

Friends of Farnham Park

Newsletter Winter/Spring 2013

Registered Charity No. 285383

Website: www.hairycalyx.com/fofp



Jubilee Tree Planting

The Friends planted a Black Walnut tree in February to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Queen's Coronation. Introduced from native central and eastern America into Europe in 1629, this large, majestic, fast-growing tree with a broadly pyramidal crown is a very good choice for Parkland settings.

The new tree was officially planted by David Havenhand and Helen Wilson, assisted by the Volunteers. It is half-way along White Bottom grazing field, just on the north side of The Avenue.



What a winter! Rain and more rain, followed by freezing cold! It made a pleasant change in January to have snow and sunshine to show off the Park at its best.



A New Look for 2013!

The stag logo (above) from many years ago has been resurrected and given a facelift, and will now adorn all Friends' communications.

A strengthened committee was elected at last year's AGM. Details of the new trustees can be found later in this newsletter. Many thanks go to Jerry Hyman, our Chairman for the past 6 years.

The Park Volunteers have now returned to the umbrella of the Friends of Farnham Park. You may even see them later this year in smart new kit embroidered with our logo!

Visitors to the Park may have noticed several old trees being felled and new ones planted. Unfortunately many of the existing trees are succumbing to infection, so the aim is to gradually replace them with a more robust species. The Ranger's Report gives further details.

There is a new-look Park Management Plan which sets out aims and objectives for the next few years, with interesting background history and information about the open space. Comments to the Ranger are welcome. See www.waverley.gov.uk/farnhampark.

The avenue of horse-chestnuts in full flower in spring. Enjoy them while you can, as they only have a limited life remaining.



If you have an Email, we'd like to use it to send out future newsletters and updates, to reduce our printing and postage costs. If you are happy with this, please can you supply your Email address to Judy Sauter (judy.sauter@ntlworld.com).

FRIENDS ACTIVITIES

EVENTS PROGRAMME 2013

Note: all indoor talks take place at the Rowhill Field Centre (Cranmore Lane), 7pm refreshments for 7:30pm start.
Events are free to FoFP members, £3 to non- members.

Wednesday 1st May: The History of Farnham Pottery. An illustrated talk by David Graham.

David, a nationally-renowned archaeologist, is back by popular demand. As Vice-Chairman of the Farnham Building Preservation Trust, he has been greatly involved in purchasing and preserving England's most perfect example of a Victorian pottery.

Wednesday 12th June: The Return of the Red Kites. An illustrated talk by Keith Betton.

Keith is the Hampshire County Bird Recorder. He lives on the edge of Farnham Park and has been studying Red Kites for five years. Under a Government licence he is able to study them by using radio transmitters and wing tags. Keith will explain how this beautiful bird has returned to our skies and what it is that makes it so different from other birds of prey.

Thursday 4th July at 7pm: BBQ

Our BBQ is now re-established as the highlight of our social programme. This year we are again having it at Farnham cricket club.

A walk around the Park with the Bourne Conservation Group (Date TBA)

Last year the Friends were entertained by our friends at The Bourne, learning about its ecology and history. This year we are inviting them for a return visit, and are hoping for similarly lovely weather for an informative stroll around the Park.

Monday 24th June: Mid-summer walkabout with the Ranger

Meet at Park Lodge at 6pm for a chance to find out past and future plans for the Park and to raise issues with the Ranger.

Wednesday 4th September: Otters. An illustrated talk by Chris Matcham.

Chris has worked in Otter conservation since 1993. In 1998 he joined the Surrey Wildlife Trust as Otter and Rivers Project Officer and was responsible for surveying all Surrey's rivers, analysing the problems and advising landowners on methods of improvement and conservation as viable habitats. Chris gave us an excellent talk on hedgehogs last September.

Sunday 15th September 2:30-4 pm: Heritage Weekend Walk with the Ranger

A ramble with the Ranger - discover the delights of an ancient Deer Park in the centre of Farnham.
Meet at Farnham Park Ranger's Office, the main car park off Folly Hill.

Saturday 19th October at 2:30pm: Fungi Foray with Dr June Chatfield.

June Chatfield is a Vice President and Fellow of the BNA [British Naturalist Association]. She is a well-known and highly respected author on Natural History and amongst many things is involved in the gallery redevelopment project at Haslemere Museum.

The event will start at the Golf Club cafe, at which anybody is welcome to bring along fungi in advance to be identified. June will then take us on a walk around the Park, discovering and identifying fungi, finishing back at the cafe for a cup of tea.

Tuesday 19th November: AGM

Our Annual General Meeting, featuring Ranger Robin Crowther's round-up of the year.

Saturday 14th December: Fungal Foray: join the West Weald Fungus group to hunt for mushrooms in the Park.

