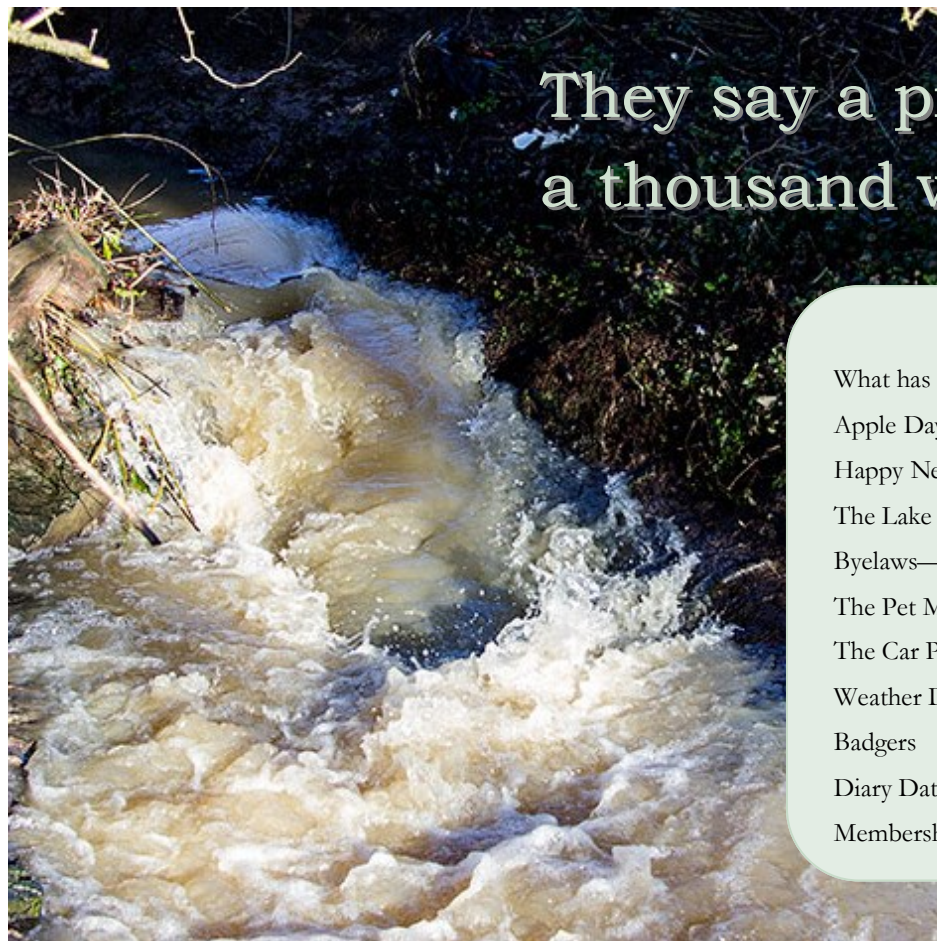


Newsletter

No. 8, Winter 2014

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR FRIENDS



They say a picture is worth
a thousand words.....

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What has been happening?

There's a lot to catch up on... life is busy and it's only now that we've had a chance to produce the Newsletter.

Walks in the park

There have been two very successful walks in the park, The Spring Walk to see the bluebells in Gusted Wood and the Summer Walk which included a chance to see the new hibernacula. Between thirty and forty friends joined in each walk, the weather was kind and we all learned from the experts who accompanied the walks. There are more photos on the website and on Facebook.

Sadly we had to cancel our Halloween Walk at the last moment. Severe weather warnings were issued by the Met Office, with very high winds forecast. As the walk was due to take place in New England Wood we could not risk the possibility of fallen trees or branches causing injury. I'm sure the special spooky effects will be put to good use next year! More walks are planned for 2014, check the Diary Dates on page 7.



The Annual General Meeting

Once again we were able to hold our Annual General Meeting at Grove Wood Primary School for which thanks go to Mr Green, Headteacher. Thank you to all those who attended the meeting, it's lovely to be able to match the names to some faces.

All comments have been taken on board in particular with reference to planting a tree for the Friends. We are pleased to be able to plant a tree and place a bench in the South West corner of the Lake Meadow. And a short dedication ceremony will take place during the Spring Walk. More information on page 7. The minutes of the meeting are available on the website.





