

Friends of Jubilee Country Park

Newsletter Autumn 2019



Autumn Update by John Bruce

What an odd summer we've had, with both the hottest and some of the wettest days on record, but Jubilee Country Park has come through the season with flying colours. The spring flowers and blossom were magnificent, as were the blooming grasses and corky-fruited water dropwort meadows in early summer. Then came the knapweed and purple-loosestrife. The annual mowing of the meadows takes place in early autumn, to maximise the opportunity for the wildflowers and insects to proliferate during the summer months.

With great sadness, we share the news that the year has been overshadowed by the very sad loss of Alan Saban. Alan will be known to many of you as a much loved, founding member of the Friends of Jubilee Country Park. Up until the time of his declining health last year, Alan had remained fit and active and could often be seen cycling around the local area and the park on his beloved bicycle. He had continued to play an active, leading role as a highly skilled and knowledgeable member of the Conservation Work Party. He also gave much of his time to help and support us at our fundraising events and he will always be remembered fondly and with a smile. He will be sorely missed by all who knew him and we send our heartfelt sympathy to his son, Dave. A tribute to Alan by Jennie Randall follows later in this newsletter.

The Friends' year began at the end of March with our AGM when our guest speaker, Steven Lofting, a long-time Friend of the Park who now works with the RSPB and idverde, explained the importance of biodiversity and how we can encourage it in our parks and gardens.

The Committee was duly elected and currently comprises Zara Jolly (Secretary), Peter Runacres (Treasurer), Ros Martin (Events and Publicity), Jennie Randall (Projects and Conservation Work Party), Sylvia Chubbs (Membership), Sarah Coulbert (Social Media), Penny Russell (Events) and me, John Bruce (Chair). Sue Folkes was co-opted to help with her special projects – the digital nature trail, woodland trail and schools liaison, as well as being our invaluable IT guru. Tony Ruffle was also co-opted but unfortunately, Tony has been very ill this year and has been in hospital for much of it. He is now recuperating at home and we all send Tony our very best wishes for his continuing recovery.

We continue with our programme of varied and interesting talks held in the Garden Room of St Augustine's.

In April we heard all about Woodlands Farm, a community farm just off Shooters Hill and in June, Russell Miles introduced us to the life of the elusive hare, illustrated with some great photos.

Hunting for butterflies in the park



In September, we welcomed Kate Whitton of the Marine Conservation Society who gave an impassioned and highly motivational talk about the effect of waste plastics on the environment and the whole food chain from plankton to humans. To find out more and read how you can do your bit to help tackle this important issue, there is plenty of useful information on their website-mcsuk.org.

As part of the *London Open House* weekend, Jennie Randall reprised her talk *The Crooked Billet, Not Forgotten*. An audience of more than 50 people filled the Garden Room to hear Jennie's fascinating talk, recounting the devastating wartime V2 rocket attack on the well known pub in Southborough Lane.

In the summer, most of our events take place outdoors and in the park. Andrew Harby, our idverde ranger, conducted two highly informative and well-attended butterfly survey walks. Butterfly surveys make up an important part of our wildlife records and we are always looking for volunteers to assist, so please get in touch if you can spare a couple of hours on the relevant day. Full details will be in the *What's On* section on our website.

Another exciting venture was Sue Holland's *Walk in the Park at Dusk*. As darkness fell, Sue led a group of about 40 adults and children around the park and introduced us to some of its nocturnal wildlife including bats, badgers, owls, foxes and hedgehogs. Lastly, if the weather is dry, Steven Lofting will be leading a small mammal survey at half-term in October, so do come and join our hunt. Full details of all events can be found in the events diary on the back page of this newsletter.

On 20th July, we held our second Meadows Day at Jubilee Park. This was a day of sunshine and very heavy showers. I led a well-attended wild flower walk and luckily we managed to miss most of the rain. Those who braved the wet weather enjoyed a day of fun and learning. We were also joined by Friends of the Earth and there was a variety of children's activities, crafts and a new range of craft-based merchandise for sale. We also recruited several new members as they sheltered from the rain!

