

Protecting Richmond Park's peace and natural beauty for future generations

NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2012



The Queen visits Richmond Park
The new Jubilee Pond
Olympics in the Park, then and now
Poster competition

Welcome

...and a very special welcome to the 2000th Friend of Richmond Park! Since this time last year we have added 250 new members, and our numbers are now over 2000, which suggests that we are doing something right! You can see up-to-date figures on page 14.

Also reported in this issue, and perhaps among the reasons for our growing numbers, are some exciting events and Park projects in which the Friends have played, and continue to play, an important and very visible part. Altogether the past few weeks have been a busy time for the Friends as well as for the Park, so this is a very newsy issue, with lots of pictures.

Pictured below is a delightful little bird. What is it and where in the Park can you see it? The answer can be found in this newsletter. (*Photo by Michael Davison – no prizes for correct answers, I'm afraid*).

Marilyn Mason marilyn.mason@virgin.net



Cover photos:

Front cover: Rain didn't stop the Jubilee celebrations in the Park. Photo by Funky Photographers www.funkyphotographers.co.uk

Back cover: David Attenborough turning the first sod for the new Jubilee Pond.
Photo by Liz Coleman

WANTED – BUTTERFLY SURVEYORS

Once summer starts properly, the Park's butterflies should begin to appear in increasing numbers, and these numbers are a very useful guide to the health of the Park's habitat. The Wildlife Group is looking for more volunteers to report on the butterflies they see when walking in the Park. One report each month through to September is all the Group needs, and recognition training can be provided. If you are interested, please contact Ray Garrett at rtgarrett@ phonecoop.coop or on 8546-5958.

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Please pass it on to a friend or recycle it when you have finished with it.

Ponds, streams and campaigns

In the last issue I wrote about the plan for the Friends to fund a new programme to restore the Park's ponds and streams. The programme was officially launched at the Queen's visit, when Sir David Attenborough inaugurated the first project, Jubilee Pond. See page 4, where there are more details and pictures, and the leaflet on the Ponds and Streams Programme and Jubilee Pond that we have included with this newsletter.

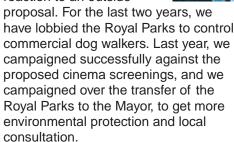
The Friends was founded in 1961 to campaign against the increasing urbanisation of Richmond Park, especially by traffic. Are we still a campaigning body? Yes, most definitely. The issues may be somewhat different from 1961 but the passion and the objectives are the same – to protect the Park.

Firstly, we campaign through public education to get everybody to appreciate the Park and want to protect it. We do this explicitly though the new "Tread Lightly" leaflet and our Discoverers programme, but also obliquely through walks, courses, newsletters and our publications – for example, the *Guide* and *Family Trails* – which show the richness of the Park's ecology. Changing public views is slow, but potentially very powerful.

Secondly, we have campaigns with a particular objective, which often involve a range of actions. We have campaigned for better policing, including fixed penalty notices and more police at weekends. Currently we are trying to improve road safety through better pedestrian crossings and the new

leaflet "On The Road" (see page 7). We are monitoring sporting and other public events to limit their effect on the Park's sensitive areas.

Thirdly, we campaign on specific issues, often in reaction to an outside



Much of this is low profile. Often it is easier to change minds through quiet explanation than through public confrontation. On common concerns we work with others: The Royal Parks, the police, other Friends groups, MPs. But we also object to the views and actions of any of these if necessary.

We are starting to use social media, both for public education and to campaign on particular issues. We have a Facebook page and a YouTube channel, and a redesigned website that allows us to quickly post our views on issues. The "Fenton" episode taught that sometimes we have to respond quickly to events.

Will we ever have another loud public campaign? Yes, if needed, and we now have a lot more options available for using our influence.

Ron Crompton ron.crompton@frp.org.uk 143 Palewell Park London SW14 8JJ

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The new Jubilee Pond

In one of the few bright spells on the day of the Queen's visit, Sir David Attenborough turned the first sod for the new Jubilee Pond commemorating the Queen's Diamond Jubilee (pictured below and on our back cover; photos by Liz Coleman).



This is also the first project in the Ponds and Streams Programme, funded by the Friends and others, which aims over the next two to three years to restore many of the Park's water-bodies and to build some new ones.

