



Skylarks

Spring is here and lots will be happening in the Wick Country Park in the coming months. Read all the latest news from the 'Friends' and we look forward to seeing you at our future events. Please keep all those fingers and paws crossed for fine weather!

Message from the Chair

A busy time ahead for the 'Friends' - our main event of the year 'PAWS IN THE PARK' is on Sunday 8th June and all fingers are crossed for fine weather again this year! The second Skylarks 3K race is in July, followed quickly by Nature Quest as again this year it is in July. In August it will be the time for getting out the sweep nets for Crickets and Dragonflies and then the ever popular Kite Festival will be in September.

All the details are on our website and hopefully we will see you at the events.

In this edition of Skylarks we have reports on all our recent events, thanks to all for coming along.

Good news - you will be pleased to know Mark our Countryside Ranger at the park is now a proud father. Best wishes to Mark, his wife Sarah and the new arrival, Dylan.

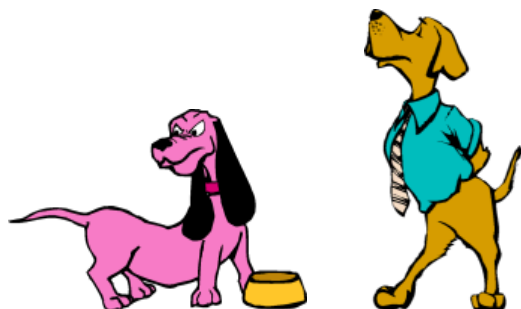


Eileen Cattell
Chairperson



Don't forget to fill up on the catering at 'Paws' this year - not only the normal delicious burgers and ice creams by our regulars One Stop Vans but also Chengs Doughnuts and The Little Coffee Camper. There will also be our refreshments in the pavilion so please come along inside there too.

PLEASE COME ALONG TO THE NEXT EVENT IN THE WICK COUNTRY PARK 'PAWS IN THE PARK' SUNDAY 8th JUNE 2014



A fun dog show with many categories including best bitch, cutest puppy and scruffiest dog - registration from 11.00am. Please register your dog early as classes get booked fast. The cost to enter per class is £2.00

The Billericay Dog Training School will also be here to give one of their excellent displays

Plus children's quiz, stalls, tombola, exhibits & children's craft activities

Sunday 8th June 2014, 11.00am to 4.00pm
The Wick Country Park, Tresco Way Wickford
SS12 9GP

Admission Free

Refreshments available

For full details see our website

www.friendsofthewickcountrypark.co.uk



OUR FIRST EVENT OF THE YEAR - QUIZ NIGHT 2014

April 4th 2014 - the date of the Friend's annual quiz night. Once again we convened at the Barnhall Community Social Club - an excellent venue (large hall, plentiful parking, good loos and a bar stocking real ale.) We all hoped that we would not appear too ignorant, but we knew that we would have an entertaining evening anyhow. And we were not disappointed!

Once again, Michelle came up with original questions. Who would have thought that China has only one time zone? All our calculations - comparing the size of China to the USA, and trying to remember how many time zones there are in America - came to naught. Some answers could be worked out – which animal can run faster uphill than downhill? Well, the hare (the correct answer) has bigger hind legs, so we worked out that it could probably fare well uphill, - just a pity we changed the answer to rabbit! How many teams, like us, played the joker on what proved to be our low scoring round - although playing the joker early does tend to put you in the lead so that for a short time you can enjoy having the “leader's balloon” on your table.

The marathon round, mainly cryptic clues to names of London Underground stations, had the commuters in the room listing all the stations on the various lines - but which station was 'bigger than big'? Most of us were challenged by the anagram round - a big clue, the anagrams were of OSCAR winning films, but it is amazing how difficult it can be to unravel 'Shakespeare in Love' and 'Slumdog Millionaire', although judging by the cheers most tables managed 'Driving Miss Daisy'. Whose last words were 'Goodnight my darlings, I'll see you tomorrow'? It was Noel Coward - perhaps an indication of the age of some of us that a murmuring of 'we thought it was Charlie Drake' was heard when the correct answer was given. Further indications of age were apparent by sighs of relief or disappointment when it was announced that the music round would not be pop music!

A fun, light-hearted and rather noisy evening and congratulations to the winners, Basildon and Wickford Lions. The losing team, who shall not be named, were rewarded with lemons. Thanks to all who contributed to the evening, which was a sell-out, and especially to Michelle, Nikki and Mike who did the bulk of the work, and to the Barn Hall Social Centre for hosting us. The event raised over £650, money that will be spent on the Country Park.

We look forward to next year's quiz, so please book early, some teams had to be turned away this year.

(Written by Dorothy Cundy)

A poem has also been written by one of the contestants which perfectly summarises the occasion:-

Thinking caps at the ready
From our homes we did embark
For the grand quiz of the year
In aid of Wick Country Park

25 Tube stations later
We arrived at round two
Martin already in the corner
Where Michelle found these questions, no-one knew

After a raffle and some drinks,
We put our thinking caps on once more
With Nikki and Mike still busy marking
We keenly awaited the mid-way score

The rounds just kept on coming
Then the night soon came to a close
Such a great night made better by
The great cause where the money goes (Written by Nicolle Warren)



On the night at Barnhall, heads down, glasses full, thinking caps on...

THE BIRDSONG WALK - SUNDAY 6th MARCH 2014

The weather was not particularly favourable for the Spring Bird Song Walk, nevertheless 10 hardy souls turned up. The rain delayed the start of play and everyone retreated to the pavilion to enjoy one of Christine's nice hot drinks and a tasty biscuit as we waited for the rain to stop. Our leader for the walk was Martin Singleton who is a Friend of the Wick Country Park and a Committee Member of the Wickford Wildlife Society. He was ably assisted by Stuart Fleming who has many years of bird watching experience behind him.



