

**Newsletter autumn 2017**



**Ground-living bees and wasps**

**Litter-picking scheme up and running!**

**Breeding birds**

**Downstream Defender**

**2018 Friends' Calendar, DVD and other gifts**

## Find your ideal Christmas presents at the Visitor Centre

The Visitor Information Centre by Pembroke Lodge is a treasure trove of cards and presents for all ages, and all profits go to conservation projects in the Park.



**The 2018 Friends' Calendar** (£7.50) showcases the Park as a National Nature Reserve.

The calendar includes 52 beautiful photos from 30 talented photographers, many of whom go into the Park before dawn and after dusk to capture their images to amaze and delight us.

**Christmas cards and many other ideas for presents – our willow deer are delightful –** are also on sale at the Visitor Centre so do pop in for your gifts and cards (5 mixed for £3.50 or one for 80p), and so further support the Park.

The Visitor Centre is open every day except Christmas Day – 11am to 3pm from October to March. *We can only accept cash or cheques. We hope to be able to offer credit/debit card facilities soon.*

New this year is **the DVD** (£5.00) of our award-winning film **Richmond Park: National Nature Reserve** presented by Sir David Attenborough. As well as the film, the DVD has several exclusive extras from the launch including the Sir Trevor McDonald interview with Sir David.



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It is important to us to support the community with whom we work, and we are delighted to sponsor the Friends of Richmond Park. Contact us at our offices in Putney, Kingston and Central London or visit our website.

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**Front cover photo:** Stag by Pen Ponds by Nigel Jackman

## RIP: Wendy Macaulay and Douglas Reynolds MBE

Last June we sadly lost two of the Friends' greatest stalwarts: co-founder Wendy Macaulay and former Chairman Douglas 'Doug' Reynolds

### Wendy Macaulay



In 1961, Wendy Macaulay and Mary Gueritz were discussing the urbanisation of Richmond Park and decided to take action. Thus was the Friends of Richmond Park born and Wendy was elected Hon. Secretary.

Some of Wendy's earliest memories included watching Crystal Palace on fire from the Park and listening to the bands playing at the Bandstand near Richmond Gate. She saw military units housed in the Park during the War and Pen Ponds drained and camouflaged to prevent their use as a navigational aid to bombers.

Wendy remained active in local affairs, supporting Liberal causes and the Richmond 'Good Neighbours' scheme. The last survivor of the original Friends, she died at the age of 92.

### Douglas Reynolds MBE

Doug Reynolds, who died aged 96, was known to many as a councillor and he and his wife, Doris, became the borough's first Labour Mayor and Mayoress in 1974/5.

Doris introduced him to the Friends of Richmond Park and he was Chairman from 1993 to 1999 but also well-known for his walks and talks about the Park's history and wildlife. On retirement in 2010, he calculated that he'd led 250 walks and given over 485 talks!

In 2013, Doug was awarded the MBE for services to the community with this citation: *"Doug has done more than anyone else to increase public knowledge of the special quality of Richmond Park and the need to protect it"*.

Chair of the Friends, Ron Crompton, said, *"Wendy and Doug will be sadly missed; as well as being campaigners who passionately cared about the Park, they were hugely respected and loved by all the Friends who met and worked with them"*.



## Friends' Film wins award!

The Friends film with Sir David Attenborough, *Richmond Park – National Nature Reserve* – won the top Gold award at the prestigious EVCom Clarion Awards for charity films in July and was shown at the Barnes Film Festival in September. Over 8,000 flyers encouraging people to watch the film online were distributed by 35 Friends volunteers to households in areas around the Park during September and October.

By the time you read this, the film should also be available to view on a screen attached to the side of the kiosk outside Pembroke Lodge gates, which we hope will attract occasional visitors to the Park.

The film has now been seen by 60,000 people via social media and over 100,000 in the seven TV broadcasts on London Live. We have also started to distribute DVDs to local schools. Our thanks to all the volunteers who have helped in promoting the film and to those members who have promoted it personally to friends and relations.

## Sponsorship of the Friends

For the last two years the Friends has been sponsored by Russell-Cooke, a top 100 law firm based in Putney and Kingston. We are delighted they have renewed their sponsorship for another two years. They are joined by Thames Water which is responsible for the public water supply and waste water treatment in the areas around Richmond Park.