After short speeches from me (pictured below right with Sir David and Olivia Couchman of Healthy Planet) and Simon Richards, the Park Superintendent, Sir David moved a few vards to the pond site, dug into the ground (helpfully loosened beforehand) and raised a spadeful of earth in triumph. He was helped by two of the Royal Parks first year apprentices, Leon Charalambous, who works in St James's Park, and Ben Despirito, who works in Richmond Park, for both of whom Sir David is a great hero. You can see a short video of the inauguration at www.facebook.com/ thefriendsofrichmondpark.

Jubilee Pond is located on the road from Sheen Cross to the Royal Ballet School, where it crosses a small white

Ron Crompton

bridge. Display boards at the site give more information. Its construction and landscaping should be completed by the end of the summer, with planting being done in the appropriate season.

Jubilee Pond is being generously funded by a variety of individual and company donations, including Robert Holmes & Co, the Wimbledon estate agent. In addition, Healthy Planet, the conservation charity that has already funded the Sand Martin nest bank and two tree projects in the Park in the last year, has offered to match pound for pound all donations raised through a public appeal – a wonderful opportunity for everyone to contribute to the Park they love.

There are a number of ways to donate to Jubilee Pond: in cash at collection points at the Visitor Centre and Holly Lodge (note that neither place can take credit or debit cards); online at www.healthyplanet.org/jubileepond or www.frp.org.uk/ponds-and-streams (both can take credit and debit cards); or by cheque to Jubilee Pond Appeal, c/o FRP Treasurer, David McLaughlin, 5 Crescent Road, Kingston KT2 7RD. Please make cheques payable to "The Friends of Richmond Park" and write "Jubilee Pond Appeal" on the back – and please give generously.



Poems in the Park



The winning Poems in the Park will be on display in Richmond Reference Library till the end of July, and three LAMDA actors read the poems beautifully at the celebration for the Queen in the Park on May 15th. The photo above shows visitors enjoying the poems displayed earlier this year at Poets' Corner in Pembroke Lodge Gardens.

Friends out and about

As well their strong presence at May's Jubilee celebration in the Park, the Friends had a stall at Richmond May Fair and will be at St Margaret's Fair on 14th July and welcoming visitors to the Park during the cycle races Thank you to all Friends helping at these events.

DISCOVERERS

Visit www.frp.org.uk/friends/discoverers for news of FRP family events and activities, for example the Bat Walk on September 29th. To join the mailing list, please e-mail discoverers@frp.org.uk.

Desert Island Friends

FRP Patrons Sir David Attenborough and Jacqueline Wilson, and Dame Monica of the Royal Ballet, are among the castaways whose choices and reminiscences you can catch up with at http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/features/de sert-island-discs/find-a-castaway.

Doug Reynolds honoured

In April, Doug Reynolds, a Friend of Richmond Park for well over 30 years and our Chairman from 1993 to 1999. received a Lifetime Achievement Award from The Royal Parks Guild "in recognition of the significant role he has played in supporting and promoting the Royal Parks". Nonagenarian Doug has led 250 walks in the Park and given no fewer than 485 talks on the Park, reaching something like 10,000 people, a remarkable achievement! The picture below shows Doug receiving his award from Linda Lennon CBE, Chief Executive of The Royal Parks, and Michael Fitt. Chairman of The Royal Parks Guild.



The Guild, chaired by Michael Fitt, former Richmond Park Superintendent and Deputy Chief Executive of The Royal Parks, comprises former Royal Parks employees, contractors, volunteers and others who have supported London's eight Royal Parks. The Guild particularly promotes the heritage, horticulture and protection of the biodiversity of the Parks, and acknowledges individuals and groups who have provided substantial active support.

Refurbishment of horse ride

Many of you will have seen work happening on the horse ride through the Park. It is being refurbished thanks to a private donation from someone who rides her horse in the Park and who has also given money to encourage riding for the disabled. Extensive work is being done to the ride adjacent to the road between Pen Ponds car park and Ham Cross in order to reduce flooding of the ride and to create new scrapes to retain some of the water in the Park.

