



# NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2014

## **Jennie Randall - Seven Years as Chairman**

The Friends of Jubilee Park was established in 2003 as part of an initiative by Bromley Council to encourage the community to participate in the protection and conservation of the green spaces of Bromley. Nick Hopkins, our countryside officer at the time, started the group following a public meeting at Bromley High School. It wasn't long before it was felt the group could stand on its own and Nick recruited Jennie Randall to take over the chairmanship.

After three years in the post Jennie had done such a good job that the rules were changed so she could continue. She has seen the group through its 10th anniversary year and now, after more than seven years in the post, feels it is time to step down.

Jennie's achievements in this time have been remarkable. The membership has grown to over 200 households and we are seen as a leading example of what a Friends Group can achieve. Jennie regularly attended our weekly volunteer force and actively contributed to the Work Programme. The group also runs a comprehensive programme of events including walks and talks. Initially many of these were organised by Bromley Rangers but it has been increasingly incumbent upon Jennie to produce the programme, persuading interesting speakers and walk leaders to participate. Highlights in 2013, our 10th anniversary year, were Tom Hart-Dyke talking about the World Garden at Lullingstone and Bob Ogley with his experiences of the Great Storm of 1987.

Jennie is a tireless campaigner. Her successes are too numerous to mention in full but include obtaining grants from many sources for information boards and installing the orienteering course; improving the signage on the cycle tracks, commissioning robust fireproof bins for general and dog waste; organising fund-raising products such as notecards and bags; and leading walks explaining the work of the Friends groups and telling the history of the Park.

Her passion is History and one highlight of her years with us must be the installation of the plaque commemorating the V2 attack on the Crooked Billet in 1944, significant because of the gun-site at Thornet Wood. Jennie spent many months collating first-hand accounts of the event into a booklet "Not Forgotten - The Crooked Billet" which is still selling well. Following the success of this she plunged immediately into writing a history of Jubilee Country Park: "Jubilee Country Park - Its History and Heritage". In addition to donating her time, Jennie has generously donated the profits from both of these books to the work of Friends of Jubilee Country Park.

Jennie is regarded as a mentor to other Friends groups in the Borough and we sincerely hope she will continue to be a mentor to the Friends of Jubilee Country Park.

We all wish her the very best for her future and would like to say "Thank you Jennie for all your hard work and dedication. You are a hard act to follow!".

*The FoJCP Committee.*

## **And a message from the Site Manager of Jubilee Country Park - Sue Holland**

I came to Jubilee Country Park 2 years ago with no knowledge of the park. Thankfully Jennie was on hand to inform me of the ins and outs of the park, which made my research of the park a lot easier and rewarding.

Having someone so organised and knowledgeable was a godsend and I will always be very thankful to Jennie for showing me the ropes and guiding me through the excellent work that the Friends of Jubilee Country Park have achieved.

Although her great work within the Friends committee will be missed I wish Jennie all the best in the future and hope that her love of Jubilee Country Park will continue to thrive benefiting both herself and the park.

All the best

*Sue*

If anyone would like to respond to this or any other article please feel free to contact us on [jubileecountrypark@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jubileecountrypark@yahoo.co.uk)

## **The Loosestrife Pond Project**

The Loosestrife Pond at Jubilee Country Park was once a sand bunker used when the park was a golf course. Since the park was opened to the public, work has been carried out to turn the bunker into a wildlife pond. The pond, however, has been a seasonal pond, prone to drying out during hot summers.

Members of the Friends of Jubilee Country Park therefore sought advice on how to improve the pond, especially for the park's amphibian and newt populations. After discussing this with organisations such as Frog Life, it was decided to put a clay liner into the pond. This would enable the pond to hold water all year round and therefore be more attractive for newts and amphibians.



A quote for £2050.00 was obtained from AGA Bioengineering Systems Ltd, a company suggested by Frog Life. The Friends then discussed using some of the Friends money to pay for this.

Fortunately for the park, funds became available from Bromley Council. These came from money set aside for another borough project which unfortunately was not going to be able to be completed before the end of the financial year. After putting forward the pond project to the Council it was agreed that some of this money could be used to complete the Loosestrife Pond.

Correspondence with AGA Bioengineering Systems Ltd began and work commenced on the 11<sup>th</sup> February 2013. Through the thick snow the contractor installed the clay liner and tidied the pathways up as best as they could, which was very difficult in the snowy conditions.

