

# Friends of Jubilee Country Park

## Newsletter Spring 2019



### Welcome to our Spring Edition by John Bruce

It has been another busy year for the Friends of Jubilee Country Park. On the grand scale, we have seen idverde retain the contract for looking after Bromley's green spaces, including our park. We heard in December that after a long period of tendering and negotiation, Bromley Council had made the decision to appoint idverde for the next 8 eight years, with an option for a further 8 years. This was good news as we have developed a great working relationship with the team at idverde and this provides the continuity to develop and realise our plans.

In Bromley, there are 156 parks in total. Some are no more than a patch of grass, but others such as Crystal Palace and Keston are very large. Of these, 48 currently have friends' groups. Although we are by no means one of the largest groups, I'm very pleased to report that we are amongst the most active. We currently have 330 members and 31 active members who take part in our conservation work and/or help with our events. Altogether, we put in a total of over 4000 hours of voluntary work last year. This is a vital contribution to the maintenance of the park and idverde are very appreciative of all we do, as this amounts to the equivalent of having two full-time workers on site.

Our sincere thanks, as always, to those who give their time and effort to support us. If you are interested in joining us, or just finding out more about what we do, please come along on a Monday morning, or you can call Jennie Randall on 07840 542261, or email us at [jubileecountrypark@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jubileecountrypark@yahoo.co.uk). The work programme and meeting point can be found on notice boards in the park, or on the Get Involved-Conservation Work Party page of our website [www.jubileecountrypark.btck.co.uk](http://www.jubileecountrypark.btck.co.uk)

### Our Conservation Volunteers have been busy in Jubilee Country Park. Here are some snapshots of the team at work throughout the year



*Removing saplings*



*Clearing brambles*



*Litter picking*



*Coppicing hazel*



*Repairing dead hedge borders*



*Not forgetting finding time for tea and biscuits*

Last year we had another busy programme of walks and talks and appropriately, it was The Queen's Sapphire Jubilee year, when we welcomed two very interesting speakers with royal connections. Firstly, Jim Buttress, former head gardener at the Royal Parks, and then former Police Superintendent Dick Griffin, who was for many years the Queen's Police Protection Officer.

At our AGM, our guest speaker was Emma Pooley, Hedgehog Project Officer for the London Wildlife Trust. The humble hedgehog, once a familiar dweller in our gardens, is becoming increasingly rare due to the loss of their habitat and foraging areas. Emma gave a very interesting talk and explained some simple ways we can help this much-loved creature by making small changes in our gardens and fences.

A good friend of Jubilee Park for many years, Steven Lofting works for the RSPB and idverde and he joined us in May to give us a fascinating insight on shrews. Steven will also be our keynote speaker at this year's AGM, so we look forward to hearing more from him about the important subject of biodiversity.

During the late spring and summer, most of our events take place outside. At the end of last April, National Trust Ranger Sam Pettman lead us on a walk around Petts Wood and explained the land management methods used in this vast area of over 300 acres which has avoided being lost to urban development thanks to some generous benefactors from past decades.

Our busy programme now features the regular fundraising and awareness events which starts with the Petts Wood May Fayre, followed by the Keston Countryside Day in June and our very popular Petts Wood coffee mornings which we host twice a year.

In June, over 30 Friends joined me for my annual wild flower walk and in August, 40 people joined Sue Holland for her evening walk and talk on bats. Unfortunately, our wheelchair walk for the residents of Southmore Court earlier in that month had to be cancelled because of the heat- it's hard to believe just how hot last summer was!

In September, our friends from Chislehurst Commons told us all about their projects. Unfortunately, due to heavy rain, Jennie Randall had to cancel her walk and talk on the hidden history of Jubilee Park for Open House London, but there's another chance to hear her talk later this year. The last two talks of the year were from Dr Ishpi Blatchley, who told us about the world of lichens, then Willow Wildlife kindly stepped in at the eleventh hour to talk about their wild animal hospital, when our scheduled speaker was unable to attend.