Helen Wilson

Volunteer Group

In addition to the events listed above, anybody is welcome to come along to the Volunteer work parties. These morning sessions run every Wednesday and on the fourth Sunday of each month, starting at 10 o'clock. Tea and biscuits are provided! Details of where to meet can be found on the Park noticeboards, and under the volunteering section of the website (www.hairycalyx.com/fofp).

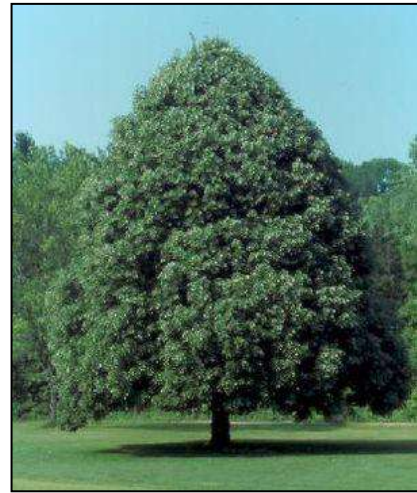
Over the winter, the Volunteers have laid another 70 metres of the Queen Mother's hedge along The Avenue. The first job is to prepare the hedge for laying by stripping out all the dead pleachers (stems) which were laid in the last cycle about 15 years ago, clearing the base of ivy, bramble and leaves, and removing any large, awkward shaped or crowded stems not suitable for laying. We can then start carefully cutting and laying the stems from left to right in each ten metre section. Finally, stakes are driven into the centre of the newly-laid hedge and binders are woven in to provide strength and rigidity to the structure.



RANGER'S REPORT by Robin Crowther

With a recent increase in findings of new pests and diseases, it is clear that Britain's trees are facing unprecedented threats and it seems that climate change will create the conditions for even more pest and disease activity. Sudden oak death, acute oak decline, ash dieback, bleeding canker, oak processionary moth, horse chestnut leaf miner moth...I could go on! One of the defining landscape features of the Park is its tree cover and tree care forms a key part of the Management Plan.

The horse chestnut Avenue along the path rising from Bear Lane provides a wonderful show of blossom in the spring but with everything stripped bare in the winter, you can see the trees are not in good health. Three of the worst specimens were felled this winter as they were falling apart naturally. We have decided to replant with small leaved lime rather than horse chestnut whose future I'm afraid, does not look good in this country. All the specimens have sturdy parkland-style guards and will require careful watering over the next three years. In addition, one dead and one dying lime were felled along The Avenue as well as a poorly beech, again, all replanted with small-leaved lime. It may seem a bit brutal at times, but you have to think long-term when dealing with Avenues and it is something which will be necessary on an annual basis in order for future generations to enjoy mature, healthy trees. Other less drastic tree work is still ongoing, reducing the weight and size of tree crowns where they show evidence of decline through weak branch unions or certain fungi at the base.



Small-leaved lime (*Tilia cordata* 'Greenspire')

With new tenants at Farnham Castle we will be looking to increase the connection between the Park and Castle over the next few years. Work continues by the Castle team, to clear the defensive ditch which when completed, will create fantastic views of the 13th century structure from many parts of the Park. We are also discussing the possibility of providing access for the public via the 'postern gate' at the end of the Avenue – a stately and fitting entrance to this Ancient monument.

MOTH SURVEY FOR 2012 by David Helliwell

David has been monitoring moths in his garden adjacent to the north end of the Park for well over a decade. In contrast to the drop in butterfly numbers during last year's poor summer, the total number of moth species in 2012 was almost unchanged from the previous year; some species actually appeared to prefer the wet weather.

All the collecting and recording is done using a Robinson Mercury Vapour Moth Trap (*right*), a circular container containing empty egg boxes, with a Perspex cone sitting in it. The cone has a louvred insert sitting in it containing a mercury vapour bulb. The moths are attracted to the lit bulb, flying around it until they hit the louvres and fall into the container. They then sleep amongst the egg boxes and next morning the species and numbers are recorded. They are then released at dusk.



This year as normal we had a number of immigrants from Europe, some of which do breed in Southern England. This includes the exceedingly rare **Four Spotted Footman**.

Several of the photogenic hawk moths were collected, including the **Elephant Hawk Moth** (*top right*).

Some of the moths recorded are regarded as pests and these include the **Cabbage Moth**, **Ghost Moth**, and the **Common Swift Moth**. The latter two have caterpillars which feed on plant roots. The **Bordered White Moth** and the **Browntail Moth** are particular pests on both deciduous and conifer trees.

There are also populations of rarer moths resident in the Park such as the **Waved Black Moth** which feeds on the bracket fungi occurring on birch trees and the **Least Carpet Moth** confined to and spreading along the area's river and stream margins.

Some species have recently disappeared and are a cause for concern, including the **Red Underwing Moth** (*below, left*), **Yellow Sallow Moth** and **Lesser Spotted Pinion Moth**. The latter two feed on elm and because of the demise of the elm they have disappeared. Many other species are scarce or under threat including the **False Mocha Moth** and **Garden Tiger Moth** (*below, right*).



