

Friends of Buchan Country Park

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Issue 3

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Chair's Report

Many thanks to all who joined since our last newsletter. We have now reached the half century in membership numbers but would like more! The core committee would especially welcome some additional support. We meet monthly, on Tuesday evenings, at the Centre. Do come and join us!

EASTER EGG HUNT

To support the Park, we ran the advertised Easter activity. Sadly, we couldn't be quite as creative as Phil Haskell but still managed to entertain a good few children.

ART IN THE PARK, 20th May

Our first 'big event' was a great success – *as evidenced by the photos on the website.*

Friends provided materials for three activities: Land Art, Collage work and Pavement artistry. These were taken up with enthusiasm. Other activities included Face painting and Story-telling. There were 4 different craft workers based in the Centre and a wood-turner (with marquee!) at the Boathouse. Music and Dance were provided by Rawbones and Anocalypse Now. Crawley Arts Society turned up in force – working around the Lake. They also gave some 'lessons' and judged our primary school's art competition - for which we had over 60 entries. A fun activity was a flip chart of cartoons, drawn by Dave Fawcett, where visitors could write their comments about the Park. A cheerful way to get some nice feedback.



FUN DOG SHOW, 24th June

This was another extremely popular event – with a good number of follow-up e-mails (as well as enthusiastic comments on the day) asking us to make this an annual event. We were fortunate to have the sponsorship of Surrey Pets and The Hound Lounge, (providing prizes and judges).

Classes most heavily subscribed were those in the 'best' category but some good sports provided great entertainment in the 'waggiest tail' challenge and the Fancy Dress competition. Loads of lovely photos on the website. See Mick's report below.



Educational Support

We continued to provide assistance to the education service when volunteers were requested.

FUN DOG SHOW Mick Shelley

The first ever FOBCP FUN DOG SHOW was held on Sunday June 25th 2012 on the picnic area by the lake. The weather forecast had not been promising but in the event it was just right for a dog show - not too hot for our canine friends, not too cold for us humans, and importantly no rain to disrupt things.

The first event, Best Puppy, got under way bang on time at 12 noon with a good number of entries and other classes followed at half hourly intervals. The Fancy dress was worthy of a special mention, the dozen or so entries providing much merriment for all the spectators, with everything from ballerinas to cowboys on display. Ned, a huge St Bernard, was the eventual winner dressed up as a cross between a ballerina and a fairy I think. The phrase Fairy Elephant comes to mind! Every class had plenty of entries and the winners of each were given the opportunity to take part in a Best in Show finale at the end of proceedings, the lucky winner being a cocker spaniel.



Fancy Dress Winner - Ned

The judging was undertaken by Barbara Handscomb from Sussex Pets who kindly sponsored the whole event and provided all the 'doggy' prizes, and Stefan Franks, professional dog groomer and owner of The Hound Lounge who provided the prize of a free grooming session for the fortunate Best in Show winner (dog, not the owner). Our MC for the day, Steve Barker did a brilliant job keeping us all informed as the show progressed. Charlotte Barker took charge of rosette and prize distribution, making sure the dogs received their just rewards! Apart from the dog show classes there was a stall set up by Sussex Pets where various canine treats and equipment were available to buy, a display of the grooming services offered by The Hound Lounge and a bric-a-brac stall. There was face painting for the children as well, ably done by Vicky and her daughter Nina.

The behaviour of everyone who attended and their dogs was exemplary and it appeared that a good time was had by all; it certainly lived up to its name of a FUN DOG SHOW. Finally a big thank you to the committee members Judy, Claire, Tim, Shirley and Vicky, park rangers (especially Robin), Lorna, Andy and others too many to name, who put in hours of hard work in organising and running the show. Thanks to Sid as well for ensuring the car parking ran smoothly. Thanks to everyone who came and supported the event, I hope you enjoyed it and I for one can't wait till the next (bigger and better?) FOBCP FUN DOG SHOW.

A place not a person this time - the star of this issue's 'all about' interview is

Buchan Park!

Was the Park originally part of a private estate?

