

NOTICE OF AGM

The FoFP Annual General Meeting

will be held at 7.30pm on

Tues. 13th November 2012 at
Rowhill Field Centre,
Cranmore Lane, GU11 3BD

The main Item on the Agenda will be a discussion of **whether to increase Membership Fees by £1** from next October, to offset increased costs and avoid depletion of our healthy but unspectacular working balance. With our Treasurer's guidance we'll run through the pros and cons and seek Members' views and any alternative suggestions before putting a proposal to the meeting. Agenda papers will be available at the meeting and from the Secretary a week in advance. All Members are welcome.

Refreshments are from 7pm for a 7.30 start to the formalities, which will be followed by the **Ranger's illustrated Round-Up of the year**, Members' photos and an informal discussion. Please email photos to Robin in advance.

Friends of Farnham Park

Newsletter October 2012

Regd. Charity No. 285383

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

The FoFP Committee – Officers' Contact Details:

Chairman: Jerry Hyman:
jerryhyman@tiscali.co.uk 724664
Secretary: Martin Clegg:
martin_clegg@btinternet.com 821977
Treasurer: David Havenhand:
d.havenhand1@ntlworld.com 404983
Membership: Judy Sauter: 668813



Geoff Lunn

FoFP Talk: **'The Seasons'** by **Geoff Lunn**

at Rowhill Field Centre, on **Wednesday 24th October**

Geoff is the acclaimed local nature photographer and enthusiast from the Sands, and is returning by popular demand to present his latest creation: a mixture of music, photos, and engaging light-hearted chat under the umbrella heading of 'The Seasons'.

Free entry for Members; non-Members £3. Refreshments 7pm for 7.30 start.

Spotted : Since the first swifts and swallows in May and through the wettest drought in history, 'spottings' include a cuckoo, a little owl at the Rangers House, a hobby, a Peregrine falcon at the castle and a snipe at Deer Pond. As well as the usual deer, badgers and squirrels, a weasel was seen at Chorley Wood, and lots of dazzling dragonflies have been seen around the stream and by the new ponds. Do tell Robin of anything interesting that you spot.



Common snipe

Farnham Park Bonfire Night , Saturday 3rd November

The Round Table's Bonfire & Firework Display is nigh, so please bring along your unwanted wood, antique furniture etc & leave it near the cricket nets, by the surplus ancient (but happily appropriate) round table.



The Round Table Bonfire

This year **the bonfire will be lit at 7.15, with fireworks from 7.45 to 8.15pm.**

To avoid all the discarded bags and paper plates being blown around the Park overnight we'll be around afterwards, litter-picking, digging broken glass out of the football pitch & tending the bonfire as usual, for which the Round Table kindly make a generous donation to FoFP funds.

Anyone that wishes to help or 'supervise' should bring warm clothes and appropriate refreshments; meet by the bonfire when the crowds have gone.
– Jerry Hyman

A bit Parky? Fancy a treat?

If you're feeling the chill when out walking, you could try stopping off at the Golf Club café to warm up with a hot drink and comfort food, and give your dog a treat too. The clubhouse is open to all, and not only are dogs welcome, they get a treat in the form of 2 complimentary dog biscuits each ! Recent investment in the facilities has included a wood-burning stove for winter warmth.

Since changing hands two years ago, the club café/restaurant has tripled its takings by concentrating on quality, sourcing ingredients locally whilst keeping prices low. The best bacon bannies in the area are just £2, or try the delicious cakes from Loseley Park. In addition to proper coffees and tea there's Hogs Back brewery bottled ales. The full hot food menu includes jacket potatoes, chilli, soups and Wendy's acclaimed macaroni cheese.

Just as noticeable are the improvements to the Course, which is a full nine-hole par 3 course (not Pitch & Putt) and is looking beautiful - which it should be, with 116 hours invested in grounds work every week, clearing brambles and treating the greens. The Partners are now celebrating their lease having finally been signed on October 11th, after 2 years' negotiation. Two of the Partners are usually about, so drop by and get to know Wendy and Johann, their friendly staff and the course's resident deer, Freddie.

Silver Gilt Award for Park

All the hard work involved in keeping the place shipshape was rewarded at the first attempt this year, with Farnham Park receiving a Silver Gilt at the South & South East in Bloom Awards 2012 at Ferneham Hall, Fareham. The award recognised the successful working relationship between the Council, the contractors Glendale, and the community (that's you!) – thanks to the 18 regular members of the volunteer work party. Ranger Robin Crowther invited Ann Barnard to represent the volunteers at the Oscar-style ceremony held on 13th Sept, and Ann tells her story:

"I arrived not knowing quite what to expect, nervous but excited to be there. The large hall was decked with round tables, beautifully laid out, and the staff were welcoming and helpful. The morning started with an introduction from the S&SE 'In Bloom' Chairman Peter Holman, followed by Jean Griffith (the gardening expert from BBC Radio Sussex, Surrey & Kent) and Chris Collins, the celebrity gardener responsible for moving the Blue Peter garden from London to Manchester. The Mayor of Fareham added his welcomes and congratulations, as did the Director of Communications for Southern Water, the sponsors. Pupils from Northern Junior Community School sang "Plant a little seed", which was delightful.