A more detailed list is can be found on the FoFP website (www.hairycalyx.com/fofp/moths).

MEET YOUR NEW COMMITTEE

At the Annual General Meeting in November, several new Committee members were elected, and there was also a change in Officer positions. The new Committee felt that they should introduce themselves to the membership, although it is quite likely that many of us are well known anyway!

We start with the most important man on the Committee – the Hon. Secretary. **Martin Clegg** has been secretary of the Friends for 5 years. He is an Agricultural Economist by profession and worked for over 10 years for the National Farmers Union, followed by work on agricultural and rural policy in public service. Now retired, his interests (beyond the Friends) include walking, not only in the Park with his chocolate Lab, but also in the surrounding countryside and occasionally on the Cornish coast. Once a week, he undertakes volunteer work in London for an association of retired persons. *Tel: 821977*

Our new Treasurer is **Roger Griffiths**. Roger completed an apprenticeship at the R.A.E., Farnborough, becoming a draughtsman. Following National service in the R.E.M.E., he returned to the R.A.E. as a mechanical engineering draughtsman, where he remained until retirement. He still has an interest in aircraft and railways. Roger was the last Secretary of the sadly missed Farnham Gostrey Bowls Club, and also Treasurer of the R.A.E. Swimming Club. He has been a very active park volunteer since 2001.

Our Events Co-ordinator is **Helen Wilson**. Helen has taught in local schools both as a classroom teacher and as a peripatetic TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) specialist. She has travelled the world extensively during which time her TEFL skills have been useful. She has been a Park Volunteer for many years and her interests include bird watching, water colour painting, gardening and swimming.

Sharon Watson runs our Website and edits the Newsletter. She worked in computer-based scientific research, mainly in the defence industry, specialising in Image Processing. Now semi-retired and dabbling in web programming, gardening and volunteering, both in the Park and for the National Trust at Winkworth Arboretum. Special interests include wildflowers and photography, walking, and playing cricket for Rowledge Ladies.

Finally me – **David Havenhand** – Chairman. An Industrial Chemist by profession, having worked for Johnson Wax for over 38 years, several as Quality Control Manager, finally as Technical and Customer Service Manager. Always been sports orientated – soccer referee, played cricket for Rowledge and Badshot Lea (now an umpire), played League table tennis – and been involved in the committees of all of them! First involvement as a volunteer was the construction of Friend's Pond, but got the "bug" and have been an active volunteer almost continuously since then. I have done the annual Butterfly Survey in the Park for the last 8 years. *Tel: 404983*

You will see that we have a variety of skills relevant to the welfare and conservation of the Park amongst the Committee members.

Judy Sauter is the Membership Secretary. She has a degree in Conservation Management and worked for Surrey Wildlife Trust for 10 years, advising boroughs in Surrey on the impact of planning applications on biodiversity. On retiring she trained as a Personal Trainer specialising in the over 50s. A very keen tennis player. Has been a Park volunteer for many years. Amongst her involvements were the creation of Friend's Pond and the first laying of the Queen Mother's Hedge. *Tel: 668813*

Jerry Hyman was a Farnham Grammar boy brought up in Hale, and since university (physics) has run his own engineering, retail and management businesses in London and Swindon, returning to Farnham in '95. Jerry is known for supporting local heritage groups, often representing residents on technical and legal issues at hearings, and volunteered to be FoFP's Chairman in 2006 to prevent the group folding. He attributes the Friends' current rude health to the support of our Ranger and our dedicated members and volunteers. Jerry also loves old cars.

Sally Hall – Joint Publicity Officer. Sally is a retired physiotherapist and a member of the Bourne Club where she plays tennis several times a week. She has served on several of their committees. Although she has lived near the Park for many years, it is only in the last few that she has been walking regularly in the Park and working as a volunteer.

Libby Ralph – Joint Publicity Officer. Spent time as a management consultant in the IT industry, ending up at Hewlett Packard. In 2010, changed course and is completing a BSc (Hons.) degree in Conservation and Wildlife Management. She volunteers both in the Park and for Surrey Wildlife Trust, including management plans and wildlife surveys. A recreational runner, birdwatcher and gardener.

Mind the Mud!

Regular visitors to the Park over the winter may have noticed Harley the Border Collie being accompanied by a different walker each day. This is because Harley's owner, our new chairman David, slipped over on a particularly muddy path last November and severed the tendons in his knee. After a rare and complex operation, and several months of physiotherapy, David is now well on the way to a full recovery.

Many thanks to all the people who have helped, those on the dog-walking rota, and everybody who sent their best wishes.

So do take care when walking in the Park: it isn't just ice and snow that can make paths treacherous!

