

NEWSLETTER

Newsletter No. 1

July 2006

CONTACT DETAILS:

Shrewsbury House
Bushmoor Crescent
Shooters Hill
London SE18 3EG

Kathy Smith:
ksmithbox@hotmail.com

Carol Farr: CarolA-Farr@aol.com

Kris Inglis: Kris.inglis4@ntlworld.com

Inside this issue:

<i>Clearing a path</i>	2
<i>Walking the Park</i>	2
<i>Wild Service Tree</i>	2
<i>A personal history</i>	3
<i>Woodpecker</i>	3
<i>Aims</i>	4
<i>Become a Member</i>	4
<i>Useful numbers</i>	

Welcome and Introductions

Welcome to this first edition of the Friends of Shrewsbury Park newsletter. The group was formed on 13th March 2006 at a meeting held in Shrewsbury House. The Management Committee were elected at that meeting, and we have met to discuss the issues concerning the Park.

We will be using the newsletter to keep you up to date with what we are doing.

The Management Committee are:

Chair: Kathy Smith,
Secretaries: Carol Farr & Kris Inglis,
Treasurer: Nicola Dennis.

Other members are: Alistair Layzell, Bev Hand,



The logo takes the shape of the Park

Helen Sinclair, Leslie Drew, Libby Agate, Liz McDermot, Ron Senkus, Tina Rowe and Trevor Codrington.

If you have any issues concerning the Park, or any ideas for future newsletters, please contact us.

Action Plan

We drew up an Action Plan arising from issues at the public meeting. The plan included action on the problems at the Park, as well as the suggestions for development.

The priorities were: make it safe; make it cleaner; find out

about the flora and fauna; and encourage use of the Park.

Work on the Action Plan is ongoing, so if you have any ideas, contact us.

Copies of the Action Plan are available from the Chair.

Clearing a Path

A number of the Management Committee met on Good Friday and cut, lopped and sawed our way around the old L.C.C. Nature reserve in Dohill Lane (this is a piece of land next to the Onyx Nature Conservation area). Kathy, Liz and Trevor were soon joined by Helen and then Nicola with her daughters, Morgan and Carmen). The rain held off and we put in a few hours work.

This part of the Park used to have a stream running through it and Rosebay willow herb (*Chamaenerion angustifolium*) - neither were in evidence, but there

were a number of rose bushes, so we are looking forward to seeing what happens with them this summer.

We will be seeking advice on the area's bio-diversity as we want to encourage flora and fauna in this and other areas of the Park.

Do take a walk in the area and help us keep it free from brambles (take your secateurs with you).



Tired, but pleased with our work.

Walking in the Park with Alan Pett

We met with Alan Pett, the Council's Park Security & Education Manager, who walked around the Park with us and listened to the problems and our suggested solutions. We discussed ways of stopping vandals driving cars into the Park and he promised to take action (Libby had marked on the map where vandals were getting in). We

asked for more bins (Tina had marked on the map where they were needed), and Alan said he would arrange this. We asked for more seats (Bev had marked on the map where they were needed) and again he agreed to organise the work. He said he hoped work would start in June 2006.

We are taking advice on the bio-diversity of the Park before we come up with suggestions to improve the Park.

Wild Service Tree identified

There are at least three Wild Service Trees (*Sorbus Torminalis*), in the hawthorn hedgerow. The tree, one of the rarest British native trees, was once widespread, but was used by charcoal burners. It is now only found in patches of old



Leaf of *Sorbus Torminalis*

woodland in southern England. The dark grey bark peels off in rectangular strips, producing a chequered effect which explains the tree's alternative name of chequer tree. It has many-lobed alternative leaves, and creamy white flowers in May and June. Its leathery brown fruit has speckles.

A personal history of the Park - Helen Sinclair-Bishop

A large part of what is now Shrewsbury Park once belonged to the Shrewsbury House estate and some to the Rev. Dallin.

By the fence behind Ashridge Crescent was a pond fed by natural Springs where boys once fished for tiddlers. Now filled in, it still becomes a quagmire in wet weather.

During WW2, two bombs dropped in the big field, one landing where the pond had been. The hole immediately filled up with water and once more children played there.

The woods were fenced off and managed by the L.C.C. with paths for walkers (and dogs!). The Park Keeper, in his brown uniform, worked from a small brick building near where the car park is now, and woe betide any child who misbehaved when he was on his rounds.

During the Park's early years when it was smaller, it was surrounded by railings, a bell was rung at closing time when the big metal gates were shut for the night. During the war most of these railings went for the 'war effort' and allotments sprang up all around the Park. Gradually the two fields became overgrown with gorse, and groups of fly agaric, the beautiful but poisonous red toadstools with white spots, appeared between the silver birches in the woods.

A V.E. Day Party was hold in the small field for the children of the nearby Laing's Estate, and gradually the Park returned to normal, with cricket matches in summer and football in winter.



Helen is in the front row

As the years passed, the fences and wooden seats, like the little pavilion that once stood at the top of the steep path that leads down to the allotments, fell into disrepair and were dismantled and taken away.

But it is not all 'doom and gloom' as we now have a greater variety of birds than before, including, among others, three kinds of woodpecker, one of which is quite rare, a goldcrest and a short-eared owl have recently been seen.

Lesser spotted Woodpecker spotted.

We were pleased to learn from Dave, one of the bird watchers that he had photographed the rarer woodpecker, a Lesser spotted woodpecker, in the Park. The bird, not much bigger than a sparrow is found among the top branches of



Male Lesser spotted woodpecker.

trees. The male has a red cap (the female is buff), and white bars on its black back. The bird drums on wood to establish territory, the sound usually lasts longer than that of the great spotted woodpecker. We now have all three types of woodpecker using the Park. Let us know of any bird you have seen in the Park.

FRIENDS OF SHREWSBURY PARK

Not a member? Want to become one?

The benefits of membership include:

- entitlement to vote at Annual General Meetings to elect Board Members and influence the development of the Park
- Keeping up-to-date with what is going on by receiving the newsletters and annual report
- Getting involved in Friends events

The cost of membership is £2 per person per year (donations gratefully received). If you would like to join, please contact Carol Farr for a membership form.



Early Spring in the Park

USEFUL NUMBERS:

Anti-social behaviour:

0208 856 0100

Park security: 0208 856 2232

Police: 0208 855 1212

0208 853 1212

Local PC—Cliff Graham: 07951

347128

Shrewsbury Park Residents Assoc:
Len Newland, Chair, 0208 854 4423

The aims of the Friends of Shrewsbury Park

To support and encourage the use of Shrewsbury Park

To support the development of facilities for recreation, education and amenities for local people and to encourage a sense of community around the area of the Park.

To promote harmony within the community and to actively work against all forms of discrimination within it so that no one is disadvantaged by reason of ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age, class, income, employment status or religious belief.

To represent the interests of the users of the Park in consultation with the local authority and other bodies.

The group shall have the power to affiliate to any Body whose objects may be of benefit to its membership.

To raise funds via grants/fundraising activities to support the running and use of the Park.

To ensure that all members of Friends of Shrewsbury Park are informed and consulted regularly, and that all park users are encouraged to join.

To provide a safe environment for the park users and wildlife and to promote such schemes as will benefit and nurture wildlife.

LOST/FOUND

Camera found in Park. If you lost one, please contact Kathy with a description.

Car keys with fob lost in Park. If you find them, please let Kathy know