

Friends of Farnham Park



A flock of volunteers, rounded up nicely. Good boy.

EVENTS PROGRAMME 2011

Tues. 17th May: Guided Tour of The Bishops Palace, Farnham Castle – led by The Rev. Roy Kingston – the Keep is open to all, but **this is special**, a rare opportunity to tour the palace buildings. **Members Only. Meet in the Castle courtyard for 6.30pm**, visit the Keep beforehand if you wish.

Tues 24th May: The Farnham Heath Project – a talk by Mike Coates, our former Farnham Park & Frensham Ranger. Find out what the RSPB is doing, from the horse's mouth. **7pm for 7.30 start at The Rowhills Centre, Cranmore Lane.** Non-members £2.

Mon 13th June: Martin Woolner's Guided 'Tree Walk' If you attended Martin's talk last year, you know why we were so keen to experience his guided walk. To get bitten by the bug, meet by Park Lodge in the **main car park at 6 pm.**

Thurs 21st July: Friends' Annual Social/Barbecue - new venue: the **Cricket Pavilion. 7 pm on**, a chance to feast, relax, catch up with old friends and make new ones.

Wed 26th October: 'Surrey Safari', an illustrated talk by Geoff Lunn. A light-hearted presentation from the renowned wildlife photographer at the **Rowhills Centre, Cranmore Lane. 7 pm for 7.30 start,** Non-members £2.

Tues 15th November: our A.G.M. at **Rowhills Centre, Cranmore Lane, 7pm for 7.30 start**, followed by an illustrated round-up of the year by our Ranger Robin Crowther, and God willing, a few of our Members' best photos of the Park.

Wednesday and Sunday Conservation Volunteer Groups
Starting 10 a.m. – if you can't make it to the weekly Wednesday groups, why not help with the monthly Sunday tasks – held on last Sunday of the month? Contact Robin on 717047.

NEW FoFP WEBSITE: <http://www.hairycalyx.com/fofp>

CONTACTS: FoFP COMMITTEE

Chairman: Jerry Hyman 724664
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Treasurer: David Havenhand 404983
Judy Sauter (Membership) 668813
Nick Street (Publicity) 725094
Plus Helen Wilson (Events), Tim Seely.
Robin Crowther, Park Lodge 717047



Brimstone

FoFP CELEBRATES KING KNUT

We can't hold back the tide of change. Take a look at the wonderful website that Sharon Watson has kindly developed for us:

<http://www.hairycalyx.com/fofp>



THE PARK TWITCHER

Two large flocks of **waxwings** visited the Park during the cold winter spell. These beautiful birds (above) have flown south from northern Europe to escape the worst of the winter and to gorge themselves on winter berries.

We've also enjoyed regular sightings of **buzzards** mewing high in the sky, as well as the distinctive forked tail of the **red kite**, which used to be a regular in the markets of the City feasting on leftover meat.

The first spring butterfly was spotted in early February. The pale butter coloured **brimstone** – perhaps the original 'butter-fly' – is one of the few to hibernate as an adult, waking from its winter slumber (usually in ivy covered trees) in the warm sunshine.

Another spring harbinger is the unmistakable call of the **chiff-chaff**, calling to its mate as it establishes territories. Some have made the journey all the way from the Mediterranean, just to nest in Farnham Park.

- Robin Crowther

CATCHING UP

It certainly has been a busy time for Robin, ably assisted by the thriving Wednesday Conservation volunteer group (photos below), a Merrist Wood student on work placement called Rachel, and the odd contractor or two.

The main entrance improvements are now complete, and a celebration is planned for the local schools involved in the cedar sculpting. The 15-strong volunteer work party has been busy building stag beetle homes, coppicing, hedge laying, clearing scrub and thinning, playing an important part in maintaining the historic character of the landscape and encouraging valuable ecology. Winter tree inspections were conducted followed by crown thinning, branch reduction, dead wood removal and the felling of two diseased horse chestnuts, which have been replaced with the pink-flowering Indian variety, *Aesculus indica*. Other tree plantings include a copper beech by Oast House Crescent, a London plane and mixed hedge plants in the main car park, and hazel by the redesigned Bear Lane entrance. The chain link fence along the Golf Club boundary has been replaced and trees removed; the supports for the eastern bridge over the Nadder have been replaced; and the new ponds are establishing well, having filled naturally. By the way – did you know Robin gets through 120,000 dog poop bags a year?



Building stag beetle homes – digging holes and fetching sticks. It's a dog's life.

For the kids, the play area at the top of St James' Avenue has been refurbished, and two dozen willing willow weavers from the Sandy Hill Single Parent Group enjoyed a fun and productive half-term workshop.

A week of scrub clearance by contractors (near the eastern boundary) has linked glades and opened up space for the oaks, hopefully reducing squirrel damage and improving bird and insect habitats.

There is always more conservation work to be done, and we are looking to expand the Friends' monthly Sunday morning workparty. If you fancy some enjoyable and productive exercise please call Robin on 717047.

HOT NEWS: Waverley has planned a "Park Open Day" from 12 – 4 pm on **Sunday 5th June**. Drop by and give your views on the Park's ongoing and future management. There'll be a small display, historical maps and local history books on sale, plus **the Marquess of Winchester's Regiment will be on hand, in period costume**, to give a flavour of Civil War in the Park 400 years ago.

UNVEILING THE NEW EASTERN CAR PARK

A new must-see destination for Park lovers is the new **Farnham Park Eastern Car Park**, nestling attractively in the dell of the disused old A325 Hale Road, adjacent to the Six Bells roundabout in Hale.

Waverley's decision to designate the short stretch of highway as a convenient new 'SANG' car park has now made Farnham Park significantly more accessible and attractive, particularly to dogwalkers that would otherwise be spending their time disturbing endangered birds on the nearby army heathland. Having passed Natural England's tests, and with the council recognising that there is nowhere anyone can safely park their car any closer to Farnham Park, the convenient new facility is considered the most effective solution available to counteract the effects of increasing 'urbanisation' around Farnham. Without such measures, the council say, the past 4 years of unpopular over-development and garden-grabbing that many of us so enjoy grumbling about could not have proceeded lawfully.

Looking ahead, the next task will be to devise a PR campaign to educate potential car park users, selling the delights of the kilometre route to the park along the main road (via the Six Bells pub) and explaining how it offers a convenient 'new' access to the designated northern dog-walking areas of the Park. If you have the required PR skills, or can suggest a Suitable Alternative Natural Space to locate a car park... well, perhaps best keep it to yourself.

– *Chairman*



CUT TO THE CHASE

The grazing area fence at College Copse was cut yet again during the winter, three large sections were removed and posts and stiles were knocked down. Whilst we respect peoples' right to protest, this latest episode cost taxpayers over £500 to repair, adding to our childrens' debt pile ! We'd like to know exactly what the problem is, find a resolution and end the pointless vandalism, so please enlighten us if you know anything, and report suspicious activity to Robin.

LATE NEWS: VEHICULAR ACCESS TO THE 'BEAR LANE' ENTRANCE?

The recent 'Notice of Intent' seeking vehicular access to the rear of a Castle Street property, via the historic walled Park Row footpath – the town's main access to the park – threatens to impede safe access for Park users, sparking widespread controversy. It is important that any comments or objections arising are submitted in response to the Notice of Intent, rather than await a planning application. The Friends' Committee is looking into it, with other Farnham groups, and will represent Park users' interests. Look out for progress reports in the Herald. **We will also be posting updates on our new website:**

CHECK OUT THE NEW FoFP WEBSITE: <http://www.hairycalyx.com/fofp>