WELCOME ...
...it is with great pleasure that I introduce our fourth Newsletter, the biggest yet! This is in response to many of you asking for more news items and articles about the Royal Parks – so I hope you enjoy reading this enlarged edition.

Much has happened since the winter Newsletter went out. To start with we have had very constructive discussions with The Royal Parks Management Team about involvement with the New Apprenticeship Programme. We are also finalising details of the Guild’s late summer party to be held in Hyde Park on Saturday 13 September, aimed to coincide with the Last Night of the Proms held in the park (a date for your diary – details to follow).

I am very pleased to report that we have received some magnificent donations towards our bursaries, our newly instigated Awards Scheme, and our general funds (see over for details). So a big thank you from the Management Committee and me, to those individuals and organisations for their generosity. This is also our first sponsored Newsletter, courtesy of fountains plc, and our thanks go to them for their ongoing support.

So as you can see it is exciting times for the Guild as we continue to grow and expand our membership. Many of whom I look forward to meeting at our various events and activities.

From this issue, the RPG Newsletter is kindly being sponsored by fountains plc.

Thanks from everyone at the Guild goes to fountains, for its generous donation of £1000. This will be put towards the RPG General Fund, administered by the Management Committee. In addition to operating and administrative costs such as postage and printing, the General Fund is also used to subsidise the cost of RPG events, in order to make them more affordable for our members.

Starting with forestry and arboriculture, fountains now offers a complete managed service to customers, operating in both green and built environments. It offers consultancy, project management, and plays a vital role in maintaining and improving the environmental impact of business, and the environments in which its customers work. fountains provides a range of services to central government and local authorities, to power and utility companies, and many other sectors.

Congratulations to RPG Treasurer, former Royal Parks’ acting Bailiff and latterly City of London Director of Open Spaces, Jennifer Adams on her retirement. For 40 years she has been involved in London’s parks, and was instrumental in overseeing many changes and new initiatives. She intends to travel (with husband Terry), before settling in their new Hampshire home. Jennifer will stay as RPG Treasurer. We would all like to wish her all the best for a long and happy retirement.

Congratulations to RPG members Ian Talbot (until recently the Artistic/Managing Director of the Regents Park Open Air Theatre), and Dr Steve Dowbiggin (Chief Executive of Capel Manor College). Both received the OBE in the New Year’s Honours List.

Congratulations to Royal Parks Chief Executive (and Guild member) Mark Camley, for completing the London Marathon in just 4 hours 36 minutes.

Congratulations to RPG Management Committee member Bob Ivison, for being appointed to the post of Vice President of the Kew Guild. He will take up this role in September 2008.
We are indebted to the generosity of a number of individuals who have made significant donations to the Royal Parks Guild since the last Newsletter.

- **Andy Ayres** of Mantaplan has made an outstanding donation of £15,000 specifically to go towards Bursaries and Awards and for computer equipment.
- **Fountains plc** have donated £1000 for the Guild’s general fund, and in part for sponsoring the Newsletter.
- **Many donations** have also been received from members whilst renewing their subscriptions for the year, and also new members at the time of joining. Several people have been particularly generous. At the time of printing we have received £510 towards the general fund and £465 for Bursaries and Awards.

Thank you one and all – you know who you are!

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### Chestnut Sunday

**Venue:** Bushy Park  
**Date:** Sunday 11 May

ONE OF the greatest events in any of the Royal Parks is that of Chestnut Sunday, held annually in Bushy Park. Traditionally the blooms of the chestnut trees in the park’s mile-long avenue are at their best over the 10 days nearest to 11th May, and this year the Sunday fell on that date!

Police horses, veteran cycles, Harley Davidson motorcyclists, classic cars, police vehicles, World War II vehicles and the Teddington School Big Jazz Band were all in evidence – as well as the Mayor of Richmond-upon-Thames!

Guild member Colin Pain has for many years been on the organising team. He tells us that the Chestnut Avenue at Bushy was designated by Sir Christopher Wren in 1699. A postcard of 1909 shows the activities of Chestnut Sunday that year, and it is known that King Edward VII used to ride down the avenue in his car, and did so on this day. King George V carried on this tradition, and in 1910, only three weeks after the death of his father, he rode down it with the Kaiser as his guest!