Sponsorship income provides the Friends with additional funds for conservation projects and gives us guaranteed funding for multi-year projects.

Sponsoring the Friends enables the sponsors to reach people in the area around the Park and to associate their name with conservation of the Park. Sponsors have their name and logo on our website, Facebook page, newsletter, monthly e-bulletin and calendar. They can also have display material at one Friends' event a year. Sponsors do not influence our activities or campaigns in any way.

## Conservation Donations

Thames Water, who sponsored the launch of the Friends film at the Royal Geographic Society, has made a donation of £20,000 to the Friends for conservation projects. It will be earmarked for further work at Beverley Brook, including a 1-2 year programme of maintenance and small improvements and a new wildlife habitat at the confluence of Beverley Brook and the Pen Ponds outfall.

Earlier this year we also received a £5,000 donation from the local Kaye Pemberton Trust for conservation projects; they were an important sponsor of the Friends' film.

We are very grateful to both for these donations.

## We've got it covered!

### ...with the *Adopt-an-Area* litter-picking scheme

By Steve Sandham

"It's extraordinary what people leave behind in the Park," said Nicky Wood who found a dragon in the field by Two Storm Wood!



The new *Adopt an Area* scheme began in the summer. It was a suggestion made by some of the volunteers during the very successful Richmond Park Spring Clean in March (which we may repeat).

So we've divided the Park into 29 areas and each area has been adopted by Friends of Richmond Park, either individually, in couples or as families. We're so grateful for their amazing generosity in giving up their time to help keep the Park looking in great shape and virtually litter free. The volunteers are working in partnership with The Royal Parks and their teams of full time litter pickers.

With regular feedback from the volunteers, we're able to see just what a difference the additional resource is making to the environment.

Christopher Hedley, covering area 20, has found an assortment of items, including "metal off a bike or car, food and sweet wrappers, plastic bags, a dog's tennis ball and poo bags."



PJ Greeves and friends, who cover area 3, have found that the haul can be quite variable: "The first time, all that I found were two small bits of paper, a chocolate bar wrapper and a cigarette butt." However, on the next occasion, which was after the summer bank holiday, Peter reported: "I filled a large Boots carrier bag with bottles, cans, tissues, and chocolate bar wrappers."

Matt Porter, area 21, says of one of his sessions: "Collected a full carrier bag of plastic bottles, sandwich bags, dog poo bags, energy sachets (chewed by some animal), wet wipes, a disposable BBQ and general litter. I have to say that I was shocked at people's thoughtlessness but it also endorses your brilliant scheme. Much of the debris was under trees in the little copses but also around the benches on viewpoints."

If you'd like to get involved, please email [litter@frp.org.uk](mailto:litter@frp.org.uk)

## Breeding birds – a mixed picture

Jan Wilczur and Richard Gray report



Like the curate's egg, nesting and breeding in the Park last summer was good in parts, with worrying disappointments but some surprising successes.

Despite a national decline in numbers of 75% over the last 40 years, skylark nesting territories were the highest recorded in the Park since 2009. Excellent early summer weather and efforts to alert visitors and dog owners to sensitive nesting sites may have turned the tide, although the number of successful

fledglings is not known. Hopefully, we'll hear Shelley's "blithe spirit" singing over the Park's grasslands for years to come.

Raptors also fared well: two hobbies fledged in mid-September, up to 18 young kestrels fledged and there was a notable first with common buzzards nesting and at least one young buzzard heard.



Sand martins were another significant first; a pair raising two young in the artificial nesting bank, installed in 2011. Stonechats, once extinct in the Park, saw 17 young in six broods, the best breeding season since at least 2000.

