while, even the most committed of bird lovers forgot to listen to the birdsong as the sun hung in the sky, its ever-increasing strength causing the mist to rise magically above the ponds. The birdsong reached a crescendo as other birds woke from their roosts and joined in – chiffchaffs, great-tits, blue-tits, black-caps, whitethroats, reed warblers. The distant cry of a pheasant, the agitated screeching of terns above the pond... a magnificent confusion of avian music to welcome daybreak.

If only I hadn't woken up at 3 am, decided to go back to sleep for an hour and missed the entire wonderful performance! I am very grateful to, and extremely jealous of, the other members of the bird group who provided such enthusiastic accounts and such brilliant photos. Next year...



Native pollinators such as bees, moths and butterflies, lace wings and hoverflies play a vital part in helping flowers to set seed, fruit, and grow again year after year. Over 80% of food crops and wildflowers rely on them. However, all are in decline and one of the main reasons is loss of habitat.

The new **Pollinator Garden** provides an ideal habitat. It is also designed to show gardeners how a more formal garden of borders and flowerbeds – or similar allotments and window boxes – can still be an oasis for insects. It will also be used to teach people of all ages about the vital role that invertebrates play in our environment.

The Pollinator Garden is located at the north end of Pembroke Lodge Gardens by Poet's Corner and is funded by a grant from the People's Postcode Lottery and TRP's 'Mission Invertebrate' programme.

The most noticeable feature is the **native wildflower meadow**, which features a mix of native wildflowers and grasses to provide forage and shelter. These include birdsfoot trefoil, ox-eye daisy (food for the red soldier beetle), field scabious and yarrow (which attracts marmalade and other hoverflies). The meadow has mixed native hedge plants around it and bespoke gates at either end of the short central path which runs through it.

Then there is **the border** beside a herring-bone wall, with a mix of native and non-native species that flower throughout the year. It's planted with bugle, echinacea (its flower head is made up of small florets, each a nectar source for insects and is a favourite of hoverflies), asters (which bees and other pollinators love; its many seed heads will bring birds to the garden) and heathers (particularly important in autumn and winter, offering nectar and pollen at a time of scarcity).

New Pollinator Garden

By Ron Crompton and Jo Scrivener



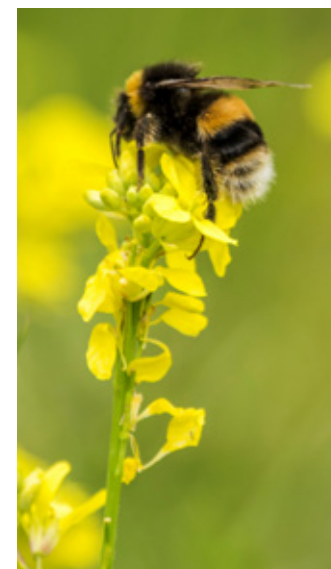
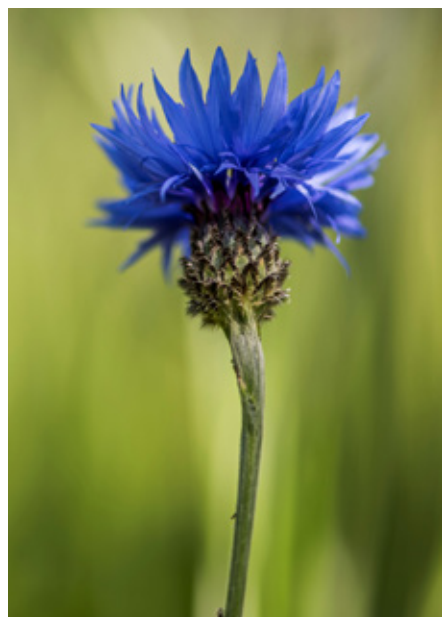
There's also a **hedgerow**. Hedgerows are vital for healthy and diverse pollinators, providing pollen and nectar from spring to autumn. It includes blackthorn (it flowers in the early spring, making it particularly valuable for queen bumblebees), and hawthorn (which comes later in spring providing food for pollinators such as longhorn beetles) and is undersown with a wildflower seed mix.



