

Skylarks

In this issue check out the details for our summer events – 'Nature Quest' and 'Paws in the Park'. Come along and join us and tell your friends and neighbours. Don't miss out on the fun!

Park update

It's spring again although it feels more like summer. It's time to dust off your walking boots and enjoy our country park. We had a bird walk back in late March led by Mark our ranger on a crisp sunny day. We spotted blackbirds and the ubiquitous skylarks calling their beautiful territorial song across the park. Sparrows, chaffinches and a jay were seen by the lower bridge near the pond. A most enjoyable morning was spent listening to bird calls and identifying species.

I have spent several days taking advantage of the good hot early spring weather to put some much-needed work into our garden. I have pruned all the shrubs, enabling them to reach their full potential as the warm weather approaches. Re-shaping the roses, potentillas, berberis, spindle, ceonothus and dogwoods has made the area look splendid. We have watered it and the mulch that was applied earlier has given the plants a wonderful head start.

The garden has been weeded and the hedgerows cut back. The weeds around the educational pond have been cleared, where the grass has been mown, making the edge of the top part of the garden look tidier. The hawthorn and blackthorn is blossoming giving a heady smell to the area. A new tree called *Liquidambar styraciflua* or Sweet Gum has been planted in the central area of the pavilion garden, which has a leaf similar to a maple. The yellow dogwood and the berberis are flowering already. The warm weather has accelerated the flowering of the ceonothus and the potentilla.



The general look of the garden is most pleasing, together with the bushing out of the hawthorn hedge that skirts the car park. This area is looking much more established. All being well the area left of the pavilion is to be planted with bulbs in the autumn and these will be ordered soon. They will include bluebells, daffodils, narcissi, grape hyacinths, snowdrops and yellow and purple crocus.

The park is looking very pretty, as all the perimeter shrubs are leafing up and early insects are busy already due to the favourable weather.

This truly is a magnificent time of year to enjoy our wonderful country park. We are always looking for volunteers to help on our work parties (third Sunday of the month). So if anyone is interested please contact Mark at the park. Even if it is just one or two hours it would be very much appreciated.

Maureen Bradford
Committee member

Nature Quest

A FREE, fun, family day at
The Wick Country Park

Sunday 20th May 2007

11am to 4pm



Test your knowledge with a quiz around the park followed by pond dipping and children's craft activities.



Refreshments available

Parental supervision required

Come and join the fun!

A spring walk around the Wick Country Park

On Sunday 22nd April, my husband and I and our visiting daughter, along with our three dogs, enjoyed a lovely warm sunny walk around the perimeter path with the freshness of everything bursting into bud and leaf.

One of the joys of visiting a local park on a regular basis is watching the changes through the seasons and as the park develops. It was good to see four swans on the lake and I look forward to the possibility of seeing some cygnets again this year. It was a particular pleasure to hear at least one skylark rising up to the sky singing its heart out and to hear all the other birds making their presence known. If only I could see and recognise who it is that has such wonderful songs – it seems as though the bushes are singing.

However, as responsible dog owners we always clean up after our dogs and it makes me sad and angry that not all dog walkers are so careful. Leaving your dog's mess in the park is not only laziness and irresponsible it creates a bad impression of dog owners and could lead to dogs being banned in country parks. Please watch your dogs and clean up after them for all our sakes. Then we can all enjoy the pleasures of the Wick Country Park.

Gill and John Beck

Friends of the Wick Country Park

Natural Nibbles

Hi! Phil here!

Do you remember that last time in 'Skylarks' I asked you to think about what some of the birds in the Park eat? Well here are some *fascinating facts* about House sparrows.

House sparrows mainly eat plants, whatever the time of year.

Sparrows have chunky, seed-eater's beaks, and they will tackle all manner of seeds and grain. They either separate the seed from its husk with their beak or they pull the seed apart to get to the good bit - the starch that the seed would have used when it was time to grow. We use this same starch to make flour for bread. This is why many birds are happy to eat scraps of bread from your bird table.

Source: RSPB Website October 2006



Paws in the Park

Make a date for you and your dog at The Wick Country Park

on

Sunday 10th June 2007

11am to 4pm

Join the Canine Ramble before the event at 10.30am to 11am

Enter your dog in the fun dog show

Watch the dog obedience and agility display by the Billericay Dog Training School

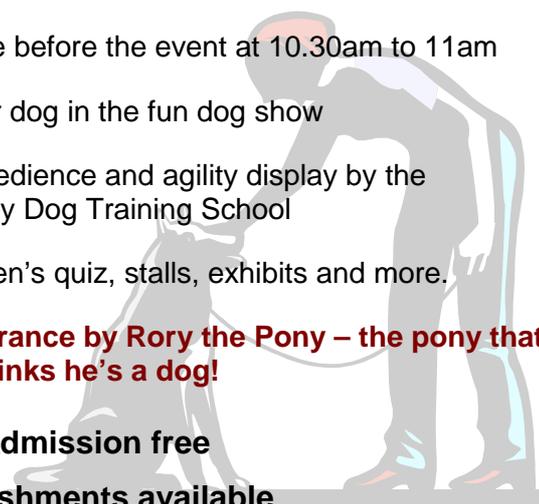
Also includes children's quiz, stalls, exhibits and more.

With special guest appearance by Rory the Pony – the pony that thinks he's a dog!



Admission free

Refreshments available



Events

Basildon District Health Walks

Tuesdays 10.15am for 30 to 40 minutes. Meet in the car park.

For info. call **01268 568528**

The Friends' committee has arranged the following events with the Wick Country Park ranger. *For all events please meet at the Wick Pavilion.*

Work Parties

Third Sunday of each month

10am – 12noon and/or 1pm – 3pm

Come and have fun and help the ranger with improvements to the park.



Nature Quest

Sunday 20th May

11am – 4pm

A fun day for all the family. Be a nature detective, explore the park and investigate the underwater world of the dipping pond. Parental supervision required.



Paws in the Park

Sunday 10th June

11am – 4pm

Calling all dogs! Bring your owners for some canine capers. Fun dog show, agility display, children's quiz, stalls, exhibits and more.



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

The Friends of the Wick Country Park Committee:

Deborah Bolverstone - Chairperson

Nikki Gibson – Treasurer

Tricia Marshall - Secretary

Allison Tanner

Gill Clarke

Maureen Bradford

Contact Deborah on 01268 572732 or email dbolverstone@yahoo.co.uk

Basildon District Council Countryside Services:

Marcus Hotten

Countryside Officer

Telephone: 01268 550088

Mark Williams

Countryside Ranger

Telephone: 01268 562921