



# The Park

Edition 30 - Spring 2016

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

## Cover Photograph

"Crucus" by Trevor Sudds. The Friends have a Spring Flower Planting Project in the Shelter Belt and elsewhere in the Park.

### Friends of HOCP - Committee AGM

Wed 11th May at 10.00 am

Open to all registered Friends

Why not join us and help plan for the future?

The **Friends' Committee** is responsible for promoting the activities aimed at providing opportunities for outdoor recreation, wildlife conservation, education and raising public awareness of countryside activities. It is governed by a constitution and is responsible for allocating money raised in the Park.

The Committee meetings are held three times a year and are open to all registered Friends of the Park. At the next AGM the Committee will receive the annual accounts and it will elect or re-appoint Committee members. The AGM in May will seek to appoint a new Chair when the current post holder stands down after four years. **All registered Friends of the Park are eligible for Committee membership and can attend these meetings.**

## Children and Parents

### Test your powers of observation ...

... with the **I SPY in the PARK** sheets that are available free from the wall-dispenser at the back of the Discovery Room in the Visitors' Centre, or print them from our website. I Spy sheets are available on Birds, Structures and Signs.

**Use the sheets as you walk around the large lake to see how many items you can spot.**



# Friends of Harrold-Odell Country Park

Carlton Road, Harrold, MK43 7DS  
Tel 01234 720016

## Newsletter No.30 Spring 2016

*Thank you to all those visitors who make donations to the Park via the collection boxes in the car park and the café. All your money is spent in the Park and forms the greater part of the money raised by the Friends.*

*The boardwalk project is finished although we do have ideas for an extension. The project was paid for from your donations, log sales and grants from Bedford Borough Council. In these times of austerity and cut-backs its great that such things are still possible.*

*The Friends of HOCP exists to help maintain and develop the Park. We also provide opportunities for volunteers to get out in the fresh air and engage in purposeful activities. Take a look at our website at [www.hocp.co.uk](http://www.hocp.co.uk) for more information.*

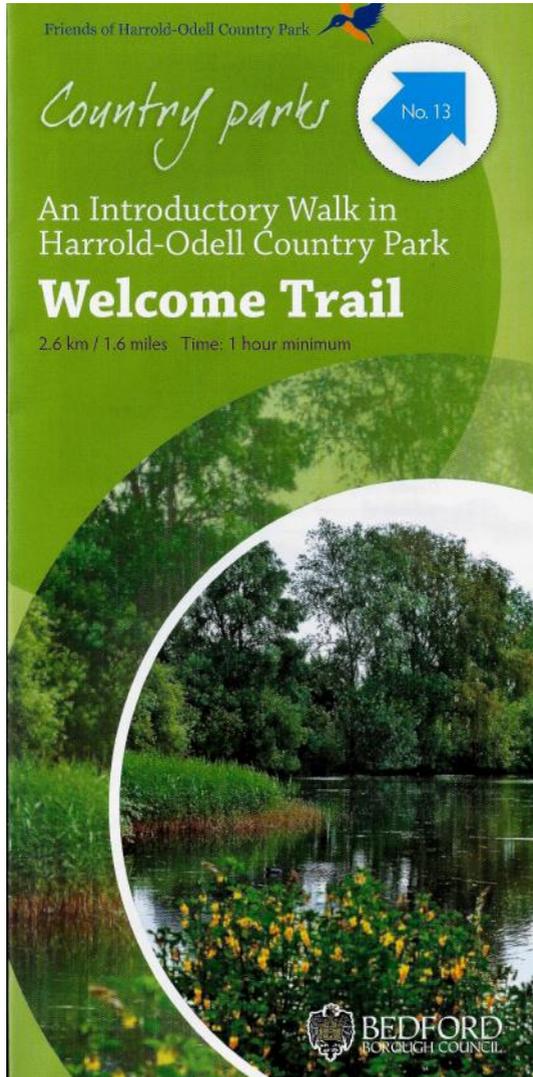
*David Taylor, Editor ([da.taylor@btinternet.com](mailto:da.taylor@btinternet.com))*