A couple of weeks later, our traditional wheelchair walk with the residents of Southmore Court went ahead as planned. Last year, we had to cancel as it was just too hot!

We are continuing to run a number of fundraising events throughout the year. These start in June with the Petts Wood Fayre and Keston Countryside Day when plants, books, branded items and other goodies are for sale. We also hold a couple of coffee mornings at Petts Wood Methodist Church. We could always do with more help on these occasions, so please do volunteer if you can bake and donate cakes or help on the day for any of these events.

While on the issue of volunteering, I must mention our urgent need for active volunteers and new inspiration. We need help with the conservation work party, wildlife surveys and fundraising events. We would really welcome new ideas to help us maintain a lively walks and talks programme. Please speak to any committee member or see our contact details on the back page. Whatever you can do to help, either on a regular or an as needed basis, please do get in touch, as we currently rely solely on a small group of our volunteers to run the Friends' events and activities.

Linking up with local schools by Susan Folkes



Bickley boys hunting for little critters with Dr Judy John and volunteer David Atkinson

Last year, John Bruce led a walk around the park for pupils of St James' School, introducing them to its history, habitats and some of the available activities. This year, we have continued to work with schools to encourage them to care for the environment and our park in particular. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the many volunteers who have given so generously of their time to make these projects possible.

In July, we were delighted to host a visit from a group of pupils from Bickley Park School and their teacher, Alastair Hyslop, as part of their community week. During their visit, sixty boys from years 5 and 6 were introduced to the park and the work of the Friends. The day began with a visit to Thornet Wood, to learn about how and why we manage the woodland to encourage biodiversity. Members of our conservation work party then demonstrated some of the specialist tools we use, such as tree-poppers and post diggers.



Tools demonstration by conservation volunteers

The highlight of the day for the boys was taking part in Dr Judy John's hunt for some of the insects such as beetles, spiders, moths and grasshoppers which live in the trees and meadow grasses. These are important habitats for the wildlife which we are helping to protect.

As part of our ongoing digital nature trail project with Bromley High Junior School, the new year 5 pupils joined us in April, along with their science teacher, for our third field day to photograph the nature trail in spring. The girls have put a lot of effort in to helping to bring this audio-visual project together and since the first field trips in autumn 2017 and summer 2018, a total of 96 pupils have now participated in this exciting project.



Some of the girls from Bromley High Junior School on the spring field trip



Looking for photo opportunities at post 12 with volunteer, John Long

The summer section of the digital nature trail went live in July this year and we plan to have the spring version ready for March 2020. By then, we will have a collection of over 400 images of the park over three seasons and they will be available to view on your smartphone or tablet at each of the nature trail observation posts. If there is enough demand, we could make these beautiful photographs available in a full colour book, so please let us know if you would be interested in buying one-it would make a wonderful birthday present or Christmas gift.

Finally, if you have ideas for projects or field trips with your local school or club that you would like to discuss, or you would like to find out more about how you can become a volunteer, please get in touch, we'd love to hear from you.

In memory of Jackie Lewis 1950-2019 by Jennie Randall



Very sadly, in August, one of the original members of the *Friends of Jubilee Country Park*, Jackie Lewis passed away. Jackie stood as Treasurer when the Friends committee was formed in 2005 and she remained in that role until 2008.

Following this, Jackie was the Membership Secretary until 2013, when family commitments and subsequently long-term ill health prevented her from continuing. Jackie was also an active member of the conservation work party for several years.

Jackie had the ability to be highly organised in whatever she did - a skill that proved to be invaluable in both her roles. She was also a great support to me personally, particularly in my early days as Chairman. Her advice and practical help were always very much appreciated. Jackie will be much missed by all those who knew her and we send our condolences to her husband Dennis and family.