The presentations began, and one by one the awards were announced for hardwork and dedication in different categories, with recipients taking the walk to be presented with certificates by Chris Collins. Photos were taken to lots of applause, and guests returned to their tables with big smiles, proud to have achieved their awards. When it was time for our Country Park category I waited in excited anticipation, and Farnham Park was announced a Silver Gilt. Robin stood up and said "come on Ann", so I followed him to the front of the hall. We walked in front of the stage and stood either side of Chris Collins to receive the award. Cameras flashed and within moments it was all over and we returned to our seats. It was BRILLIANT, I felt so proud. I have never been involved in anything like this before! Perhaps next year we can achieve a GOLD !!!! " – Ann Barnard



Ann Barnard, Chris Collins and Robin Crowther

BUTTERFLY SURVEY 2012

It is difficult to be at all positive about this year's butterfly survey! The coldest, wettest summer on record has had a disastrous effect on this season's numbers. Not only that, but the late snow and frost last winter probably did the waiting eggs and chrysalises no favours.

It is rather ironic that when walking some friends round the Park on 29th March, before the survey season started, we saw 7 different species, and lots of them too! Yet my first "transect" on Sunday 1st April found just one Speckled Wood, and that was the last walk that I did until 30th April, as the intervening 3 weeks were too cold, wet or windy, or all three! The first week in May was also a washout, and though numbers picked up a bit it was not until July that a walk produced sightings in double figures!

This year's total of 355 sightings is the lowest total recorded since I started doing the survey in 2005, considerably lower than the 448 in 2011, 519 in 2010 and 559 in 2009

The transect remains the same - from Hampton Road diagonally across the Park to end at St. James' Avenue, for 26 weeks (in theory) from 1st April to 30th September, though this year only 22 weeks could be walked. On only 13 of the walks did the temperature reach 19 C (66 F) or above, though strangely, 17 were 'sunny' days (50% or more blue sky). The wind was certainly a big factor - on 16 occasions wind speeds of between 3 and 5 were recorded, and only once was it as low as one!

The first 3 months of the "season" yielded a total of only 26 butterflies (last year it was 129!). The most prolific months were July at 139 (2011 = 255) and August at 176, well up on last year's 54. At 14, September was slightly up on last year's 10. Apart from the 4 weeks when no walk was possible, there were 3 other walks that produced no sightings. The most butterflies recorded on a walk was 66 in the last week in July.

As ever, the Meadow Brown at 188 sightings in 12 weeks was the most abundant butterfly. This figure is only one short of 2011's sightings, made in 15 weeks! As last year, some of the "browns" showed an increase – Ringlet 41 against 30 and Gatekeeper 39 against 29, but the Small Heath (10, down from 27), Speckled Wood (18, from 45) and Marbled White (15, down from 37), as did the previously prolific "whites" which halved from 34 to 17. Skippers (10 against 19) and Orange Tip (5 against 14) also declined sharply. Just 3 Red Admirals were reported, against 6 last year, and only one each of the other "aristocrats," Peacock, Comma and Small Tortoiseshell were seen. Only a single Brimstone and 2 Holly Blues were sighted, and sadly no Small Coppers, Glanville Fritillaries or Painted Ladies graced us with their presence!

The most productive Section of the transect was S.6 (bottom of Hampton Road to Bishop's Paddock) – 89 sightings, followed by S.1 (the Southern Slopes) at 76. The area behind the Ranger's House & White Bottom (S.3), usually quite prolific, produced only 67 - but this year it was so muddy I probably spent more time watching my feet than counting butterflies!

What are the prospects for a resurgence in numbers next year? Probably not too high – without the adults to lay eggs this year, it's doubtful if the numbers will return significantly, but we have to be hopeful. It would be interesting to see how well numbers can recover in 2013, given a favourably mild autumn and winter. – David Havenhand



If you'd like to know the latest news of how the Castle's financial difficulties or the Council's Habitats policy affects us, catch me at the bonfire or ask at the AGM! - Jerry

^ Great Crested Newt

We all know the Great Crested Newt is a protected species, but what do we know of this nocturnal inhabitant of our park? Last spring Rosalie Hughes kindly invited some neighbours to view them in their breeding splendour (well the males anyway) and to tell us about them. Rosalie has a Natural England licence that allows her to capture them for research and educational purposes, and we were fortunate that she was able to include us in her education programme.

The breeding male has a handsome crest along his back and a silver line each side of his tail. The female may lay as many as 200 pearly white eggs over a period of several weeks; each egg is carefully wrapped in a leaf. They can live for as long as 15 years.

Did you know each newt can be identified individually by its markings? Both sexes have a yellow/orange belly on which are distinctive black blotches, and the pattern of blotches is unique to each individual.

They are particularly sensitive to fish presence, and as a protected species their habitat should not be disturbed, which is why most of our Park's ponds are fenced. – Helen Wilson

Anne Howe – Sadly Missed

Anne Howe was a Park regular, having lived in Oast House Crescent overlooking the Park for 44 years, kindly delivering many a FoFP Newsletter for us. Born and raised in Cambridge, Anne moved to Farnham in 1968 and went 'back to school' around 1981, teaching A-level History at Farnborough Tech and Alton College. After retiring she enjoyed U3A, walks with friends and the Ramblers Association, singing with Bourne Choral Society, and walking the Park. Anne will be sadly missed by all who knew her.