Walks are always well attended and a great way of enjoying our green, open spaces. Ros led one to Foots Cray Meadows and I encouraged everyone to get some fresh, winter air as we walked the park after Christmas.

Jennie's January Quiz is now a regular and very popular event. We packed the Garden Room to bursting with enthusiastic quizzers and raised over £350 for the Friends' funds. Many thanks to Jennie for all her hard work in preparing and organising this very enjoyable event.

Finally, I must mention our two major projects of 2018 – both dear to our ex-chairman, Susan Folkes' heart. One is the Woodland Trail, a largely wheelchair friendly path through Thornet Wood, which just needs some final signage. The other is the Digital Nature Trail, an exciting and complex project undertaken in conjunction with Bromley High Junior School. The DNT was officially launched by The Mayor of Bromley, Cllr Kim Botting, on 12<sup>th</sup> October.

Our immense thanks are due to Sue for spearheading this project and to Dr Judy John who has provided the wildlife expert knowledge for the commentary. The *Summer* element of the digital nature trail is currently being finalised and will be completed in time for our Meadows Day Celebration on 20<sup>th</sup> July.

On Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> April, we are planning a field day to start the *Spring* element of the trail with the new year 5 pupils from Bromley High Junior School. Many thanks to those who have already offered to help us again. If anyone else is interested in helping with this exciting project, please contact Sue Folkes on 07739 709383.

### **Jennie's Jubilee Jottings by Jennie Randall**



Firstly, a very big thank you to everyone who joined us for the Quiz Night in January, when I was ably assisted by Christine Berkshire. The turnout was incredible with over 70 quizzers taking part and we made over £350 towards the work of the Friends. The evening was a great success and your support is much appreciated.

#### **Projects update**

If you've visited the picnic area recently you may have noticed the three new picnic benches which the Friends have purchased. The previous wooden ones had become so dilapidated they were beyond repair. The tables, made from recycled materials, were paid for by the Friends, aided by a £300 grant from the Friends Forum.

*The new picnic tables are made from recycled materials which look like wood, but won't fade or rot*



The new benches are a great enhancement to the picnic area and we are grateful to the Friends Forum for their generous contribution.

The Friends have also recently purchased a new notice board for the St James' entrance, which is due to be put in place in the spring. The existing board will then be refurbished and placed in the picnic area, providing additional information in an area where there is heavy footfall.

### A wartime cabbage patch kid!

A few weeks ago, the Friends conservation work party discovered some curious old-fashioned metal tags, labelled with various names such as Arran Pilot, Broad Beans and Carrots, whilst clearing a glade adjacent to Tent Peg car park. These markers survive from what were once allotments, created as part of the *Dig for Victory* campaign to boost food production during the Second World War.

Until recently, other than aerial photographs, we had no good images of the allotment plots. In wartime, camera film was scarce and expensive, so photographs were taken very sparingly. However, last year Christine Regas, one of our Friends, showed me a wonderful picture taken by her father, Ellis Regas, in 1940 or 1941, showing her sitting amongst the cabbages on the family's allotment. Christine has kindly agreed to share this image with us.



*The war time vegetable markers found on the site of the allotments.*

Following a recent appeal from the Royal Horticultural Society for photos of wartime allotments, I submitted this photo on behalf of Christine and we are delighted that it has been accepted as part of their permanent heritage collection. It may also be used in their *Dig for Victory* exhibition which opens later this year.



*Christine among the cabbages on the family allotment, as part of the Dig for Victory campaign c 1940 © Christine Regas*

The photograph was taken in the allotments which were situated in the vicinity of what is now Tent Peg Lane car park - the railway line can be seen in the distance. This scene is now almost unrecognisable today as it has reverted to woodland. However, if you look carefully on the ground you can still occasionally see ridges in the soil denoting the allotment plot boundaries.

