

Friends of Farnham Park

Newsletter Spring 2012

Registered Charity No. 285383



Chilling out on Dave Phipps' bench

EVENTS PROGRAMME 2012

Thursday May 31st – A Guided Tour of the Castle Keep by Phil Hackett

Meet by 6.30pm on the cobbles outside the "900 Years of Living History" Exhibition (open to 6.30 for us, so arrive early if you can). Enjoy a guided tour of the Keep led by the new Farnham Castle CEO, Phil Hackett, and learn of his ambitions to strengthen the historic connection between the Castle and its Park. Sensible shoes a must.

Thursday June 21st – FoFP Annual Social BBQ at the Cricket Pavilion

Feast and fun from 7 to 9 pm, all ages welcome. Have a chat with other Members over good food and a drink. Please phone/email Martin to guide catering quantities.

Thursday July 5th – An Illustrated Talk : 'Surrey Birds' by Fiona Haynes

Rowhills, Cranmore Lane. Tea from 7pm for 7.30 start. The Work Of Surrey Wildlife Trust : Surrey Birds, an illustrated talk by Fiona Haynes, ex-Park Ranger (now SWT Einstead area ranger) and well known for her fascinating talks.

Sat. July 28th – 'The Attraction of Moths' – A Night With David Helliwell

In honour of National Moth Week we'll be identifying moths by light trap, led by David Helliwell and WBC Ranger Robin Crowther, aided by tea, biscuits & chat. Park Lodge garden from 9 to 11pm. If inclement weather, check with Jerry on 07787 392742.

Tues. September 18th – 'Hedgehogs' Illustrated Talk by Chris Matcham

Recently the Wetlands Mammal Officer for Surrey Wildlife Trust, Chris' fascinating fund of knowledge was recommended by a Member who attended his Otter walk & talk at the British Wildlife Centre. We are delighted to host an illustrated talk on one of his favourite subjects, at Rowhills Field centre, teas from 7pm for 7.30 start.

Wednesday October 24th – 'The Seasons' Illustrated Talk by Geoff Lunn

At Rowhills, Cranmore Lane. Back by popular demand, Geoff has agreed to give us an evening of his very latest creation, a mixture of music, photos and chat under the umbrella heading of 'The Seasons'. 7pm refreshments for 7.30 start.

Tuesday November 13th – FoFP AGM & Annual Ranger's Slideshow

Established to be the only AGM worth attending. Refreshments from 7pm for a 7.30 start to formalities, followed by the main attraction, Ranger Robin Crowther's Illustrated Round-Up of the year and Member's photographs. (Rowhill Field Centre).

Wednesday and Sunday Conservation Volunteer Groups

Starting 10 a.m. – if you can't make it to the weekly Wednesday group, you're welcome to join our 'last Sunday of the month' workparty ! Contact Robin on 717047.



Fork Handles: The Park volunteers got down and dirty digging a butterfly scrape to encourage butterflies and insects in the grazing area. Areas of bare ground among the tall grasses heat up more quickly in sunshine, creating areas for butterflies to bask and giving seeds the opportunity to colonise and flower. . – Robin

The Queen's Diamond Jubilee

Many communities are planting oaks to celebrate the Jubilee, but as our park is full of oak it was suggested we plant something different, but still British, and suitable for a natural park setting. One suggestion was the Black Walnut.

The Romans probably introduced the Walnut from Asia Minor or the Balkans. The name derives from the Old English 'wealth', meaning 'foreign'. I think that's old enough to be classed as native. The magnificent London Planes in Castle Street were planted for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, and they were probably only introduced into England in the mid-17th Century yet are classed as British.

The Black Walnut is so called from its dark purplish-brown timber. It prefers to stand-alone and matures into a large statuesque tree with downy reddish-brown twigs. The walnuts are barely edible so won't be stripped by passers-by.

The Romans valued the Walnut highly, and by the sound of a popular old English rhyme, it has a hardy reputation:

***A woman, a dog and a
walnut tree,
The more you beat them,
the better they be."***

I make no comment. – Helen

(P.S. Have we told Mr & Mrs Philip Windsor of our reasoning? – Jerry)



Thirty kids from the Farnham Museum Saturday Club joined the Ranger in a tour of the Park, followed by some den building. Rain and mud made the sessions even more enjoyable for the kids!
 – Robin

CONTACTS: FoFP COMMITTEE

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 & Helen Wilson (Events), Tim Seely,
 Lucinda Fleming and Robin Crowther.

