

Friends of Jubilee Country Park

Explore it, love it, support it



Newsletter Spring 2020

Welcome by John Bruce

"If we think we can live without insects, we're wrong. 80% of our crops, as well as fruit trees, herbs and most garden and wild flowers are pollinated by bees, wasps, beetles and flies. It is said that if bees died out, we would follow four years later." **Simon Barnes (Wilder Kent KWT)**

That is quite a thought – and the reason why we must look after our whole ecosystem, both wild and domestic. We are lucky to live in an area with so many wild open spaces and gardens – not least the 62 acres of Jubilee Country Park and to have the Friends who love it and look after it.

This last year has seen the Friends as busy as ever. The conservation work party (which meets every Monday from 10am to 1pm except during August) has been active maintaining paths and ponds, clearing underbrush, repairing fences and hedges and of course, collecting litter. We now have around fifteen regular helpers as well as Angela Wood, our new idverde manager and Andrew Harby, our former manager and butterfly expert who will be leading a walk for us later in the year.

The hot and wet summer had less effect on our outdoor events than the previous year. We enjoyed a well-attended walk to High Elms and Keston. Our Meadows Day combined with my Wild Flower Walk scraped through between showers. Sue Holland's walk at dusk was a great success, as was Andrew Harby's butterfly hunt. Happily, the Southmore Court wheelchair walk went ahead as planned, but the rain in September and October meant that our meadows went uncut and unraked. It will be interesting to see if this has any effect on the wildlife this year.

Throughout the year we have had some fascinating speakers for our talks programme. Russell Miles provided the story of the elusive hare and last September Katie Whitton gave a highly topical and impassioned talk about marine conservation and the dangers of plastics in our ecosystems.

In the October half-term, Steven Lofting led a small mammal survey. Having laid humane traps the night before, we were rewarded with a good count of bank voles and wood mice which were sexed, weighed and released back into the wild.

In November we had a *rubbish morning* when we visited Bromley's Recycling Depot in Waldo Road and learnt how much of the town's refuse is recycled. You can read more about what we learned on our visit in the following article by Jennie Randall.

On December 28th Jennie, Sue and I led the last walk around the park for the year. It was a chilly but dry morning and we enjoyed some welcome fresh air and exercise after the Christmas holiday.

Early in the new year we enjoyed Jennie's greatly anticipated quiz night, held in the Garden Room, which was filled to bursting. The quiz and raffle were a great success and the money raised will be used to make improvements to Alan's Path, to commemorate Alan Saban.



Holding forth on the December Wild Flower Walk

Our links with local schools continue to flourish and last year included a visit from the boys of Bickley Park School who learnt about wildlife in the park, the tools the work party uses and the variety of insects that can be discovered when you shake a tree branch!

Sue Folkes and Judy John have formed a highly successful association with Bromley High Junior School and the Digital Nature Trail continues to develop. We were delighted to learn that as a result of this project, our partner at the school, Sheetal Kowalczyk, has been shortlisted for the i25 award. This award recognises those who have made an outstanding contribution towards innovation and influence in the independent schools sector. The winner will be announced at an awards ceremony in March.

If you are associated with any local schools and would like us to give a fun and educational talk or guided walk, please let me know. We want to build links with the younger generation to safeguard the work we are doing now for the future .

In February this year, Ashley Leiman, founder of the Orangutan Foundation gave us a fascinating insight in to the life of the orangutan. These are amazing but seriously endangered creatures.

