

Friends of Jubilee Country Park

Spring Newsletter 2017



Chairman's Report

by Susan Folkes

Firstly, a big thank you to everyone who has renewed their membership for 2017 and thank you for your generous donations. If you haven't renewed then please do – and why not bring a friend to one of our events! We love to meet new people.

In addition to our weekly conservation tasks we have some exciting projects in hand. Plans for the circular accessible path (page 3) are well underway and the Nature Trail (page 3) is being redesigned. We are working closely with *idverde* to make these happen. For those who don't recognise the name, "idverde" is the new name for The Landscape Group (TLG) who took over the management of Bromley's parks and green spaces in 2015. We also plan to replace and update our work party tools.

We would also like to involve local schools and youth groups in some projects including one to digitise the nature trail. If you have any contacts in schools with an interest in combining Information Technology, Wildlife and/or Design and would like to help please get in touch.

A major change in our schedule is the change in our monthly social meeting at the Sovereign of the Seas. In the hope that more members will be able to attend we are changing it to the first Friday of the month in the afternoon at 3:30 p.m. after the health walk. Just turn up and look out for our table logo or give us a call on one of the contact numbers below. The first date is the 7th April. All the dates are posted on our noticeboards.



At the AGM in March 2016 the following members were elected to the committee and subsequently adopted these roles:

John Bruce - Events team, Sylvia Chubbs - Membership secretary, Sarah Coulbert - Social Media, Susan Folkes - Chairman, Ros Martin - Events Team, Paula Murphy - Treasurer, Ian Pannett - Conservation Working Party co-ordinator, Tony Ruffle - Membership team. Jan Coulbert was subsequently co-opted and arranged a highly successful coffee morning at the Methodist church in Petts Wood.

We would like to thank John Bruce, Marcus Jordan, Ian Pannett and Jennie Randall for leading walks in the Park this year; Alan Saban, Marian Clarke and Margaret Harrington for their help on our event evenings and our stand at the May Fayre.

If anyone would like to respond to this or any other article please feel free to contact me on email at jubileecountrypark@yahoo.co.uk or use the contact details at the end of the newsletter.

Conservation Work Party

by Ian Panett

The volunteers continue to make a difference in the Park with regular path clearing and litter picking. During the winter, time was spent coppicing in Thornet Wood to allow more light in for wild flowers to flourish. Much of the material was used to build a stake and binding fence around the car park "island". We finished our work day early on the Monday before Christmas to have lunch at The Crown Carvery, Bromley Common - thank you Jennie for organising it, an enjoyable time was had by all. The Monday work party is a relaxed group who always welcome new members. Call Ian 07976 409743 if you would like to find out more.

Membership

By Sylvia Chubbs

At the time of writing we have 207 households and 330 members, an increase of about 14%. Most members are on email but we are still posting newsletters to 30%. If you haven't renewed for 2017 then please consider helping us by doing so.

If any members have some spare time to be more active in their support then please consider joining our management team. We are in sore need of a secretary to plan and record meetings and, if you have computer skills, we could use help with our membership renewals process.

Jubilee Country Park Butterflies 2016

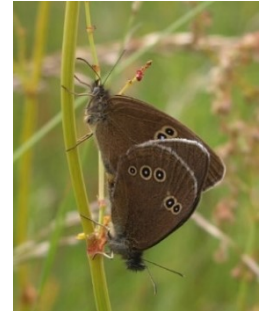
by Tony Ruffle



Meadow Brown

Angela (my wife) and I with expert help from Marcus Jordan walked the Jubilee Country Park Butterfly Transect for the 26 weeks from April to September 2016 on behalf of Butterfly Conservation.

The total number of butterflies recorded was the lowest since 2008. Although numbers of most of the species fluctuate wildly 2016 was a poor year for Common Blue, Holly Blue, Purple Hairstreak, Peacock, Comma and Gatekeeper. Only Meadow Brown and Ringlet showed a marked increase over 2016.