A major concern for the Park's Bird Group has been continuing poor breeding by water birds, particularly around Pen Ponds. Jan Wilczur's bird breeding bulletin noted:

- Mute swan: two young surviving from seven
- Greylag goose: two young, disappeared
- Mandarin duck: one fledged
- Mallard: one survived
- Pochard: no evidence of breeding
- Tufted duck: one young survived from 18
- Great crested grebe: failed to breed
- Moorhen: one fledged from 10 pairs
- Coot: one fledged from 10 pairs

*continued on next page...*

Photos: Skylark by Paula Redmond; Kestrel's first flight after leaving nest by Russell Ritchin

## Downstream Defender launched



Last summer, a new three-metre plastic 'Downstream Defender III System' and access chamber was installed onto an existing surface water drain next to Roehampton cafe car park. It is now preventing contaminated road-derived sediment from reaching the Beverley Brook. The defender was officially launched with a coffee and cake celebration.

The work is part of an on-going partnership project between The Royal Parks, the Friends of Richmond Park, the South East Rivers Trust, the Environment Agency and sponsors Coca-Cola. The aim is to improve the quality of the water and enhance the Beverley Brook and the species that rely on this watercourse.

*Photos by Clearwater Photography*



## Water leaks and Bishops Pond

The Royal Parks is continuing its work to reduce the number of leaks in the Park's water mains system, which are allowing chlorinated water to flow into the water course. As we've reported before, one of the leaks used to feed Bishops Pond and without it, the pond has dried up again this summer. Unfortunately there is no easy solution since the pond is not on a natural water course. Either run-off from elsewhere will need to be piped into the pond or we may all need to accept that in future it will be an 'ephemeral' pond – full after rainfall but partially or wholly dry the rest of the time, much like the pond near Roehampton Gate. Such ponds provide a specific habitat and so have ecological benefits, although they are not such an attractive landscape feature.

The Bird Group believes easy access around the banks of the ponds, little dense vegetation for safe nesting and dogs regularly playing in the water all make young birds extremely vulnerable.

However, the Heronry on Upper Pen Pond island continues to prosper with 12 young fledged and a nest also established on the Lower Pond island. The islands are safe from predators and attacks by dogs. The same is true of common terns and their floating rafts and an increase in numbers was recorded with five pairs raising eight young.



*Sand Martin by John Few*

# Bees and Wasps under your feet!

By Hugh Bradshaw



In the Park, as summer fades into autumn, it's hard to escape the frenzied attention of wasps as they seek a sugar rush. These are social wasps which, like honey and bumble bees, make nests and raise young colonially.

However, the Park is also home to over 150 species of solitary bee and wasp. As their name suggests, these insects do not live in colonies but rather make their own separate nests which can be in masonry, wood or the stems of vegetation but mostly they are made in tunnels in the ground. The sandy soil of the Park's acid grasslands provides an ideal environment for many of these insects.

Solitary bees come in different shapes and sizes but many look like small furry honeybees. They are important pollinators of wild flowers and also very helpful to farmers.

The mining bees are the most numerous group and dig tunnels up to 60cm long. The female then lays her eggs on small balls of pollen and nectar in separate cells within the tunnel. Although called solitary bees, where conditions are right, many bees can dig tunnels in close proximity causing huge aggregations of bees.

The Tawny mining bee emerges early in the year. Its distinctive ginger hue gives a splash of colour in the spring whereas the Ashy mining bee, in contrast, is monochrome with two broad ashy grey bands on its back. Some mining bees are tied to flower sources like the Ivy mining bee, a recent coloniser to England, or the nationally scarce Bryony mining bee which has also been recorded in the Park.



*Ashy mining bee by Ann Healey*



*Ivy mining bee by Ann Healey*



*Bee wolf wasp preying on a honey bee by Mike Waite*



Solitary wasps lead a much darker life. Unlike the bucolic existence of the solitary bee, the solitary wasp's lifecycle could come straight out of science fiction. Although adults generally feed on nectar (including flowering ragwort and bramble), the lava

must feed on flesh. Female solitary wasps therefore spend a lot of time hunting for other insects. Once located the prey is paralysed by a sting but this does not kill it. Instead it enables the female wasp to build up a cache of living food, which will not decay, in its burrow to feed its larva.

The Park's wasps include the nationally scarce Bee wolf wasp which preys on honeybees. Its tunnel can be up to a metre in length within which up to 100 honeybees may be cached.

