

Beddington Park NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the latest edition of the Beddington Park Newsletter



 @BEDDINGTON_PARK
www.sutton.gov.uk
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Jan-June 2021

Update

During lockdown with little to do and limited places to go, it was the park that has kept many of us entertained. You may have witnessed a Kingfisher in January, Daffodils in March, Cherry-blossom in April or at long last in late May, after over a month incubating her eggs on the island, a Swan gave birth to a brood of not so ugly cygnets. Not to forget the new goslings, ducklings etc.



Photo by Graham Wilkins

Since the easing of restrictions in April, we have slowly and cautiously restarted volunteering activities and events in the park. We have tried to provide something for all age groups from history walks to forest school and more.

Sakura Cherry Tree Project

In February, 60 Cherry trees were planted at 2 locations in the park, half follow the route of the cycle path and the other half form a new tree avenue, in the field behind the Beddington Park cottages. Cherry blossom (Sakura) is the national flower of Japan and this national project celebrates a new era of UK-Japan friendship and cooperation.



The trees were paid for by businesses located in both countries and the planting costs were covered by the Heritage and Community Lottery Fund. In total 6,500 Sakura were planted in parks and schools around the UK. We look forward to the future cherry displays, as the trees mature!



Jan-June 2021

Sutton Parks Lockdown Poetry

We had 60 entries into our Lockdown Poetry Prize, judged by published poets from the [Sutton Writers Group](#). Parks have been a lifeline for many people this year and the competition gave people an opportunity to express what parks have meant to them during this time.

Congratulations to the 3 winners, each awarded a prize of a £50 book token:

- Heather Honour with her poem - *30th December in Beddington Park*
- Eleanor McSherry with her poem - *Flying*
- Corrina Nesbitt Gibbons with her poem - *Treasured Time in Precious Parks*

30TH DECEMBER IN BEDDINGTON PARK

A crisp morning, my heart feels something strange, like joy?

*I pull back my straining dog from
the swans in icy water, and the geese.*

*He would hunt them,
they would beak him, given the chance.*

*At this year's end, after so much rain, and "stuff,"
it is not hard to choose a walk for me and my constant companion*

*So, it's Beddington again,
firm paths to avert muddy feet and paws...*

Continue reading Heather's poem and all the winning and runner up poems here:

www.sutton.gov.uk/poetry-competition

Jan-June 2021

Forest School

In partnership with **Wildlings Forest School** we ran 2 trial Forest School sessions in April along with further sessions in June and July. Lots of fun was had and there are more sessions available on the **9th & 10th August, 10.30-12.30pm or 1.30-3.30pm.**

They are open to 8-12 year olds plus an adult (parent/grandparent/carer) and booking is essential.

opportunity for free play, chilling in the hammock or having a go on the rope swing.



Book here:

wildlingsforestschool@gmail.com

Forest School helps get children outdoors, in touch with nature and away from their phones and computers. Kids learn through play and discovery, collaboration and risk taking, climbing trees and using tools.

We will be getting the tools out to create some amazing woodland crafts. There will also be plenty of



Jan-June 2021

A Long Walk in the Park

At 101 years of age, Margaret New may well be the oldest person walking in Beddington Park today.

So if you pass an upright lady with a black stick, in a dark blue coat and trilby hat stepping out smartly, daughter by her side, you'll know who it is.

Her relationship with Sutton's parks began in 1948 when she moved into the borough as a young married woman. While bringing up their three daughters Margaret and her husband Harry used Sutton's parks regularly. Collingwood Road Rec was closest but walking to Nonsuch or Cheam Park on a Sunday afternoon for a picnic with friends in the summer, was a regular feature of family life – despite the long walk there and back. In 1968 after moving to Carshalton Beeches, Oaks Park became the focus of attention. A walk to and from, visit to the cafe and enjoyment of the trees, was a regular occurrence. After moving to Wallington in 1983, Margaret and Harry continued to walk to and from Oaks Park via the smallholdings.

Interestingly, despite its relative proximity, Margaret's relationship with Beddington Park is a new one - borne of the pandemic. Since March 2020,

weather permitting, Margaret and her daughter have completed a daily 30–45 minute walk, clocking up an impressive average of 5 miles a week. Although



they started off walking locally, they were increasingly drawn to walking in the Park, inspired by the scenery, wildlife, beautiful trees and opportunity for connection with

children, dogs, their owners, runners and walkers. They've walked through the changing seasons and enjoyed how the park reveals different aspects of itself, when the trees are in full foliage – or bare. A walk in the park has become part of their daily routine, bringing structure to their lives as well as being a metaphor for hope, connection and joy, amidst uncertainty and change. As winter gives way to spring, and nature renews itself once again, Margaret continues to put her best foot forward - walking with hopeful optimism and vigour into her 102nd year.

Perhaps you have a park story to share?