Ringlet

Small Mammal Report

by Marcus Jordan

In 2016 Jubilee Country Park participated in a survey of 550 ponds conducted by the Freshwater Habitats Trust. Five of our ponds were tested for the presence of great crested newts using an eDNA (environmental DNA) test. Three showed positive including Ray's pond. Good news showing that the newts may well breed elsewhere, other than Thornet Wood. More information on the work of the Trust can be found at www.freshwaterhabitats.org.uk

for the coming season.

There has been plenty of both frog and toad spawn seen in the four ponds, as well as early toadlets. When the season gets under way later, I will have more idea of what's happening.

From Bats to Bees – Events and social activities

by John Bruce

The last season started with an evening Bat Walk led by Sue Holland (Jubilee Country Park manager) and Marcus Jordan. This was oversubscribed so we organised another but had to cancel due to bad weather. Unfortunately, the weather also affected the Small Mammal survey a month later.

We had better luck with our walks and indoor events. In October Ian Pannet and I led a walk to Old Bexley. Almost on the anniversary of the wartime V2 hit on the Crooked Billet Jennie Randall revealed its fascinating story. One day after Boxing Day about 30 of us enjoyed a walk round the park to 'walk off the turkey'; and in January Jennie was back to host an immensely popular quiz.

On 16th February Dr Nikki Gammans of the Bee Conservation Trust introduced us to the wondrous world of bees and told us about the progress that she and her team are having in re-introducing the short-haired bumblebee to Kent.

Check out our future plans on the attached Walks and Talks schedule for the season. These include Janet Clayton from the Orpington and District Archaeological Society talking to us about their work in the Cray Valley and Scadbury Park; Dr Ishpi Blatchley leading a lichen walk; and Jennie Randall leading a walk talking about work undertaken by the Friends in our park.

Summer is the time for our natural history walks. I'll be pointing out the wild flowers in June, in July Marcus and friends will be looking at butterflies, then an evening stroll to identify bats and moths.

Please keep suggestions for speakers coming. We have, so far, been unsuccessful finding a speaker or walk leader to talk about trees so please let us know if you know of someone.

Social Media March 2016

by Sarah Coulbert

I have continued to add updates to our Facebook page and watched as we have gathered new views. People have chosen to select to 'like' the page to receive all our news & event information. Currently we have 67 'likes', including two new people who have found us in the last week. We have been fortunate that other community groups have sometimes shared details of our events with their followers and increased our possible audience.

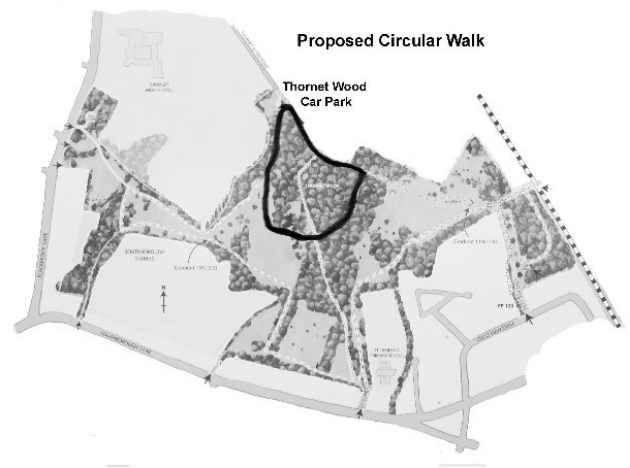
I am also working on updating our Twitter account at least once or twice a week from now on. Four more accounts have started to follow us in the last week bringing the total to over 30 receiving our updates. Similar to Facebook we have also had other community groups share our updates and hopefully that will help us grow further

Circular Woodland and Meadow Wheelchair Path

by Susan Folkes

Following our survey of members, residents and wheelchair users last year we are now obtaining quotes and looking for a grant to finance the project in 2017/2018. The project will involve upgrading existing paths in the park meaning less disturbance to existing flora and fauna throughout the woods. The work will also improve the drainage and help reduce traffic on the sensitive meadows.

From Thornet Wood car park the proposed route follows the concrete path, entering the woods before the picnic area. It passes the interpretation board in Thornet Wood, crosses the bridle path, enters the meadow, passes Loosestrife Pond and ends up through the woods back into Thornet Wood car park. The circuit of about half a mile will offer a leisurely route of about 30 minutes.