Jackie Lewis, one of our founder members and a long serving committee member

Jennie's Jubilee Jottings by Jennie Randall

Here's a brief update on what's been going on in the park and how we've been using some of the funds raised to maintain and improve the park

- ❖ You may have noticed that the entrance to the picnic area has been moved away from the path. This was due to the fact that a puddle of rain regularly formed next to the path as it was part of the concreted area making up the wartime anti-aircraft gun emplacement. We hope this will solve the problem and make access easier all year round.
- ❖ The Friends have recently purchased a new picnic table made from weather-resistant, recycled materials, to replace one of the existing tables outside the picnic area which has badly deteriorated. It is scheduled to be installed later this year.
- ❖ The *From Warfare to Wildlife* history board has been a popular feature on the Gun Site for the last 13 years. With the passage of time the panel is showing signs of age and becoming difficult to read, so the Friends have funded a replacement which will be in situ shortly.
- ❖ Following a suggestion from a member of the Friends group, an additional wooden bench has been constructed and installed by the conservation work party and placed on the Gun Site, halfway between the history board and the picnic area. This provides a welcome opportunity for those amongst us who may find it difficult to walk for any length of time to be able to sit down and rest before continuing on.
- ❖ Most of us are probably familiar with the Blackbrook Lane entrances to Jubilee Country Park but perhaps give little consideration to how this area appeared when it was just a rural lane. Earlier this year when one of our members, John Longbourne sadly passed away, his daughter Sue kindly gave me some photographs taken in 1929 depicting this area, which I thought would be of interest.



Blackbrook Lane seen from house no.30 in 1929



The view from Blackbrook Lane looking north, 1929

- ❖ For many years there has been an ongoing issue of flooding on the pedestrian path that runs parallel to the cycle track from Tent Peg Lane car park towards the Gun Site. The problem arose every time there was a heavy downpour and on occasion, resulted in the footpath becoming completely waterlogged and therefore totally impassable. This was due to the fact that at one particular point there was a substantial dip in the path. Following a concern raised about this by one of our members who has mobility issues, the Friends reported the matter via Bromley Council's website, accompanied by photographs to illustrate the problem. As a result, I am pleased to say that idverde have now had the path completely levelled and it is now negotiable whatever the weather.
- ❖ Next time you're out and about in the park, look out for our conservation volunteers in their smart, new polo shirts with the Friends' logo on them. The shirts have been provided for our dedicated team thanks to the generous sponsorship of JDM Estate Agents.



Conservation volunteers in their smart new polo shirts which were kindly sponsored by JDM Estate Agents

Flowers to look out for in Jubilee Country Park by John Bruce



Flowering currant (*Ribes sanguineum*) Best known for introducing the Douglas Fir to Britain, Scottish botanist David Douglas brought more than 200 new plants to the UK, including the flowering currant in 1826. It originated in North America and is related to the European Red Currant. See it with its glorious drooping clusters of pink flowers in March/April, just off Alan's Path.

Common chicory (*Cichorium intybus*)

The flower of the chicory is usually bright blue, but sometimes white or pink. It is common in Jubilee Park and it has been adopted as the symbol of the Friends of the Park. It is quite rare in Scotland, Wales and Ireland. A woody, perennial herbaceous plant of the dandelion family, its roots when roasted and ground have been used as a coffee substitute or blend since the time of the ancient Egyptians, though it contains no caffeine. Its leaves, which have a bitter taste, can be used as a vegetable or in salads where its cultivars are known as radicchio, endive, witloof, escarole, salad chicory and what the Americans and French call frisée.



Memories of our dear Friend Alan Saban 1938-2019

By Jennie Randall

Alan Saban was one of the founding fathers of the *Friends of Jubilee Country Park*. He was also a father figure to many of the volunteers, especially those in the conservation work party, in which he played a pivotal role. Alan had attended the inaugural meeting of the group in 2003 and remained at the heart of it thereafter.