The celebration day seemed to be unsupported after the war years, but following research by Colin and Mu Pain during the 1977 Silver Jubilee year, the Hampton Wick Association decided to revive it.

If you didn’t get to it this year, reserve the day for it in 2009 – and take a picnic!

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**TRP restructure**

THE ROYAL PARKS is changing its governing structure with the establishment of a new board and separate executive committee.

It aims to improve accountability between the appropriate ministers at the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, and chief executive Mark Camley’s department.

Four non-executive directors have been appointed: the Hon. Apurv Bagri (The Metdist Group), Ruth Anderson (KPMG UK), Andrew Fenwick (The Brunswick Group) and Sue Moore (Land Securities Trillium). The board also comprises three executive directors: the director of parks, the director of strategy and communications, and the director of finance. The Executive Committee comprises the Senior Management Team of TRP.
More than 60 industry experts, Royal Parks & DCMS staff, community volunteers, and RPG Guild members attended a workshop to discuss creating a “historic collection” of artefacts, ephemera and memories relating to the Royal Parks. The initiative is the brainchild of former Royal Parks director and Guild chairman Mike Fitt, who passionately believes that items telling the story of these world-famous parks should be carefully preserved. He feels that oral history such as taped interviews with retired park managers and artefacts like posters advertising landmark events held in the parks would bring their rich history to life.

Nick Wyatt of the Science Museum shared his experience in collecting, cataloguing and conserving items. He said that archivists must develop criteria for acquisition: “You need to consider things like historical importance, doubts over ownership or copyright, and ethical and legal issues.” Wyatt went on to stress the importance of effective marketing: “Who is your collection for, and what do they want? How will you tell them that the collection is there?”

Martyn Foster of London’s Wild in the Parks project discussed ways to ensure that the collection is accessible to all. He suggested using Internet outlets like YouTube and blogs to promote it, and told delegates about a ‘sound bench’ created by his project, which, when a button is pressed, plays recorded memories of the wildlife garden in which it is situated.

Groups debated what kinds of artefacts should be collected, and how people should be told about them. It was agreed that all kinds of items, from gardening books to music to memories, needed to be brought together and that they would help to foster pride in the Royal Parks for generations to come. People felt strongly, however, that it would be a massive undertaking and significant resources would be needed to do the job effectively.

Mike Fitt said he saw the workshop as a significant step towards setting up a historic collection: “I’ve been thinking about this for 20 years now, so this has been a great day for me. The next step will be to consider the scope of the project and set up a working group to take it forward.”

To find out more about plans for a Royal Parks “Historic Collection”, or to offer help in some way, email Mike directly at: mfitt@royalparks.gsi.gov.uk or get in touch with any of the RPG members through the normal channels (see page seven of this Newsletter)
MY FIRST recollection of Bushy Park was in 1938, just before the War. I was five years old, and most weekends my family would walk to the Savoy Cinema in Teddington through the park. We would enter at Hampton Hill Gate, walk past Upper Lodge and Donkey Corner (apparently Lady Paget once kept a donkey there!). We exited at the Blandford Road Gate and then onwards through Teddington to the cinema.

ONE NIGHT, during the war years, my mother decided it was too wet or cold for us to walk home through the park, so we headed for the train to Hampton. But my father, who was an ex-coalminer and very careful with his money, wasn’t prepared to fork out threepence for the fare. He set off to walk home, but of course there was the blackout in force – no streetlights and all the houses were blacked out. He got himself utterly lost in Bushy Park and couldn’t find his way out until morning, when he had to go straight to work. Needless to say, it was my mother’s fault!

BUSHY PARK was a schoolboy’s paradise during the war: there were enormous craters and you could hunt for shrapnel. There was the boating lake with little pedal and rowing boats. I think it was 3d for 15 mins. And there were also some ‘swing boats’ on the west side of the children’s playground, operated by the Smith family, who also ran the Hampton Court Fair. To the east of the playground was a large pavilion where you could get refreshments. Unfortunately this old building became so badly damaged it was eventually demolished.