This path will provide valuable access to woods, meadows and ponds for people who currently can't benefit from our local nature reserve as well as for current users.

New, Improved Nature Trail

by Jennie Randall

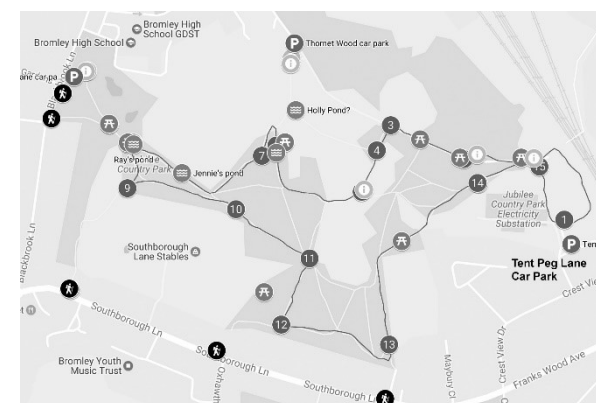
Jubilee Country Park's Nature Trail was installed in 2004. Since that time, so many changes and improvements in the park have occurred as a result of the work of the Friends group that we decided

to recreate and update the Nature Trail.

Dr Judy John, previously a Countryside Ranger, wrote much of the text for the 2004 Nature Trail and she has been very kindly assisting with this new version.

In response to suggestions from Nature Trail users in the past, the new trail will include at least seven additional posts to ensure walkers don't get lost! There will also be amendments to the route in several places.

The new trail leaflet will be a complete revision of the original, including many new photographs and substantial changes to the text. Printing will be generously funded by the Petts Wood Residents Association, whilst the graphic design costs will be paid for by the Friends. This project is very much a work-in-progress at present and the new



Current Nature Trail

leaflet will not be printed until later this year. Once it is available, we'll let you know where you can pick up a copy. In due course the trail will also be available to download from the website.

It's a small world!

by Jennie Randall

If you've ever read my book *Not Forgotten – The Crooked Billet*, or attended one of my talks of the same title, you will recollect that in 2011, on behalf of the Friends of Jubilee Country Park, I organised a blue plaque commemorating all those killed and injured by a V2 rocket attack on the Crooked Billet, Southborough Lane. I was inspired to do this by the story of three gunners from the heavy anti-aircraft gun site which occupied much of what is now Jubilee Park during the Second World War. They were killed either directly by the explosion or as a result of a roof collapsing on those attempting to rescue victims of the disaster.



Gunner William Webster

On the day of the plaque's unveiling, the three gunners, John Clark, John Walker and William Webster, were represented at the ceremony by three gunners from the Royal Artillery Territorial Army, Grove Park. I tried incredibly hard to track down members of the gunners' families so they were aware of the tribute being paid to their relatives. I was eventually successful in tracing the relatives of Gunners Clark and Walker, but of Gunner Webster's family, disappointingly, there was no trace.

William Gilbert Ronald Webster (known as Ronald to his family and friends) was 33 and single at the time of his death. He came from Ogmores Vale, Wales and had no connection with the Bromley area - he was here purely because the regiment in which he served was stationed at Thornet Wood Gun Site.

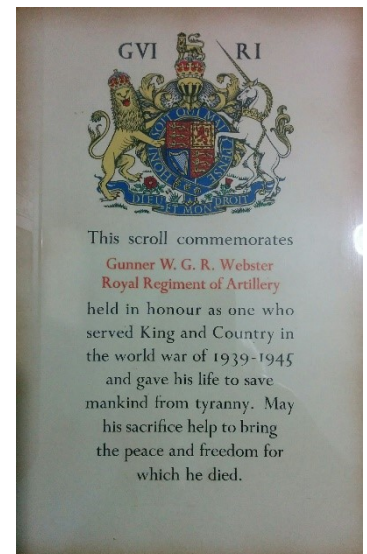
Back in 2011, I tried everything possible to track down Gunner Webster's family. I telephoned every Webster listed in the directory for the Ogmores Vale. I wrote to Welsh newspapers, I contacted various websites, but could find nothing. In the six years since I repeatedly returned to this research without success. However, I am a great believer in perseverance and I knew that however long it took, my investigations would go on. A few weeks ago at a Friends' gathering I was chatting to Ros Martin. As Ros is Welsh, I happened to mention Gunner Webster in the hope that, being from the locality, she might know of any other avenues of research that I could pursue. Whilst we were talking, Ros volunteered to have a look on the Ancestry website. She didn't hold out much hope but it was worth a look. Jokingly, she commented "You never know, Gunner Webster's family may live down the road". It was quite an absurd thing to say - Ogmores Vale is over 200 miles away! However, as the old saying goes "*many a true word hath been spoken in jest*" ...

