

NEWSLETTER 52

Summer: July 1st - September 30th 2009



Events. All events are free and open to members and non-members alike. Donations always welcome.

Thursday 9th July

Litter Pick Walk

Meet 9.30am in the mansion. A walk around the park picking up litter and, if there is any, pulling up Himalayan Balsam (it is easy to pull up as the roots are very shallow). These are necessary tasks, but if incorporated into a walk can become quite enjoyable.

Wednesday 12th August

Evening Stroll

Meet 7.00pm outside the main gates on Beckenham Hill. A leisurely perambulation around the park., being careful not to trip over the big words! We could see bats as a bonus, but it is really just a simple walk in the warm summer sunshine, we hope.

Tuesday 15th September

Green Chain Walking Festival.

Meet 9.45am on the Mansion steps. We are joining with a regular Tuesday walking group to offer three grades of walk, long, short and intermediate, to suit all comers. One theme will be BPP history.

About The Friends Events

All our events are free, but any donations to funds are much appreciated.

Most last about 1-2 hours, but you can join in for as long or as little as you like.

It is advisable to wear stout walking shoes, as the paths do get very muddy.

Walkers are individually responsible for their own safety during our events.

Children are welcome, but a parent or guardian should accompany under-12's.

Dogs are welcome, if kept under control. Walk leaders always carry water and mobile phone

CONTACTS. If anyone has any comments, ideas, articles etc. get in touch through any of the contact venues or in person at the Visitor Centre in the mansion.

Opening times:- Sundays 1.30pm-3.30pm.

THE FRIENDS OF BECKENHAM PLACE PARK, THE SECRETARY,

18 GREYCOT ROAD, BECKENHAM, KENT BR3 1TA

TEL: 020 8325 8781 E-MAIL bpp.friends@ntlworld.com

Website: www.beckenhamplaceparkfriends.org.uk

Local Groups and Events.

Lewisham Local History Society.

Meetings are held on Fridays mainly at The Methodist Church Hall, Albion Way, SE13. starting at 7.45pm. Visitors are welcome- donations invited at meetings. Full access for people with disabilities.

Here are the details of the remaining programme for 2009.

17th July	Sex and Scandal in Sydenham	Steve Grindley
August	No meeting	
25th September	The Penns of Lewisham	Richard Hartree
30th October	The Promised Land: The Lure of South London	Len Reilly
27th November	London's Postal History	Brian Bloice
11th December	Six Centuries of Christian Art at St Margaret's, Lee.	Sir Ian Mills

Green Chain Walk Walking Festival

This will be Saturday 12th September-Sunday 20th September.

The best place to get details of this nine-day event is to go to the website www.greenchain.com although details of this years event are not posted there yet.

Lewisham Peoples Day. Saturday 11th July. 12noon-7.00pm

In Mountsfield Park, Catford

This is a fun day and is extremely well policed. A variety of food and craft stalls as well as clothes, jumble, plants, charity groups, fashion shows, children's activities, sports and other amusements. Music plays much of the time and there are usually varied dance displays. It is a good afternoon's free entertainment.

Bromley Healthy Walks.

There are regular Tuesday walks in BPP from the car park outside the mansion meeting at 9.45am. The walk leader is Michael Corrigan. These are free, just turn up and join in.

Michael also leads a regular Friday walk in Crystal Palace Park meeting at the Crystal Palace Information Centre at 9.45am.

Beckenham in 1930's.

Bromley Library Archives have released two DVDs filmed in the 1930's which has been professionally transferred to DVD. One is called 'Beckenham Remembered', a two DVD set, with a total running time of 67 minutes. The set is priced at £10.

The other one is 'Three Films by John W Mantle' and is in three sections. One about the funding appeal to extend Beckenham Hospital, the second is a road safety film shot entirely around Beckenham and a third called 'Know your Kent' recording Mr Mantle's trips to the countryside. The total running time is 43minutes and it is priced at £5.

Both sets of films are really interesting even if you weren't around in the 1930's and all profits from the sales of these DVDs will be donated to local charities. They can be obtained from the Local Studies Library within the Central library in Bromley.