The Red-banded sand wasp collects caterpillars and it can be found in the sandier areas of the Park. Because the sand wasp itself is not large but the caterpillar prey may be, it often has to drag its victim on foot back to the burrow. The females are not averse to piracy, raiding each other's nests to steal the stores of caterpillars.

Other solitary wasp species prey on different insects but much is still to be discovered about them. Undoubtedly there are new species of bee and wasp to be discovered in the Park.

*Top photos: Bee wolf wasp going to its tunnel by Nigel Jackman*

## Being the Calendar Girl!

by Vivienne Press

Producing the Friends' calendar is a wonderful role as I get to see around 400 beautiful images of the Park. I eagerly click open all the emails and if a photo makes me exclaim "oooooh" then it's a contender for one of the 13 main images! I also have the pleasure of getting to know some of the photographers, both amateur and professional, who kindly donate the images allowing the calendar to raise funds for conservation projects in the Park.



The Friends' calendar is unusual in that, instead of just 12, there are over 50 images. I am often asked – 'Isn't it difficult to choose the photos?' And yes, in that so many good photos can't be included. However, I have a plan! Firstly, the images must all clearly depict the relevant month, and secondly, the photos as a whole need to give a sense of the wide variety of wildlife in the Park, to reflect its status as a National Nature Reserve. The main images are chosen first and then the smaller images are chosen to complement them.

The 2018 calendar is the second one that I have put together and I have learnt a lot about working with the photos, laying them out and the perils of printing! This year we have reduced the number of main pages with more than one image from 5 to 3 as we hear that some of you love these and others prefer just one image. They do, however, give us the opportunity to include photos of different dimensions and close-up images that otherwise would not print well at full size. They also, of course, substantially increase the overall numbers of photos.

It takes around 6 months' work for the Calendar to emerge – from February to August. Next year, we will call for photos on 1 March with a deadline of 13 April. The call is placed in the Friends' e-bulletin and on our website, and emails are sent to all those photographers who have previously submitted photos. Guidelines as to how to name and send in your images are also placed on the Friends' website. However, please don't send images before March as it's only me and my computer receiving and sorting them – I will not be geared up to do this before March and don't want to mislay any!



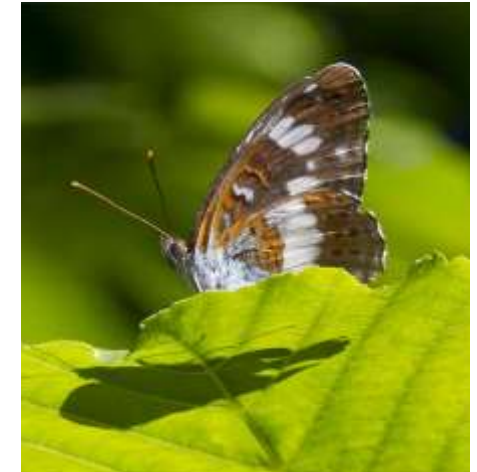
We tend to receive many more images for the autumn months than any other time of the year – so for the 2019 calendar, please send in lots for the other seasons. I look forward to another round of being amazed and delighted by your photos.

## Butterfly sightings

A very rare species of butterfly called 'the Map' was sighted in the summer. It is native to southern and eastern Europe but is slowly expanding to western Europe following the warmer weather. A large number of White Admirals have been seen near Petersham Park / Ham Lands and it's likely there is a breeding population that are making the most of mature Honeysuckle. Generally, the summer has seen more Marbled Whites and White Admirals than ever before.



*Marbled White butterfly by Ann Healey*



*White Admiral butterfly by Ann Healey*

## Paths in Pembroke Lodge Gardens

Many of the paths in the gardens have been resurfaced, especially those around King Henry's Mound and Poet's Corner. King Henry's Mound continues to get a stream of visitors to look at St Paul's through the telescope, many drawn by the publicity about the lost view. [www.frp.org.uk/news/1417-st-pauls-media-coverage](http://www.frp.org.uk/news/1417-st-pauls-media-coverage)

## Limb Drop

More trees than normal have suffered summer limb drop (falling branches) this year, but it is not clear why. Limb drop is poorly understood but often occurs after a period of very dry weather causes shrinkage and stress in the wood, resulting in breakage. This can be accentuated if the dry weather is followed by heavy rain, creating further loading on the limb. It is difficult to predict trees that may drop limbs and do preventative / precautionary work.

