

WELCOME

to the Friends of The Wick Country Park
from the Chairperson.

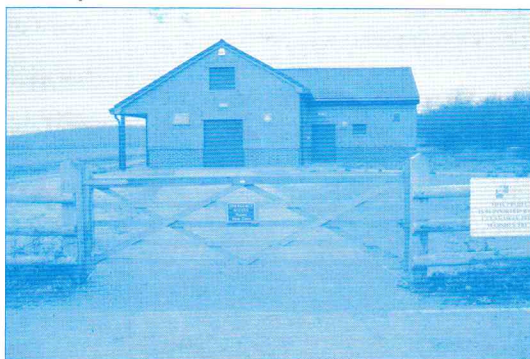


ISSUE 2 2004

Skylarks

It has been another exciting year in the development of The Wick Country Park with the completion and official opening of the Education and Information Pavilion. The Friends committee have continued to meet throughout the year helping Basildon District Council with the care of the park and we look forward to meeting more members at our forthcoming events.

An unfortunate opening to the new year is the departure of Paul Bown, the Countryside Ranger who has ably managed the park through its first two years of development. Paul is leaving to join Derbyshire Council's Ranger Service. We all wish him the very best in his new location and thank him for all the help and friendship he has provided to the Friends.



The Pavilion

On 13th September 2003 the Friends joined Council staff, local dignitaries and members of the community as they gathered for the official opening of the pavilion, the Wick's Education & Information building. (It's called pavilion, because it's been designed along the lines of a traditional cricket pavilion, complete with covered verandah!) The Countryside Services Education Team kept children entertained with kite making and bug hunting while adults took a look at the displays and explored the new centre. Professor Chris Baines, environmental author and broadcaster was guest speaker and gave an encouraging speech on the importance of urban green spaces to people and how lucky we are as local residents to have such a place on our doorsteps.

After the cutting of the ribbon there was the opportunity to take a guided walk around the park. I joined a group led by Ranger Paul Bown as we started over the newly finished raised walkway across the alder carr. This is supposed to be an area of wet woodland, though you wouldn't have believed it, as, with this year's lack of rain, there was not a drop of water to be seen. We stopped to look at the pond which lies

within the brook, which is where kingfishers have been seen, and there has even been a report of a water vole. On this occasion though we made do with dragonflies darting just above the water in the late summer sunshine. We could certainly see the effects of this year's dry weather on the water level in the lake too, exposing the reeds that survived some nibbling by the Canada geese. Paul impressed us with his knowledge of pill boxes, identifying each type by number and explaining a bit about their history and how some of them will be converted to provide homes for bats. At the end of the walk it was time for lunch, and a chance to take another look at the Pavilion and enjoy the sunshine.

Play Areas

Now that the Pavilion is finished the next addition to the park will be a Play Area, due for completion in March 2004. Steve Prewer, Countryside Services Manager, tells us more.

Under the terms of the public consultation for the development of the Wick Country Park, back in 2000, the local people agreed that a play area for youngsters be included in the facilities. Now that all of the heavy work has virtually finished on the park, with the recent completion of the splendid pavilion, it's time to construct the play area. Specialist firm PLAYDALE have been commissioned to draw up a scheme and after lengthy discussions with the Council's Countryside Services the equipment has been chosen. Following the huge success of the three play areas introduced to Wat Tyler Country Park in 2001, Countryside Services have a range of expertise that has enabled them to select an appropriate range of equipment for a specific age group, in this case, from toddlers up to six or seven year olds. It has to be challenging, yet

safe to use for all within this age group, and must be sturdy enough to withstand the inevitable abuse it will get. Finally, it ought to fit in with the semi-rural surroundings, and to this end we have gone for equipment that is made using treated logs but with colourful panels and sections of steelwork. The whole area will be enclosed by bow-topped fencing to keep children in and dogs out, and have a self-closing gate and a ramp to allow wheel chair access to some specially modified pieces of equipment for disabled children. There will, of course, be safety surfacing under all the kit.