Stag Beetles. Has anyone any sightings of Stag beetles or lesser stag beetles this year? Perhaps you could let us know time and place to see if the area is still a 'hot spot' for them. Contact details bottom of front page. Thanks.

Painted Lady Invasion.

There was a great number of these in April. They came to local gardens in big groups settling on open flowers and then moved on to pastures new, but a treat to see while they were here.



Newt Egg Hunt.

On May 1st three of us joined Alex from Froglife and Fran from The Herpetological Conservation Trust at the ancient pond to see if there was any evidence of newt occupation. Fran found some newt eggs laid in the folded leaves of pond weed. She left some cut up flimsy bin liners attached to a stick (honest!) around the edge of the pond as newts will happily lay their eggs on these as a substitute for weed. They are easier to check at a later date. It was an interesting evening as we disturbed a mouse, 'heard' bats on the bat detector and saw lots of stars as it was a lovely clear night.

A Picnic on Crab Hill Meadow.

After an unsuccessful trip to the country (always keep your maps updated or you too could find a large, well-established housing estate on your chosen country lane!) the editor plus other half fetched up on Crab Hill with an uneaten picnic. It became apparent while we ere eating our sandwiches that this was no longer just a grassy hill. Looking around at the grasses, it was quite noticeable that there was a great variety of different plants there supporting a range of different insects. We collected a few examples, but it proved rather difficult to identify many of them. Some of the insects proved a little, only a little, easier to name. There was the lovely soldier beetle (see picture), a relative of the glow worm, some developing field grasshoppers in an instar stage, some small long-horn beetles, ants, spiders, several types of bees and flies as well as butterflies.



There was a kestrel calling over at the Ravensbourne Station end of the field, blue headed parakeets and the usual ring-necked ones. There was as much wildlife as you could hope to see out in the countryside. It was the wide variety of grasses that was the most impressive on this occasion and on the Friend's Boundary Posts and Ancient trees walk on the 20th June, a knowledgeable son came along to identify them. This area is a fascinating miniature world and even if you don't know the names of the plants and creatures just stopping and looking is very rewarding.

List of Crab Hill meadow plants on June 21st 2009.

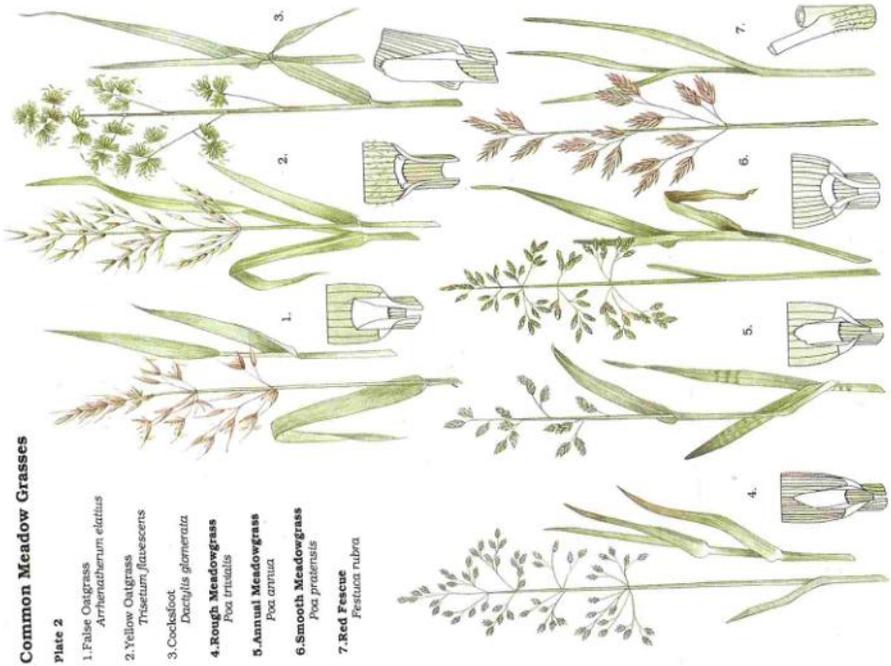
Greater plantain	Wood sedge
Meadow foxtail	Giant fescue
Italian rye grass	Marsh foxtail
Yorkshire Fog	Perennial rye grass
Cock's foot	Smooth meadow grass
Common sorrel (in flower)	Annual meadow grass
Clover - white and some red	Brown bent
Buttercup	Lanceolate plantain
Wall barley	Hogweed (not giant)
Rough-stalked meadow grass	Red fescue

Reference: Grasses opposite from Field Studies Council laminated leaflet.