Three threats to our Oaks

It's probably best to avoid sitting under Oak trees these days, as early summer is when the caterpillars of the Oak Processionary Moth are on the move. From May to July you may see people staring up at Oak trees with binoculars, checking for nests which will then be removed by specialist operatives. If you come across the caterpillars or their webbed nests please do not touch them, keep children and dogs away, and report sightings to the Park office on 0300 061 2200. Oaks also continue to be threatened by Acute Oak Decline and Sudden Oak Death.

And all trees, especially saplings, can be put at risk by our increasingly erratic weather. The Royal Parks are as subject to the hosepipe ban as the rest of us, but are permitted to abstract water from Beverly Brook to water newly planted trees if necessary.

Pembroke Lodge Gardens

After the The Royal Parks Guild awards ceremony and reception at Pembroke Lodge in April, Linda Lennon was invited to cut the ribbon for the official opening of the Dell, an attractive new trail in Pembroke Lodge gardens.



Visitors then took an inaugural stroll on the new path, pictured above.

Only rumour

Park management tell us that there is no evidence that dogs are being poisoned in Richmond Park, no cases have been reported, and that putting anti-freeze in puddles (as rumoured) is a very unlikely means of harming dogs.

Lyme disease alert

With warmer weather comes the temptation to wear shorts in the Park, probably not such a good idea as summer also encourages the plants that provide cover for the ticks that can cause Lyme disease – and covering up is one method of prevention. Whilst the chance of contracting Lyme disease is low, some serious cases have been reported recently and it is not always easy to diagnose in its early stages. A leaflet on sensible precautions is available from Holly Lodge, or from NHS Direct on 0845 4647 or their website.

Bird news

The Bird Recording Group recently published a leaflet showing all the birds they have recorded in Richmond Park year by year over the last ten years, distinguishing between those that breed in the Park and those passing through. A total of 156 species have been recorded, of which 62 are thought to have bred. Since records began in 1921, a total of 208 different species have been recorded. There is a downloadable version of the leaflet on our website.

This spring, a Harris Hawk took up residence in the Park. This American bird of prey is often used a lot to discourage pigeons, and this one had obviously escaped from a falconer as it still had leather straps on its legs. In the Park it scared off most of the herons, including a pair that was breeding near Pen Ponds. The first Cuckoo was heard and a Swallow was seen in the Park towards the end of April. Also spotted have been Red Kite, Hobby and the Common Buzzard.

Policing the Park

In January the police in Richmond Park were restructured. The Response and Safer Parks Teams were merged and the numbers cut from 14 to 11 (including a sergeant). However, the police are now all fully-trained PCs, rather than a mix of PCs and PCSOs, staffing at weekends and bank holidays has increased, and the police are patrolling by bike and on foot more than they used to. Overall, their effectiveness and visibility seem to have improved.

Crime and social disorder in the Park continue to be low, and the main role of the police is enforcing Park regulations, including traffic. In March, April and May, for example, there were only 40

crime incidents, of which 23 were for cannabis possession.

In contrast, the police gave written warnings to 180 people, including: 70 for off-track cycling and 6 for excess speed while cycling (one of whom is being summoned); 49 for dogs off-lead in restricted areas and for dog fouling; 7 for dogs chasing deer (one of whom is being summoned); and 6 for taking horses off-track when not allowed. They also issued penalty notices to 185 motorists: 38 for excess speed, 31 for unauthorised parking and 116 for driving a trade vehicle in the Park. There were 8 recorded collisions, of which 6 involved cyclists only (4 cyclists falling off, 1 swerving to avoid a pedestrian who refused to move, and 1 hitting a squirrel).

From July, the police will be able to give £50 fixed penalty notices for off-track cycling, dog fouling and littering, something The Friends and others have been lobbying for for five years, and which brings the Royal Parks into line with other local areas. The police are likely to allow a few weeks while the new fines are publicised before enforcing them.

A new leaflet, "On The Road", dealing with road safety and relevant regulations has been issued by the police, Royal Parks and the Friends. Written by one of the PCs, it has guidance and reminders for pedestrians, cyclists, motorists and horse riders. It is available at the Visitor Centre and Holly Lodge, the police are handing it out to motorists and cyclists, and it will also be available on our website soon.

With thanks to Nick Coleman, Ron Crompton, Michael Davison, Teresa Grafton, Richard Gray, Max Lankester, and Park Management for news and photos.

