



The Park

Edition 21 Winter 2014

The Quarterly Magazine of
The Friends of Harrold-Odell Country Park



Friends of Harrold-Odell Country Park

Carlton Road, Harrold, MK43 7DS

Tel 01234 720016

Newsletter No.21

Winter 2014

This autumn has been a trying time for the Park. First, the proposed cuts to the Borough Council's budget seemed to threaten the jobs of the Park staff. Thank you to everyone who responded to our appeal to write to the Council in support of our staff and to the volunteers who do such sterling work to make the Park such an outstanding environment for visitors and wildlife. We must wait until the spring for the final outcome.

Secondly, we had to face up to the loss of Trevor Smith, our Water Bailiff and outstanding Friend to the Park. Slowly his work is being absorbed by others and this only goes to show what an outstanding contribution he made. Plans are being made to provide a suitable memorial to Trevor.

David Taylor, Editor (theparkeditor@btinternet.com)

Cover Photograph

Evidence of rotten trees removed and new hedges laid by volunteers. Trevor Sudds is our photographer in residence.



In Memory of Trevor Smith

On the last day of September, the Friends of the Park planted 3,000 wild daffodil bulbs at the entrance to the Park in memory of Trevor. The idea came from Trevor who had proposed the planting earlier in the year.

Thank You ...

... to the volunteers who help keep the Park clear of litter and dog mess throughout the year. You do a great job which is much appreciated.

Receive your own copy of The Park by post

The Park is published quarterly in mid October, January, April and July. Printed copies can be collected from the Visitors' Centre while stocks last. Electronic copies are sent to registered Friends who have an email address, and a copy appears in the News/Archive section of the Friends' website at www.hocp.co.uk. To obtain your own printed copy by post, send a cheque for £3.50 made out to "The Friends of HOCP", to The Park Editor, HOCP, Carlton Road, Harrold, MK43 7DS. We will then mail you the next four editions.

HOCp Website

www.hocp.co.uk

In April of this year The Friends of the Park launched a new website. It has two aims: to provide

- A. new visitors with information about the Park;
- B. visitors with information that helps them to understand and enjoy the environment of the Park.

Between April and September, the website was visited by 8,757 people. Of these 6,717 were new visitors. They looked at 35,358 pages on the website and over 70% of them explored the site.

Using the automatically generated usage records that we are provided with, it is possible to identify which topics interest visitors the most. The pattern throughout the first six months has remained the same: facilities; directions; about the Park; opening hours; activities; contact information; events calendar and in the season, information about the fishing.

If you haven't visited the site yet give it a try even if you know the Park well. In addition to the above you will find a photo gallery, articles, information sheets and much more.

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Habitats —The River Meadows

The Country Park can be divided into five quite distinct habitats; the river meadows, the shelter belt, the Nature Reserve, the lakes and the rabbit warren and other grassland areas. In each of the next five editions of the Newsletter, we will explore these habitats one by one.

1. Start your exploration of the River Meadows in the corner of the Main Car Park behind the information Board. You are standing in the valley of the River Great Ouse. It flows across the Fens to enter the North Sea through The Wash.
2. Enter the meadows via the kissing gate. Walk past the trees on your left until you reach open ground. This is the flood plain of the Ouse and, true to its name, it floods after heavy rain.



3. During the Ice Age, ice over 200 feet thick covered the spot where you are standing! The ice carved its way down the valley, creating the terrace you see to your right with Chellington Church standing on top of it.
4. To your left is Kingfisher Lake. It was created by the quarrying that gave us the Country Park landscape.

5. Walk over to the bank of the lake. A shock can sometimes await visitors in the form of a dolls head or limbs appearing out of the sand. These are a reminder of the Harrold doll factory whose waste was dumped here.
6. It is worth crossing to the river bank. Following it downstream you will come to a hollow joining the river. Is it natural? Could it be the site of a fish pond or maybe a boathouse? Your guess is as good as anyone's.
7. Follow the river bank and in various places you will find that the bank has collapsed and in places it reveals a horizontal 'plough' line which represents the depth to which the land was ploughed in years gone by.
8. Leave the meadows via one of two gates to your left that take you back into the Park.



Picture of the River Meadows by Felix Iles, aged 13 from Radwell.
His picture shows Chellington Church in the distance across the meadows.