Common Meadow Grasses

Plate 1

1. Italian Ryegrass
Lolium multiflorum
2. Perennial Ryegrass
Lolium perenne
3. Crested Dogstail
Cynosurus cristatus
4. Sweet Vernal-grass
Anthoxanthum odoratum
5. Meadow Foxtail
Alopecurus pratensis
6. Timothy
Phleum pratense
7. Yorkshire-fog
Holcus lanatus



Common Meadow Grasses

Plate 2

1. False Oatgrass
Arrhenatherum elatius
2. Yellow Oatgrass
Trisetum flavescens
3. Cocksfoot
Dactylis glomerata
4. Rough Meadowgrass
Poa trivittata
5. Annual Meadowgrass
Poa annua
6. Smooth Meadowgrass
Poa pratensis
7. Red Fescue
Festuca rubra

WORKING PARTY

There has been little to report from these meetings of late. There was a consultation on the mansion which some of the Friends Committee did manage to have some input to. The person conducting it did seem interested in our ideas, so may be any results won't be as awful as expected , but don't hold your breath.

Arranged Nature Visits to BPP for School Children.

This scheme is now up and running well. Teacher contact details:

Jordan Ihama, Waterlink Way Project Officer,

Tele: 020 8314 2556 Mob: 07743 842 893,

Email: Jordan.ogbeideihama@lewisham.gov.uk

By mail: Green Scene, Wearside Service Centre, Wearside Road, Lewisham SE13 7EZ

Friends AGM

We will be holding this in the Autumn. The committee could do with some more people to share out some of the workload. If you would like any topics to be brought up at this meeting do send your ideas to us. Contact numbers at bottom of front page.

TULIP TREE (*Liriodendron tulipifera*)

This tree was introduced to Britain by the Tradescants, father and son, in around 1656. They were gardeners to Charles 1. The tree can grow to 115feet or 35 metres, so ours is a baby at about 15-20ft. Tulip tree is named for the tulip-like flowers that appear on the trees as they mature. In the autumn the tree has rich yellow and russet leaves, which remain on the tree until late November.

This is first time we have seen it flower, but maybe someone has seen it with flowers other years. All the illustrations in books do not do this beautiful flower justice.



Recent Events Report

Saturday 18th April. Bluebell Walk. And what a walk it was! The lovely Nick Bertrand, usually seen these days leading wading parties through Deptford Creek at low tide, led us around the bluebells for three hours. Nick is so knowledgeable on all things to do with plants with a bit of history thrown in for good measure. It was a very informative and enjoyable afternoon with a dazzling display of bluebells as a backdrop. Thank you so much Nick, for giving us your time and inspiring everyone to keep on trying to protect our lovely green space.

Sunday 17th May. Beating the Bounds. Thank you to the three people that came on this walk, poor Nick Goy has in the past has walked alone. It was a cool, but mostly dry afternoon and everyone enjoyed this long walk around the perimeter of the park to mark the boundaries in the traditional way. The origins of this walk in our park date from the late Roy Ramsey. Roy was a tireless campaigner for the preservation of park during the threat of another golf course, a driving range and huge indoor tennis centre that was proposed in the 1990s. He said we should have a symbolic walk to try and establish some public right to keep the area open to roam in.