Other than the marvellous tale of how, in 1959, the cutting edge of a Bronze Age socketed axe dating from 3000 years ago was found by Harry Marfleet when digging in his plot, stories of our allotments eluded me – until last year. Browsing in a charity shop in Eltham, I discovered an excellent little publication by Paul Rason called *Memories of the Many*, about the Second World War. It included the reminiscences of Derek J. Brewer describing, at our allotments, a somewhat unexpected form of looting:

“War time is a time for patriotic slogans and one such was *Dig for Victory* which encouraged people to grow their own vegetables. At the end of what is now called Tent Peg Lane, a turning off Crest View Drive, was a large field adjacent to the railway (it's now thickly wooded) which was turned into allotments...One day my father and I went to our 'plot' to do some work. Apparently, someone had been stealing vegetables from the next allotment, because a sign had been put up to this effect by the owner, also saying, was this the way to treat the wife of someone away at the war, fighting for King and Country?”

### The Crooked Billet

If you've not yet had an opportunity to hear my talk on the V2 rocket attack on The Crooked Billet, I shall be giving it again as part of the London Open House series, on 21<sup>st</sup> September (see Dates for your Diary) to commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of

the disaster. If you're new to the Friends and are wondering what the Crooked Billet has got to do with Jubilee Country Park, do join us and find out! If you'd like me to give my talk to your local community group, do get in touch on 07840-542261 or email me at [jubileecountrypark@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jubileecountrypark@yahoo.co.uk)

Since 2013, I've been giving this talk all across the Borough of Bromley and beyond. Occasionally, members of the audience share their own reminiscences of what happened that terrible night and one such story, told to me by a lady in the audience at the Eltham Society, I found especially moving and I would like to share it with you:

## **Tibs, the cat who went to hospital by Sally Simmons**

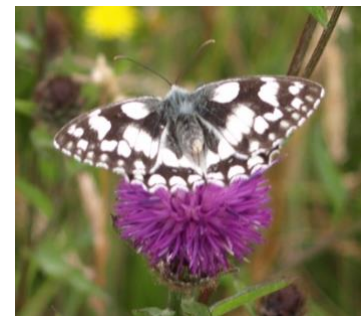
*"My mother, Hilda Clarke, was a nurse at the Bromley Isolation Hospital in Lennard Road, Bromley. She was on duty, in charge of a children's ward, when the rocket landed and she both felt and saw the explosion from her ward. As a hospital dealing with infectious diseases that needed isolation, the staff were not involved in caring for the injured. However, the next day a tabby cat was found by the Nurses' Home, badly injured. His injuries, according to my mother, were consistent with being near to an explosion. He must have struggled across the fields to the hospital. The staff looked after him and he recovered and was given the name Tibs. He adopted my mother who then took him back to my Grandmother's house in Eltham, where he lived out his life to a ripe old age. I do remember that he was absolutely terrified of thunder and loud bangs and that when I stroked him, scars could be felt under the fur. He was the cat of my childhood; a lucky survivor".*

## **The Butterflies of Jubilee Country Park by Andrew Harby**

After a slow start to the year due to early wet weather, there was a good showing of butterflies through the summer of 2018. Meadow species such as Gatekeeper, Ringlets, Common Blue and Meadow Brown were particularly abundant and benefited from the extended dry period, although numbers of skippers were lower than normal.

One notable species that seemed to do quite well was the Marbled Whites, which appeared in several of the meadows. However, the number of many species dropped away a little as the drought persisted and the source of food for the caterpillars dried up. This could adversely affect the number of butterflies in 2019.

In March and June last year, idverde held two butterfly walks with the Friends of Jubilee Park, which included butterfly identification skills and how to record butterflies, as part of the UK Butterfly Monitoring Survey. We are still short of people to take part in this important survey and we'd welcome anyone who would be interested in helping out this year.