Yes. In Victorian times the park was part of a large estate, considerably bigger than it is now! It was owned by a Mr Saillard, who built a mansion to live in (now Cottesmore School). The Saillard family were also responsible for the creation of both ponds in Buchan. More information can be found in the Countryside Centre, including maps and photographs.

Why is the Park designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest?

The name of the SSSI site is 'Buchan Hill Ponds'. The site was designated a SSSI because the ponds are the best example of Wealden hammer ponds in West Sussex and they are home to rich dragonfly fauna. More information can be found at www.sssi.naturalengland.org.uk/

What is the oldest tree in the Park and how old is it estimated to be?

This would be the very large beech tree in Middle Covert. It is in the woodland to the back of the picnic site. We estimate the tree to be around 150 years old, although it is difficult to be exact.

How deep is the lake and does it contain any large fish?

Douster Pond, with the boathouse in the corner, is the largest of the ponds at Buchan Country Park. At its deepest, the water is 12.5 metres deep! Douster Pond is home to a number of fish, including Roach, Rudd, Perch, Bream, Sunfish, Carp, Pike, Tench and Crucian Carp. The fishing in Douster is known to be difficult but Crawley Angling Society has reported Carp and "monster" Pike up to 30lb.

What is the rarest bird seen in the Park?

The rarest birds seen in the park of note include Wood Warbler, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker and Nightjars. Buchan is also home to a number of more common birds that are just as special to see including Greater Spotted and Green Woodpeckers, Spotted Flycatcher, Great Crested Grebe, Sparrow hawk, Tawny Owl and many more!



What caused the craters seen around the Park?

The craters around the park are reminders of a time where Iron mining was a common practise around Sussex. We have more information and drawings inside the Countryside Centre here at the park.

What are the long 'trenches' seen at various places in the Park?

The long trenches seen in Buchan are from World War One. Troops were trained to build trenches here before going to war. We also have areas in the park where men would practise their shooting. Rifle butts (that can still be seen today) were created to stop the bullets from travelling too far and injuring someone in case the shooters missed their targets. Hence the name of this area being Target Hill. Inside the centre you can come and see some of the bullets that were used, and believe me, they are heavy!

Finally, is it true that the thatched Stone Age dwelling just erected in the Wild Garden is going to accommodate a tribe of previously unknown primitive WSCC Rangers recently found living in a remote area of the Park?

Haha! This rumour has been circulating for some time! The answer is of course no, although the Rangers on site will now have somewhere to sleep if they are ever kicked out of their cottages by their wives!

Answers kindly provided by Ranger Tom Burns.

BUSH CRAFT DAY AT BUCHAN PARK Mick Shelley

On The 24th of July my two granddaughters Ellie and Charlie went on one of the Bush craft days organized by the staff at Buchan Country Park. It was a beautiful sunny day and the event, which took place in a 'secret' area within the Park, was well attended by boys and girls aged around 8 to 14 years of age. They were under the supervision of Tom, Phil and Simon, three of the park rangers who gave them instruction in various countryside skills, including shelter building, fire lighting, tool making and open air cooking. They even made their own bread! Over to Ellie and Charlie to describe the highlights of the day in their own words.....

*Robin shows he really can 'make fire'.
(Slightly dodgy place to do it?!!!)*



I really enjoyed the Bush craft Day because there were lots of really, really good things to do like making popcorn on the fire, building shelters and fire lighting. The most enjoyable was making popcorn, it was delicious and yummy. All the Rangers looked after us. I think they did a brilliant job.

Charlie, aged 10.

I thought the Bush craft Day was amazing! Shannon, Caitlin and I made a camp shelter out of sticks and ferns and the Rangers judged it. We got a 9/10 score! Also we made bread with Phil and it was delicious. We shared it with the other people there. I really liked the Rangers; they were nice to me and helped us all out. Thank you Rangers - for making it a great day. **Ellie, aged 10.**

Keep your eye on the notice board for more events for all the family within the Park; they are well worth checking out and participating in!

This issue's challenge is a photographic one!

Send us your photos of

A Buchan Park Tree with a Face!

Alright – best I could come up with at short notice ...but can you do better? Send your photos with name and contact number + say where in the Park your picture was taken.

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Many thanks to Mick Shelley and family for providing the major contributions to this newsletter.