March sees our Annual General Meeting, with guest speaker Ian Wright, on Thursday 19th March at 7.30pm in St Augustine's Garden Room. Ian is a Senior Conservation and Community Ranger with idverde and he will share his keen knowledge all about the *History of the Countryside*. We are also delighted to welcome Cllr Kira Gabbert, Councillor for Bickley ward and Deputy Mayor of Bromley to our AGM. The AGM part of the meeting will not take long – but it is important, so please come along and support *your* Friends group. We need to approve our accounts and elect the committee. We have two vacancies at present and are looking for nominations. **So, if you have ideas for speakers or projects, would like to make a nomination or stand as a committee member, or if you are willing to help organise the Friends' events, do let me know. We really need your support so if you can help in any way, please get in touch on 07956 801761 or email me at john_bruce@ntlworld.com.**

Flowers found in Jubilee Country Park by John Bruce

Primrose (*primula vulgaris*) Each year, April 19th marks Primrose Day, a semi-political celebration popular in the late 19th and early 20th century, in memory of Benjamin Disraeli and the Primrose League, when primrose flowers were worn by gentlemen and soldiers. Prima Rosa (the first rose) flowers in March and April and was often used to decorate churches at Easter and on Mothering Sunday. Its yellow flowers provide nectar for another spring first – the yellow brimstone butterfly.



Charles Darwin was fascinated by primroses and discovered that half his local primroses had a stigma that stood above the anthers (pin-eyed) and the other half had stamens above the stigma (thrum-eyed). This meant that they could pollinate each other.

In the early 20th century Olaf Kavli, from Norway, where primroses grow in profusion, invented a soft, long-lasting, pale yellow cheese. He called it Primula – the Latin name for the flower.

Daisy (*bellis perennis*) Stepping on the daisies is a traditional sign of spring, though how many are needed varies from place to place. Sometimes it's 12, or 9 or 7 and for the true optimist 3 is enough. The name daisy originates from *day's eye*, as the flower opens at day-break and closes when the sun goes down. It is a very robust plant and grows almost everywhere. Though proverbially seen as a cover for graves it used to be prescribed for almost any ailment (hence once called bruise-wort). Its look-alikes, feverfew and chamomile were also widely used medicinally.

The daisy is often quoted by poets - Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Tennyson, Burns and is adored by lovers and children who pick the petals and make daisy chains. It is also the bane of gardeners' lives, but daisies have been around a lot longer than lawns!



A rubbish day out by Jennie Randall

One bright November morning last year, around twenty five of the Friends of Jubilee Country Park, joined by members of the public, gathered in Bickley for a rather unusual outing. So where were we heading? The answer might surprise you! Our destination wasn't somewhere beautiful, somewhere we might discover more about biodiversity or somewhere a tourist might frequent. No, much more interesting than that...we were off to Waldo Road! Reading those words, your first thoughts might well be *tip* or *rubbish dump*. Well, think again for there's a lot more to Waldo Road than just rubbish and perhaps we should really call it by its proper name, for Waldo Road is officially known as a Reuse and Recycling Centre.

Our guide for the tour was Stephen Morris, The Operations Manager (disposal) who works for Veolia, the Council's waste management contractor. Perhaps when you think of recycling you might imagine it is restricted to cans, bottles, paper, card and glass. However, as we were to discover, at Waldo Road there are facilities for recycling far more than just these items. In recent times, Waldo Road has undergone quite a transformation. Rather than small skips into which items are thrown, there are now substantial containers, designed to improve efficiency and reduce congestion.



Enjoying an interesting and informative visit to Waldo Road Reuse and Recycling Centre

These bins are labelled and include those for wood, green garden waste, plastics and non-recyclable household waste. In addition to these containers, we learnt that there are also facilities for recycling many other household items, including textiles, mattresses, Wellington boots, car and household batteries, oil, Tetra packs, printer cartridges, fluorescent light bulbs, low-energy lightbulbs and old paint tins.

Electrical items such as televisions are examined by Veolia employees and if they are still viable to be used, they are checked for safety and sold on elsewhere. Fridges and freezers are dealt with in a separate section as these contain chlorofluorocarbons (CFC's) which are damaging to the ozone layer and have to be disposed of appropriately. There is also a container for cement-bonded asbestos which has to be disposed of under licence due to the potential health hazard.

Many of us were surprised to learn that the Waldo Road site has been in operation for over a hundred years, although obviously the nature and certainly the quantity of what has passed through this centre over this period of time has changed almost beyond recognition. Today, as Stephen emphasised, the focus is very much on recycling rather than just disposal. In all, it was a most fascinating and enlightening tour and definitely not a rubbish day out!