Get involved



Forest Bathing

Despite its name, forest bathing isn't about getting wet. Instead the experience involves using all your senses to immerse yourself in nature. In essence, forest bathing is a slow, sensory woodland walk. We spend quality time under the canopy of trees which feels different to a common walk in the woods. When we walk at our

system and accelerate recovery from illness.

We ran 4 sessions in June and received brilliant feedback. Now is your chance to have a go! **Book on one of our free sessions on the Saturday 18th September, 10.30-11.30am or 1-2pm. Email: dawn.fielding@sutton.gov.uk**



usual pace, talk to a friend, use our phone or have a destination in mind, nature becomes a backdrop. Forest bathing lets you immerse yourself in nature, it is good for both physical and mental wellbeing. It is proven to reduce stress hormone production, improve feelings of happiness and free up creativity, as well as lower heart rate and blood pressure, boost the immune

Get involved



Sutton Tree Warden News

Tree Wardens are back in action, they have teamed up with the Surrey branch of **Butterfly Conservation** to plant disease resistant Elm trees in the park. When Dutch elm disease swept through southern Britain in the 1960s and 70s, over 90% of elms were lost; an



estimated 25 million trees. This in turn caused a catastrophic decline of the **white-letter hairstreak butterfly** that relies on the elm to feed its caterpillars. We are creating new habitat for the hairstreak. These are tree dwelling butterflies and are hard to spot, so we are hopeful that perhaps there are more around than we thought. Young English elm can still be seen growing in the park, but they perish from Dutch elm disease long before they reach maturity. With



careful monitoring we hope that our new saplings grow into mature trees in the distant future and that the white-letter hairstreak population can in time return to the park.

Talks on butterfly projects taking place in London and Surrey can be found here:

<https://butterfly-conservation.org/in-your-area/surrey-and-sw-london-branch/zoom-talks>

Tree Wardens meet every Tuesday from 1-3pm and some Saturday mornings. For more information or to volunteer, email:

suttontreewardens@gmail.com

What else has been happening in the park?



Transform your space!

Our aim is to help transform *small* neglected spots into beautiful and inspiring spaces in Sutton's parks and the local community.

We are offering free training for volunteer **Garden Advisors** who have time to help. The training will include learning basic horticultural skills along with garden planning. Once trained the garden advisors will have the confidence to help other friends/community groups make their own garden transformations.



Volunteers will need to have good communication skills, enthusiasm and be willing to travel locally. **The training will be taking place from September on Thursday mornings from 10-11.30am** across parks and locations in the London Borough of Sutton.

Email: dawn.fielding@sutton.gov.uk

for more information or call 0208 7705052.

Friends of Beddington Park

The Friends are planning activities as well as updating their membership form, website and developing a wildlife/history trail leaflet for children and families.

Litter picking – help with our regular litter picking activities

Friends flower bed – help look after the flower bed maintained by the Friends

If you are interested in becoming a member or helping with one of the activities above, email Muriel McIntosh: chairman@friendsofbeddingtonpark.co.uk

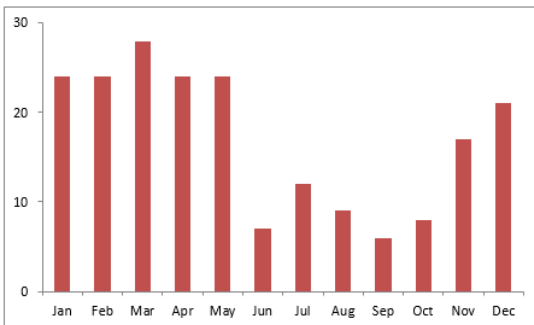


Wildlife Corner

Desilting the lake has been good for Tufted Ducks!

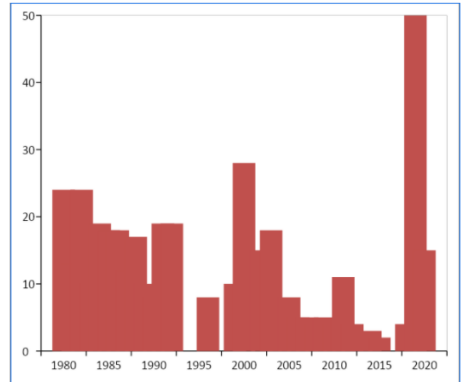
by Derek Coleman

There have been two effects of the coronavirus pandemic that make this article possible. Firstly, like many bird-watchers, I have been entering records from my old diaries onto the computer. Secondly, thanks to the Government press conferences, we have all become much more familiar with charts. So first slide please.



This slide shows the **average number of Tufted Ducks** seen on the lake for each month from 1980 to present. Tufted Duck is principally a winter visitor to the Park with pairs breeding in some years. Most wintering birds would be expected to leave for their breeding grounds by the end of March but Tufted Duck breeds relatively late in the year (July-August) so birds breeding 'locally' may not disperse until June.

Next slide please.