*Marbled white on knapweed in Jubilee Country Park*

**If you would like to find out more about butterflies or would like to help with the survey, I will be holding a butterfly identification session on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May. Please join me at 1pm in the Tent Peg Lane car park, off Crest View Drive, Petts Wood BR5 1BY. Full details are in the events listings at the back of this newsletter.**

## **Native Species Campaign Report by Dr Judy John**

Many rare and declining species are dependent at some stage in their lives on invertebrates, whose catastrophic decline over the last 30 years has now been well documented. Native invertebrates are adapted to eat native plants, so this year, Bromley Biodiversity Partnership is asking everyone with gardens to plant at least one UK grown, native shrub or tree in their garden, or ask if it is possible to plant native species (or even better, a hedge) in local sport and school grounds, allotments, parks or other open spaces.

It can be difficult to obtain these species at garden centres, but they can be bought online or you can grow your own from local seed, provided that you are not removing seeds from rare plants. An excel file of native hedge-plants with details of flowers and fruit, soil type needed and importance for biodiversity, can be downloaded from the Friends Forum website (under Biodiversity, useful documents) and this will be extended to include native trees later this year. Native hedge-plants and trees are best planted during November-March (or possibly April).

The Woodland Trust sell UK grown native species online. They also supply free packs to community groups, but you have to apply now for delivery in November 2019. See [www.woodlandtrust.org](http://www.woodlandtrust.org) for further details. Nurseries in Kent which supply UK grown whips, with no minimum order and preferably of south-east England provenance, can be found on the web, but you will need to ask about the provenance of their plants and whether they are grown in the UK.

**Explore it, love it, support it**-Have you noticed our new slogan to help promote the park? We are using it on our posters, leaflets and website to encourage everyone to enjoy the park and do their bit to help support us. Please spread the word to your family, friends and neighbours.

## Early flowers to look out for in Jubilee Country Park by John Bruce



*The beautiful snowdrop*

**The Common Snowdrop (*Galanthus nivalis*)** One of the first signs of a new year, appearing through the leaf litter, frost and snow, is the delicately beautiful snowdrop with its drooping head and green-tinged petals.

Once called *Eve's tears*, as she is said to have shed them when she was cast out of the Garden of Eden, snowdrops are a relative newcomer to our shores. They are not mentioned by Shakespeare and only begin to appear in 18<sup>th</sup> century literature. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, their popularity was assured when soldiers from the Crimea brought bulbs home. There are now over 900 species in the national collection.

### **The Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*)**

Probably our most popular wild flower to be found in spring woodland in Kent is the bluebell. It is genuinely under threat from hybridised bluebells, loss of natural woodland, garden escapes and climate change. But there is little any one can do about it. True Spanish Bluebells are relatively rare in Europe as they hybridise easily. So, long-term, the hybrid bluebell will win, but wouldn't you prefer that to no bluebells at all?

*A carpet of bluebells*



### **Useful contact numbers**

The Friends of Jubilee Country Park work with Bromley Council solely in a conservation and preservation role. To report any of the following, please contact Bromley Council's Customer Service Centre by calling 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 such as uncut grass, damaged fences, gates, paths etc.
- Rubbish dumping

Contact details for the Friends of Jubilee Country Park

Web address: [www.jubileecountrypark.btck.co.uk](http://www.jubileecountrypark.btck.co.uk)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/jubileecountrypark](http://www.facebook.com/jubileecountrypark)

Email: [jubileecountrypark@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jubileecountrypark@yahoo.co.uk)

For telephone contact details for any of our events or to find out more about volunteering, please refer the relevant articles and the Dates for your Diary listing at the end of this newsletter.