Jennie's Jubilee Jottings by Jennie Randall

Firstly, a huge *thank you* to everyone who joined us for our fund-raising quiz in January and to all the volunteers who assisted me in making the evening such a success. We had a record attendance - the room was packed!

In addition to the money raised on the night from the quiz and raffle, several people also generously gave us donations. A grand total of £789.67 was raised and will be used to pay for a new, carved oak sign for Alan's Path. This will be in memory of our dear Friend, Alan Saban, a founder member of the Friends and also a key conservation work party volunteer. The sign, to be installed in the next few weeks, will clearly identify that particular pedestrian entrance for all those who use it from now on. In case you're not familiar with it, the Alan's Path entrance is almost opposite the Crooked Billet, on Southborough Lane.

The quiz has become a popular annual feature in the Friends' calendar and is a fun, social evening with lots of laughter. Do join us in January for the next one. I'm already working on the questions now!

Some of the most successful projects undertaken by the Friends have been as a result of comments or concerns raised by the public or members of the group. One particular issue which I repeatedly received complaints about was the parlous condition of the wooden boardwalk just beyond post 10 of the Nature Trail. Originally constructed in 2005, over the course of time the wooden planks had deteriorated to the point where several were very rotten and loose. To make matters worse, the poor quality chicken wire covering the boards (to prevent slipping when wet or muddy) was breaking up, which made it potentially dangerous.

As this boardwalk is not technically our responsibility, I raised this issue with idverde. As a result and in consultation with the Friends, it was decided to completely reconstruct the boardwalk using railway sleepers for strength and durability.



This project was undertaken in October 2019 by the Bromley Conservation Volunteers, under the supervision of Ian Wright of idverde, alongside several members of the Friends of Jubilee Country Park. The resulting boardwalk, as you can see from the photograph, is superb!

Now, instead of complaints, I hear nothing but praise for it. Rather than using chicken wire over the boards, idverde listened to comments I raised at the Friends Forum about the disadvantages of this material and have used a heavy-duty metal mesh covering instead, which will not disintegrate and therefore not be a potential cause of harm.

This project is a wonderful example of the Friends working with another group, to the benefit of all. It was a challenging project, but a great example of what can be done with teamwork and perseverance.

The newly constructed boardwalk

Some months ago, I mentioned that a photograph, taken during the Second World War in allotments that now form part of Jubilee Country Park, was being considered by the Royal Horticultural Society for inclusion in an exhibition it is staging to mark the 80th anniversary of the *Dig for Victory* campaign. Well, I am very pleased to say that the picture, showing Friend of Jubilee Country Park Chris Regas as a child, sitting amongst cabbages on her father's plot, has been selected and displayed at both Wisley and at the RHS Lindley Library in London. The exhibition was also featured in an episode of *Countryfile* and the photograph has been included on the BBC's website

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/in-pictures-49715638>



*Then and now-
Christine Regas as a
child on her father's
allotment and
proudly alongside the
exhibition at the RHS
Lindley Library*

On many occasions in the past, the Friends have received telephone calls about a variety of park related issues for which, with the best will in the world, we have no responsibility. For instance, one Saturday night some years ago someone rang me to report a fire in the park. Unfortunately, there was nothing I could do other than suggest that the individual concerned called the Fire Brigade.

There are other examples too- I've had calls from people covering a variety of issues, such as someone being locked overnight in one of our car parks, reports of fallen trees, graffiti and so on. Over time, it became very apparent that members of the public were bewildered about who to contact about what. I raised this issue with the Friends Forum and the result was that in conjunction with other Friends groups, a sign has been created which will appear on all our notice boards (and will be regularly updated) advising who to contact to report a problem in the park.

Now, if you see anything of concern, you'll know who to report it to. Please keep a look out for the new information and regular updates on our noticeboards and don't forget that we always include useful contact details in our newsletters.

