

Newsletter

Cherry blossom in Cherry Orchard Park.

At last, Spring is here and everything is in a rush to catch up. The wild cherry trees in the plantations have been heavy with blossom and the park is living up to its name.

It's a walk in the park!

A series of seasonal walks have been planned. Join us and find out more about the park. *Cont. on page 2*



A strong fence and whips of mixed native hedging mark the area that will become the Pet Memorial Garden. The next stage will be the preparation of the ground and seeding for the wild flower meadow within the boundary.

Cherry Orchard Country Park
SPRING WALKS

Sunday May 19th
Walks start at 10am
from the car parks

**Cherry Orchard Way or
Grove Road, Rayleigh**

**Our expert leaders will be there to tell you
about the wildlife, plants and trees**
The walks will last about 2½ hours with
a half way break to meet the other group

Everyone welcome NO CHARGE

For more details of the joining points, routes
and about the park please visit our website
www.friendsofcherryorchardpark.org

There may be uneven ground with gentle inclines at times. Please wear suitable clothes and stout shoes

Inside this issue

Dates for your Diary	2 and 3
The Next Family Event	3
The Lake	4
Byelaws	5
The Music Festival	5
Snapshots from Friends	6
Contacts and Membership	6

Dates for your diary

Sunday, May 19th—We hope to see lots of you on our first walk of the year. There will be two starting places, Grove Wood Car Park and Cherry Orchard Way Car Park. Choose which ever is most convenient for you. Bring the family, bring your friends and neighbours. There is no charge and there will be an expert on hand to tell you about the park and answer questions. Well behaved dogs are also welcome. The walk will start at 10:00 am from both car parks and we will meet up in The Scrubs by Gusted Hall. With spring being so late there may be a few bluebells left for us to see. *(More information on page 1 and the website.)*

June 9th at Sutton Hall. Old Tyme Farming and Craft Fayre

Friends of Cherry Orchard Park will be at the Olde Tyme Farming and Craft Fayre which is organized by the Rochford Hundred Vintage Tractor and Engine Club and as well as a chance to see the wonderful tractors and stationary engines there will be gun dog displays, duck herding, crafts, refreshments and much more. This is the first time we have been invited to be at the Fayre and we are looking forward to it very much.



July 3rd The FOCOP Annual General Meeting.

Thanks go to Grove Wood Primary School for once again allowing us to use a large room in the school to hold our Annual General Meeting. We hope lots of you will come to this public meeting—it's an opportunity to ask questions and make suggestions. **EVERYONE WELCOME—SEE YOU THERE!**

July 28th—The 2nd Kirste 5 Memorial Race—Benfleet Running Club

Last year's race in memory of Kirste was a great success. This year The Friends of Cherry Orchard Park want to help.



We will be in the park on the day with the trailer and would like to see as many of you as possible ready to encourage and cheer on the runners. Kirste Bowman (nee Snellgrove) trained regularly running in the park and in Hockley Woods. Sadly she was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2005, and underwent six bouts of chemotherapy and radio therapy.

Sadly Kirste lost her battle and passed away on February 9th 2012, at the age of just 42 after raising more than £50,000 for breast cancer charities by running 23 marathons while fighting the disease.

Last year hundreds of runners, many in fancy dress, took part and £7,000 was raised for MacMillan Cancer Support and Bosom Pals. **Come to the park and support the runners**—all dogs on leads near the runners please.



Sunday 18th August — Summer Walk

This is the second of our planned walks and we will have more details for you nearer the day. If you have any suggestions about parts of the park you would like to explore please let us know.

Sunday 27th October—Halloween Walk . Starts late afternoon, bring your torch, watch out for bats and moths.

January 1st 2014—A New Year's Day Walk This is still a tentative suggestion, but could involve a brisk walk to clear away the cobwebs and include a visit to the Bull, Hockley to revive and celebrate the new year. We'd like to know how many of you would be interested.

The next family event!

Remember Apple Day?

It was a great success despite the worst weather. It was cold, windy and had been raining steadily for a week. Everything was ready, cream teas purchased, band booked, scarecrows prepared and waiting. Then, at the last possible moment a 'pitch inspection' took place and the whole thing was almost called off.

As you can imagine, there were gasps of horror and sinking hearts. We were all sure it would be OK, we could do it, we wouldn't float away. So it was agreed; OK the event can go ahead. Amongst sighs of relief marquees began appearing on the site, bunting was hung and tables and chairs began arriving.

And it was all alright.

In fact it was more than alright—it was a real success.

A pat on the back all round. For a first attempt at organising an event Apple Day was a prize winner. We achieved one of the groups Aims—to act as a focus for bringing the community together. Children helped to plant the Guardian Tree and Councillor David Merrick judged the Scarecrow Competition. Local schools made some spectacular entries and many more were made on the day.

So—will we do it again? YES!

The committee is already making plans for an event in the Autumn of this year. No fixed date yet but we will let you know in plenty of time.