Alan's enthusiasm and cheerfulness made every work day fun, no matter what the weather or what the challenge of the day might be. His experience as a groundsman and an ambulance man meant he had a wealth of knowledge which he readily shared. His ability to come up with practical solutions for problems was remarkable. He could turn his hand to any task and on more than one occasion his driving abilities saved the day for a ranger who'd managed to get their vehicle stuck in the mud! Whether it was sharpening tools, installing information boards, putting up signs, organising the tool container, mending things or adapting them, Alan always knew exactly what to do. Wherever you look in Jubilee Country Park, Alan has left his mark. From hedge-laying to carving beautiful pond signs or constructing post and rail fencing, Alan was always there with a smile on his face, a twinkle in his eye and his repertoire of favourite jokes... "*Have you heard the one about the vicar and the bicycle?*"

Alan had a warm and generous nature and was always ready to offer a helping hand and a listening ear. He provided the Friends with transport for Petts Wood May Fayre, Keston Countryside Day, the Wheelchair Walk and much more besides. He also volunteered as a driver for residents of *Southmore Court* and was the transport manager for the Multiple Sclerosis Society's day centre in Bromley.



The annual conservation work party barbeque at Alan's was a much anticipated event and appreciated by all of the volunteers. On other occasions, if we were working on conservation tasks near his home, we sometimes had the treat of enjoying our tea breaks in his beautifully-tended garden, admiring his horticultural efforts and his well-stocked fish pond. He made each and every one of us feel so welcome. After workdays, Alan would always take the initiative to suggest that we had a "*de-briefing*". In reality, this involved a lengthy visit to the pub, with lots of reminiscing, putting the world to rights, a few beers and always a few more jokes. What fun and laughter we had!

I have particular reason to be grateful to Alan, as it was he who first told me that *The Crooked Billet* pub had been destroyed by a V2 rocket in 1944. We never could have guessed where that would lead.

Alan's name will live on in Jubilee Country Park in the path that bears his name. He will live forever in the memories of all those who knew him as a very good and a very dear friend.

Our very dear Friend Alan

Friends of Jubilee Country Park
Event Dates for your Diary
October 2019 to March 2020



The Friends of Jubilee Country Park is a voluntary organisation working with Bromley Council. We help manage the protection and conservation of nature in the park for the benefit of wildlife and local people

To contact us on the day of an event please call 07840 542261 or 07956 801761

Volunteers meet every Monday at 10am (excluding Bank Holidays and the month of August) to help with the management of the park under the guidance of our ranger from idverde for Bromley Council. The work programme and meeting point can be found on notice boards in the park, by calling us on 07840 542261 or on the ***Get Involved : Conservation Work Party*** page of our website www.jubileecountrypark.btck.co.uk.

Walking for Health- every Friday throughout the year Meet at 2pm at Tent Peg Lane car park, off Crest View Drive, Petts Wood BR5 1BY for a walk around Jubilee Country Park (and sometimes beyond) lasting approximately 60 – 75 minutes. Organised by the Ramblers and Macmillan Cancer Support.

October 2019

Thursday 10th Walk to High Elms for lunch at the Green Roof Café, or bring your own picnic. Approximately 5 miles, with the option to continue after lunch on to Keston Ponds, a further 2.5 miles, or to return to Petts Wood using public transport. This is part of the London Loop, a popular walk through countryside, woodland and on some roads. Meet at Tent Peg Lane car park, off Crest View Drive, Petts Wood BR5 1BY at 10:00am. This walk will be led by Ros Martin. Please call 07733 004248 for further information.

Thursday 24th Small Mammal Walk Steven Lofting, an expert on the wildlife in the Park, will give us another chance to see the small mammals which live in the woodlands and hedgerows of Jubilee Country Park. Discover how they are an important part of the biodiversity of our local environment. Meet at Tent Peg Lane car park, off Crest View Drive, Petts Wood BR5 1BY at 9am. **No dogs please.** The walk will not go ahead in bad weather and the decision will be made the day before - please ring 07733 004248 to check. No need to book in advance.