And finally...a nice little story. As many of you know, I regularly give talks about the Crooked Billet and the history of Jubilee Country Park, all over the Borough of Bromley and beyond. In November I gave a talk at Petts Wood Library, during which I read out a quote from Eddie Mortimer who had witnessed the devastation caused by the V2 rocket. At the end of the talk, an elderly gentleman approached me saying he recognised Eddie's name from his schooldays and would I pass his telephone number on to him. The result of this is they are now in contact with each other - for the first time in 75 years!

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:

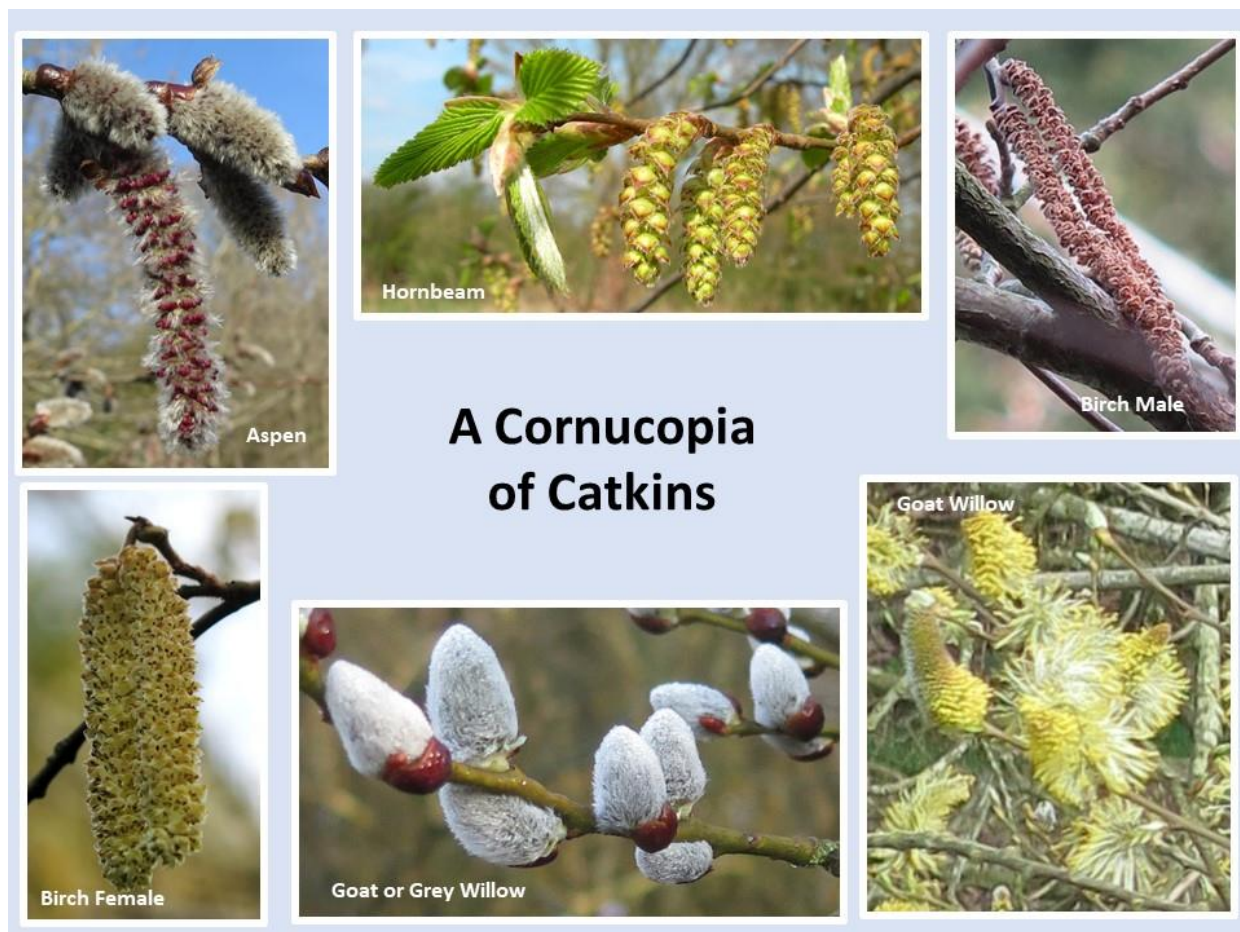
Overflowing bins (dog waste and rubbish)- Fallen or dangerous trees - Anti-social behaviour - Vandalism and graffiti

