



NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2013

REPORTS – SEPTEMBER 2013

AGM - 21 March 2013

The following were elected to serve on the Committee of the Friends of Jubilee Country Park.

Chairman	Jennie Randall
Secretary	Lyn Ward
Treasurer	Paula Murphy
Website	Sue Folkes
Committee Member	Ian Pannett
Committee Member	Tony Ruffle

Proposed by – Sally Morris

Seconded by – Joanne Kane

Chairman's Report – SEPTEMBER 2013

1. I am pleased to report that, following a complaint by the Friends to the Head of Parks & Green Spaces, the car parks at Thornet Wood & Blackbrook Lane have (at last!) been repaired.
2. Sally Taylor has kindly agreed to be co-opted onto the Friends Committee to act as Membership Secretary.
3. Congratulations to Nick & Sarah Hopkins (both former Site Managers for Jubilee Country Park) on the birth of their son, Arthur Colin, on 8th June 2013.
4. Congratulations also to Sue Folkes, who runs our website, on her marriage to Brian Thompson aboard HMS Belfast on 13th July 2013.
5. My book "Not Forgotten - The Crooked Billet" featured in a five-page article in the August edition of *Britain at War* magazine, raising awareness on a national level of the activities of our Friends group. If you haven't got a copy yet, it can be purchased for £4 from Petts Wood and Southborough libraries, Bromley Local Studies Library, the Beeche Visitor Centre at High Elms or Websters Social Stationers, Petts Wood. All profits go to the work of the Friends.
6. Every Friday, Walk4Life takes place at Jubilee Country Park. This is not a Friends event, but many of those attending are Friends. Meet at 2.00 pm at Tent Peg Lane car park for a gentle stroll around the park (and sometimes beyond) lasting approximately 1 hour. On 28th September 2013, there will be a Walk4Life Picnic in the Park at 3.00 pm, following the weekly walk which commences at the usual time.
7. As a result of the recent survey of Friends we intend to send out the Friends Newsletter via e-mail from 2014. If you would like to receive it by email, but did not complete a survey form, please let us know and we will arrange this in future for you. Sending the Newsletter electronically saves both paper and postage costs. We will, of course, continue to issue paper copies of the Newsletter to all those who prefer that format.
8. Many thanks to all of you for renewing your subscriptions and also for the generous additional donations which accompanied many of them. With regard to the annual subscriptions, the Committee are also

investigating the possibility of offering Friends the option to renew this either by standing order or online in the future, if that is more convenient.

9. Keen walkers amongst our members may be interested to learn that Bromley Council has recently published a new walks pack entitled *Countryside on your doorstep*. This consists of 14 walks around the borough, each on a laminated sheet. It includes the Petts Wood Circular walk which starts at Jubilee Country Park. The packs are available for £7.50 from Bromley libraries and the Beeche Visitor Centre at High Elms.
10. The residents of Southmore Court, 437 Southborough Lane, will be holding an Autumn Fayre on Saturday 12th October starting at 10.30 am. All Friends of Jubilee Country Park are welcome to go along. There will be many bargains to be had and a lunch will be available to purchase for those who wish to stay for it.
11. Bob Land's hand-made solid wooden bird boxes were so popular that we sold out! Bob has kindly agreed to make some more for us so if you are looking for a bird box for your garden or as a perfect Christmas present order one quickly before they all go! They are priced at £11.99 and all profits go to the work of the Friends. Call or email me to reserve one. (Contact details set out below point 13).
12. I am sad to report that one of our members, Ken Walker, passed away recently. We send our sincere sympathy to his wife Jean.
13. Remember, if you have any good ideas about walks, talks or outings the Friends could arrange, or thoughts about projects in the park which we might be able to consider, do let us know. Also, if you have a few hours to spare on a Monday morning and would like to join our conservation party, do get in touch – we need your help.

Jennie Randall, *Chairman*. 07840-542261 or email jubileecountrypark@yahoo.co.uk

Moth Session Report

A moth session was organised for the members of the Friends on the night of the 5th July. Fellow enthusiasts and I set up three moth traps at the Blackbrook Lane Car Park end of the site. One trap was tucked up against trees, another next to pines and the third was in a meadow. The plan was to create a large list on the night which was not hot enough for moths to fly freely. Over all 75 species were seen and a few coleophora moths are yet to be determined. These are case bearing as caterpillars so may be worth searching for as young next May, providing it has been a decent spring!