November 2019

Thursday 7th Waldo Road Re-use and Recycling Centre Join us for what should be a very interesting visit to see how Bromley Council processes our waste and recyclable materials. Meet at 10.15am at the entrance to the site in The Avenue, Bromley BR1 2BS. The 336 bus stops close to the entrance. Bickley railway station is half a mile away. Limited parking is available in The Avenue.

December 2019

Saturday 28th Winter Walk Join us for a seasonal walk around Jubilee Country Park, lasting about an hour. This walk will be led by John Bruce, an expert in the flora of the park. Meet at 10.30am at Blackbrook Lane car park, BR2 8AY (near the entrance to Bromley High School). Please wear footwear suitable for rough or muddy terrain. Well behaved dogs are welcome.



January 2020

Thursday 16th Annual Quiz Night We kick start the year with this very popular and fun social event. This year we will be raising funds for improvements to the *Alan's Path* entrance to Jubilee Country Park, in memory of Alan Saban. The quiz will be held at 7.30pm in the Garden Room, St Augustine's Church, Southborough Lane, Bromley BR2 8AT.

This event will be hosted by Jennie Randall, assisted by Christine Berkshire. Tea, coffee and nibbles will be provided but you're welcome to bring your own drinks and snacks. Teams of up to 6 people – make up a team, or just come along and make up a team on the night. No need to book. Entry fee is £5 per person. For further information please call 07840 542261.

February 2020

Thursday 27th The Orangutan Foundation A highly informative talk will be given by Ashley Leiman who will tell us all about orangutans and the work of the foundation which she founded in 1990. The Foundation's aim is to ensure the survival of this critically endangered species and its globally important habitat; the tropical forests of Borneo and Sumatra, together with the fauna and flora they contain. Meet at 2pm in the Garden Room of St. Augustine's Church, Southborough Lane, Bromley. BR2 8AT. Refreshments will be served at the start of the meeting. Entry is free but a donation of £3 towards the cost of running the event and the work of the Friends would be welcomed.

March 2020

Saturday 14th March Coffee morning at Petts Wood Methodist Church, Queensway, Petts Wood BR5 1EB. Take a break from shopping and join us from 10.00am until noon for delicious homemade cakes and refreshments. Everyone is welcome! *If you can bake and donate a cake, please get in touch. All help is greatly appreciated.*

Thursday 19th March Friends of Jubilee Country Park AGM *Please support your Friends group. Come along and meet other members, take the opportunity to have your say and find out what we're planning for the next year.* The meeting will start at 7.30pm in the Garden Room, St Augustine's Church, Southborough Lane, Bromley BR2 8AT. Plenty of free parking is available nearby. Refreshments will be served on arrival. Our guest speaker will be Ian Wright, Senior Conservation and Community Ranger with idverde, who will give an illustrated talk about the ***History of the Countryside***. Ian has worked in the countryside for many years and his talk is sure to be both informative and entertaining. *We look forward to seeing you there.*

Our thanks to all our supporters, especially those who take an active part to make this events programme possible

How to get in touch and useful contact details

We would love to hear from you with your ideas, suggestions and feedback, so please get in touch via our website www.jubileecountrypark.btck.co.uk or by email to jubileecountrypark@yahoo.co.uk

You can follow us on Facebook and Twitter. Please send in your photos with captions and don't forget to share with your friends and family. **You can find us at www.facebook.com/jubileecountrypark**

If you have a question about a particular event, or would like to find out more about volunteering, please contact the number mentioned in the Events for your Diary listing or call us on 07840 542261. All details are also on our website.

The Friends of Jubilee Country Park work with Bromley Council solely in a conservation and preservation role. To report any of the following issues, please contact Bromley Council's Customer Service Centre on 0300 303 8658:

Overflowing bins (dog waste and rubbish), fallen or dangerous trees, anti-social behaviour, vandalism/graffiti, dog related issues including dangerous dogs, maintenance issues including uncut grass, damaged fences, gates and paths and dumping of rubbish.