**Friends of Jubilee Country Park  
Financial Accounts 2018**

**Balance as at 1st Jan 2018**

**£7,514.35**

**Money In:**

*Subscriptions*

2019: £630.00  
2018: £515.00

*Donations*

General Donations	£1,485.16	
Charities Trust Donation Refund	-£998.60	
Legacy Donation	<u>£275.00</u>	£761.56

£1,145.00

*Grants & Awards*

Friends Forum	<u>£300.00</u>	£300.00
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*Income from Events*

Methodist Church Coffee Mornings	£175.25	
Talks	£196.80	
Cake Stall	£81.16	
May Fayre	£40.50	
Quiz Takings	<u>£195.00</u>	£688.71

*Sales*

Books	£800.64	
Postcards	£159.00	
Plants	£574.00	
Other	<u>£20.00</u>	£1,553.64

**Total Money In:**

**£4,448.91**

**Money Out:**

*Park Projects*

QR Cards & Nature Trail	£90.00	
Woodland Trail Markers	£444.00	
Picnic Benches	£1,652.40	
Notice Boards	£1,657.20	
Magnets, Storage & Cables Etc	<u>£66.49</u>	£3,910.09

*Events*

Speakers Inc Donations	£388.20	
May Fayre	£45.00	
Banners	£394.80	
Field Study Guides	£80.78	
Meadow Day	£334.29	
Hall Hire	£42.00	
Misc Walk/Talk Costs	<u>£52.37</u>	£1,337.44

*Work Party*

Provisions	£104.00	
Tools+Equipment	<u>£143.36</u>	£247.36

*Cost of Sales*

Book Costs	<u>£192.50</u>	£192.50
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*Administration*

Insurance of Equipment	£141.00	
Stationery Telephone Etc	<u>£321.13</u>	£462.13

**Total Money Out:**

**-£6,149.52**

**Balance as at 31st January 2019**

**£5,813.74**



## Friends of Jubilee Country Park Dates for your Diary



### April 2019 to October 2019

*The Friends of Jubilee Country Park is a voluntary organisation working with Bromley Council to help with the management, protection and conservation of the park for the long-term benefit of wildlife and local people.*

***Don't forget you can follow us on Facebook and Twitter and please remember to share updates with your friends and family***

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

#### **Conservation Group Volunteers meet in the Park every Monday at 10am**

**(excluding Bank Holidays and the month of August)** to help with the management of the park under the guidance of Andrew Harby, our community manager 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 [jubileecountrypark.btck.co.uk](http://jubileecountrypark.btck.co.uk). It's a great way of getting involved and really making a valuable contribution to our work.

#### **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 – 90 minutes. Organised by the Ramblers and Macmillan Cancer Support.

#### **April 2019**

##### **Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> April Woodlands Farm – a community farm on the edge of London**

Learn about this unique, 89 acre, city farm on the borders of Greenwich and Bexley. Run as a working farm, predominantly by volunteers, the farm's main principles are that of education and conservation. Join us at 2pm in the Garden Room, 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 running the event and the work of the Friends would be welcomed.

#### **May 2019**

**Monday 6<sup>th</sup> May Petts Wood May Fayre** Find our stall at the annual May Bank Holiday Fayre in the grounds of the Memorial Hall, Petts Wood Road, Petts Wood BR5 1LA. Come along between 10am and 4pm for a chat and to buy your summer bedding plants. If you can help with the stall please call us on 07840 542261 or email [jubileecountrypark@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jubileecountrypark@yahoo.co.uk)

**Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May Butterflies of Jubilee Country Park.** Come along to learn about identifying different species of butterfly and how to conduct a butterfly survey as part of the UK Butterfly Monitoring Survey. Led by Andrew Harby, Community Manager with idverde, meet at 1pm at Tent Peg Lane car park, Crest View Drive, Petts Wood BR5 1BY. For more information, please call 07733 004248.

#### **June 2019**

**Friday 7<sup>th</sup> June 'The Life of the Hare',** a talk by **Russell Miles** who has been photographing hares for many years. He spent hours capturing stunning images of this rare and elusive animal, mainly in south-east Kent. Learn about the lifestyle of this fascinating mammal. Meet in the Garden Room, St Augustine's Church, Southborough Lane, Bromley BR2 8AT at 2pm. Refreshments will be served before the start of the talk. Entry is free but a donation of £3 towards the cost of running the event and the work of the Friends would be welcomed.

**Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> June** Visit us at **Keston Countryside Day** from 2pm to 5pm at Hayes Common, alongside Commonsides, opposite the Greyhound Pub BR2 6BP. The Friends of Jubilee Country Park will have a stall at the event which is hosted by the Friends of Keston Common. A day for all the family to enjoy. Free entry.

## **July 2019**

**Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> July Celebrate Meadows Day as part of the London National Parks City Festival.** Join us for a day of fun and learning for all the family. FREE ENTRY including crafts and activities for children.

***Make a day of it and bring a picnic lunch.***

The main highlights of the day will include:

**10am Wildflower Walk** guided by John Bruce. Meet at Blackbrook Lane Car Park, BR2 8AY (near the entrance to Bromley High School). Learn interesting facts and folk-lore about the wild flowers which are in bloom. The walk should finish around 12.30pm. Bring a picnic lunch and join us afterwards in the picnic area.

**11am-3pm Meadows Day Celebration** – find us at the picnic area, just a couple of minutes' walk from Tent Peg Lane car park, off Crest View Drive, Petts Wood BR5 1BY, or from Thornet Wood car park, Bickley BR1 2LN. Learn more about this beautiful nature reserve and the work of the Friends. Fun and educational activities for all the family.

**2pm Nature Walk** led by John Bruce, looking for flowers and butterflies, starting from the picnic area and lasting about 45 minutes. Please ring 07733 004248 or 07956 801761 for more details.

## **August 2019**

**Monday 5<sup>th</sup> August Wheelchair Walk** for the residents of Southmore Court.

**Volunteers are needed please**, to help to push the wheelchairs and chat to our guests.

Meet at 10.30am at Southmore Court, 437 Southborough Lane, Bromley BR2 8BQ next to St James School. Please call 07840 542261 if you are able to help.

**Monday 12<sup>th</sup> August Butterfly Walk** Join Andrew Harby, Community Manager with idverde, who will lead a walk around the park looking for butterflies such as the common blue and speckled wood and explaining how to identify them. Meet at 10.30am at Tent Peg Lane car park, off Crest View Drive, Petts Wood BR5 1BY. Suitable for all ages.

**Please note that this event will not take place in bad weather, please call 07733 004248 to check.**

**Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> August A Walk in the Park at Dusk** Sue Holland, Senior Community Manager with idverde, will give a talk about nocturnal animals then take us on a walk around the park to hear the sounds of dusk. Meet at 8pm at Blackbrook Lane car park, BR2 8AY, next to Bromley High School. **Please note that the walk will not take place in bad weather so please call 07733 004248 to check.**

## **September 2019**

**Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> September** Katie Whitton of The Marine Conservation Society will give us an overview of the work of the society, with particular focus on the citizen science aspects and how people can get involved with their work. Find out what the society is doing as an organisation to tackle the problem of plastics and the effect on the marine environment. Meet at 7.30pm in the Garden Room. 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 running of the event and the work of the Friends would be welcomed.

**Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> September 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.

**Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> September Not Forgotten- The Crooked Billet.** As part of London Open House weekend, Jennie Randall will tell the story of the V2 rocket attack on the Crooked Billet pub 75 years ago. Discover how the blue plaque commemorating all those killed and injured, came to be installed. Meet at 10.30am in the Garden Room, St. Augustine's Church, Southborough Lane, Bromley BR2 8AT. After the talk, there will be a visit to see the blue plaque on the Crooked Billet, Southborough Lane BR2 8AA, a short walk from the church.

## **October 2019**

**Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> October A Small Mammal Walk led by Steven Lofting**, an expert in the wildlife of the Park. Meet at 9am at Tent Peg Lane car park, off Crest View Drive, Petts Wood BR5 1BY.

**No dogs please. Please note that the walk will not go ahead in bad weather – the decision will be made the day before so please ring 07733 004248 to check.**