Dog related issues including dangerous dogs

Maintenance issues including uncut grass, damaged fences, gates and paths and dumping of rubbish

Spring Spotlight on Catkins by Sue Folkes

It is amazing how many different trees have catkins and the variety of forms they take. Catkins have adapted to be pollinated by the wind, which explains their dangling habit. Some trees like the hornbeam, oak, white willow, hazel and birch have male and female flowers on the same tree. These are called monoecious trees. Others, like goat willow and aspen are dioecious, meaning that male and female catkins appear on separate trees.



A guide to some of the most common types of catkins you might find in the park

When you are in the park in the next month or so, have a look and see how many different catkins you can find. My favourites are the aspen trees. Catkins appear at different times, hazel being the first. The spectacular showings don't last long, so it's a good idea to make regular visits to make sure you don't miss anything. Catkins are everywhere but you can look specifically at the presentations at nature trail posts 1, 9 and 11.

The girls of Bromley High Junior School thoroughly enjoyed their latest field day working on the spring section of the Digital Nature Trail and were fascinated to learn about the variety of catkins and insects found at post 14. Look out for more information our spring section of the Digital Nature Trail when we install it in April.

Although this is the last of the seasons we're working on, rather like the painting of the Forth Bridge, we may go back to the beginning and revisit the other seasons to keep them updated.

Friends of Jubilee Country Park Dates for your Diary April to September 2020



The Friends of Jubilee Country Park is a voluntary organisation to help manage the protection and conservation of nature in the park for the benefit of wildlife and people.

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

Conservation 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 community 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 gentle stroll around Jubilee Country Park (and sometimes beyond) lasting approximately 60 – 75 minutes. Organised by the Ramblers and Macmillan Cancer Support.

April 2020

Sunday 19th EnBro's Silver Jubilee Trail In the 40th anniversary year of the founding of Environment Bromley (EnBro), we will follow this 7 mile circular walk from Chislehurst station along footpaths through Hawkwood, Petts Wood, Scadbury Park and Chislehurst. A packed lunch can be eaten at the picnic area in Scadbury Park. The Sydney Arms in Old Perry Street is a short walk away and serves food at lunchtime. **Meet at Chislehurst Station BR7 5NN at 10.00 am.** Bus routes R7, 162 and 269 stop near the station. Car parking (free on Sundays) is available at Goshill Road, off Summer Hill, BR7 5NS opposite the station. For more information please call 07733 004248. For those who would prefer a shorter walk, there is the option of finishing at Scadbury Park after 4 miles. For return to Chislehurst station, the 269 bus stops nearby.

May 2020

Sunday 3rd Petts Wood May Fayre in the grounds of the Memorial Hall, Petts Wood Road, Petts Wood BR5 1LA. We will have our usual stall at the May Fayre which will be held on a Sunday due to the commemorations of the 75th anniversary of VE Day. Come along between **10am and 4pm** for a chat and buy your summer bedding plants. If you can help with the stall please call us on 07840 542261 or email jubileecountrypark@yahoo.co.uk

Thursday 7th Brilliant Butterflies Project Sunitha Amos of London Wildlife Trust will tell us about the Brilliant Butterflies Project which aims to create new wildlife havens for butterflies and insects through the restoration of chalk grassland in South London, a rare and threatened habitat which many species thrive in. **Meet at 10.30am in the Garden Room, St. Augustine's Church, Southborough Lane, Bromley BR2 8AT. Doors open at 10am.** Refreshments will be served before 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. We are also arranging a visit to one of the sites will be made during the summer – date to be confirmed.