And there's a Bug Hotel (*above photo*). Old garden walls, and holes in plant stems or dead wood, provide cracks and crevices for invertebrates, such as the red mason bee, to shelter, hide, nest and breed. The Bug Hotel replicates this environment with an assortment of shapes, sizes and materials, including brick, wood, stones, pottery and canes.

The Garden has an **interpretation board** on an oak lectern stand. TRP have improved the steps and paths around it and added benches. Jo Scrivener says: *"This is a pretty traditional garden design, with beds and borders. What we have done is choose varieties that are especially attractive to pollinators and that flower at different times of the year, to make sure there is a consistent source of food. I wanted to show people that creating spaces for wildlife doesn't have to mean allowing a plot to go wild."*

Poet's Corner has a gilded board with the ode to the 18th century poet James Thomson (restored with funding from the Friends in 2015) and wonderful curved benches with the inscription; *'A poor life this, if, full of care, we have no time to stand and stare'*. The Pollinator Garden provides a lovely sight to sit and look at, and maybe inspire budding poets.



Lyme disease can be diagnosed by 'bull's eye' rash alone



New advice from the NHS says that people with the 'bull's eye' circular rash do not need a blood test and should be treated immediately with antibiotics to avoid complications.

However, not all Lyme disease rashes have the central 'bull's eye' so go to your GP if you develop a circular rash that increases in size.

As many infected people don't get a rash, also go to your GP if you've been bitten by

a tick or visited an area in the past month where infected ticks are found and you get flu-like symptoms. See our new website for more information on Lyme disease: www.frp.org.uk/ticks-and-lyme-disease.

Thomson's Teeth

We've all seen the low wooden stakes that line the Park's roads. They're known as 'Thomson's Teeth' after George Thomson, the Park Superintendent from 1951 to 1971, who first installed them to stop cars parking off-road. Over the years, many have been lost, damaged or worn down by the weather and, with parking off-road increasing, TRP have now bought 1,000 new ones to replace them, with priority given to the sections where off-road parking is rife. One of these is the road from Sheen Cross up the hill to the Ballet School at White Lodge, where contractors recently installed new teeth with the fearsome-looking instrument shown in the photo.



Drone survey

In March/April TRP conducted a drone survey of the whole of the Park, with the drone taking high-resolution photographs of every square inch. When stitched together (itself a complex task because of the large file size of the photographs) it has provided a picture map of the Park as it is now, providing both a baseline for recording how the landscape changes over time and accurate data on the size and shape of the different habitats. It is being used initially for managing the spread of bracken.

Tree tags



What are they for, those silver, yellow, red or blue tags that you see on trees in the Park? They've all been attached by TRP's arboriculturalists at some point and they all give vital information on the tree.

The silver metal tag means it is a veteran tree, numbered because TRP keeps a detailed record of all veteran trees.

A yellow, round, plastic tag with writing on, like that in the photo, means the tree has had Oak Processionary Moth (OPM) at some point. It could be five years ago or the present year, depending on the information on the tag. The tree in the photo had OPM in 2014, 2015 and 2018.

A red plastic tag means that the tree has been of particular wildlife interest at some point; maybe a little owl was recorded in it or a kestrel nest. However, there aren't many of these and they were used more in past years than now. There is also a very small number of trees with round, blue, plastic tags on and these indicate that the tree has been part of a research project into a particular disease.

Historically, the trees in Pembroke Lodge gardens were each given a green or white, numbered plastic tag, which was linked to a tree record. However, the record is no longer used and the tags are largely redundant.

Surveys, surveys ...

Surveys are the first step in conservation programmes and TRP have a number of invertebrate surveys currently underway or planned, funded by the 'Mission Invertebrate' programme. We have reported before on the surveys of Odonata (dragon/damselflies) which recorded 17 species in Ham Pond and the Isabella Plantation, and the survey of Dung Beetles which recorded 14 species compared with previous records of only nine. Two other recent surveys of moths have recorded 215 species of double-line moths and 249 species (including 30 which have not been recorded here before) of macro-moths.