## Did You Know? Facts about the Park



- The Park is owned and managed by Bedford Borough Council
- Three staff are based in the Park but also work in other green spaces in the Borough
- The last survey showed that the Park receives in the region of 250,000 visitors a year
- The Park covers 144 acres or 44 hectares
- It was originally a sand and gravel quarrel the output of which was used to build Milton Keynes
- The Friends of HOCP is a group of supporters and volunteers who contribute to the maintenance and conservation of the Park
- Together they contribute over 7 person-days per week to the Park on a voluntary basis
- All the money raised through donations and sales is spent improving the Park

## Take a Guided Tour of the Park



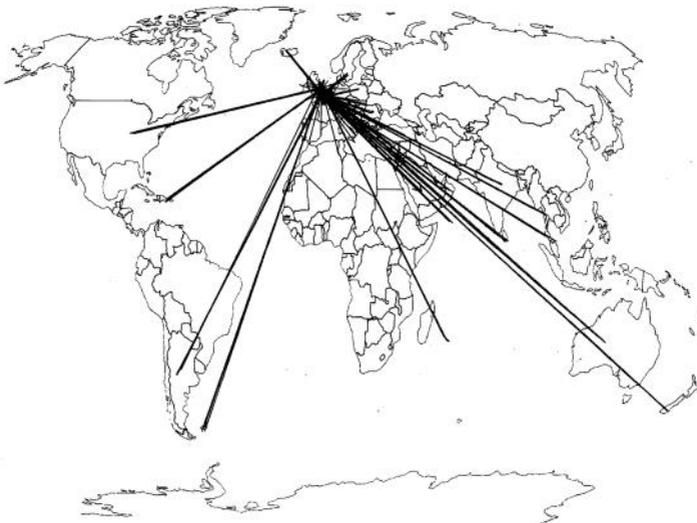
Copies of the **Welcome Trail** are available free of charge and can be collected from the leaflet rack in the Discovery Room inside Tez-zels Café. Use it to follow an informative guided trail around the Park and discover many interesting facts and features.

# The Coin Hoard of Harrold-Odell Country Park

## by Elizabeth Dowsett

A big thanks to all the visitors who donated cash to the Friends of the Park via the collection boxes in the car park and café. We use all your money for the benefit of visitors and wildlife. Without your donations the many projects undertaken to enhance the Park just would not have happened.

Over time we have extracted from the boxes some 88 foreign coins and they tell an interesting story, possibly about holiday destinations or even the country of origin of our visitors. The map below illustrates the sources of these coins and Elizabeth has used these to take us on a journey around the world that illustrates the rich diversity of the coins collected. Her travelogue starts opposite and is set out in full on our website at [www.hocp.co.uk](http://www.hocp.co.uk), along with a complete list of the coins that make up the 'HOCP Hoard.'



## EXTRACT:

*"The first stop on this circumnavigation takes us north west from the United Kingdom in Iceland, where a one-krona piece originated. Other krona coins came from Sweden, another of the Scandinavian states represented by three 1-krona coins. From Sweden it is a pleasant drive across one of the famous bridges in the world to Denmark from where a ten-krona piece was donated.*

*The next coin comes from Germany, with two pfennig coins of different denominations and dates. From here we step across the border into the Netherlands from where a 5-cent coin was generously gifted to HOCP. From this Low Country to France where we get a double whammy with both modern Euros and older francs. Travelling on south to Spain with pesos and ptas representing the old and new currency. After Española, it is a short hop across the border to the British Dependency of Gibraltar for a ten pence piece.*

*A short dash across the Straits of Gibraltar to Tunisia gives us our first quick glimpse of non-European currency. However, our journey takes us back to Europe via Malta to gather a Maltese cent coin and then over to Italy to be given a 20-lira piece. We travel over the Alps to Switzerland to pick up some Swiss Francs before detouring to the Czech Republic.*

*The journey through Europe continues through Poland up to Estonia and back down south to Hungary and Croatia .....*"

**Find the full article at [www.hocp.co.uk](http://www.hocp.co.uk) under  
Discover The Park — look at Fact Sheets**

# What's that tree?

Below is an example of the wealth of information that can be found in "Spot 50 Trees" published by Miles Kelly. It provides an excellent spotter's guide for children & parents. Order online from [www.mileskelly.net](http://www.mileskelly.net)

## ALDER ALNUS GLUTINOSA

**T**he wood of the alder is fascinating – when it is submerged in water, it becomes as hard as stone. Much of the Italian city of Venice is built on piles of alder wood, which were sunk into the sand banks. Houses and other buildings were then built on top. The small, winged seeds of this water-loving tree get carried along by streams and rivers to grow further downstream. It is said that the green dye of the alder flower was used to colour the clothes of Robin Hood.