## Prince Charles launches new Royal Parks charity

On a warm summer's morning in Hyde Park, Prince Charles formally launched the new Royal Parks charity, of which he is Patron.

In his speech he said, "I remember as a very small child, being taken around Richmond Park with my great grandmother Queen Mary in her wonderful old, upright green Daimler, with her telling me to look out for the deer. As a result, the Royal Parks, in particular Richmond Park, are imprinted on my childhood memory in a very special way".

## Super nursery

As part of his visit, the Prince saw The Royal Parks' (TRP) new £5million 'Super Nursery'. The football pitch-sized glasshouse, which is currently being fitted out, will provide about 98 per cent of the 500,000 plants and shrubs needed across the eight Royal Parks. It replaces a much smaller 1960s nursery in Regent's Park and the increasing number of plants bought from commercial nurseries, saving TRP £200,000 a year.

The new glasshouse is split into 13 climate-controlled zones for the 2,000 varieties of plants that TRP requires. It also boasts a Wimbledon-style, climate controlled roof – the largest production greenhouse in the UK to use this innovative technology. It will help the acclimatisation of young plants so they do not have to be moved outside for hardening. The Royal Parks is generally considered among the foremost horticulture organisations in the country and the new nursery will help to consolidate this reputation.

## Park Life

### The Memoirs of a Royal Parks Gamekeeper

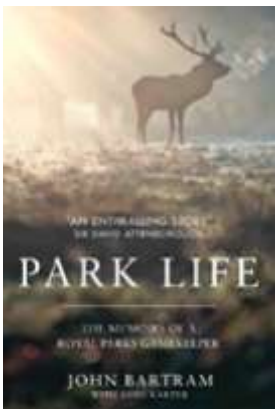
by John Bartram

*"It is an enthralling story of great interest to anyone, whether one-time visitor or knowledgeable naturalist who visits".*

Sir David Attenborough

John Bartram was Richmond Park's gamekeeper and senior wildlife officer for nearly forty years. Retiring last year, John kept a diary of his final year as guardian of the Park, sharing his remarkable stories of how the landscape and wildlife changes across the four seasons. With a foreword by David

Attenborough the book is a complete chronicle of the achievements of John Bartram's work in the Park. All of John's royalties from the book are being donated to The Royal Parks. Available from the Visitor Centre, Pembroke Lodge, Hardback, £16.99.



## Miss Sylva Boyden, the 'famous English airgirl' lands in Richmond Park in 1919

by Robert Wood

As part of the Friends' History Project, working in collaboration with the Hearsam Collection, volunteers are researching notable stories from the history of the Park. They have recently discovered an exciting escapade in a French newspaper cutting recently acquired by the Collection. It revealed that almost 100 years ago Richmond Park was the setting for a feat of pioneering skill and daring when, at the tender age of 17, Sylva Boyden became the first woman in England to jump from a great height and use a packed parachute to land safely.

Further research revealed that Sylva had come to the Park to watch the Royal Flying Corps test a new parachute, and quickly determined to have a go herself. To



get permission she lied about her age, claiming to be a mature 21, and giving her grandmother's name to avoid recognition. She clearly had a talent and made three successful balloon jumps that day with a 'Guardian Angel' parachute.

This redoubtable pioneer went on to become one of the first women to make parachute jumps from aircraft and became known as the 'famous English air-girl', following an interview by the New York Times. She appeared in RAF pageants and air shows in Britain and

Europe, often as the only female participant. During her career she made some 150 jumps, driven by the thrill of the experience, and by the desire to demonstrate the need to make life-saving parachutes compulsory equipment on aircraft.

Further such stories from the history of the Park can be found at the Hearsam Collection website: [www.hearsumcollection.org.uk](http://www.hearsumcollection.org.uk)

*Photo: Miss Sylva Boyden prepares to make a pioneering parachute jump from a balloon in Richmond Park in 1919. Hearsam Collection*

## New organiser for Friends' talks and courses

**Xanthi Giallou** has taken over organising our talks and courses from Peter Burrows-Smith. She is from the island of Kos in Greece, has been living in the area for three years and works as



a Senior Project Manager at the British Library. She is currently working on the programme for next year. We welcome her to the Friends.