NEWS FEATURE NEWS FEATURE

The day the Queen visited the Park



Friends trustees Ron Crompton, Sheila Hamilton and Teresa Grafton wait anxiously for the fun to begin (above, photo by Liz Coleman).

Queen Victoria is amused by trustee P J Greeves (below, photo by Liz Coleman).

On 15th May, as part of her Jubilee festivities, the Queen came to the Park to visit "Wild London", a celebration of the conservational, recreational and inspirational roles played by London's woodlands, parks and gardens. And of course the Friends were there too, with displays in a large marquee in the Conservation Zone and in the Inspiration Zone. The Jubilee Pond and the Ponds & Streams Programme Appeal were also prominently featured at The Royal Parks/Richmond Park Wildlife Group's stand. The Friends' displays included the history and background of the Friends, volunteering and Discoverers, and Poems in the Park in the Inspiration Zone. Even heavy showers (see our cover photo and the one below) couldn't spoil a very special day.

Chairman of the Friends Ron Crompton intoduces trustees and volunteers to the Queen (above, photo by Funky Photographers).

The Queen braves the rain (below, photo by Liz Coleman).



Her Majesty the Queen visits the Friends display (above, photo by Funky Photographers).

More photos can be seen on the Richmond Park Facebook page.

PARK NEWS FRIENDS COMPETITION

Improvements at Isabella

Various improvements have recently been completed in the Isabella Plantation, including replacing the surrounding fencing, refurbishing the toilet block at the upper end of the plantation, and removing much of the rhododendron that was reducing light and air-flow to other plants.

Congratulations to Pat Ealey MBE

Our congratulations to Dr Pat Ealey, who manages the Holly Lodge Centre in the Park and who was awarded an MBE in the New Year's Honours "for services to The Holly Lodge Centre and to People with Special Needs in Richmond and Ealing". Pat has been with the Centre for ten years and is widely known in the field of education for special needs children.

"The Way"

A new set of gates in the Park marks the tercentenary of the completion of St Paul's. They have been erected where the sightline from King Henry's Mound to St Paul's cuts through Sidmouth Wood, a view that has been in





existence since the 18th century and is now protected. The gates are given by the Goldsmith family in memory of Edward Goldsmith, elder brother of Sir James and uncle of Zac, who was a highly influential environmentalist, founder and publisher of *The Ecologist* magazine, and author of the book *The Way*, commemorated on the gates. They were designed and made by Josh De Lisle, who won the competition for them while still in college training to be a blacksmith. Their design echoes both the natural setting of the Park and the St Paul's classical dome and columns –

and includes the little wren pictured on page 2, a refererece to the architect of St Pauls.

The gates are opened by Linda Lennon CBE, Chief Executive of The Royal Parks, and their creator Josh De Lisle (left).

A group of Friends led by trustee Max Lankester visit and admire the gates (above).

Photos by Michael Davison.

Design a poster - help protect the Park Richard Gray

Last year's Poems in the Park competition attracted 650 entries from poets of all ages. Now we're inviting amateur and professional artists and designers to design a poster to celebrate the wonders of Richmond Park and to help protect it.

The competition, which is free to enter, asks entrants to design an eye-catching poster featuring the slogan "Tread Lightly in Richmond Park", celebrating the Park in this momentous year and helping protect the Park's rich wildlife and ecology.

There are three age categories: 9 - 13; 13 - 18; and 19+.

The main purposes of the poster should be: to present the rich variety of flora and fauna in Richmond Park; to indicate what an important and unique place it is, particularly in London; to educate visitors so that on their visits they "tread lightly" and respect the Park's environment and wildlife while enjoying themselves.

Entries should be imaginative and creative in their interpretation and use the best design ideas to communicate the key messages (examples of styles and ideas from different eras illustrate this page). The poster should also consider the Park's popularity and could feature the Diamond Jubilee event



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and/or the Olympics cycling road races this year.

The poster should contain minimal text and must include the Friends logo and the web-link www.frp.org.uk/park/tread-lightly-in-the-park. Lots of information about Richmond Park and "Tread Lightly" can be found on the Friends website, www.frp.org.uk. You can enter directly via the website or use the form enclosed with this newsletter.

So far, we have two highly skilled professionals to help judge the event: Simon Maidment, Head of the Design School at Kingston University, one of the most highly rated university design faculties in the UK; and David Livingstone, President, Worldwide Marketing, Working Title Films, who created iconic design images for films such as Four Weddings and A Funeral, Bridget Jones's Diary, Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy and many others.