All of these indicate a greater wealth of invertebrates in the Park than had been thought. Further surveys planned include minotaur beetles (a spectacular beetle with the males having long prongs on the thorax) and baseline surveys of the invertebrates in the scrapes created last year, the new pollinator garden and the hawthorn enclosures. A citizen science project mapping the hawthorns in the Park started in May and TRP are also planning a package of surveys of the Park's ponds and streams.

Brewing up a dragon's storm!

A crew of brave Friends will be stirring up the Thames in Kingston raising (we hope!) over £1,000 for Park conservation projects.

Josh and Frankie Kearns, who run Kingston's Park Brewery, love Richmond Park and recently launched 'Tread Lightly' ale. As members, they and their children are part of our Adopt an Area litter-picking team. More recently, they've been training for the Kingston Rotary Dragon Boat Challenge, 21st July, and nominated Friends of Richmond Park as their charity. We wish them well and hope they brew up a storm!

Bishop's Pond

Bishop's Pond and Bishop's Gate on the north side of the Park have nothing to do with bishops but are named after two assistant Park keepers, father and son, in the 19th century. Our Autumn 2017 newsletter told how Bishop's Pond had dried up after The Royal Parks plugged leaks in the Park's water mains system, as part of its programme of reducing waste. A hydrographical survey has now confirmed that the Pond has no natural water course to feed it and other options, such as collecting water from road run-off, are expensive and polluting. So, the plan is for it to be an ephemeral pond which fills with heavy rain but is partially or wholly dry the rest of the time. Such ponds are a good habitat for many amphibians, such as newts, frogs and toads.

Albert Waterfield

Albert Waterfield was awarded the George Cross Medal of Honour for Civilian Bravery. He received this award following an incident in Richmond Park on May 10, 1921. The account of his deed reads:

"At 2.05 am on 10th May 1921 Mr. Waterfield, park-keeper, Richmond Park, saw two young men, each armed with a rifle. As he walked towards them they ran off and he gave chase. He followed them for about a mile to a spot not far from Robin Hood Gate when they stopped and called out that if he did not halt they would fire. He went on towards them and when he was about 50 yards away one of the men fired two shots, both of which missed. The men then turned and ran off, still followed by Mr. Waterfield. They scaled a wall into a lane and when captured some distance away were found to be carrying 76 cartridges between them. It was later revealed that they were trying to make an entry into White Lodge, Richmond Park, the home of The Duke and Duchess of York, later King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. Mr. Waterfield showed great courage and it was due to his persistence in giving chase that the two men were finally arrested".

Albert Waterfield was also a veteran of World War I. The two men were members of the IRA.

Ornate-tailed digger wasps

By Paula Redmond



I am always finding curiosities in the Park that I never knew existed. On days when birds and other wildlife are hard to find, I like to look for other creatures and am amazed at the wide variety of species that I find. One sunny afternoon last summer, I spotted a smallish wasp emerging from holes in the ground. This was an Ornate-tailed Digger Wasp (*Cerceris rybyensis*), a species of solitary wasp which specialises in hunting small to medium-sized mining bees which they feed to their young.

Solitary bees and wasps, along with many of our other, often overlooked insects, are important pollinators of all kinds of plants (see centre pages and also centre page article of the autumn 2017 Friends' newsletter).



Digger wasps nest in sandy paths, often right under our feet. They prey on bees that are weighed-down with pollen as then they are easier to catch mid-flight. Once caught, they paralyse the bees with a sting and squeeze the prey's neck with their strong mandibles. They then carry them into their nest where they are stored in a larder created for hungry wasp larvae to eat when they hatch. The unfortunate victims are kept alive for as long as possible to keep them fresh. The

pollen on the bees no doubt makes a tasty and nutritious dessert! Like many other wasps, the adults only feed on flowers and so pollinate them.

