

# RICHMOND PARK DIARY

## FEBRUARY

**GATE OPENING AND CLOSING:** The road gates to Richmond Park are open between dawn and dusk by a security company contracted by the Royal Parks. The times of opening and closing are displayed at each entrance gate and are on the Royal Parks website for the ensuing year. The gates are closed at 16.00 hrs in winter, 21.00hrs in summer and adjust throughout the autumn and spring by approximately 15 minutes per week. Opening times are 07.00hrs in the summer and 07.30hrs in the winter. The gates are closed to allow the deer and other wildlife the opportunity to move around the Park to feed without being injured by vehicles. Pedestrian gates are left open at night but the gates are set to a double gate system that allows pedestrian access whilst preventing deer escaping. Even the pedestrian gates are locked during the deer culls in February and November. During the day the traffic gates can be left open as the deer do not feel safe where there are high volumes of traffic.

**PARK REGULATIONS:** On 15<sup>th</sup> January Margaret Hodge, Minister for Culture Media and Sport announced a number of proposed changes to the Park Regulations including the introduction of car parking charges in Richmond Park. This follows a public consultation held in 2009. Subject to parliamentary approval, the changes are expected to come into force in the autumn of 2010. Full details are on the Royal Parks web site [www.royalparks.org.uk](http://www.royalparks.org.uk) Permission for a public demonstration against the proposals was given for 30<sup>th</sup> January and attracted a great deal of local interest.

**DEER CULL:** With no predators and 200 births annually, the deer population would increase beyond the Parks carrying capacity without human intervention. To prevent starvation and habitat destruction, the deer are selectively culled during November and again in February. This ensures a healthy herd of 630 with the correct balance of ages and sexes.

**COWS:** The 5 Cows continue to graze the 4-hectare paddock on Sawyer's Hill, near Holly Lodge. This trial grazing project is being undertaken to see if the cows have a beneficial effect on the rare acid grassland. Cows were known to have roamed Richmond Park at least until 1943 and it is thought that their absence has contributed to the decline of species diversity of the grassland. The cows (Highland and Dexters) will remain until they have eaten all the grass required or the grazier needs them elsewhere.

**TREE PLANTING:** During February the estate maintenance team will be busy planting trees. Some of their work will be the replacement of larger trees in the wooden deer guards that have not established. They are also planting a new boundary screen of holly, privet and thorn around the edge of Sidmouth woods. A traditional livestock hedge will be planted around the fence at the new pond by Cambrian Gate.

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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.