IN 1942 the US Troops arrived. They occupied three locations in the park: Camp Griffith, Twelve Site (at the Hampton Wick end) and Upper Lodge. There was a brick sentry box to the left of the arch. I remember one of the sentries showing my friend and me a loaded pistol. Big US army lorries used to come and go through the arch. The US Army Air Corps cleared and levelled the area on the south side of the park parallel with the wall that runs from Hampton Wick to the children’s playground.

My friend and I were regular visitors to the airstrip. There were usually a couple of single winged aircraft parked there. The US servicemen always had sweets and chewing gum, and I remember young ladies were sometimes given a quick flight around the park.

It was around this time that Joe Louis, the heavy weight boxing champion of the world, visited Camp Griffith (apparently he often toured American bases). I remember seeing a very large black man sparring, and was told it was him.

PONDS in the park were, it was realised by the US High Command, a directional aid for enemy bombers, so it was decided to camouflage them. Posts were driven in to the bottom of the pond in straight lines, and cables were stretched across them. Wire netting was laid over, which was painted with a thick, gooey paint mixed with chicken feathers!

This canopy was suspended about 4ft over the water. Fortunately for us boys, a maintenance raft made from oil drums and boards, was always there on the bank of the Diana pond. We had a great time floating around under this canopy.

In those days it never entered my head that I would spend 40 years of my working life riding a horse around the Royal Parks, and I’ll be recounting some of those tales in future issues of the RPG Newsletter.
FROM THE ARCHIVES
THE LONDON EVENING NEWS c.1970

First gardener as new head of Royal parks

FOR THE first time since the office of Bailiff of the Royal Parks was created more than 100 years ago, the job has gone to a gardener.

Robert Hare has just completed his first month in his £4700 - a year job, which involves the overall management of St James's, Green Park, Hyde Park, Kensington Gardens, Regent's Park as well as Richmond, Greenwich, Hamiton Court, Ham, Osborne and Dover Castle.

Together with the Queen, Mr Hare must be the only occupant of a house in central London, situate, as agents put it, in its own extensive grounds. This is Hyde Park House, an agreeable 18th century mansion with its own gardens.

The Bailiff, among other duties, commands a force of more than 250 keepers and officers uniformed like the civil police force, except for a green flash. As well as gardening, he must know about an infinity of matters such as parking and drainage.

Mr Hare, now 55, began as a gardener's boy at Kirklinton Hall in the North Riding, worked his way up, and after a long spell in the Army, finally got his national diploma as a gardener and joined the royal parks in 1954.

"When I started," he says, "I thought I might eventually become head gardener somewhere. And then along the line, ambition grew." He describes his appointment to this top job as a shot-in-the-arm for the profession.

Is your pay packet too small?

If so, just put yourself in the position of Richmond Park gardener Charles Johnson in the years from 1868 and 1873. He got the princely sum of 2s6d (25p) per day, without a rise in five years. Then, in June 1873 not only did labourers' wages rise from 2s6d to 2s10d, but Charles was also promoted to Foreman. His gross daily wage soared to a heady 3s6d.

These figures are revealed in an old ledger containing details of staff employed at Richmond, during research carried out by a gap year student working in the Parks.

Apart from these pay rates, some of Charles Johnson's duties also make interesting reading. All of the usual jobs for a gardeners are there, as well as 'spreading cattle droppings', 'picking stones', 'turning molehills', 'felling dead trees' and 'spreading clay'.

APPRENTICE APPLICATIONS

In April, applications were invited for the 10 places on this year's Royal Parks' GROW apprenticeship scheme, which operates across the eight Parks. Now in its second year, the scheme is run in partnership between Royal Parks, the landscape maintenance contractors, and Capel Manor College. It's open to young people as well as older applicants and existing staff.

Each week, apprentices spend four days learning landscaping and horticultural techniques at their assigned park, and one day in the classroom at Capel Manor College in Regent's Park.

Apprentices gain experience in the care and management of public and private gardens, sports grounds and green community areas. This involves maintenance of lawns and borders, trees, shrubs, hedges, herbaceous plants and bedding. On completion of the three-year course, participants will have NVQ Levels II & III in Amenity Horticulture.

Dennis Clarke, Senior Park Manager, said: "The apprenticeship scheme offers a fantastic opportunity for people to combine practical experience and classroom learning in an environment renowned for horticultural excellence. Quality training is key to ensuring high standards are retained in the sector, and mark a real investment in the future of our parks."