With many thanks to the sponsors of this competition

RUSSELL-COOKE SOLICITOR



The Olympics then and now Michael Davison

two men to get out of bed at the same time". No allowance had been made for the size of competitors, and one bed collapsed under an Argentinian wrestler. But otherwise the village was as well appointed as the nation's circumstances allowed. An old army cookhouse became an athletes' cafeteria, there was a bank, a cinema, a post office, a reading room, and a hut (pictured left) containing a tailor, a laundry, and branches of Bentalls and W H Smith.

As the Olympic road-cycling contestants hurtle through the Park on 28th and 29th July, how many of them will be aware that they are passing close to a site inseparably associated with the last time the Olympic Games came to London, in 1948?

On the high ground between Kingston Gate and Ladderstile Gate a former army camp, set up ten years earlier to accommodate recruits to the East Surrey Regiment, was pressed into service as a 15-acre Olympic Village. Here were housed 1500 of the visiting athletes who came to London from 59 countries. In a Britain still reeling from the effects of a six-year war, there was little money to adapt the plain wooden huts for their new occupants; the budget for the entire "austerity" Olympics only ran to £730,000 (£20 million in today's money). The huts were given a lick of creosote and their doors painted green, but inside the accommodation remained spartan, a far cry from what this year's Olympic competitors will enjoy at Stratford.

Rooms were shared between four and six individuals, and two men shared a single wardrobe 2ft 6in wide for their belongings. According to the *Surrey Comet*, "there was not enough room for

Working out who slept where involved great diplomacy. Most of those quartered in Richmond Park were male athletes from South and Central America, Scandinavia and Italy. The Italians, representing a nation that only six years earlier had been fighting on the Nazi side, were kept carefully separate. Generally the athletes seem to have accepted their quarters with good grace, hoisted their national flags and got on with their training in the Park; however, it is reported that one group of Swedes took an appalled look at the huts and promptly booked into a Richmond hotel. At least a few of the visitors had eyes for the wildlife surrounding them. "The deer appeared quite tame, the squirrels chased

each other round the branches," said one. "It was hard to believe they had survived in view of the shortage of meat during the war."

The visitors were looked after by staff recruited from the National Union of Students, and were ferried to Wembley Stadium and other venues by London buses and Ministry of Supply station wagons, whose female drivers were billeted just outside the camp.

Raising the 1948 Olympic flag in the Park

Among the people of Richmond and Kingston, there were mixed feelings about the newcomers in their midst. At the time the Army prepared to hand the site over to the Olympic Organising Committee there had been angry protests by the Kingston Homeless Association, led by a local vicar, who argued that homeless Londoners should be given priority over foreign athletes. However, once the Olympic Village was established the townsfolk seem to have made their guests welcome. "Everybody here is so kind, so nice," said one Mexican team member.

Local children crowded to the site and pressed their autograph books into athletes' hands. Some opportunistic youngsters turned the visitors' presence to good account. "We heard they were recruiting messenger boys and about half a dozen of us were taken on," recalls Tim Lowry, 15 at the time. "You had to provide your own bicycle and received no pay, but got three meals a day." A further reward came when the messenger boys were taken to the opening ceremony by bus.

When the Olympic Games ended and the athletes left for home, the camp reverted to military use. It housed units of the Royal Corps of Signals and later of the Women's Royal Army Corps.

During the Suez crisis of 1956 the ageing huts found yet another role as a reception centre for service wives and children evacuated from the Canal Zone. The camp was dismantled in 1965 and the site cleared, leaving no trace except a flight of eight concrete steps near Dann's Pond (pictured far right).

There is, however, a relic of the camp elsewhere. One hut was saved from demolition by members of Malden Rifle and Pistol Club, who bought it for £5, dismantled it



and re-erected it at their range in New Malden, where it still serves as the clubhouse (*pictured above*). Frank Dobson, at 78 still a club member, has a special reason for treasuring this relic of the Olympic Village: as a schoolboy of 14 in 1948 he helped his father, who ran Kingston Photographic, to develop films taken by the visiting athletes. Twelve years later he was a member of England's pistol-shooting team in the 1960 Rome Olympics.