The pond has held water all year round and plants have grown back in the pond and around it. I'm very pleased to report that as well as smooth newts and dragonflies, great crested newts have been spotted in the pond which is great news.

*Sue Holland - Site Manager of Jubilee Country Park*

## **Jubilee Water World – Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2014 – Alan Saban**

I thought you might like a flavour of how the appalling weather we have experienced over the last few weeks is affecting Jubilee Country Park. Friday night, 7<sup>th</sup> February saw yet more rain adding to the floods in the park. The ditch by Alan's path was overflowing into the road (the storm drain must be partially blocked) but it soon clears when the rain stops. The old bunker at the top of the path has more water in it than I have ever seen.

The Long Pond is full, as is Ray's Pond. The Loosestrife Pond could take more water and is looking very good. Dog Pond is full, but with a bit of filling with clay at the lowest point we could get another foot (sorry 30cm) of water which will sustain the level longer if we get more droughts this year.

The Woodland Pond has more water than I have ever seen in it, covering the ditch that feeds it and the area where cowslips grow (hope it doesn't drown them).

There is a lot of water lying by Jess's Steps (a good 2 foot deep). All the ditches that we have cleared are working well. When we think of those massive cracks in the clay (one was deep enough to swallow a spade up to the handle) it may explain why the water in places drains away relatively quickly. The amphibians are going to have a great time. After all this rain we can expect an explosion of growth when it warms up.

The other result of the constant rain and relatively mild weather is the early return of amphibians to their spawning grounds. Both frog and toad spawn have been seen in both Rays` and Long ponds. Newts (smooth newt) were also seen whilst restoring nearby White Hall recreation ground. The effect of this will mean we will have to start amphibian surveying two weeks earlier than usual.



Long Pond



Loosetrife Pond  
after renovation



Secret Woodland Pond

## **Unsung Hero Award**

Each year Bromley Council search the borough's volunteer groups for special members who have gone beyond the call of duty for their local green space, and last year the Friends of Jubilee Country Park and their Friends Officer Sue Holland nominated Jean Archer.

Although now in her eighties Jean continues to be a strong presence within the group, especially on the Friends workdays. In all weathers Jean walks the whole park gathering litter and reporting any problems that she may see along her way. As well as this Jean provides refreshments for the work party at tea break and always makes sure everyone is catered for.

Even with her heavy community commitments with the local church and residents where she lives Jean will always find time to support the Friends social events and special workdays such as the Parks Community Hay Rake day, where she



was only supposed to be the tea lady but instead rolled her sleeves up and helped rake up the hay in preparation for next spring's wild flowers. With her sunny outlook on life, sense of humour, enthusiasm and knowledge of the wildflowers in the park, she is an inspiration to us all in the group.

## **Membership Subscription Renewals Reminder**

It has never been more important to the conservation of Jubilee Country Park to have your support. Your annual membership subscription of £5 per annum per household is now due. We are grateful to all those Friends who have already renewed their membership. For all those Friends who have not yet had the opportunity to respond, the **deadline is 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014**. If you have mislaid the renewal form and need a new one please contact us on 0797 640 9743.

If we do not receive your membership renewal by the due date we will assume you no longer wish to remain a member.

## **Financial Accounts**

A copy of the Financial Accounts for 2013 is attached.

The account balance as at 7 February 2014 is £6,305.37 of which £1,670 + VAT has been allocated for the digging of a new pond for the benefit of wildlife and to help alleviate flooding in the field known as Bob's Land, and £2,700 + VAT for the repair of Jess's steps.

*Paula Murphy, Treasurer*

## **Website and Online News February 2014**

We continue to have steady usage, a slight increase over the same period last year, averaging 102 hits per month from 75 different people monthly. Last year we recorded averages of 100 hits from 68 different people.

We now offer the option to pay subscriptions and donations directly into our bank account online and several members have taken advantage of this. It is useful if you send us a confirmatory email.

We have recently created a Facebook page on which our events are published. If you have a Facebook account please share these events with your Facebook friends, past events you think would be of interest to our members or even add any photos you would like to share. In any event, if you can, please "Like Us".

A tentative foray into Twitter territory was abandoned due to lack of time to do it properly. If anyone wishes to take on Twittering on our behalf please let me know. Also 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, or any local events you may like to publish.

*Susan Folkes – Webmaster*

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

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This newsletter will be available in glorious technicolor on our website above.

*Lyn Ward - Secretary to the Friends of Jubilee Country Park  
March 2014*