Bourne Free

Our FoFP event season got off to a fine start on May 1st with a Walk & Talk hosted by our friends at the Bourne Conservation Group. Noel Moss, Martin Angel and Richard Sandars entertained us with the ecology and history of the old churchyard, along with a stroll around the local landmarks, including George Sturt's old house and the Bourne Boy Scouts' spectacular Rocket Launching. With lovely weather & good company, a perfect evening ended with tea and biscuits served by actress Abigail McKern and friends. Many thanks to all for a thoroughly enjoyable time.
 – Jerry

Putting On The Stile

Used by generations of Park visitors and for centuries the only southern access to the Park, the ageing Bear Lane stile was in a poor state and has been replaced with a fine new structure. The stile has been replaced many times over its life and was often in disrepair, as the memoirs of a Farnham lady in the 1820's recalls : **"The visitor went through Bear Lane, passing a tidy row of poor cottages, down a shabby little bye road, and over a broken flight of old wooden steps with a rail on one side"**. The narrow passageway was widened in 1881 to ease the driving of grazing animals through the Park. The new stile is made of French oak (well it is a Norman Castle!), crafted by the carpenter that produced the imposing entrance gates to the Castle.
 – Robin



Bourne Old Vicarage lychgate

Wildlife Roundup

The ponds have seen plenty of frogspawn and some newts, but unusually, no newts found at Aubrey's pond. Carron pond hosted a pair of coots with at least one chick, plus moorhens, 2 little grebes, 3 mallards and the heron, and the new Royal pond (east of the Rangers House) saw mallards too. The days of herds of deer may be long gone, but groups of 2 or 3 can still be found. The mad March heat brought out the butterflies – brimstones, orange tips, peacocks and red admirals among others, but in April's chill only a speckled wood was seen. Chiff chaffs, lots of migratory black caps, some buzzards and a pair of red kites have been spotted, and look out for ravens in the castle. Badgers have been partying as usual and we've seen a few horses too, albeit having temporarily escaped from the hotel land to the east. Keep your eyes peeled and please do tell Robin (the Ranger) what you spot
 – Jerry

Name-dropping ? Us ?

Thanks to Waverley's maps most folk know where White Bottom, College Copse, the Swallow Hole, the Queen Mother's Hedge, the Avenue, Phoebe's Copse and each of the ponds are, but large areas of the Park are unnamed. To make life easier, David Havenhand and webmistress Sharon Watson have been looking at the possibility of some **informal naming of certain areas of the Park**. Lucinda Fleming is researching the ancient field names (like Hemeway and Vineyard) to ensure history is respected. We'll no doubt have a lively discussion of suggestions at our AGM.
 – Jerry



Litterally Speaking

Our Park Volunteer pick-it line ventured far beyond the pale to help out with 'The Big Pick' down at Riverside, an initiative to kickstart this year's 'Farnham in Bloom' campaign.

Whilst on the subject, we'd like to thank the many Friends who pick up litter as they walk the Park – a real labour of love. We met Ann and Keith one Sunday brandishing a huge sack of rubbish, all collected from a small area in the north of the Park. Thanks to you both and to everyone who helps to keep our Park clean and tidy.
 – Helen

Bishop's Move

In centuries past, the 'election' of a new Bishop of Winchester could have quite an impact on the landscape of the Park. Bishop William of Wykeham created the 'new Park' in 1376, installing a 'Pale' or boundary that survives today; Bishop Morley planted the grand Avenue of elms and built the Ranger's House in the 17th century; and in the late 18th century, Bishop North planted the magnificent Cedars of Lebanon which still dominate the skyline. The 97th Bishop of Winchester **Tim Dakin** recently took his seat at a service of enthronement at Winchester Cathedral. At a grand spectacle of ceremony and music set in a centuries-old tradition said to date from the time of St Benedict, the service begins dramatically as the new Bishop knocks, three times thrice, on the great west door knocker before being welcomed to the cathedral by the Dean. Although the Bishops no longer influence Park management, the landscape we enjoy today strongly reflects the interest of Bishops past. We wish Bishop Dakin well in his new job and hope to host a visit sometime.
 – Robin