Photos by © Paula Redmond photography: Ornate-tailed Digger Wasp carrying a Mining Bee victim into its nest hole. With grateful thanks to Stephen Cotterell for creating the composite.

Enquiries

Friends: see www.frp.org.uk. If your query is not answered here, please email secretary@frp.org.uk

Park management: contact Park Manager Simon Richards, 0300 061 2200 or email Richmond@royalparks.org.uk

Police non-emergency telephone number: 101

Newsletter people

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Friends' Talks with Walks

Talks with Walks begin at 10.15 am and are typically a 1-hour talk at Pembroke Lodge followed by a 1.5 to 2-hour walk in the Park. These are all for members of the Friends only and do not need to be booked – just turn up. There is no charge and coffee and tea are provided. Please check on our website for more details of these and dates of other talks throughout the year: www.frp.org.uk. Meeting place for the September walk TBC.

21 September	Tour of Beverley Brook conservation site with Toby Hull
12 October	Deer by Peter Burrows Smith
16 November	Fungi by Janet Bostock

Membership and Subscriptions

It's easy to become a member: you can sign-up online at <https://www.frp.org.uk/membership/> using your credit card. Alternatively you can get a form: off the website using the same address, from the Visitor Centre at Pembroke Lodge or by emailing me at: membership@frp.org.uk.

Individual membership is £10 and household membership is £15.

If you are a member and don't receive the monthly Friends' bulletin by email and wish to do so, please email bulletins@frp.org.uk with the subject 'Add to bulletin'. Please also include the first line of your address and post code. You can easily stop this at any time using the unsubscribe button.

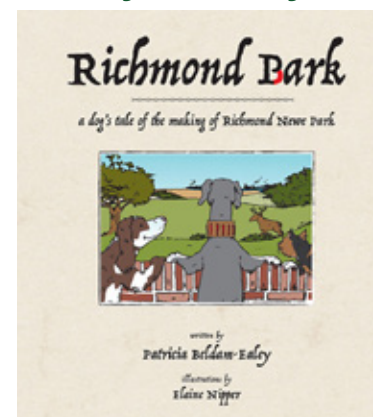
If you change your email or home address then please let me know by emailing membership@frp.org.uk and include your previous address.

Chris Mason, Membership Secretary
(Post applications to: 38 Chesham Rd, Kingston, Surrey KT1 3AQ)



Photo of Discoverers © Brendan Blake

Richmond Bark by Pat Ealey



Tail wagging fun! The story of Richmond Park seen through the eyes of Gypsy the greyhound (the favourite dog of Charles I) and her best friends Rogue the spaniel and Hop the cat. The book for 8-9 year olds tells of the friends' adventures through the centuries and is written by Pat Ealey who was until recently the Centre Manager at the Holly Lodge Centre in the Park. It's on sale at the Visitor Centre, price £8.99.



Discoverers is the Friends' activities programme for families with school-age children. It's a great way to get to know the Park, and the rich diversity of its wildlife and ecology. We run about six events throughout the year. Join our mailing list for early notification. For full details visit:

www.frp.org.uk/discoverers/ or

[f /thefriendsofrichmondpark](https://www.facebook.com/thefriendsofrichmondpark)

Friends' Walks

All are welcome. Friends' Walks are free, last about two hours and start from a car park. All except Bird Walks are on Saturdays unless otherwise stated.

If you need more information or special support or help with the walk, please phone Ian McKenzie on 020 8943 0632 or email walks@frp.org.uk in advance, or 07824-784335 only on the walk day itself. Also see our website: www.frp.org.uk

Please keep dogs under control.

Date	Starting at 10am from
6 July	Robin Hood Gate car park
3 August	Kingston gate Gate park
7 September	Roehampton Gate car park
5 October	Sheen Gate car park (Deer + Walk the Wall)
2 November	Pembroke Lodge car park
7 December	Pen Ponds car park
26 December	Pembroke Lodge car park



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RICHMOND PARK

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Honey bee on umbellifer by © LouiseOliverphotography.com

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