The trap by the pines did get Pine Carpet, the trap tucked against the trees got Codling Moth, an Apple feeder and Cherry Fruit Moth as well as an Elm feeder, *Bucculatrix albedinella*. At last signs of the Horse-chestnut Leaf Miner were visible on the walk from the cars to the traps so that species is still about, if not very late, perhaps the winter severely reduced its population.

The best moth of the night was clearly Alder Kitten which was caught by one of my friends, lucky chap. If any of the coleophora are of great interest I will forward the news. There were several other species with fruit names indicating the presence of the tree species in the area. Apple is an unnoticed tree in many woods but very useful for insects; the leaves tend to be very small compared to those in a commercial orchard.



ALDER



BEAUTIFUL



CORONET

Many species indicated open grassland, others, the trees around it, such as the Elm feeder, the trees were not many feet from the trap. It is after all a tiny moth as it has a wingspan of only a few millimetres.

Just over half on the list were micros moths which are generally smaller than macro moths but have different ways of growing as young, often inside a leaf or rolling one within which to hide. Macro moths tend to live on

the leaves. It was that sort of night, still and not too hot, I am happy to see micros because they are under recorded but for an event it would have been better if it had been a macros night with more big common moths. I feel that the Friends of Jubilee Country Park who came along really enjoyed themselves and were keen to see what had come to the lights. From my point of view I therefore see it as a success and we also got decent records for many species in a new area of Kent. This all helps to understand more about the Kent countryside and the areas of it enveloped by the towns. In that sense there is no difference between Mote Park in Maidstone and Jubilee Country Park. I think you would be correct to be proud of the site. Our findings are but a fraction of the total moth list for the site and, of course, the other orders too.

David Gardner

Try Orienteering

Saturday 2nd November 2013

The Friends of Jubilee Country Park, in conjunction with the Dartford Orienteering Club, are giving you the opportunity to try Orienteering, a challenging outdoor adventure sport that exercises both body and mind. The aim is to navigate in sequence between control points marked on a unique orienteering map and decide the best route to complete an orienteering course of about 1.5 km (1 mile). No prior orienteering knowledge is required.

This activity will be particularly suited to children aged 10 to 14 but older children and adults can participate if they wish. It does not matter how fit you are – you can run, walk or jog the course and progress at your own pace.

The Orienteering event will take place on Saturday 2nd November at Jubilee Country Park, starting from Tent Peg Lane car park, off Crest View Drive, Petts Wood. Please arrive at any time between 10 am and 11 am. Protective clothing (no shorts/skirts) and sensible footwear is advised – it may be muddy! The approximate duration will be 1.5 hours.

This event, which is being sponsored by the Friends of Jubilee Country Park, is **free**. Donations to the Friends are welcome. **Booking essential as numbers are limited – call 07840-542261**

Amphibian and Reptile Report

In spite of the bad spring, there was a good showing of slow worms and it was particularly gratifying to see juveniles for the first time.

Common lizards were also seen basking on a number of refugia.

The one good thing about the wet winter and spring was that it filled our seasonal ponds up, thereby creating ideal breeding conditions for amphibians. This was most notable by the netting of eighteen adult and juvenile great crested newts, the most I have seen since monitoring started.

This was not the case in Ray's Pond as some irresponsible person or persons have put at least two large fish in the pond. The consequence of this selfish action was to cause a serious decline in the newt population. We now have to find a way of getting rid of them so the amphibians can recover.

Two juvenile great crested newts were also observed, rising for air, in the loosestrife pond. This is exactly the reason why the pond was lined, so it would hold water during the breeding season and act as a satellite pond.

It is most important that we stop inconsiderate people from compromising the bio-diversity of the ponds we have at Jubilee Country Park. It would be a good idea if we could use the large Friends group to be the eyes and ears of the park and report any untoward behaviour in respect to our ponds, or anything else come to that.

Marcus Jordan

Butterflies

It was with some trepidation that Tony Ruffle and I approached the butterfly monitoring season (transect walking) after two bad summers but the resilience of insects is quite remarkable. The usual over wintering butterflies, peacock, comma, small tortoiseshell, brimstone, and red admiral turned up in April, soon followed by orange tips, holly blues, and the common whites, but, of course, there are always losers, and in this case, it was green hairstreaks (absent), common blue and large skipper. Mid summer produced good numbers of meadow

browns, gate keepers, ringlets and small skippers. As the summer progressed, it became clear that common blues had made a small come back, the second generation being quite good, as were peacocks, a single marbled white was also observed. We shall have to wait to see what the rest of summer produces.

