



The Friends of Horton Country Park

NEWSLETTER No. 18

APRIL 2009

Chairman's Statement

The weather over the past year has thrown everything at us; we have had the darkest wettest summer for 18 years. Going into the park on a summer evening when the rain had cleared showed the park in a different light, as did seeing it under snow. Throughout that time the Rangers and Volunteers have still got the tasks done and the Park is looking well. There has been a lot of work done by the "paid professionals" and the Friends want to thank them and to wish the Countryside Team well in their new home.

Thanks also to the Friends. We now have quite a large, stable group and the chair would like to say Thank you for turning up, for all your efforts and for taking part in the Volunteer Tasks.

It is good to see people already working towards the Autumn Fair for which we have a busy time ahead. I am looking forward to the year ahead and working with many of you.

Brendan Kilby
Friends of Horton
07717 504 453

Autumn Fair

The Autumn Fair will be held in the Country Park this year on the 27th of September and the Friends are working with the Countryside Team to make the event an absolute success.

The event has the makings of an excellent fair with as good a diversity of stalls and country craft displays as the last time it was held in the park in 2007.

The next meeting of the Autumn Fair sub-committee will be on Monday the 18th of May in the meeting room in the house near the Information Centre for those wishing to help. Also, if you are able to help out on the day of the event we would be most grateful to hear from you.

Membership

Annual membership subscriptions are now due

Can members please send payment of £3 to the Membership Secretary, Laurence Coley, 1 South View, Epsom, Surrey. KT19 7LA. Please make cheques payable to "Friends of Horton Country Park".

It was agreed at the last meeting to invest in insurance cover for the Friend's Volunteer tasks without Ranger presence and to purchase a rolling display board to raise awareness of the Friends and buy new apple and pear trees to replace those lost from the Orchard over the year with the same species.

www.hortoncountrypark.co.uk

Countryside Team Update

2009 has seen some changes to the Countryside Team. We have started the move in to a new office. We will now be based in West Park Farmhouse just across from the Ranger's Office. We are very much looking forward to this move which should make the team more efficient and active. Our new contact details will be with the Friends a.s.a.p.

The move to the Planning department has been fruitful. Last October we had a team building day and were able to get our Epsom and Ewell planners out managing one of the hedge-rows in one of the northern meadows in the Country Park.

The coppicing has been completed in Butcher's Grove. Two areas were coppiced this year as we had extra resource in the form of a professional coppice worker who completed one section and the volunteers the other. We will be putting up the deer fencing to protect this on 21st-23rd April. Any volunteers are most welcome. We should be on site in Butcher's Grove by 10 am on all days.

The Horton History walk went well, although it was the day the snow came which was quite eventful. Those walkers who attended were very brave. It was one of the quickest walks I have done as we had to keep moving to keep warm!

We are about to set out monitoring the condition of the woodlands. I also have meetings planned with some consultants to advise us on how the bats are doing in the bat roost, our water vole population, and the bryophytes within the ancient woodland.

I hope you have all had a chance to see the amazing black-thorn and orchard blossom and make sure you go down to Pond Wood to take in the wonderful bluebell display. The warmer weather seems to be on its way so make sure you take the opportunity to go for a lovely walk and take in the sites of Horton Country Park.

If you have any questions about the management of Horton Country Park or would like to get involved with the volunteers please get in touch. If you would like to join us, either mid-week or on our monthly Sundays, please contact the Countryside Team on 01372 732000 or sclift@epsom-ewell.gov.uk.

Sarah Clift
EEBC Countryside Team

The Friends of Horton Country Park

Bird Watch

Last autumn was memorable for the huge number of times I saw JAYS carting acorns across the sky from good oaks to secret hiding places to form winter larders, or future oak trees with ones not eaten!

I did not see many winter thrushes in the park until January when there were 15 FIELDFARES and 5 REDWINGS . I flushed a JACK SNIPE from Meadow Pond on February 18th. Three REDPOLLS were flying about on 26th March. A few CHIFF-CHAFFS and BLACKCAPS have arrived .



Jay
[*Garrulus glandarius*]



Fieldfare
[*Turdus pilaris*]



Redwing
[*Turdus iliacus*]



Jack Snipe
[*Lymnocyptes minimus*]



Carrion Crow
[*Corvus corone*]



Grey Heron
[*Ardea cinerea*]

The Heronry had 9 nests that looked " in-use" but a recent visit suggested that the snow on February 2nd plus the CROWS may have reduced the potential yield of young birds. Look out for Buzzards, with the recent spread Eastwards they are nesting not-far-away and I have recently seen hunting birds within a mile of Horton, they eat rabbits but I haven't seen any in the park yet.!

Tony Gibb
Friends of Horton

Visitor Information Centre

If you would like to find out about the wildlife in the park, the history of the park or how it is managed today.

More information on the park and the Friends can be found at the Visitor Information Centre, which is situated next to the main car park near the Rangers Hut.

It's worth a visit

What's Going On? / Diary Dates

Friends meetings:

Meetings are on the first Tuesday of every second month.

Tuesday 2nd June 2009

Tuesday 4th August 2009

Tuesday 6th October 2009

Tuesday 1st December 2009

At 7:30 p.m. in the hall behind the Rangers' Hut.

Friends volunteer tasks:

Friends Membership Awareness Day

19th April 2009

Meeting the public in the park to raise awareness of the Friends within our community.

Deer Fencing

21st, 22nd & 23rd April 2009

Deer fencing around coppiced areas with the Moles.

Meadow Management

18th & 25th June

Strimming and raking the grassland to keep meadows rough but free of scrub. Fly Meadow will be one area.

Additional tasks will be displayed on the Notice Board.

If you have the time and enjoy the park please do come along and join us on one of our tasks. It's great exercise and a good way to spend some time with friends.

We usually meeting by the Rangers' Hut for 10 a.m.

Please do come along and support us, it's great fun.

The Next Newsletter

Would you like to write an article for the next newsletter?

Perhaps you would like to write about your experiences as a volunteer with the Friends; or pass on some of your expert knowledge of the parks wildlife or its history.

Any photographs that you think would be interesting for other readers are also welcomed.

If you would like to write an article for us all to read or show us some of your photographs then we would be pleased if you could let us have your articles and photos by e-mail to peter@hortoncountrypark.co.uk or by hand to Brendan.

Thank you for reading

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