BRING YOUR MEMORABILIA:

If you are attending any of our Guild events please bring with you photos or other items of interest from your days with The Royal Parks. Other members and guests present will be interested to look at them - and we may, with your approval, wish to copy them for The Royal Parks' "Historic Collection". 
TWO ECO-COWS have been brought into Richmond Park to help conserve a rare habitat. The British ‘white cross’ cows are part of a grazing trial to improve acid grassland flowers at the park.

The mother and her calf are being housed in a 4ha enclosure on Sawyer’s Hill at the park during the trial, which is a partnership between The Royal Parks, Natural England and Hounslow Urban Farm.

The science behind the experiment is that as cows are grazers, they improve biodiversity by creating gaps in the acid grassland, allowing flowers such as harebells to flourish.

Nigel Reeve (pictured) community ecologist for The Royal Parks, said:

"Cattle were a familiar part of Richmond Park’s community of grazing animals right up until the mid-20th Century. Working with our partners, this exciting study will help us to learn more about how better to conserve and enhance the special community of plant and animal wildlife that makes up the park’s acid grassland."

Records show that cattle used to roam Richmond Park in large numbers. There were 114 recorded in 1914 and 50 in 1943.

The effects of the project will be reviewed annually until 2013 and the number of cattle will be adjusted according to how the flora responds.

Simon Richards, manager of Richmond Park and RPG member, said:

"This project is an excellent example of how The Royal Parks are working with partners in the local area to improve the management of the park both for visitors and for the wildlife for which the Park is internationally famous. Since the cows arrived, they have already been the subject of much positive comment from our visitors."

ROYAL PARKS GUILD Founding Patron Alan Titchmarsh fell for the charms of the Isle of Wight long ago. And now the islanders have showed they’re equally as fond of him – by appointing him High Sheriff.

TV star Alan, who owns a flat in West Cowes, wore full Sheriff’s uniform for the induction ceremony in April. “Home is where I hang my hat, and there is no hat that I am more proud to own, or to do justice to, than the hat of High Sheriff,” he said.

Alan, from Ilkley in Yorkshire, left school at 15 to become an apprentice gardener. His name has since become a registered trademark, by-words for gardening gold-dust. He now lives in a Hampshire farmhouse, but insists he regards the IoW as his home.

He was originally offered the post three years ago, but turned it down. He said: “I changed my mind. First it was a great honour, second there was a great costume... But third I could put something back into an island that has given me and my family so much”.

A GRAND re-opening party was held in March at Ryde Golf Club on the Isle of Wight, to celebrate the refurbishment of the clubhouse. Guest of honour was Royal Parks Guild chairman Mike Fitt, who spoke about the importance of ancient oaks on the course. The Club donated £100 to the RPG, for the newly launched Bursary/Awards Fund. Our thanks go to the Club Secretariat.

For most of us, the fun of the Christmas Lights Tour has faded, but there is good news: £935 was collected on the day, including a £150 donation from the Guild, and this will go to the Rainbow Children’s Trust. Thanks to all!

...And why are there no horses on the Isle of Wight? Because people prefer COWES to RYDE!
APPRENTICES AND THEIR ASPIRATIONS

One of the Guild's stated aims is to assist the apprentices with expertise in a number of horticultural, landscape and amenity disciplines. This expertise will be offered by volunteers from the Guild membership, and is intended to supplement and enhance the formal and on-the-job training already provided by TRP, Capel Manor and the individual contractors who are employing the apprentices.

After almost 10 months of the scheme running, several of the apprentices have been in touch with the Guild. Through talking with them we are beginning to see where some of the professional hopes and aspirations of the apprentices lay. Individuals have suggested subjects such as: “Information on turf from experts”; “Outings to gardens (maybe even abroad)”; “Information on new plants and new methods”; “Courses on driving 7.5 tonne vehicles (for those who already drive)”; “Chainsaw courses”, and so on. The contractors may or may not have the resources for some of these, and this is possibly where the Guild can help.

If you are able to help (in any of the above subjects or any in the list below), and you are prepared to be contacted by an apprentice seeking advice on a particular topic, we would like to hear from you.