## Newsletter people

**Production, Layout and Editor:** Vivienne Press

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**Proof reader:** Sally Wood

**Advisors:** Ron Crompton and Richard Gray

**Contact:** editor@frp.org.uk

## Enquiries

**Friends:** see [www.frp.org.uk](http://www.frp.org.uk). If your query is not answered here, please email [secretary@frp.org.uk](mailto:secretary@frp.org.uk)

**Park management:** contact Park Manager Simon Richards, 0300 061 2200 or email [Richmond@royalparks.gsl.gov.uk](mailto:Richmond@royalparks.gsl.gov.uk)

**Police non-emergency telephone number: 101**

## Membership and Subscriptions

**Membership renewals for those paying by cash are due on 1 January 2018**

If you wish to become a Friend, membership forms can be downloaded from our website [www.frp.org.uk/friends/get-involved](http://www.frp.org.uk/friends/get-involved), or picked up from the Visitor Centre at Pembroke Lodge or by emailing me at [membership@frp.org.uk](mailto:membership@frp.org.uk). Individual membership is £10 and household membership is £15.

Membership fees increased in 2015. **Please update your standing order if you have not already done this**, so you continue to receive the newsletter and bulletin, and continue to support the work of the Friends of Richmond Park.

If you are a member and don't receive the monthly Friends' bulletin by email and wish to do so, please email [bulletins@frp.org.uk](mailto:bulletins@frp.org.uk) with the subject 'Add to bulletin'. Please also include your first line of address and post code. You can easily stop it at any time.

If you change your email or home address then please let us know by emailing [membership@frp.org.uk](mailto:membership@frp.org.uk) and include your previous address.

With thanks  
Chris Mason, Membership Secretary

This newsletter is printed on paper which is 50% recycled and 50% from certified sustainable forests.

## Friends' Walks

All are welcome. Friends' Walks are free, last about two hours and start from a car park. All except Bird Walks are on Saturdays unless otherwise stated.

If you need more information or special support or help with the walk, please phone Ian McKenzie on 020 8943 0632 or email [walks@frp.org.uk](mailto:walks@frp.org.uk) in advance, or 07824 784335 only on the walk day itself. Also see our website: [www.frp.org.uk](http://www.frp.org.uk)

Please keep dogs under control.

### Date Starting at 10am from

2 December	Pen Ponds Car Park
26 December	Pembroke Lodge Car Park
6 January	Robin Hood Gate Car Park
3 February	Roehampton Gate Car Park
3 March	Kingston Gate Car Park
7 April	Sheen Gate Car Park

### Plus Informal Bird Walks

Every Friday at 9.30am from Pen Ponds coffee kiosk.

## Friends' Courses

Courses begin at 10.15am and are typically a 1-hour talk at Pembroke Lodge followed by a 1.5 to 2-hour walk in the Park. Courses are for members of the Friends only and do not need to be booked – just turn up. There is no charge and coffee and tea are provided. The following courses are planned, but at the time of printing we do not have dates. Please check on our website for more details of these and dates of other courses throughout the year: [www.frp.org.uk](http://www.frp.org.uk)

27 January	History and stories of Richmond Park: Ron Crompton (talk only)
17 February	Bird song 1: medium and large birds: Peter Burrows-Smith
17 March	Bird song 2: small birds and spring migrants: Peter Burrows-Smith



Discoverers is the Friends' activities programme for families. Join our mailing list for early notification of events. For full details visit <http://discoverers.frp.org.uk/> or

[/thefriendsofrichmondpark](https://www.instagram.com/thefriendsofrichmondpark)



*Looking at spider by Brendan Blake*

## Friends' AGM

14 April 10.30am  
at Kings House School



[www.frp.org.uk](http://www.frp.org.uk)

 /thefriendsofrichmondpark

 @FRPtweets



*Stonechat by Paula Redmond*

Richmond Park is a National Nature Reserve,  
a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a  
Special Area of Conservation



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