

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT Month by Month in 2009 - Jennie Randall**

**January** At the beginning of 2009 the Friends welcomed a new **Ranger to Jubilee Country Park - Jenny Price**. Work continued on the major conservation task of the winter-laying the hedge beside Alan's Path. A special hedge-laying demonstration was held where members of the public were invited to join us to learn more about this traditional skill. On the 19th a Customer Service Excellence Assessor was scheduled to visit our workday as we had been chosen to represent the work undertaken by Friends' groups in Bromley Borough as part of the Environment Directorate's efforts to seek out this accreditation. This occasion nearly ended in disaster when the Ranger's vehicle was involved in an accident and, as a result, the workday had to be cancelled! However, with a bit of quick thinking and a slight change of venue, we were able to show the assessor the newly-completed layed hedge and discuss with him the diverse range of activities our Friends' Group are involved in. He went away very impressed and the Environment Directorate were successful in achieving what was formerly known as Chartermark status.

**February** The heaviest snowfall for 20 years led to the cancellation of both our workday, and, (for the first time ever), the Jub Pub Club. The following week though, when snow and ice were still thick on the ground, a noble team of workers were out clearing ditches! This shows what an enthusiastic team we have! A joint grant application to Veolia from the Countryside & Parks Department and the Friends was successful in securing 4,500 for the creation of a pond not far from Blackbrook Lane Car Park. Several Friends attended Bromley Council's Friends Winter social event at the Civic Centre, where we heard speakers on topics such as the Green Chain, Active Lifestyles and Bromley Community Links. For something completely different, back at the Garden Room at St. Augustine's Church, we had a talk by a speaker from the Orangutan foundation on the important work they do to help protect this endangered species.

**March** **Bob Francis**, from **Bromley RSPB**, led a **Bird Walk** in Jubilee attended by 40 people. Contractors started clearance work on the new pond. Workdays included scalloping woodland edges and further ditch clearance. Newt surveys were conducted and ongoing monitoring of the Park's 20+ bird boxes was undertaken by **Derek McWalter** from the **RSPB**. Our **AGM** took place.

**April Heronwatch at Kelsey Park** in Beckenham (undertaken in partnership with the Friends of Kelsey Park and Bromley RSPB) was a great success this year with a large number of visitors over the weekend. This was the first time our Friends' tent had been used at this event. **Tony Ruffle** and **Richard Pearce** both qualified as First Aiders after attending a course. Tony Ruffle also, photographed at Jubilee, featured on the front cover of Bromley's "Walks & Talks" booklet. At Jubilee, a **History Walk**, undertaken as part of the **EnBro** programme, attracted 37 visitors to the Park. **Sue Folkes** worked very hard throughout the Spring at setting up our new website - [www.jubileecountrypark.btik.com](http://www.jubileecountrypark.btik.com)

Do take a look if you haven't done so yet - and please leave a comment on the Guestbook Page- it is good to get feedback.

**May** The Friends had a stall at the **Petts Wood May Fayre**. Unbelievably, we managed to sell 33 packets of Christmas notecards! We continued clearance work around the new pond and further **newt surveying** took place.

**June** A group of special needs students from Bromley College studying Social Independence visited Jubilee to learn more about the ecology of the Park. **Jess Isden**, one of our former Rangers, returned to tell us all about her fascinating work in South Africa studying the **meerkats** featured in the television series **Meerkat Manor**. A Responsible Dog Owner event was held with free poo bags and literature being distributed to dog walkers in Thomet Wood Car Park. A much-needed sign identifying the Oxhath Crescent Entrance was installed by the working party. The major project for this month was setting out the Orienteering Course which was generously funded by local charity, **Give2Give**. The Dartford Orienteering Klubb assisted us by mapping the course. This has proved to be a very popular addition to the Park's facilities and is especially good in that it attracts young people, such as Scouts and Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme participants, into the Park. It also generated a significant amount of publicity on the NewsShopper's Green Guardian page.

**July** Working parties this month concentrated on preparing the Park for summer, with the painting of picnic tables, clearance of overgrowth on paths, replacing chicken wire on the boardwalk and removing rubbish. ~ special thank you to all those who litter-pick when in the Park - it makes a massive difference! **Sally Morris**, assisted by **John Bruce**, led a **Wildflower Walk** attended by 41 people. **Marcus Jordan** and **Tony Ruffle** led two **Butterfly Walks**, joined by a total of 22 people.

Throughout the warmer months they also walked the **Butterfly Transect** at Jubilee, recording the increasing number of butterfly species observed en route.

**August** No official workdays this month, but things were busy nevertheless. Our annual **Wheelchair Walk** for the residents of Southmore Court was held on a beautifully sunny morning, and much enjoyed by all. The ages of those present ranged from 10-100! Special thanks to **Jamie and Lucy Goddard**, two of our younger members, who were fantastic company for our guests. Also to **Jean Archer** for her legendary rock cakes! Several friends attended the Rangers' Barbeque for rural Friends groups and other volunteers at High Elms. A **Bat Walk** led by the Rangers was fully booked. Mention must be made here of **Hugh Stewart** who undertakes a monthly check of the Nature Trail route, reporting any problems so they may be dealt with promptly.

**September** This month marked 6 years since our Friends Group started. A **Badger Talk** by **Dave Witherspoon** of the **West Kent Badger Group** gave us a real insight into the lives of these animals. The Friends had a Stall at the High Elms Open Day. I was presented with the Gold Award for Outstanding Individual contribution to Beautiful Bromley in the 2009 Celebrate Bromley Competition. There are a couple of very funny stories associated with this involving biscuits and the prize that went missing! If you have not heard them, do ask me! A "**What do Friends do?**" Walk was attended by 14 people, showcasing the vast array of projects we are involved in. Workdays included upgrading Jess's steps and replacing post and rail on the Bridle Path.

**October** Major work was undertaken on the new pond which has been named "**Ray's Pond**" in memory of **Ray Millard**, a much-loved member both of the Friends and the Friday Walk4Life Group, who passed away this month. Special thanks go to **Mary Williams** who invited all those who attended Ray's funeral back to her home for refreshments afterwards. Mary's commitment in running this weekly walk is outstanding and much appreciated by all the health walkers. The Walk at Jubilee is used as a role model for similar walks elsewhere.

**November** A joint workday was held with the Friends of Darrick Wood (to whom we act as mentors) to coppice wood in their Park for use at Jubilee. **Jenny Price** led a '**How Brown is a Brownfield site?**' Walk explaining the diverse range of habitats which a brownfield site can provide. The Friends had a Stall at the hugely popular Bromley High School Christmas Market to promote our activities.

**December** A talk by **Trevor Williams** from **The Fox Project** attracted a record audience of 40 people. Projects in the Park included the creation of a dead hedge around the Dog Pond and trimming the layed hedge along the Alleyway. The **Christmas Social Event at High Elms**, attended by several Friends, was a very enjoyable occasion. An outdoor Christmas Lunch was cooked on a bonfire for the conservation workers on the last workday of the season. Lastly, a quote from a letter received this year which echoes many comments I get about all the hard work of the Friends. 'Thank you for all the pride taken in keeping Jubilee Park so tidy and for all the time given that all may enjoy its delights.' I think that says it all!