

Guided Walks 2006

For further details please visit our web site on www.royalparks.org.uk or Contact Nick Lane on 020 7298 2083 or nlane@royalparks.gsi.gov.uk

Hyde Park: 10th Nov. ~ Art & Architecture / 8th Dec. ~ Christmas Through the Ages (all walks 1pm ~ 2:30pm)

Kensington Gardens: 23rd Nov. ~ 19th Century Pioneers / 14th Dec. ~ Christmas Through the Ages (all walks 2pm ~ 3:30pm)

St. James's Park: 4th Nov. ~ Gunpowder, Treason & Plot (12 noon) / 29th Nov. ~ National Tree Week (1pm) / 13th Dec. ~ All in the Name (1pm)

the schools, help the children to dress and think as Victorians, present the children to the actor's and collect them at the end of the session. Their valuable experience and time ensures that further costs do not have to be sought and they are participating in their own piece of living history in the making. Thank you to all of the volunteers who allow the programme to take place.

The Friends group also supported the project by organising the maintenance of the costumes. As you may imagine with three hundred pupils a week using the costumes regular washing and repairs of the costumes are needed.

There is a Living History Programme prepared for Bushy Park, on the World War II Camp Griffith. This will be reactivated when the new Welcome Centre has been built as part of the new Bushy Park restoration programme. We are currently developing a Tudor Project for Hyde Park, which will be piloted with schools next spring.

The Education Team and the Royal Parks Foundation are looking to find regular funding to allow this valuable scheme to be subsidised and delivered to the local schools who really benefit from the living history experience. For any further information about the living history programmes contact Celeste on 020 7298 2006.

Article: Toni Assirati, Head of Education & Community Engagement

Stepping Stones

As a painter, it is easy to spend a long time on one's own and that is time to charity or another worthwhile cause. I wanted to

meet people on a regular basis during the day and to have more contact with the outside world and the community. "What could be nicer than to do this in the middle of one of the most beautiful parks in London", I thought, when I was told about Richmond Park's Holly Lodge Centre guided walks, which are aimed towards adults with a general interest.

Discussing ideas with Pat Ealey, Centre Manager at The Holly Lodge Centre is always fun and challenging. She has a mind of her own when it comes to art, and that makes my work at the Holly Lodge Centre all the more enjoyable! The first thing she suggested I did was to paint the three-dimensional oak tree made by another volunteer, Stewart Perkes, which I enjoyed a lot. Many children who come to spend time at the Centre now use the oak tree. It helps them learn about nature, the different seasons and how incredibly alive the quintessential English oak tree is. I must confess that I am, myself, constantly learning and being fascinated by the discovery of life going on around us all the time.

One of the things that I find most rewarding at the Centre is seeing how children express themselves with a few coloured pencils and a piece of paper – making things out of a few leaves, conkers, twigs and any other things they collect on their expeditions in the Park. Particularly moving is to see the effect this type of activity seems to produce on some of the less able people who come here; for a little while they appear totally immersed in their own creations, and the quietness that fills the classroom at those times is something I find quite special.

Article: Manel Guell-Leal, Volunteer

Find the Trees...

Alder / Aspen / Bark / Beech / Cedar / Cherry / Conifer / Common Ash / Crab Apple / Cypress / Elm / Fir / Holly / Hornbeam / Juniper / Larch / Lime / Magnolia / Maple / Oak / Pine / Plane / Poplar / Rowan / Silver Birch / Sycamore / Walnut / Willow / Yew

A O N C Y P R E S S N G P A R C E P S A
T K H C R I B R E V L I S O M L E W U G
J M A D E C M E P S A H A L B A R D H E
U A S Y C A C O R E H B I R H C E S A E
N G U R A L P O P E H S A V E P O P L R
I N V F T M A L N C M U A R I T L V I A
P O A S P E N S E I W L O N M D I A L F
E L T A H O I E L R D M U R O W A N N R
R F I N O C B V P E S J U A P M U T R E
A M K C R A L L P C T Y A N B T M E E A
S H A A O M K S A W O L L I W A H O L L
Y W B E I P A T B L D P N R P H G E C D
C C N L B O U G A E Z I B L P T R N H U
A H H P G N A F R H K N E I F I K P E B
M E R S L M R I C E D F A M E Y R O R Y
O R I A R A T O A C L I N E L M A P P L
R R W E B K Y C H W B R K H N R B L Y L
E Y O M O C R M A P E M S L V I E A K O
S Y H C R A L R V T E Y A L P O P A L H
C A I L O N G A M O H C O N I F E R T F