Meanwhile—the Scarecrow Competition will take place again, so please don't throw away those old trousers, hats, jackets, shirts. We can 'recycle' them into scarecrows and will collect if necessary.



The Lake



New Year's Day 2013, early morning.



November 2012

Cormorants play a useful role at the lake, though camping and litter is still a problem.

Over the winter months and through to early spring a flock of thirty or more cormorants visited the lake on an almost daily basis. They were no doubt attracted by the large number of fish illegally dumped into the lake over the years and which have been multiplying steadily.

Fishing in the lake has been a problem in recent years, as irresponsible fishermen climbing over the fenced conservation end of the lake and camping have destroyed the planting in that area that attracted and protected nesting birds.

Recently however anglers have been having little success. It seems that there are very few fish left in the lake, thanks to the cormorants' healthy appetite.

Camping by the lake however is still a problem. It's not the campers—it's the mess they leave behind. If they realised this only the hardy early morning dog walkers and joggers would ever know they had been there.

GOOD NEWS though. Police attended the lake regarding a 'party' some teenage campers were having. The youths names were taken and they were move off. Some underage youths were taken home to their parents.

In the meantime, a big THANK YOU to those Friends who regularly 'litter pick' in the park and around the lake. Although during the week we can inform RDC customer services who promptly send clear up teams, at weekends the park is still maintained as far as possible for visitors. Volunteers use their regular walks in the park to carry out this unpleasant task, clearing up after Friday and Saturday night campers, who leave behind their broken tents, pizza boxes, vodka bottles, beer cans, wood for camp fires and even used toilet tissue.

May Bank Holiday Monday, bulky litter tidied up ready for RDC to collect.



Byelaws

In February this year we received a copy of the Draft Byelaws for the parks and open spaces within the Rochford district, sent to us again as the next part of the local council's consultation exercise. All members were sent a copy, either by email or by post and given the opportunity to comment again on this next draft.

A response was collated from all the comments and this was sent to Angela Law, at the Legal, Estates and Member Services Department of the council. Ms Law acknowledge receipt of our response and said that she would be keeping us updated at each stage of the process.

The final draft has now been sent to the Department for Communities and Local Government for approval. We have been warned that this is an extremely slow procedure and it will be surprising if the Byelaws are in place and displayed in the park before the end of the year.

Music Festival adjacent to the park.

Many of you were concerned to learn that a music festival is to be held over two days every August Bank Holiday in a field adjacent to the Bridleway in the park. An application for a licence for live music, dancing and the sale of alcohol was made to Rochford District Council .

Several objections were made by Eastwood residents, Southend Councillors and Friends of Cherry Orchard Park.

We were very pleased to be invited to the Hearing. The applicants were able to assure the committee that every precaution will be taken and that all health and safety measures will be in place to ensure that the event will run smoothly. Parking will be available at the site and no glass will be allowed on the site, all drinks being served in plastic beakers. No alcohol will be allowed to be taken onto or off the site. There will be litter sweeps at the end of each day and at the end of the event. An example of music typical of the festival was played at the hearing and we heard three quiet folk guitar pieces. We were also informed that the event would take the form of a Day of the Dead celebration, a Mexican folk festival for all the family.

The Licensing Subcommittee, after listening to the Lawyer representing the festival organisers and taking into consideration all the concerns of the objectors, decided to grant the Licence.

We felt at the time that the event sounded interesting and that it would be well managed. There is still concern however that it may prove to be in the wrong place, being squeezed between the country Park and a residential area. We hope that the measures the organisers have taken will ensure that residents are not too inconvenienced and that the park will be protected from 'festival overspill'.

Damn Dead Circus

After the Hearing details of the 2013 festival quickly appeared on Facebook and we now learn that it is called the Damn Dead Circus. There is also a list of the 18 bands that will be playing over the two day weekend.

More details about ticket prices etc. are available on Facebook.

Photos taken at last years' smaller event.



Snap Shots

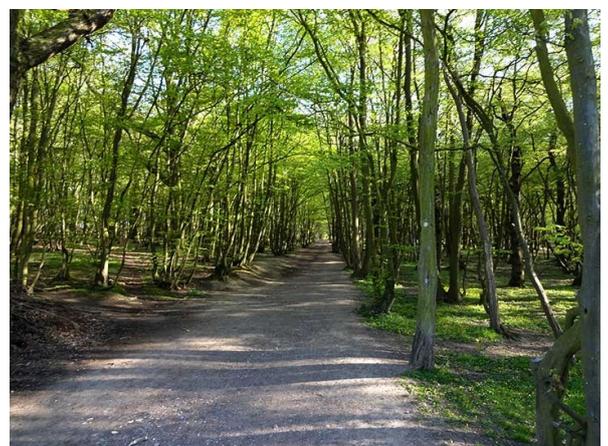
Thanks to Friends for sending in their photos for the Newsletter.



Tia



The Guardian Tree in the orchard
April 2013



Spring Photos from Lynne Hodson—May 2013

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

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!