A few days later, Ros was indeed successful in tracing a member of Gunner Webster's family - his nephew and namesake, Ronald Webster. He didn't live in Wales...he lives in Orpington - just down the road, just as Ros had predicted! Although he knew his uncle had been killed in a pub during the Second World War, the family story had been that it was in Surrey, not Kent. Amazingly, it turns out that Gunner Walker's nephew had walked in Jubilee Park and visited the Crooked Billet, never knowing the connections both those places had with his family history.

It's a small world indeed!

Many thanks to Ros Martin whose help with my research was invaluable.

Ronald Webster has very kindly shared with us a photo of Gunner Webster and his commemorative scroll.



Petts Wood Postcards

By Jennie Randall

Thanks to a generous donation, the Friends now have a stock of Petts Wood postcards on sale to raise funds for the group. These very high-quality cards depict a range of views of the village, including the Petts Wood sign, Willett Memorial, library, Memorial Hall and the Daylight Inn. A pack of three cards, of various designs, is available at the bargain price of only £1. Our supply of these cards is very limited, so if you would like to buy some please contact me as soon as possible (details as above). I'll also be bringing them along on the night of the AGM.



Financial Accounts for 2016

by Paula Murphy

Balance as at 7 Jan 2016		£3,533.82
Money In:		£3,380.96
Subscriptions	£1125.00	
2016 (935.00)		
2017 (190.00)		
Donations	£860.36	
Sales	£1395.60	
Books (735.10)		
Plants (609.50)		
Other (51.00)		
Money Out:		-£2,331.53
Park Projects: Alan's Path Notice Board	£1,347.00	
Events	£452.55	
Donation: Wildlife Trust for Speaker (50.00)		
Butterfly Guide Costs (16.90)		
Hall Hire (282.50)		
May Fayre Stall (25.00)		
Provisions (78.15)		
Work Party	£168.56	
Mugs for work party (56.00)		
Tools+Equipment (112.56)		
Cost of Sales: Plant Costs	£133.08	
Administration	£230.34	
Mobile Phone Costs (10.00)		
Computer Costs (118)		
Postage Costs (14.04)		
Stationery (88.30)		
Balance as at 7 Jan 2017		£4,583.25

An audited and signed copy of the accounts is available.

Finally – Need a Speaker?

By Jennie Randall

Over the last year I've been giving talks about the Crooked Billet to a several local groups, including churches, women's organisations, history societies, charities and various libraries. If you're a member of a community group and you'd like me to speak at one of your meetings you're welcome to get in touch. Contact me on 07840-542261 or email me at jubileecountrypark@yahoo.co.uk

Contacts:

The Friends work with the Council and idverde solely in a conservation and preservation role. To report any of the following, contact Bromley Council's Customer Service Centre by calling 0300 303 8658.

- Overflowing bins (both dog and rubbish)
- Fallen/dangerous trees
- Anti-social behaviour
- Vandalism/Graffiti
- Dog-related issues (such as dangerous dogs)
- Maintenance issues (such as uncut grass, damaged fencing, gates, dangerous paths etc.)
- Dumped rubbish

To report a Fire or call an Ambulance dial 999

To report an Emergency to the Police call 999

To report a Non-Emergency issue to the Police call 101

Contacts for the Friends of Jubilee Country Park

web address: www.jubileecountrypark.btck.co.uk

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/jubileecountrypark/>.

email: jubileecountrypark@yahoo.co.uk

write to: Susan Folkes, 41 Lovelace Avenue, Bromley, BR2 8DG

phone: Ian Pannett, 07976 409743

The Committee - Friends of Jubilee Country Park

March 2017