Find words vertically, horizontally and diagonally, front and backwards

Wordsearch: Celeste P Smith

If you would like to contribute a wordsearch / puzzle / activity for the next issue of the newsletter, please contact Celeste P Smith on 020 7298 2006

New Volunteers

Bushy Park

Virginia (Ginny) Lewis ~ supporting work on the production of the Bushy Park Community Newsletter

Anna Milgrom ~ supporting work on publicity, marketing and potential for youth volunteering

Sally Morgan ~ supporting work on volunteer liaison

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THE
ROYAL
PARKS

volunteering news



Issue Two

I have been Chief Executive of the Parks for 18 months and the growth in volunteering during that period has been incredible. It reminds me what wonderful assets we have, that people are willing to give of their own time to contribute to the management and development of the Parks.

I am delighted, therefore, by this initiative of producing a newsletter for and about volunteers. It is no secret that the Parks are dependent on volunteers to deliver the wide programme of work on which we are engaged, from education to water gardens – our volunteers get everywhere.

Even so, it is too easy for volunteers to become the unsung heroes of the organisation and that is why I believe the newsletter and the central forum to be so valuable. At last, volunteers have a voice and an opportunity to build a common bond across the different elements of volunteering. Each story is an inspiration and each deed a valuable contribution to maintaining and enhancing the Parks. I am grateful to each and every one of you for your time and efforts. On behalf of the Parks and all our visitors, with a personal gratitude from me – thank you.

Mark Camley
Chief Executive

One Thursday in June

All Royal Park volunteers who work with children will have their stories of rewarding experiences. This is one of mine.

This particular Thursday, in June, had been quite demanding for those of us at The Lookout. We had two classes of thirty 8 and 9 year olds, one in the morning, the other for the afternoon session.

To our surprise both classes arrived together, one class doing their own thing, while the other remained with us. The Lookout is so small we could not have over sixty people going in and out, so we collected all the bags and put them inside, returning them at lunchtime. The whole procedure was then repeated after lunch. To

make life more difficult, the main toilets were out of action and over sixty souls were using the very limited staff facilities.

Angie and myself were the two leaders that day. Nick, our Education Officer away working in Greenwich and I was doing the meet, welcome and introduction. As a result I had taken my usual 45/50 minute walk to the park, arriving bright and early at 8:30, to ensure that everything was ready for the day.

The whole group had arrived late for the morning session, and the afternoon group told me they wished to leave earlier than planned. The volunteers agreed unanimously to take a shorter lunch break, in order to give the children the maximum time. However, this still meant that both classes had just one hour fifteen

minutes for habitat and pond dipping, something that is really a two hour session, ideally on a full day.

It had been a hot, sticky day, and as we came to the end of the final session of the day, I think all the volunteers must have been feeling rather tired. I certainly was and also glad that in five minutes I would be leading the class back to The Lookout and our farewells.

I approached the two teachers and explained that all of us would have liked to have given the children more time pond dipping, but that we were doing it in one short session which is normally done in two. I was told that there was no need for explanations, the children spent most of their time on the streets and had never experienced a place like Hyde Park, or a garden like Rangers Lodge, let alone had the opportunity to pond dip or study land minibeasts in their habitat.

One of the teachers took me aside and pointed to one of the boys. He had been perfectly well behaved, listened to all that had been said, and taken his turn in pond dipping and looking under wood piles. He was now lying on the grass and making a very fine and detailed drawing of a snail. The teacher told me that the child was so violent and destructive that he should be in a special school, but he was just too violent to be accepted. "Now look at him," the teacher exclaimed, "He's been like that ever since he stepped foot in the park."

Needless to say my tiredness melted. This is what Royal Parks and other areas of nature conservation are about, and this is what volunteering and getting children into these areas is about.