This slide shows the peak count of Tufted Ducks between October and March for each year. There are a few gaps from when I did not visit the Park. However, the general pattern is higher numbers pre 2000 with lower numbers post 2000, except in the last few years. So what explains this pattern? **The explanation lies in food**; high numbers will occur when there is plenty of food. Tufted Duck



Three males and one female Tufted Duck

Wildlife Corner

find their food by diving for animals, living on the bottom of the lake, particularly snails and midge larvae, supplemented by seeds in autumn. My hypothesis is that the increasing silt in the lake reduced the availability of food. Midge larvae thrive in silty conditions so would have been present in good numbers but the silt was so thick that they may not have been available to the ducks. In the winter of 2016/17, which



was the last winter before the lake was desilted; I did not see a Tufted Duck (the absence of counts is real). Following desilting, they quickly returned with the highest ever count of 50 in late January/early February 2020 so feeding conditions must have been very good. Interestingly, many more males were present than females. Whether the desilting led to a flush of some animal and conditions have now resorted to 'normal', since the high numbers did not occur in the 2020/21 winter but were more similar to numbers in the 1980s. I await next winter with interest to see how many occur.

Breeding of Tufted ducks occurred nearly every year from 1990 to 1999

with an exceptional seven broods in 1994. Again the silty conditions may have been responsible for the lack of breeding post 1999 with the exception of a brood in 2011. Following desilting, there were broods in 2018 and 2020, which is likely to reflect better feeding conditions.

Nature Photos

Our park is packed with wildlife from birds to bees to bluebells. If you have a nature photo you would like to share email: dawn.fielding@sutton.gov.uk



Southern Marsh-orchids – jewel in our crown!

Events – a highlight of upcoming activities & events

Weekly Park Activities

Mondays.

WALKS FOR FUN: Low level Social Walking Group. A gentle walk followed by a café stop. Meet opposite St Mary's Church at 10.30am. Free. Email: befriending@vcsutton.org.uk

Tuesdays

TREE WARDEN VOLS: Tree planting, maintenance and surveying in the park. Weekly sessions from 1-3pm. Some Saturday morning sessions as well. Email: suttontreewardens@gmail.com

Wednesdays

GARDENING VOLS: Carrying out pruning, weeding & planting in the park. Twice monthly sessions from 10am-12pm. Email: dawn.fielding@sutton.gov.uk

Fridays

RUN-4-WELLBEING: A gentle 5km friendly jog & a space to chat, followed by a café stop. Meet outside Pavilion café at 9.45am for a 10am start. Free.

NORDIC WALKING: Sociable, fun outdoor exercise for better general fitness. Weekly at 1pm. £3. Email: activities@ageuksutton.org.uk

Summer Activities

Family Fitness Classes

Thursdays 29 July – 2 Sept

Saturdays 31 July – 4 Sept

11.30-12.30pm

Free. For adults & children ages 5-11 years. Maximum 2 kids per adult.



To book a place email: karen@be-epic.co.uk.

Skoot - Skateboarding lessons

Monday 2 Aug

Monday 9 Aug

10.30-11.30am

Free. For kids aged 5-12 years. To book a place visit: www.myclubhouse.co.uk/TOYP/Events/Calendar



Events – a highlight of upcoming activities & events

Forest School

Monday 9 Aug or Monday 10 Aug

10.30-11.30am or 1.30-3.30pm

Free. For kids aged 8-12 years with an adult. To book a place email: wildlingsforestschool@gmail.com

Forest Bathing

Saturday 18 Sept

10.30-12pm or 1pm-2.30pm

Free. A relaxing activity that is good for physical and mental wellbeing. Over 18s only. To book a place email: dawn.fielding@sutton.gov.uk

Guided Walks

Bat Walk

Saturday 14th Aug 8.30-10.30pm

Saturday 18th Sept 7.15-9.15pm

Free. Join this guided walk with the Senior Biodiversity Officer, to discover more about the bats in Beddington Park and see if you can spot some. To book a place email:

dawn.fielding@sutton.gov.uk

Discovery Walk

Beddington park to Grove park

Monday 9th Aug 10am-1pm

Free. For people who want to discover more about the area looking at nature and history along the way. 2.5km one way or 5km circular. To book a place email: dawn.fielding@sutton.gov.uk

Dates For Your Diary

Zippos Circus

Thursday 22 July – Monday 26 July

www.zippos.co.uk/locations/wallington

Beddington Park Friends Litter Pick

Saturday 24 July, 10.30-12.30pm

Email:

chairman@friendsofbeddingtonpark.co.uk

Autumn Rotary Task Day and Clean Up

Sunday 24 October.

Email: dawn.fielding@sutton.gov.uk



Thanks to John Phillips from Carshalton and District History & Archaeology Society for leading 3 history walks over the past few weeks, looking at the history of the Grange Garden and from 18th Century deer park to Victorian park. For also leading tours of the Dovecote!