Hands on in the park

Our first Volunteer session was a great success! The small team was very productive, and managed to clear all the required habitat in the Firing Range Hollow. This is a rare Habitat in the park and is believed to be home to a number of solitary burrowing bees and wasps and other insects. It was a good opportunity for friends to catch up and work together to directly benefit the Park.

This work is vital as it increases the diversity of species and the more species rich the Park becomes the more possibilities of funding improve!

Everyone had a great time and to top it off keen eyed Friend, Nick, spotted a young Slow Worm basking in the sunshine in the newly cleared area.



The Kirste 5 Memorial Race

The Kirste Five race, organised by Benfleet Running Club, took place again this year with participants running from Grove Wood Primary School, up to Hockley Woods, down through The Scrubs, round the lake and back to the school via New England Woods. We were delighted to be able to support this excellent cause in memory of Kirste Bowman. £8,500 was raised and shared between MacMillan Nurses and Bosom Pals. A video of the race was produced which includes some lovely scenes of the park.



The Big Lunch

Rochford District Council invited local organisations that had helped with litter picking and recycling activities to a big lunch in the park. Friends have taken part in litter picking in the park and were invited too—a very pleasant afternoon.



The Damn Dead Circus

Despite the torrential rain the festival went ahead in the field adjacent to the park and judging by the comments all those who attended had a wonderful time. Fears that the festival would overflow into the park were unfounded. This may well have been due to the weather which sent us the worst floods in the area for fifty years! We noticed that two emergency exits appeared in the temporary fencing a few days before the festival, opening up onto the bridleway in the park. We wonder whether there was planning permission for the exits and whether they are permanent.





Our second Apple Day was a great success.

It was a bright and very windy day and committee members were relieved to see that when the day dawned the marquees erected the previous afternoon were still standing!

Yardarm Folk Orchestra set the tone for the event and played all day with just a short break filled by the talented James Berryman .

The 'Tea Tent' was busy all day and visitors were able to enjoy tea and home made cakes in the sunshine. Meanwhile the Scarecrow Competition attracted more than forty entries, competing to win the "Schools Prize" and the "Made on the Day" Prize. We would like to thank our judges, Councillor David Merrick and local Headteacher Andy Howe.

This year we were delighted to be able to put on a Fun Dog Show thanks to Acres Way Kennels. You can find all the results and photos on the website.

Billericay Dog Training School gave a very impressive display of agility and obedience, which showed that the owners are just as well trained as the dogs!

Apple pressing proved very popular with a practical display of pressing and tasting and the tractors and engines brought to the event by Rochford Hundred Vintage Tractor and Engine Club were wonderful.

There was much more to see and do, including face painting, raffle, calendars, honey, dormice. See the photos at the end of the newsletter and the video on the website. We were delighted that this year we covered our costs and made a profit!

We would like to thank the Scouts and the Air Cadets who were so helpful managing the parking, litter picking, running and fetching etc. We would also like to thank RDC for providing the tables, chairs and toilets.

Also, a big thank you to everyone who helped set up the marquees and then were still there when it came to taking them down again, and to those who manned stalls, organised the Scarecrow Competition, made cakes, served tea, pressed apples and painted faces.

Put this date in you diary for next year!

Apple Day

Sunday 28th September 2014



Happy New Year!

Yes, the New Year's Day Walk did take place, and some hardy souls met in the car park at Edwards Hall and trudged in the rain and the mud through Hockley Woods to The Bull to meet with Friends and wish everyone a Happy New Year. We were all really glad that we made the effort, it was worth it. Great fun to see everyone and raise a glass!



The Lake

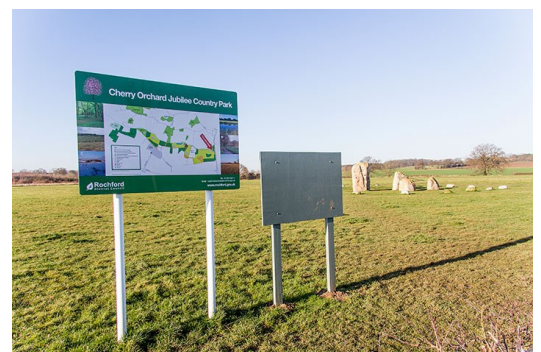
Having received permission from the Environment Agency netting operations were carried out during the Autumn and the majority of the large fish have now been removed from the lake to new homes.