Horse Chestnut, Hyde Park

Richmond Park

The Princes Trust and The Royal Parks 'Get into Green Spaces' took place on Monday 25th September ~ Friday 29th September 2006

For more information contact Toni Assirati on 020 7298 2006 or email at tassirati@royalparks.gsi.gov.uk

My last sight of this child, this destroyer of the classrooms, was of him walking away from The Lookout, hand in hand with one of his teachers, just another normal little boy.

The next time I feel tired and in need of a boost, all I will need to do is to remember that Thursday in June.

Article: David Carpenter, Volunteer at Hyde Park

Welcome to John Lewis Secondee

Bushy Park has been fortunate to receive specialist support for the development of three new projects in the coming year. John Lewis's Golden Jubilee Trust agreed to send one of their staff members to work at Bushy Park for a set period of time to further the objectives of the Royal Parks. Tessa Coleman arrived for a four-week, full time period, during which she developed the outline plan for a Bushy Park Ranger's Scheme for 8 to 10 years olds. This involved establishing the structure for young people's membership, a package of information, tools and writing materials. A primary school has worked closely with Tessa to engage parents and children in the planning of the project.

The second area of work has been to develop 12 monthly sessions in 2007 for the young people to attend. The Saturday sessions will cover relevant practical environmental activities in Bushy Park. The aim of the project is to help young people nurture a stronger relationship with the park and the environment for the future.

The final area of the work has been

to plan and prepare a Volunteer's Training Course. Tessa has received a further 18 weeks, one day a week, to run a fourteen-week course from January 2007 to May 2007. The aim of the course is to attract new volunteers who have not been involved in any volunteer work before. The course has been advertised on an environmental website and with local businesses in Kingston. It is designed to attract people who want to develop career opportunities within environmental and youth activities. It provides initial skills in voluntary work, regularity of attendance and a wide scope of the possibilities which people could potentially be involved in. It is hoped some volunteers will sign up to deliver the sessions for the Bushy Park Rangers programme. This will support their learning by hands on experience. It is also hoped that some of the established volunteers will assist in the delivery of the sessions, sharing their valuable experience and knowledge of the Royal Parks. These training sessions are being planned for the winter period and will run at the same time as the individual sessions planned for established volunteers.

Article: Toni Assirati, Head of Education & Community Engagement

Progress Report of the Woodland Gardens

New Facilities arriving in September for Volunteers gardening:

All the preparation work and planning has been carried out for Bushy Park's Heritage Lottery Project. The Woodland Gardens is one of sixty-two projects now being implemented. One of the support

mechanisms for volunteer gardeners is to provide two portacabins. Both will be based in the same yard as "Fountains Landscape Maintenance Staff and Equipment". This will continue to build on the good working relationship that was established between paid and unpaid staff last year. The new facilities will include a washing area, toilets, offices and storage for personal, corporate and safety clothing. Volunteers, with help from Fountains Staff, have continued to maintain the areas that were tacked last year, ensuring continuity with the management of the gardens, providing the opportunity for everybody to see the fruit of their labours, and to understand how the woodlands are forever changing.

Mini- management plan for the Osier Plantation:

Jenny from Falmouth University, met up with the Park's Manager, Ray Brodie to get an understanding of the complex water systems and ancient field drainage systems, in order to progress the management plan for the Osier Plantation Project. While Jenny will be returning to University in October to continue her degree in Conservation, it is hoped that she will

be able to continue this important project next year during the summer holidays.

Experienced skilled Gardener joins the Volunteers Team:

The volunteers have now been joined by Ian Whipp, who has made a career in horticulture. Now retired, he is no less active, taking on the more intricate and time consuming pruning of the Japanese Kurume azaleas, replicating the Japanese techniques, creating 'clouds' from the evergreen shrubs. Ian comes to Bushy Park from being the qualified gardener of Henley Management College, Henley-on-Thames, where he worked for ten years. From Ian's point of view "...working in the woodlands at Bushy has lifted my spirit and given me the opportunity to get back into Horticulture after being away from it for the last eight years". Welcome Ian.

Article: Mark Bridger, Head Gardener, Woodland Gardens in Bushy Park

Wildlife, Artists and Living History

Friends of Greenwich Park were



Ian Whipp, Bushy Park

Greenwich Park

Living History Programme, KS2 Victorian History took place during the fortnight 18th September to 29th September 2006. There is a review of the current scheme throughout October 2006.