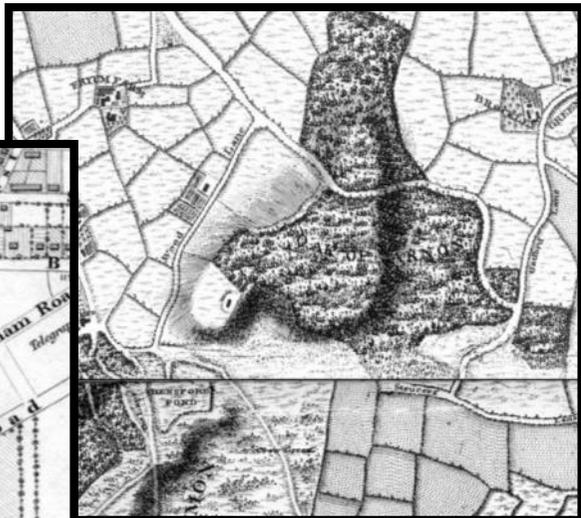
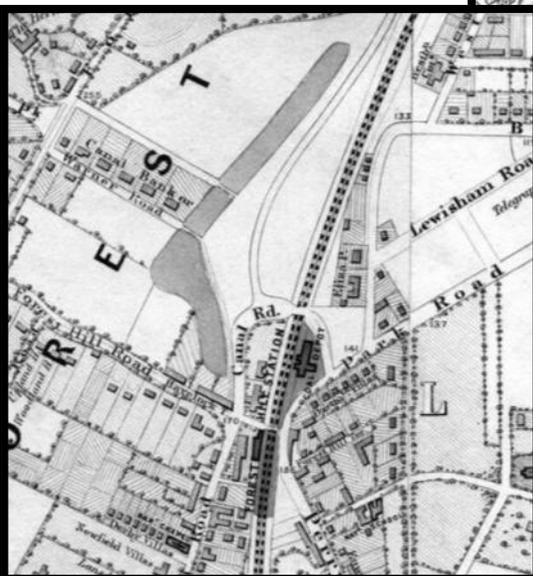
Saturday 20th June. Boundary Posts and Ancient Trees Walk. On this walk we had our youngest ever participant at six weeks old. It must have been totally absorbing as she slept the whole two hours! Anyway it was pleasant enough weather not too hot and not too cold. The walk got off to a good start as one person discovered something new straight away, that there was a large pond in the park. Focusing on the trees really opens your eyes up to just how beautiful they are, especially at this time of year when in full fresh leaf. Granddad, sorry, Mal, who led the walk discovered a beech tree he hadn't come across before, even after visiting the park for thirty odd years there are still new discoveries to be made. There are not many beech trees in the BPP woods, but this is not a bad thing as they do tend to become dominant and a diversity of trees will give a better range of habitats. One highlight was the sight of flowers on the Tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*). This tree is situated to the left of the path leading from the fallen turkey oak up into the woods, just before the gorse on the right. Thanks to all who came along to 'An Afternoon with the Mitchells', which could have been an alternative title for this walk.

FOREST HILL

The name Forest Hill has its origins, as the name suggests, in the fact that it was a wooded hilly area. It is one of the highest hills in London with stunning views to central London and the North Downs. The forest was used to supply timber to the nearby docks at Deptford, when it was part of the Great North Wood and the main occupants then were charcoal burners and woodsmen. In 1809 the Croydon Canal was cut through the area; this was not a commercial success, because there were so many locks to go through. It remained sparsely inhabited right up until the middle of the nineteenth century. Then in 1839 Forest Hill railway station opened on the London and Croydon line built on the original filled-in canal. As in much of Britain, the coming of the railways brought an end to the tranquil rural idyll (if it did ever exist) and the area attracted builders and architects creating large houses and villas for the wealthy.

An important legacy has been left to Forest Hill by one of these wealthy 'settlers'. The Horniman museum is a truly exciting collection of artefacts that Frederick Horniman, tea merchant, collector and Liberal MP, accumulated on his world travels. The current building opened in 1901 with an adjoining 16 acres of parkland. Horniman's collection having outgrown his home Surrey House, which he had been opening to the public since 1890.

Rocque's map 1745→



←**Forest Hill in 1862.**

Traces of the Croydon Canal remained in Havelock Walk. This was later drained in 1867.