The fencing around the lake has given the banks a chance to recover as you can see from the photograph and as soon as the weather permits the level of water in the lake can be lowered to allow further repair and maintenance to the banks. This will allow the lake to be managed broadly in line with Option 3 of the proposals for the lake that Friends were asked to comment on, which was to aim to re-profile the lake to maximise vegetation establishment and create a reed bed at the eastern end if depth of water will allow. Lowering the water level to a more acceptable depth will be critical if a reed bed is to be established.



Byelaws

We still do not have any confirmation that the Government have agreed the Byelaws proposed by Rochford District Council. RDC Legal Department are in discussion with the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) with regard to laws prohibiting Chinese Lanterns and whether or not such laws should be included. RDC Legal Department are optimistic that they will be allowed to include such a law in view of the danger to wildlife and the fire risk of falling lanterns. We are encouraged by the appearance of a new notice board by the car park, with plenty of room on it for the Byelaws and other notices.



The Pet Memorial Wall

In the enclosed area to the south of the car park visitors will have seen the Pet Memorial Wall. The oak timbers still have to be treated and grass seed will be sown on the bank behind the wall.



The Car Park

Although there are still some pot holes to beware of the condition of the car park surface is much better than it was at this time last year. And the grass verges have not been used and ploughed up as they were previously. We are now looking forward to the blossom on the cherry trees that border the car park.

Weather damage

High winds before Christmas caused some damage and limbs were torn from trees. These were quickly dealt with and paths cleared.

However little can be done to mitigate the trouble caused by the amount of rainfall in recent weeks. Most of the meadows are water logged and footpaths are mostly impassable. Some road planings have been lain at gateways, but it has mostly been too little and too late to make much difference.



STOP PRESS: Jan. 26-2014 - TREES FELLED BY HIGH WINDS ACROSS BRIDLEWAY. TAKE CARE.

Badgers



Badgers have been very busy in recent weeks. Beware of a number of deep holes just off the old Southend bridleway at one of the casual entrances to the park just before Toomeys. The ground there is clay and is very slippery at the moment.

In a different area badgers have tunnelled under the bridleway in the park. As this could compromise the strength and safety of the bridleway RDC are seeking advice as to how to deal with it. At present the hole has been marked off with warning tape.

Badgers and their setts are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, which makes it illegal to kill, injure or take badgers or to interfere with a badger sett. The 1992 Act specifically defines a sett as "any structure or place which displays signs indicating current use by a badger". Interference with a sett includes blocking tunnels or damaging the sett in any way.

Diary Dates

January - Membership Renewal.

If you became a member of the Friends of Cherry Orchard Park on or before January 2013 it's time to renew your membership. You can do it on line at the membership link below. Thank you!

April 27th—The Bluebell Walk, from the Cherry Orchard Car Park to Gusted Woods. This will include the dedication of a bench and tree provided by the Friends.

Bring your Camera Summer Walk—date to be confirmed.

Volunteer Sessions/Workshops

We hope to have more hands on sessions this year, which could include:-

- Tree planting Spring
- Lizard/Snake Home building Summer
- Bird box building Autumn
- Christmas wreath making Winter

Membership

You can now become a member of the Friends group and pay the £5 membership fee, on line, go to <http://www.friendsofcherryorchardpark.org/membership.html>
A membership form can also be downloaded (attached for hard copy readers)
Please share it with friends, family or neighbours.

Contacts

Website:- www.friendsofcherryorchardpark.org

Facebook:- [Facebook.com/Friendsofcherryorchardpark](https://www.facebook.com/Friendsofcherryorchardpark)

Graham Hutchinson, Chairman of Friends of Cherry Orchard Park
graham@chpkpmtrs.demon.co.uk

Heather Meggison, Senior Environmental Assistant
Rochford District Council, 01702 318057

On-line, RDC—http://www.rochford.gov.uk/leisure_and_tourism/woodlands_and_parks/cherry_orchard_country_park.aspx



Contribute to our Newsletter Please send your photos, letters, articles, news or suggestions to cherry.orchard@tesco.net for inclusion in the next edition of the Newsletter. Thank you!

Apple Day 2013

Snap Shots

