

# RICHMOND PARK DIARY

## NOVEMBER

**PRINCE CHARLES SPINNEY:** Restoration work has begun again for the second of approximately 5 years. The southern half is being re-fenced to protect the trees from deer. 1/5<sup>th</sup> of the woodland is being heavily 'thinned' because most of the trees are tall and slender, offering little cover for birds etc and the high percentage of non-native trees offer even less to the ecosystem. Trees will be felled and allowed to re-grow as multi stemmed coppice stools where appropriate. In the new-year the woodland will be densely re-planted with species that form low level cover such as Hazel and Elder. The initial effect will be stark but within a few years the woodland will grow back in a more complimentary form. The overall effect should be dense low level foliage, supporting a better abundance of wildlife and ground flora.

### **FORTE - AN OBITUARY:**

It is with great sadness that we report the loss of one of the Parks shire horses. Forte came to the Park in 2001 from Young's Brewery. He was occasionally a bit naughty but when saddled with responsibility he rose to the challenge and had a calming effect on his workmate Jed.



His small hooves and a chestnut-coloured summer coat meant he didn't fit the fashion for show horses but his work ethic and tolerance made him perfect for working life. In his career he appeared on television and radio and met celebrities and the royal family as well as performing countless hours of labour in the Parks. He retired from heavy

duties this spring but still attended events until autumn. Forte was in his early 20's and had been suffering with arthritis for the past few years. Recently he developed a swelling that related to liver problems. His discomfort led to a tired look in his eyes and so he was put to rest before he became critical. Forte is mourned by his inseparable friend Jed and the Park's younger horses 'Billy' and Massey.

**DEER:** The high point of the rut is now over and the lean bellies and hindquarters of the exhausted stags bear witness to the recent deprivation of food. They regain condition by feasting on sweet chestnuts, horse chestnuts and beech mast, building up winter fat reserves. Removing chestnuts deprives the deer of essential food.

### **PLEASE LEAVE THE CHESTNUTS FOR THE DEER**

**SIDMOUTH WOODS BOUNDARY:** For almost a year now, the London probation service has been busy removing *Rhododendron ponticum* from the boundary of Sidmouth woods – no small task as the entire boundary is almost one and half miles long!. *Rhododendron* is an exceptionally invasive plant - it grows roots when branches touch the ground and takes over the entire woodland excluding all other trees and shrubs. Once it has been removed, stumps will be dug out (or cut and treated when inaccessible) to ensure it doesn't grow back. The boundary will then be re-planted with native shrubs suitable for a boundary screen – such as Privet, Holly, Blackthorn and Hawthorn. The work has been supported by grant aid from the Mayor of London.

PAC 28/10/09

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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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