If you're one of those lining the cyclerace route through the Park at the end of this month you may feel a slight sense of anticlimax after the contestants have flashed past in a few moments. But don't go home yet. Take a little while to walk up the hill above Kingston Gate and imagine the time 64 years ago when this grassy sward, dotted by young oaks and fringed by silver birches, was covered in huts and echoed to the sound of 1500 athletes training, eating, drinking, arguing and gossiping in a babel of languages — and treading up

and down those eight concrete steps.

Michael Davison is a listed contributor to two recent books about the Olympic Games: The Austerity Olympics, by Janie Hampton (Aurum) and The British Olympics by Martin Polley (English Heritage).



Gift Aid, Membership and Subscriptions

By the middle of May membership of the Friends was 2029, an increase of almost 250 in the last year. About 50% are individual members and 50% are households. The vast majority of members (84%) have now signed up for Gift Aid. and we receive over £2,500 a vear in Gift Aid. About 250 members also give donations when they take out or renew their membership and we receive over £1,500 a year that way. Gift Aid and additional donations make up 40% of our membership income, and we are very grateful to all of you who have completed Gift Aid forms or made donations.

Each year a few more of you convert to paying by Standing Order, and this is another way in which you can help us: it is easier to administer, it is cheaper as no postage is involved once the mandate is set up, and there is no risk of fraud or loss. It is entirely under your control, as the charity has no power to alter a mandate.

Subscriptions: £6 for individuals, £10 for households and organisations. All enquiries to me on 020 8876 2623.

Sheila Hamilton, Hon. Membership Secretary

Queries about Friends?

See www.frp.org.uk, or contact Max Lankester, Hon. Secretary, on 020 8940 7898 or max.lankester@frp.org.uk.

Friends monthly email

If you would like to receive our monthly email, please email Roy Berriman at royberriman@yahoo.co.uk, including your postcode, or phone him on 020 3536 0499 or 0790 2306808.

Queries about Park management?

If you have any observations or concerns about the way the Park is being managed please contact Park Manager Simon Richards at The Royal Parks, Holly Lodge, Richmond Park, Richmond, Surrey, TW10 5HS.

Tel: 0300 061 2200

Email: richmond@royalparks.gsi.gov.uk Website: www.royalparks.gov.uk

Police non-emergency telephone number: 0300 123 1212

Trustees:

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Vice-Chairmen: Peter Burrows-Smith (Conservation & Ecology; Walks), Sheila Hamilton (Hon. Membership Secretary)

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Patrons: Sir David Attenborough, Dame Jacqueline Wilson, Baroness Kramer of Richmond Park

Friends walks and courses

WALKS
All welcome. Most,
though not all, walks
are on Saturdays
and start at 10.00am
from a car park.

Please phone Peter Burrows-Smith on 020 8392 9888 in advance if you need special support or help with the walk, and please keep dogs under control.

* COURSES are typically a 30minute talk at Pembroke Lodge followed by a 2-hour walk. Courses are for Friends members only and places must be booked - please contact Sue on 020 8549 8975 or sue.gibbons@ npl.co.uk. Coffee/ tea provided. There will be no charge.

See also www.frp.org.uk.

There are also free guided walks in Isabella Plantation led by Park staff throughout the year. These walks last about one and a half hours and are publicised on Park notice boards.

Date	Time	What and where
7 July	10.00am	WALK: meet at Pembroke Lodge car park.
14 July	<u>8.30pm</u>	WALK: Summer Evening. Meet at Sheen Gate car park.
4 Aug	10.00am	WALK: meet at Kingston Gate car park.
1 Sept	10.00am	WALK: meet at Robin Hood Gate car park.
6 Oct	10.00am	WALK: meet at Sheen Gate car park.
13 Oct	10.00am	COURSE*: Deer (Chris Howard, British Deer Society).
20 Oct	10.00am	WALK: Autumn Birds. Meet at Pembroke Lodge car park
3 Nov	10.00am	WALK: meet at Pembroke Lodge car park
17 Nov	10.00am	COURSE*: Fungi (Janet Bostock and Elisabeth Cheesman)

For other events coming up -

please see our website or sign up for the Friends monthly email (see previous page).





Registered charity No. 1133201 www.frp.org.uk Richmond Park is a National Nature Reserve, a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Special Area of Conservation