

RICHMOND PARK DIARY

August

PARKING CHARGES CANCELLED: The plans to introduce parking charges in Richmond Park have been reversed by the new coalition government. Tourism and Heritage Minister John Penrose announced on Monday 5th July that the Government would now look at different ways of raising money in the Park. He said: "Given the current economic climate, we will need to find alternative sources of income instead, but we will try to respect local residents' views and preserve the environment of these wonderful and precious spaces too."

GREEN FLAG AWARD: Last month Richmond Park was awarded a green Flag for the fourth year running. This national award is given in recognition of achieving the national standard for parks and open spaces in England and Wales.

OAK PROCESSIONARY MOTH: This moth, introduced to Britain a few years ago, has a caterpillar with toxic hairs. Thorough inspections resulted in six nests found in the park for the first time last year. This year the total has grown to 300 nests. All nests have been removed in an attempt to prevent the moth spreading. Surveying and control will continue as part of combined efforts co-ordinated by the Forestry Commission.

RAGWORT: This yellow grassland flower is an agricultural pest because it is poisonous to livestock. However, it also provides a useful nectar and food source for insects, attracting numerous butterflies and Cinnabar Moth caterpillars. The decision to control Ragwort (or not) always attracts debate, and arguably there is no right answer. The Royal Parks chooses to uproot it as late as possible, after the flowers have bloomed, but before it sets seeds. We concentrate our efforts along horse rides but in more remote areas, we may leave a few plants to allow insects their food.

ACUTE OAK DECLINE: - is a new form of Oak decline increasingly reported in southeast England, the Midlands and Wales. It is typified by "bleeding" lesions on the trunk of the tree. In the next few weeks, staff from Forest Research will be taking samples of these lesions from Oaks in different areas of the Park, to contribute towards identifying the casual bacteria. Consequently, square areas of removed bark may become noticeable on a few of our trees.

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The Royal Parks are: Bushy Park, The Green Park, Greenwich Park, Hyde Park, Kensington Gardens, The Regent's Park & Primrose Hill, Richmond Park and St James's Park.



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