Once the rain cleared we set off from the pavilion and as we arrived at the picnic area could hear the lovely song of a Robin who was perched high up in a nearby tree. We proceeded to the boardwalk over the reed-bed where we stopped for a while listening to the bird song all around us, this was mainly from Chaffinches, Blue Tits and a Blackcap the latter of which proved elusive to see. There was a warbler busy collecting nesting material and a debate took place as to what this was, the problem was solved when the distinctive call of the Chiff Chaff was heard. As we carried along the path a Skylark flew overhead and disappeared whilst singing. A Woodpigeon was seen along with many Magpies. As we moved into the open area it was quite windy which kept the smaller birds away. However, we did see a Lesser Black Backed Gull and some ducks were spotted flying overhead and these were identified as Mallards. Just before we arrived at the bridge we heard another Robin which was perched on a branch, it flew off and a Great Tit took its place and started its distinctive call of teacher, teacher. At this point two large dogs came charging by and decided to take a swim in the brook. On approaching the lake we could see a number of Black Headed Gulls a couple of Canada Geese, and flock of 10 flew over too. On the far bank there was a solitary Grey Heron skulking about looking for food. Two Coots and a Moorhen were also seen at the lake. When we reached the far end of the lake a Herring Gull flew over and as we carried on walking along the path we saw two Collared Doves. There was a shower at this point which thankfully only lasted a couple of minutes. Three House Sparrows were spotted flitting around in the trees and quite a few Goldfinches were also seen and a further Blackcap was heard. A Crow decided to land on the top of the Kestrel box and as we walk past yet another Blackcap was heard. Whilst we tried to spot it a Green Woodpecker was heard yaffling. Martin went back and spotted the Woodpecker on the post that held the Kestrel box but unfortunately no one else saw it. As we passed the pillbox a Linnet was perched on the branch of a tree and a few more were seen flying overhead. A Greenfinch was also calling. We spotted a few Blackbirds and Starlings around the park and one friendly Blackbird hopped along the path and seemed to be leading us back to the pavilion. The final bird of the day was a Dunnock which was seen on the path to the Car Park.



Despite the poor weather conditions it was an enjoyable morning with 27 species of bird being seen and heard.

(Written by Marie Singleton)

SKYLARKS 3K RACE ON 23rd APRIL 2014

Our athlete member of the committee Peter organised our first Skylark race of the season and has written the following to say: Very many thanks to the many Friends who came along to this race to support and help with the organisation, it was great to see so many of you there and it made the organisation so much easier.

As you may know, this was our eighth Skylarks 3k race, and this latest event attracted 60 runners - our highest number yet! Hopefully, once I've paid the Permit fee etc. there will be something around £60+ to the Friends' funds, plus anything made on refreshments (well done ladies!) and any memberships.

The results for the race are set out below: The next Skylarks 3k race will be held on Wednesday 16 July 2014 at 7.00 p.m., and I'm hoping that we will again get a great turnout - and that we have another excellent evening! Once again, many thanks for your support.

First Man - Crispian Bloomfield in 9:49

First Lady - Karen Whitmarsh in 11:23

First Boy - Callum Liasi in 11:02

First Girl - Chloe Nation in 15:53

(Written by Peter Bates)

Wick Country Park Events 2014

The following events have been organised by the Friends of the Wick Country Park in consultation with the Park Ranger.

All events start at the Wick Country Park Pavilion and booking is not required. Refreshments are available at all events.

Wick Weeders - Usually the 2nd and 4th Monday of each month, starting at 1.30pm (see website & posters). Come and help us to keep the Pavilion Garden looking spick and span. All are welcome, no special skills required.

Paws in the Park - Sunday 8th June, 11am to 4pm. A very popular fun dog show, for dogs of all types, ages and sizes, their owners and all dog lovers. A family event, with doggie stalls, displays and activities.

Skylarks 3K Race - Wednesday 16th July, Starting at 7pm. Run or power walk the course laid out in the Park. Come to participate or to support others. This race is organised in conjunction with the Pitsea Running Club.

Nature Quest - Sunday 20th July, 11am to 4pm. A family day. Go pond dipping, bug hunting and more. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Crickets & Dragonflies - Sunday 10th August, Starting at 2pm. Led by the Park Ranger, catch and identify these creatures. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Dogs are welcome on a lead.

Kite Festival - Sunday 21st September, 11am to 4pm. A family day. This event is held in conjunction with the Essex Kite Group.

Yule Ramble & AGM - Sunday 14th December, Starting at 2pm. Finish the year with a sociable walk round the park led by the Park Ranger, and then enjoy some mulled wine and mince pies. Everyone is then invited to the AGM.

For any more information on these events please contact Nikki Gibson on 01268 734293, email nikkigibson621@btinternet.com or Christine Lee on 01268 571302, email clee@btinternet.com

Latest information on events throughout the year can be found on our website: www.friendsofthewickcountrypark.co.uk

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 nikkigibson621@btinternet.com

The Friends of the Wick Country Park Committee:

Eileen Cattell - Chairperson, Nikki Gibson - Vice Chair/Membership Secretary, Dorothy Cundy - Treasurer, Christine Lee - Secretary

Committee Members: Trudie Crow, Maxine Crow, Hilary Sim, Marie Singleton, Peter Bates, Paul Clarke, Alaric Cundy, Richard Rowsell

Basildon District Council Countryside Services:

Mark Williams - Countryside Ranger, Telephone: 01268 562921

Steve Prewer - Manager of Countryside Operations and Development, Telephone 01268 465380

Neighbourhood Policing Team: Telephone 0300 333 4444 or 07875 003503