For more information contact Celeste P Smith on 020 7298 2006 or email at csmith3@royalparks.gsi.gov.uk

late onto the volunteering scene, starting less than four years ago. The then chief executive, Will Weston appointed the Royal Park's first Head of Education and Community Development, Simon Lee. Simon suggested that the newly formed Friends Wildlife Group provide volunteers for a once a month 'drop in' at the Secret Garden Wildlife Centre, which opened in October 2002. This programme continues and now includes an Open Day in the spring and special openings to support RSPB activities and events like the Green Fair.

When Greenwich Park was chosen to pioneer *Living History* for local primary schools in 2003, the Friends were again asked to provide volunteers to host the visiting schools. The June and September programmes now bring nearly 1000 nine and ten-year olds into the Park to role-play Victorian children, with the help of two actors and a good story line to enhance

their understanding of the period. For the past two years, the Friends have also organised the annual 'Artist in Residence' programmes for Greenwich Park.

'This is now adding up to a useful contribution in terms of time and money', says Friends of Greenwich Park Volunteers Co-ordinator, Jenni Newnham. 'During the financial year that ended in April 2006, a small band of Friends' volunteers gave almost 500 hours to events in Greenwich Park and this does not include delivering the Friends newsletter or preparing plants for sale at Blackheath Farmers' Market'. Jenni points out that, apart from meeting people and having an inside view on how the Park is run, the Friends' contribution to Royal Parks activities counts at £15 an hour towards match funding for Heritage Lottery Fund and other sources of money, making time spent doubly useful.

Article: Elaine Warell, Friends of Greenwich Park.

Photograph: Friends of Greenwich Park volunteers organise the annual 'Artist in Residence' programme.

This year the holder is local photo artist Edward Hill.



Friends of Greenwich Park

Wild in the Parks

Wild in the Parks is an exciting new partnership between The Royal Parks and the RSPB, which aims to bring Londoners closer to wildlife in their local green spaces. In addition to working in the Royal Parks, the new project will work in a variety of parks across four London boroughs - Croydon, Barking & Dagenham, Hammersmith & Fulham and Brent.

Wild in the Parks will build on the successes of the award-winning Wildlife for All, a previous Royal Parks/RSPB initiative, which introduced 36,000 people to the variety of wildlife that lives in the Royal Parks. The three members of staff who worked on the Wildlife for All project (Rachel, Catriona and Martyn) have all moved across to this project, so the team have really been able to 'hit the ground running'.

Local people are being invited to get involved in a range of fun and innovative activities including an oral history project, making practical improvements for local wildlife and producing an archive of people's thoughts and feelings about the wildlife in their local park.

The scheme will also bring 'Real World Learning' to schools across London. Free, interactive sessions will encourage children to get out into their local parks and open spaces. Through exciting activities and assemblies the project will inspire pupils and teachers to take an active role in improving their own school grounds, community areas and private gardens for wildlife.

The creation of a demonstration wildlife garden in Regent's Park will show how wildlife can be encouraged, even in small, urban spaces. Local

schools, horticultural trainees and community groups will all be actively involved in the garden's design and creation.

The garden will be a lasting resource which can be enjoyed by local communities and other park users as both a peaceful spot to escape city life and as a source of simple ideas for attracting wildlife closer to home.

This exciting new project will give group leaders, schoolteachers and volunteers the enthusiasm and skills to promote wildlife to their local communities, and, in so doing, be sustainable long after it ends in three years time.

For more information, please contact the Wild in the Parks team at wildintheparks@royalparks.gsi.gov.uk or telephone 020 7935 7430.

Article: Martyn Foser, Wild in the Parks, Regent's Park

Greenwich Living History

The very popular Victorian Living History project took place at Greenwich in both June and September 2006. Over 450 pupils participated in the KS2 history debate.

Dressed as Victorians, the children learned the social responsibility of the park, ensuring the availability of trees and a healthy environment for all future generations. The young people also learned to articulate their debate points and to listen closely to all the sides of the story.

There are such a wide number of Greenwich and local schools now participating, we feel the Royal Parks have hit the right level of planning and advertising.

The programmes could not run without the support of the Friends of Greenwich. The volunteers provide the 'meet and greet' information for