Specific subjects might include: ● Pest control/identification ● Plant identification ● Soil Management ● Pruning ● Machinery – safe use, legislation, ppe, etc ● History of the parks (design for NVQ3) ● Landscape design and maintenance ● Environmental issues eg. Wildlife Conservation ● Management – people resources and project planning ● Glasshouse work – seed sowing, prickling out, etc ● Events Management ● Health and Safety, Managing public safety, etc., ● Meetings – conducting a meeting, agenda’s minute taking ● H+S procedures and policies ● Personnel issues – DDA, etc ● Costing – contracts ● Marketing and Press & Media Relations in the Horticultural Environment.

RENEW YOUR SUBSCRIPTION TO THE ROYAL PARKS GUILD

As the Newsletter goes to press we have 254 members, and of all those who were due to renew their subscriptions at the end of March, all bar 18 have done so.

We urge the remainder (and you know who you are) to once again take the RPG pledge!

For just £7.50 a year – and we hope to maintain this price for quite some time – you get four Newsletters sent to your home, and the opportunity to participate in Guild activities such as visits to places of interest, events and you can assist with other Guild initiatives. And you can keep in touch with other members. As they say in all the best marketing leaflets:

DON’T DELAY!
RENEW TODAY!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR ROYAL PARKS GUILD SUB-GROUPS

As our Chairman announced at the AGM back in October, it was the intention, as soon as it was manageable, to initiate Sub-Groups comprising individuals who will administer specific areas of Guild activity. We are now able to initiate these Sub-Groups and we are calling for volunteers to sit on them. You should have a knowledge of, or interest in, the specific Sub-Group for which you are volunteering.

The Groups are:

TRAINING & EDUCATION:
Contact Sidney Sullivan (chair).

AWARDS & BURSARIES:
Contact Mike Fitt (chair).

EDITORIAL & COMMUNICATIONS:
Contact Graham Clarke (chair).

CONTACTING THE GUILD:
BY POST: The Royal Parks Guild, Rangers Lodge, Hyde Park, London W2 2UH
TELEPHONE: 07973 402810
EMAIL: info@theroyalparksguild.org
WEBSITE: www.theroyalparksguild.org
NEW MEMBERS (those joining between December 2007 – end April 2008)

A = APPRENTICE OR FORMER APPRENTICE  CurS = CURRENT TRP STAFF  ExS = Ex STAFF  ExC = Ex Ci/Ci  PA = PEOPLE ASSOCIATED WITH PARKS

FULL MEMBERS

Addy, Jane Member of Royal Household staff. (PA)

Assirati, Toni TRP Head of Education and Community Engagement. (CurS)

Bentley, Mark Metropolitan Police, Royally & Diplomatic Protection links with Richmond Park over many years. (PA)

Buckingham, Stephen Various project work in Royal Parks, including construction of Tamsin Trail in Richmond Park. (CurC)

Camley, Mark Chief Executive Royal Parks since 2005. (CurS)

Capel-Davies, Stephen Consultant to TRP for 10 years, mainly on Longford River, T5 inquiry, Watermill and water management studies. (ExC)

Cole, Dominic Consultant Landscape Architect, worked on restoration of Nash flower garden in Regents Park and other projects. (ExC)

Collici, Ernie Royal Parks caterer for many years. (CurC)

Debney, Jason Co-ordinator of Thames Landscape Strategy based at Richmond Park. (PA)

De Silva, Wendy Architect who worked on projects at Holly Lodge and Pembroke Lodge in Richmond Park, Regents Park Open Air Theatre and ran community workshops in Bushy Park between 1989-97. (ExC)

Gibbard, Nick Redesigned and illustrated maps for public display boards in all eight Royal Parks. (CurC)


Goodfellow, Liz Vice Chair of London Parks & Gardens Trust. (PA)

Harwood, Annette WPC with Royal Parks Constabulary from 1959–2003. (ExS)

Hayhurst, Ruth Since 2003 ongoing heritage interpretation for TRP, including guided walks, audio trails, web pages, leaflets etc. (CurC)

Jordan, David Assistant Park Manager, Hyde Park. (CurS)