Marcus Jordan

My involvement with conservation

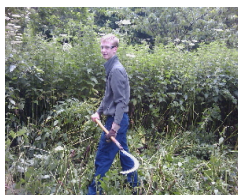
Conservation and the Countryside has been an interest of mine since the age of seven when I started attending the Bromley Buzz activity events at High Elms Country Park in the old nature centre. Since then I have never looked back and continue to follow my interest in a number of different ways across the borough and the country and I am now hoping to be accepted for an honours degree course in Countryside Management.

I have been able to get involved with a number of projects and groups including **The Friends of Jubilee Country Park**, Bromley Countryside Service and The Downlands Project. These groups and projects have fuelled my interest and allowed me to absorb a lot of information from experts across many different fields of conservation and take part in a number of hands on management techniques.

What I enjoy the most about countryside management and conservation work is being able to carry out different tasks to the benefit of an ecosystem and then being able to watch and survey the success of the work. This makes the work rewarding, which is why it is a shame Bromley Council appear to be moving away from conservation. Conservation is also enjoyable, to be able to make it better for people to access the countryside by carrying out footpath maintenance and instating benches so that other people can appreciate the countryside.

The diversity of areas, activities, specialism and habitats within conservation is very enticing as there is always something new to be learnt. People are often critical and ask why did you do that or why are you doing this, however, once you explain to them what you are doing and they can see and understand the not always immediately obvious benefits, people wish to get involved. There is always something exciting to be seen, learnt or done with conservation and I believe the best way to find that out is to get out there and just do it!

Steven Lofting



Woodland Dwellers – A Story from a Friend who has lived in the park

I have no war memories at all, although I do recollect a man at the door alarming my mother. Many years later I learnt that he was the owner of the bungalow where we lived who had fled the bombs and gone to live in Argentina for the duration of the war. This had posed a problem with the building society from which he was buying the property. They held the deeds but could not sell; they, however, did not receive his mortgage payments. To compensate for this what they could do is rent out the bungalow. Now the owner wanted it back. It was early 1946 and we were evicted.

My parents, Cyril and Daisy Wright, now had two children, but no prospects and no home. They were not alone. We lived in 'bomb alley' and the damage at the end of the war was enormous. To compound the problem, returning troops were eager to settle down and start families and there was a tremendous shortage of houses.

Some people descended on their relatives, and that is what my parents did. Grandma Rangecroft took them into her bungalow which had two bedrooms and a box room. The two bedrooms were both occupied so our family of four crowded into the box room.

It was lovely to be living with my favourite grandparents, but not so lovely for them. One day Grandma stood at the box room door, holding up a wet sheet and scolding Stephen for wetting the bed. However, they coped and never threw us out, nor lectured my parents for improvident living. Truly, my parents believed that 'the Lord will provide', and retained innocence in all worldly affairs for many years.

There was another answer to the housing shortage. All over the country stood military stations, almost empty now as personnel were being demobbed. Increasingly, homeless people were taking these over as squatters. Provided they were not caught in the actual act of breaking in, the law protected them to some extent. The Government did not approve, but decided to turn a blind eye as conditions were so desperate.

My father met up with some other homeless young husbands and broke into Thornet Wood camp. This camp was one of a series of wartime heavy anti-aircraft gun sites. Now the guns had been removed, though their towering concrete bases remained in a large field with nearby a dozen or so huts to house the troops.

My father later told me of throwing bedding over the top of the fence before burrowing under it to spend the night in a hut. Next day he opened the gates for the rest of the family. He was traumatised by the temerity of illegally entering Government property, but he had to provide for his family. Two huts were still occupied by soldiers, but they did not interfere. We took over a rather superior hut near the entrance, and at last our grandparents regained the use of their own home.

At the camp were several other homeless families, who were to form a society for several years at various addresses. We were all on the overburdened Council housing list. Slowly, Council houses were being built, chiefly by cutting down swathes of woodland to build the 'Coppice' Estate. But a points system operated and we never got to the top of the list despite nine years of hoping. Our family had only two children and a husband with a regular job. Such self-discipline was not rewarded.