**DECIDUOUS**

### FACT FILE

**Height** 18–25 m  
**Where** Widespread; woodland, hedgerows, often near water  
**Flowering** February/March  
**Fruiting** October–December  
**Leaf tint/fall** November



Rounded with toothed edges

Shiny and dark green in colour

Side buds are on short stalks

Smaller female catkins develop into cones (fruit)

Male catkins (flowers) are up to 5 cm long



Mature cones are woody and open to release seeds

## Heron Island Conservation Work



What's happening on the island in Grebe Lake? This was part of the original landscape before the quarry was dug out. It has remained largely untouched for many years. Now that we have a boat that the volunteers can use, conservation work has started. This involves ground clearance and tree felling. Hopefully this will reduce the colony of Cormorants and encourage new growth.

## Farewell and Thank You to Ed Burnett

Ed was the Senior Green Spaces Officer for Bedford Borough Council with responsibility for the Country Park. Over many years, Ed provided the Friends of the Park with invaluable guidance and advice. The new boardwalk is an example of a project he helped to steer through the Council's procedures. ED left the Council service in December and we will miss his enthusiasm and support. The Friends wish him the very best of luck in his new business venture. We look forward to working with his successor, James Lynch, Senior Team Leader (Safe & Green).

## Future Events in the Park

### Health Walks



These take place on a Thursday every two weeks and are led by Janet Munro who is a trained leader and Park Ranger.

The walks are open to everyone looking for a healthy and sociable pastime. There is no need to book, just meet outside the Visitors' Centre at 10.30am.

*"The person who invented Walking for Health deserves a medal. Joining my local group has given me the confidence to enjoy the wonderful green spaces that I didn't even know existed. I feel liberated!" Walker for Health participant*

The next Health Walks will take place on April 21st; May 5th, 19th; June 2nd, 16th and 30th 2016.

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**Friends' Task Days** — These are held once a month and provide an excellent opportunity to sample what it is like to be a volunteer. They are also ideal for people who have limited time available in which to volunteer.

Task Days are led and supervised by Park Rangers, who will provide the necessary kit and training. If you enjoy the experience, you may feel inclined to join a weekday group of volunteers on a regular basis. Alternatively, you may wish to continue on a monthly basis.

**Next Task Days:** April 25th, May 23, June 27th, July 25th and Aug 22nd 2016.

## **In An Emergency**

**Emergencies** can arise anywhere, whether as a result of a health problem or an accident. If you witness, or are involved in, any emergency in the Park:

**Contact the emergency services without delay**

**Ring 999 from your mobile**

If this is not possible you should:

**Return to the café in the Visitors' Centre;**

**Tell the staff you need to ring 999;**

**Ask to use the café telephone.**

## **Seeking Help or Information in the Park**

- Your first point of reference is Park Rangers. (see below)
- You will frequently see volunteers working around the Park. Depending on the weather, they wear blue jackets or shirts with **Friends of Harrold-Odell Country Park** on them. They will be only too pleased to provide you with help if they can.

## **Contacting the Park Staff**

The Park staff have an office in the Visitors' Centre where they can be reached. However, as they can be deployed either in the Park or elsewhere in the Borough, the office may be closed in which case, ring the contact number on the door.

**Contact:** Richard Dowsett, Janet Munro and Nicky Monsey by

**Telephone:** 01234 720016 & **Email:** hocp@bedford.gov.uk

# The Bell at Odell



## **Walking in the Country Park?**

**A warm welcome awaits you at The Bell in Odell**

Just walk through the park along the main bridleway on to Horsefair Lane and 150 yards along the road you will find us serving a fine selection of ales, wines, gins and excellent food.

**As summer approaches, enjoy our Beer Garden. Walkers, cyclists, dog walkers and children will find a warm welcome here. As will visitors arriving by car as there's parking to the front and rear.**

Facebook: [TheBellinOdell](#) Tel: 01234 910850 Website: [thebellinodell.co.uk](http://thebellinodell.co.uk)