Kiddell, Shaun Horticulturist; lived and worked in Hyde Park 2002-04. (ExS)

Lane, Nick Education and Community Engagement Officer for Hyde Park, Kensington Gardens and Brompton Cemetery. (CurS)

Lourie, Serge Leader of Richmond Council, and long association with Richmond and Bushy Parks, including Chestnut Sunday. (PA)

Lucy, Michael Catering Concessionaire for Hyde Park/Greenwich Park/Regents Park. (CurC)

Marsh, Teresa Head of HR in The Royal Parks, based in Hyde Park headquarters. (CurS)

Mason-Roden, Jacqueline Richmond Park association over several years. (PA)

McCulloch, James Former Superintendent of Parks & Gardens, City of London, long association with TRP. (PA)

Michael, Elaine Executive Assistant to Chief Executive TRP, since April 2006. (CurS)

Miller, Christopher Started work in Queen Mary's Rose Garden, Regents Park, late 1960s before going to Wisley in 1970. (ExS)

Mumford, Lady Association through Thatched House Lodge at Richmond Park. (PA)

Owen, Tim Involved with TRP since 1985 through role as Westminster City Council. (PA)

Pearson, Kenwyn Long-time association with Royal Parks via London Garden Society/London in Bloom. (PA)

Rawlings, Ann Running of courses in Richmond Park and through the Institute of Horticulture exhibitions at Chelsea Flower Show. (PA)

Richards, Simon Park Manager of Richmond Park. (CurC)

Richardson, Michael Supporter and Volunteer in connection with Bushy and Richmond Parks over many years. (PA)

Risbridger, Eve Former Head of Parks for Richmond Council, and long involvement with Richmond and Bushy Parks. (PA)

Strickland, Edward Current staff, has worked as ‘Project Sponsor’ at TRP since 1999. (CurS)

Strong, Brian Former Head of Royal Parks and Palaces Division, Department of Environment, May 1982-July 1987. (ExS)

Tonge, Baroness Dr Jenny MP Richmond Park 1997-2005, Board Member on Richmond Park Charitable Trust; involved with events in Bushy Park and Richmond Park over many years. (PA)

Tos, Ted Worked in Central Royal Parks from 1966-92 as driver/carpenter/chargehand. (ExS)

Trowell, Nigel Former Royal Parks Apprentice at Hampton Court, 1964-69. (A)

Ullman, Jennifer Chief Parks Officer for Wandsworth Borough Council; long-time association with TRP and historic links with Battersea Park. (PA)

Wasilewski, Mark Joined Royal Parks in August 1988, currently Park Manager of St. James's Park and The Green Park. (CurS)

Williams, Rona Connection via Thatched Lodge, and one time resident in Richmond Park. (PA)

Woolley, Fred Involvement through Richmond Park Charitable Trust. (PA)

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Tos, Mrs Pat Pay Clerk from 1979-94 in Hyde Park; wife of Ted Tos. (ExS)

Woolley, Jackie Long involvement with Richmond Park. (PA)

CORRECTION

In a photo caption in the last Newsletter we wrongly named two of this year’s Apprentice members. We gave the name Steve Portner, and of course it should have been Steve Britter. And Steve Campbell was wrongly named Steve Coupling. Apologies to both Steve’s!

And finally, an appeal from the Newsletter editor:

I hope you have enjoyed reading through this edition of the Newsletter. It’s the largest yet.

To help in the sourcing of good material, stories, pictures, and so on, we would like each of the Royal Parks to have a ‘correspondent’. The role of the correspondent will depend entirely on the availability of the individual, the contacts they have with the park concerned, the level of activity within the park (and whether there is anything newsworthy to report), and so on. Initially the correspondent will contact me with information two or three times between each of the Newsletters being produced.

Whether this contact comprises just an idea for a small Newsletter item, or a fully written and illustrated article, will depend on the individual, and the time they have available.

At the time of writing I believe we have correspondents for Greenwich, Richmond and Bushy Parks, and St. James’s Park, but we need people for Regent’s Park, Hyde Park, Kensington Gardens and The Green Park.

If you are interested in being a correspondent, do let me know. Contact me at info@theroyalparksguild.org or ring me on 07840 533441. Thank you.

Graham Clarke