



# Skylarks

Winter is fast approaching but we are already planning next year's events to keep you entertained in the Wick Country Park. All the latest news from the Friends of the Wick Country Park is here to keep you up-to-date with all that is happening in the park.

## Message from the Chair

Another successful year is nearly over and our last event of 2012 is the Yuletide Ramble on the 9<sup>th</sup> December, look forward to seeing you there.

Thank you to the committee and all the volunteers that have helped throughout the year to make our events at the park run smoothly. I wish you all a Happy Christmas and a prosperous new year and hope to see you at our events in 2013.

**Eileen Cattell**  
Chairperson

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## Improvements to the Park

Have you noticed 'goings on' at the pond by the Pavilion? With money kindly donated by Veolia and the Jubilee Celebration Fund, plus £1,000 provided by the 'Friends' work will start at the end of November to improve the Dipping Pond. I guess at first it may look a little bare, but by the spring new growth will be seen. With the risk of it drying out removed it will be a real attraction for plants and wildlife. In the summer we hope schools, groups and clubs will make good use of this fun and educational habitat. Anyone interested in arranging a visit should firstly contact Mark, the Park Ranger.

## New benches as well!



(More details on this can be found on page 4!)

## **Please do not forget:-**

**The Yuletide Ramble & AGM on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> December, starting at 2pm!**

Finish the year with a sociable walk around the park with the Ranger and *Friends*. Enjoy some mulled wine and mince pies, stay for the AGM, meet the committee and have your say about the park.



**Our last event of 2012 but our list of events for 2013 will be published soon!!**



## **Plus a reminder for 2013**

It is that time of year again - yes all those new year renewals. The most important one of course being the renewal of your Friends of the Wick Country membership!

Nikki our dedicated Membership Secretary is on the case. We do hope that you will continue to support the *Friends*. Please use the form enclosed to renew your membership.

## Nature Quest August 2012

As the Olympics drew to a close the Friends of the Wick Country Park committee were hard at work preparing for Nature Quest. The pond had to be cleared of excess weed, the catering organised, stalls booked, craft activities planned and the Tombola prepared to name a few of the tasks at hand. Everyone pulled together to make it yet again a successful and fun event. But this year things were slightly different as on the day I was going to attend as a member of the public. A big treat for me to come with my son, daughter in law and two young grandchildren Erin and Harry aged 5 and 3. They had been bug hunting with Granny and Grandpa at the park before and were very excited.

It was a hot sunny day and we were grateful for the gazebo providing shade near the dipping pond. With an identification sheet at hand Erin and Harry were soon dipping their nets in the water and discovering what fascinating life lived below the surface. There was even more excitement when Erin was able to match some of the creatures in her net with the beautifully drawn pictures on her ID sheet.



There was so much more to do, so after a while the nets were passed to other enthusiastic children as we headed into the Pavilion. Here we had drinks and biscuits and tried our hand at butterfly pictures. The craft materials were plentiful and all provided free. I had noticed at previous events that the adults enjoy the craft activity as much as the children and my son was no exception. After that it was time for Granny to get out her purse, confident that any money raised would be spent on future events or enhancing the park. With just a £1 both children had very nice prizes and very big grins from the Prize Every Time stall. I was not so lucky on the Tombola.



Next it was time for lunch and we decided to sit on the benches provided via Lottery Funding by the Friends and have our picnic. This was also the time to try answering the nature quiz we had been given. Lunch was soon over as the children were keen to have a go at the Bug Hunting. Once they were given nets and shown the sweeping action they were soon striding through the long grass. After a few bugs and grasshoppers had been caught, examined and released we headed for the lake. The children had some bread they were keen to share with the ducks. The only disappointment of the day was no waterfowl were to be seen.

By now the children were getting tired and Harry's afternoon nap was due, so there was just time to visit the handmade jewellery stall. Erin loved her pretty pink bracelet and Harry was delighted with his unique car key-ring. There was just time to say some hasty thanks and goodbyes before we were back in the car with two little heads sleepily nodding. Well, three if you include Granny! So now is my opportunity to thank everyone who helped on the day. It was a wonderful day out and you were all brilliant, thank you.