June 2020

Friday 5th Seals, Seascapes and Coastal Wildlife Russell Miles has been watching and photographing harbour seals and grey seals in Pegwell Bay for the past 10 years and has some amazing photos of them and the wildlife of the coast of Kent. Meet in the **Garden Room, St Augustine's Church, Southborough Lane, Bromley BR2 8AT at 2pm.** Doors will open at 1.30pm and 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.

July 2020

Saturday 4th A Summer's Day in Jubilee Country Park Join us for a day of fun and learning in our beautiful park. **Wildflower Walk** guided by John Bruce, an expert in the flowers of Jubilee Country Park. Learn facts and folklore about the wild flowers which are in bloom in July. Meet at **10am at the Blackbrook Lane Car Park, BR2 8AY** (near the entrance to Bromley High School). The walk should finish about 12.15.

Bring a picnic for Have a Field Day Meet us in the **Picnic Area** from **11am until 3pm** to find out more about the nature and wildlife of the Park. The Picnic Area is 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.

Nature Walk John Bruce will take us on a fun and informative walk looking at the flowers, trees, butterflies and other wildlife in the meadow around the Picnic Area. Suitable for all ages. **Meet at the Picnic Area at 2pm.** Return within an hour. For more information please call 07956 801761.

August 2020

Monday 3rd Wheelchair Walk for the residents of Southmore Court. **Volunteers are required** to push the wheelchairs and to chat to our guests. Meet at **10.30am at Southmore Court, 437 Southborough Lane, Bromley BR2 8BQ**, next to St James School. **If you are able to help, please call 07840 542261.**

Monday 10th Butterfly Walk Join **Andrew Harby**, Community Ranger with idverde, on a walk around the park looking for butterflies such as common blues, speckled woods and meadow browns. Meet at **Tent Peg Lane car park, off Crest View Drive, Petts Wood BR5 1BY at 11am.** Suitable for all ages. Please wear footwear suitable for rough and uneven ground. The walk will not go ahead in bad weather so please call 07733 004248 for confirmation on the day.

Monday 17th Visit to Jeskyns Country Park and the surrounding area Jeskyns was originally a farm but is now a large, open area with new wildlife habitats including a wildflower meadow, glades, a newly planted wood and an orchard with over 900 varieties of cherry, plum, apple and pear trees. Bring a picnic to eat in the picnic area, or have lunch in the café. The country park can be reached by rail or by road. Meet at **11.30am in the café at Jeskyns, Henhurst Road, Gravesend DA12 3AN.** OS Grid Ref TQ 660699. By train from Bromley South: Meet at the station at 9.45am to catch the 10.05 to Sole Street. We will walk from the station to Jeskyns, about 1.8 miles. By car from Petts Wood: 20 miles via the M25. Jeskyns is situated off the A2 dual carriageway at the Sole Street/Gravesend junction, along Henhurst Road. The car park is on the left. Parking £3. For more information please call 07733 004248.

Date to be confirmed A Walk in The Park at Dusk **Sue Holland**, Senior Community Ranger with idverde, will tell us about the animals that come out after dark then take us on a walk around the Park to hear the sounds of the night. Meet at **8pm at Blackbrook Lane car park, BR2 8AY**, next to Bromley High School. The walk will not take place in bad weather so please call 07733 004248 on the day to check.

September 2020

Thursday 17th Behind the Scenes at Foal Farm Aimee Howe will tell us how they care for the animals at Foal Farm animal rescue centre, a charity which relies entirely on voluntary contributions. Their aim is to take in as many sick, distressed and unwanted pets as possible and to restore them to health and happiness. **Meet in the Garden Room, St. Augustine's Church, Southborough Lane, Bromley BR2 8AT at 2.30pm.** Doors will open 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.

Saturday 19th The Crooked Billet-Not forgotten 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 came to be installed, commemorating all those who were killed and injured. Meet in the **Garden Room, St. Augustine's Church, Southborough Lane, Bromley BR2 8AT.** Doors will open at 10am and the talk will start promptly at **10.30am.** A visit will be made after the talk to see the blue plaque on the **Crooked Billet, Southborough Lane BR2 8AA**, a short walk from the church.