Spot the birds visiting the Park this winter

1



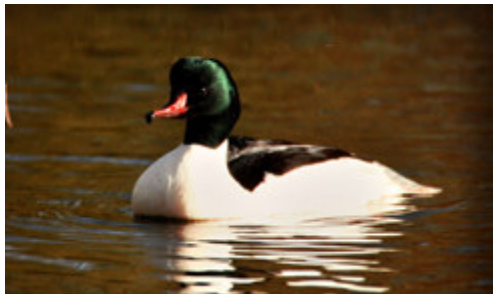
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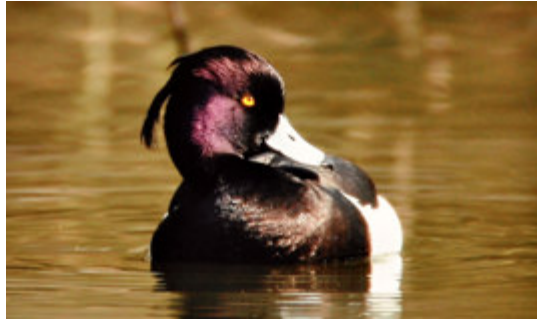
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Check out the 'Winter Birds' board in the bird hide

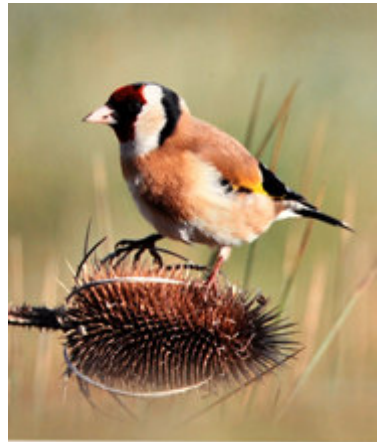


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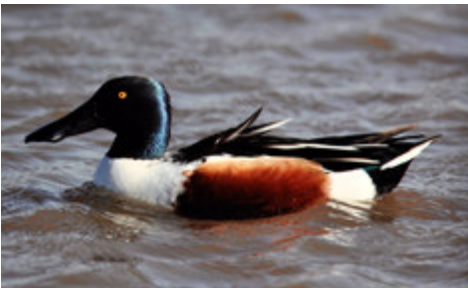


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Answers in the Spring edition

People in the Park: Trevor Sudds



Trevor Sudds is one of the extremely active volunteers who form the core of the Friends who have a high impact on the Park environment. This is the group that built the bike parking area, installed the spiling around the Grebe Lake and who regularly open up areas of the Park to encourage re-generation of plant life, to name just a few of their projects.

Over the years, Trevor and his family have been visiting the Park on a regular basis, taking advantage of its tranquillity and facilities for growing children. On retirement, Trevor approached the Park Warden, Richard Dowsett, to find out if there was anything he could do to put something back into the Park. The rest is, as they say, history.

Trevor is also our 'photographer in residence'. He supplies this Newsletter with its cover photo and those used in the 'Day in the Park' feature on page 7.

Trevor will tell you that in the past three years he has enjoyed the company of like-minded people working in the open air. He has had a lot of fun, and in the process, learned a whole range of new skills. After a career indoors, the environment of the Park has provided an enjoyable culture change in retirement.

Why not join him and others? See www.hocp.co.uk for details.

A Day in the Park — Task Days

Task Days are open to all Friends of the Park who feel like getting involved in some physical conservation work.



It's healthy, enjoyable and you will be with like-minded people. No experience required. Kit and training will be provided to suit you and you will even be rewarded with a mug of coffee!

Future Events in the Park

Health Walks

Time to walk off the Christmas excesses and carry on with the New Year's resolutions! Led by an expert, these walks provide not only good exercise but convivial company. Each walk starts at the Visitors' Centre at 10.30am and lasts about an hour.

Next Health Walks: Jan 16th & 30th; Feb 13th & 27th; March 13th & 27th; April 10th & 24th.

Friends' Task Days

These monthly events provide an excellent opportunity to find out about the conservation work that takes place in the Park. Come and join like-minded people and learn some new country skills. You will work within your own capabilities and be provided with training, tools and refreshments. Each Task Day starts at 10.00am at the Visitors' Centre. Wear suitable clothing and bring lunch.

Next Task Days: Jan 27th; Feb 24th; March 31st and April 28th.

Fishing at HOCP

Contact Paul Oliver, the Water Bailiff, on 07826 226 053 for information about fishing at HOCP.

Also, see our website at www.hocp.co.uk. Paul has great plans for the future, so watch this space!



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