The huts were very convenient as emergency housing. They were sturdy, water-tight and had electricity which, like water, came free. In the centre was a free-standing coke stove and I remember a fireplace. At any rate there was a warm centre to the home, with chilly accommodation round it. Our hut had one large room. A counterpane was suspended across it to provide a bedroom for my parents and a living room for all of us. At the back were small bedrooms for us children and a chilly bathroom.

1946-7 was a cruel winter. Britain was exhausted after a long war and still suffering shortages of food, clothing and fuel as the entire country dragged itself out of poverty. Ration books ruled the family economy and it was even more of a worry finding sufficient coupons than sufficient money.

The stove in the camp hut was always alight and somehow fuel was found for it. The hearth also held a coal fire so (apart from brief interludes when half-smothered by low-grade dusty coal) there was a warm centre to life, a colourful rug before the fire. Our weekly baths took place in a zinc bath on this rug, lit by the fire. The adults used a very cold bathroom at the back.

Greengrocers were popular at the time, for a few pence they provided nut barrels, apple boxes and above all orange boxes to desperate homemakers. An orange box makes an ideal bedside table with a cloth thrown over it, and they have many other uses. To my amazement, they are being expensively polished and sold as trendy 'retro' pieces now at a price of nearly £200 each!

Outside it was bitterly cold, but wrapped up we went outside to play in the ice and snow. Long icicles hung from the eaves of the hut and we sometimes snapped them off, wrapped one end in a comic and licked them like lollipops. No-one seems to have worried about germs. It was well known that 'you have to eat a peck of dirt before you die' and I suppose it was hard to believe anything could survive in such chilly conditions.

However, the summer that followed this winter was equally extreme. Weeks of fine weather encouraged us to play, not just around the huts but far out in the gun site. The grass was waist-high and feathery and we spent many happy unsupervised hours out there with the other children and often with Digger our dog. To clamber up the concrete steps of the gun emplacements was only an occasional adventure, for although the actual guns had been removed we were still in awe of the great ugly reminders.

Instead, we played endlessly in the meadow the grass had become, hiding and chasing, or creeping up to catch the noisy grasshoppers which were perched at the top of the taller stems and posed soaking in the heat and sunshine as enthusiastically as we did.

I was four and a half when I started at Southborough County Primary School. The school stood in Southborough Lane about a mile from where we were living at Thornet Wood Camp. My mother walked me to school in the mornings and came to meet me coming home – often still near home, as she was always very unpunctual. She pushed along a heavy black ladies bicycle, with my little brother sitting over the back wheel in a black metal child seat. Mother wore a cheerful scarlet cape that meant I could identify her from a long way off.

We had few chores to do at this young age, and we were happy and carefree. Sometimes two huts were occupied by young soldiers. On very rare occasions they would invite us inside, give us tea in huge enamelled mugs and make much of us. It was so hot they were in rolled-up shirt-sleeves and braces. They sat us on a table so we could talk face-to-face, and sometimes we watched one of them (nicknamed Ginger) win a darts game.

Grandma and Grandad Rangecroft lived about a mile away, so were often visited. Stephen and I would play, engrossed with our own affairs but half listening to the adults talking overhead. One day my mother came into the living room to collect us still wearing her scarlet cape and full of the dreaded news. "The soldiers are coming back. We've got to go".

Together with other families from 'the camp' we were soon re-housed in emergency quarters elsewhere and bid farewell to Thornet Wood Camp.

Naomi Parker (nee Wright)

Website News August 2013

Over the six months from March we have averaged 127 hits (or visits) from 91 different people monthly. This compares favourably with my last report which recorded 100 hits from 68 different people.

The e-mailbox continues to be well-used and is regularly monitored by Jennie.

Our events are now appearing on the Bromley website <http://www.bromley.gov.uk/events>. A useful way to keep up-to-date with events is to use their RSS feed. They also Tweet new events if you can follow them on Twitter.

RSS (Really Simple Syndication) is a simple way to keep up to date with the latest news on a web site without actually having to visit the web site. You use an RSS reader (in most cases available free of charge), which you install onto your PC or Mac. The RSS reader will automatically download the latest news from your favourite selected web sites. More information can be found on the Bromley site above.

Please let us have your thoughts for improvements, your photos, feedback on any of the walks led by volunteers from the Friends, stories about the history of the Park and local events you may like to publish.

Susan Folkes – Webmaster

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*Lyn Ward - Secretary to the Friends of Jubilee Country Park
September 2013*