(Written by Nikki)



## Kite Flying Festival at the Wick Country Park

It was a bright and blustery day for the Friends of the Wick Country Park ("FOWCP") Kite Flying Festival on Sunday 16 September. Co-hosted with The Essex Kite Group ("EKG"), the festival is a free event which aims to attract adults and children to the joys of – obviously – kite flying! There was an excellent turn out of over 200 people to see a fantastic demonstration of flying abilities and kites of all shapes, sizes and colours. Apparently, the giant orange Nemo fish was very popular rousing lots of oohhhs and aahhhs. From a distance it appeared as though Nemo had jumped from the park lake and was now suspended in mid-air....it gave the locals who were fishing a bit of a fright!



In the pavilion the FOWCP craft table was offering free kite making. Members of the EKG were on site also and provided the equipment (and help) for children to make their own kites. Plenty of pens and coloured paper were provided for decoration and it proved extremely popular. Of course there is always a tricky part to the procedure – the tying of the Bow Line knot. Experienced kite flyers Colin, Vernon, Maurice, Graham, Rita, Margaret and Glenda [EKF] were professionals who tried their best to teach the FOWCP helpers but to no avail – they needed a separate training session in knot tying and just couldn't seem to grasp the idea of the rabbit out of the hole, behind the tree and back in the hole! It was a tricky concept and seemingly one for experts only. But there was no time to practise - a long queue of children waited in excited anticipation – while their parents queued for tea, coffee and free biscuits!



The wind picked up and at 3pm Ernie (EKG) was brought into the arena to judge the competition and present the prizes for best decorated and best flyer for children aged 6 and under and 7 plus. As the flyers gathered the wind seemed to grow stronger and there were a few tangled strings – but surely it was the expectation of showing off to win first prize. Well done to everyone who took part.

Pictures are on the website ([www.friendsofthewickcountrypark.co.uk/gallery](http://www.friendsofthewickcountrypark.co.uk/gallery)) – check out the competition winners with their fabulous prize-winning entries.

Thanks to all involved for making this such a special event and we look forward to seeing you next year!

(Written by Trudie)

## More Improvements to the Park - The New Benches & More

The FOWCP committee have been very busy on your behalf, not only with events, but also with improving facilities within the park. Five benches have been purchased and located at strategic positions round the park.



Our favourite is close to the Pavilion where one can sit and enjoy the garden. Another at the highest point in the park gives wonderful views across the park and towards the lake. Which will be your favourite?

The Wildlife has not been forgotten, the Kestrel box on one of the telegraph poles has been improved to make it more appealing for Kestrels to nest and should now be a 'des-res'. A Barn Owl box has been secured at the top of the telegraph pole nearer to the lake. Finally a Tawny Owl box has been placed in a tree near the board walk. Time only will tell if, left in peace, these new habitats will increase the range of wildlife in the park. We will keep you informed.

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## Events for 2012

**The Friends' Committee has arranged the following events with the Wick Country Park Ranger. Some events are organised by the Friends of the Wick Country Park (FOWCP) and others by Basildon Council (BC). For all events meet at the Wick Country Park Pavilion.**

**Wick Weeders (FOWCP)** Usually 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays of each month, starting at 1.30pm (see website & posters).

**Work Parties (BC)** These are bi-monthly on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month, 10am – 12noon, the next one is to be advised soon. **Come and have fun and help the Ranger with improvements to the park.**

**Yule Ramble & AGM (FOWCP)**



Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> December, Starting at 2pm

Finish the year with a sociable walk round the park with the Ranger and *Friends*. Enjoy some mulled wine and mince pies, stay for the AGM, meet the committee and have your say about the park.

For any more info on the above please contact Nikki Gibson on 01268 734293 or email [mikenikki@supanet.com](mailto:mikenikki@supanet.com)

Latest information on events throughout the year can be found on our website: [www.friendsofthewickcountrypark.co.uk](http://www.friendsofthewickcountrypark.co.uk)

### **Membership**

If you are not a member but would like to join the *Friends of the Wick Country Park* please contact Nikki on 01268 734293 or email [mikenikki@supanet.com](mailto:mikenikki@supanet.com)

### **The Friends of the Wick Country Park Committee:**

Eileen Cattell – Chairperson, Nikki Gibson – Vice Chair/Membership, Dorothy Cundy - Treasurer, Christine Lee - Secretary

Committee Members: Trudie Crow, Maxine Crow, Hilary Sim, Peter Bates, Paul Clarke, Alaric Cundy

### **Basildon District Council Countryside Services:**

Mark Williams - Countryside Ranger, Telephone: 01268 562921

Steve Prewer - Countryside Officer, Telephone 01268 550088

**Neighbourhood Policing Team:** Telephone 0300 333 4444 or 07875 00350