The plan is to site the play area on the wide strip of open ground next to the access road to the park, some thirty metres in from the Tresco Way entrance. There is ample space to allow for benches and picnic tables to be accommodated around the play area for mums and dads to relax and watch their children. It is also hoped that by siting it closer to Tresco Way people living in the adjacent houses will be able to keep an eye on things and report any vandalism or misuse to the Ranger or to Countryside Services headquarters at Wat Tyler Country Park, on 01268 550088. Having the play area a little way off from the rest of the park will also ensure that those who enjoy the peace and tranquility of the lake and meadows will not have their pleasure spoiled. There will be less disturbance too, for the increasing wildlife that is adding interest for the visitor.

Wildlife Sightings

All of the following bird species have been spotted at the Wick Country Park at some time throughout the year. The Friends of The Wick Country Park will be meeting for a Winter Bird Watch on Sunday 25th January at 10am which should provide an excellent opportunity to see many of our feathered winter visitors.

Black headed gull	Little gull
Blue tit	Mallard
Canada Goose	Meadow pipit
Carrion Crow	Moorhen
Chaffinch	Pheasant
Chiffchaff	Redwing
Common whitethroat	Reed bunting
Coot	Robin
Fieldfare	Skylark
Goldfinch	Snipe
Great tit	Sparrowhawk
Green sandpiper	Starling
Greenfinch	Stock dove
House martin	Swallow
Hobby	Swift
Jay	Tufted duck
Kestrel	Turtle dove
Kingfisher	Waxwing
Lesser whitethroat	Wood pigeon
Linnet	Wren
Little egret	Yellowhammer
Little grebe	



The Alder Pond boardwalk

Events 2004

Winter Bird Watch

Sunday 25th January 10am

Bring your binoculars and join the Countryside Services Manager to take a look at some feathered visitors to the park.

Building Bat Caves - work party

Sunday 7th March 10am

Come and help the Countryside Ranger to convert two of the former pill boxes into homes for our local bats.

We're talking Bats!

Wednesday 17th March 7.30pm

Find out all about bats with guest speaker John Dobson who will be providing an illustrated talk on the subject. John is a county authority on these fascinating, but misunderstood creatures. He's also a very entertaining speaker.

For all events please meet at The Wick Pavilion, off Tresco Way. We look forward to seeing you.

Membership

Our membership has steadily increased since the opening of the park back in December 2002. Committee meetings are now held in the Pavilion and we hope to hold regular events including talks, walks and work parties. If you haven't yet joined The Friends of The Wick Country Park, but would like to do so, please fill in the application form and return to the address at the bottom.

The Friends of The Wick Country Park Committee:

Deborah Belverstone
Dave Mullender
Tricia Marshall
Barbara Chapman
Alison Sweetland
Maurice Sweetland
Reg Hartley

Basildon Council Countryside Services:

Steve Prewer
Countryside Services Manager
Telephone: 01268 550088

Countryside Ranger

Telephone: 01277 624553

Membership Application

FRIENDS OF THE WICK COUNTRY PARK

(PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS THROUGHOUT)

If taking a household membership, please list all those to which it applies.

Full name: _____

Address: _____

Full name: _____

Age, if under 18: _____

Full name: _____

Age, if under 18: _____

Full name: _____

Age, if under 18: _____

Full name: _____

Age, if under 18: _____

Type of Membership requested (please tick):

New: _____

Renewal: _____

Membership fees
£3 per household £1.50 individual.

I hereby apply for membership to the Friends of The Wick Country Park, and agree to be bound by its constitution. (Copy available on request).

Signature: _____

Date: _____

OFFICE USE ONLY

Please return to:
D. Mullender,
31 Tresco Way, Wickford, SS12 9GP

Membership No: _____

Renewal date: _____

