

**Message from our Chairman**

Following our decision earlier in the year to involve members more in what we do, we formed sub-groups, which are beginning to work well. We have now planned some new members' activities for the summer months – see page 2 – and hope that some of you will come along and join us. We speak to so many people when we are gardening or walking around the park and they all say how beautiful the park looks these days. Well done to everyone in the team who has helped! *Charles Novis*

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**The Garden of the Child in the Park**

was officially re-opened on Friday May 20th, by Gary Baker, Veolia North Thames Trust Project Officer.



We should like to thank Veolia for their generosity in funding this project, and Billericay Town Council for their help. Thanks also go to Rob Smith who designed and planted the garden. The plants have settled in well and now just need time to spread and outdo the weeds.



We added a reed fence to the path in the hope of keeping little feet off the new plants, we hope that visitors to the gardens will respect the notices.

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**Bark in the Park** Our amazing dog show is to be held on **Saturday September 17<sup>th</sup>** from 11am until 4pm.



Even better than previous years, we have lots of lovely classes for your dog to enter, plus displays and stands offering all you and your pet could wish for. Even if you don't have a dog, bring a chair and you can spend many hours enjoying the antics of dogs and their owners.

**Dates for your diaries**

- Jazz in the Park: Saturday July 16<sup>th</sup> 4.30 – 7pm**
- Members events – see page 2**
- Bark in the Park: Saturday September 17<sup>th</sup>**
- AGM & Speaker Jim Buttress ex-Royal Parks: Thursday September 29<sup>th</sup> 7.45pm**
- Carols in the Park: Saturday December 17<sup>th</sup>**

We hope that you will join us – see more information elsewhere in this newsletter and watch for further details coming soon on our website!

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**Jazz in the Park**



**Saturday July 16<sup>th</sup>** will soon be here, with our super jazz event! Let's hope that summer has come by then. Watch our website if there is any doubt about the weather!

We are thrilled to be able to announce that we have very generous sponsorship this year from Michael Barnard & Co. Ltd, which enables us to run the jazz event for the next few years, covering all our expenses.

We have an evening packed with players ranging from our friends Nimrod Margalit and his band and also the Daisy Bowlers again. This year we have two young players: Latalia, who sang last year and Adam Holdsworth who plays the sax and clarinet. In addition, Drew-Levi, a local singer/songwriter who accompanies himself in songs inspired by Elton John and others. And finally the Law, an acoustic-duo, also join us for the first time, and will be singing and playing their guitars.

Bring your own picnic, with chairs or rugs and enjoy a variety of music on a warm summer's evening by the lake. And all for free! The music starts at 4.30pm and continues until about 7pm or so.

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*'God made rainy days, so gardeners could get the housework done.'* *If only He had told the weeds not to grow so fast!*

## New events for members & friends

We have planned some special events for members and hope that some of you will join us.

- **Coffee morning: Thursday July 28<sup>th</sup> from 10.30am**, with short talk about the History of the park at the Community Hut next to our Information Centre. Open to all members and bring a friend for £1 donation. No need to book. If any of you feel you could help us do the coffees for this session, please let us know.
- **Guided Tree Walk: Thursday August 4<sup>th</sup> 7.30pm** Find out about the special trees in the park and their uses. Booking essential. Meet at our Information Centre.
- **Bat Walk: Thursday August 18<sup>th</sup> 7.30pm** - details under 'Let's go batty' item.
- **Making bat and bird boxes:** event for families to be organised for a Saturday in September. Watch for details coming soon.

Booking is essential as numbers are limited. **Please ring 07843 860 135 to book your place or complete the form on-line.**

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## Photography Competition 2016



A final reminder that entries for our photo competition must be in by midnight on August 31<sup>st</sup>. There are literally hundreds of pounds' worth of prizes awaiting you and you can photograph just anything in the park, on a phone or camera. If possible, please send your entry via our website, where you will find the rules and entry form. If you can only send an actual photo, then ring us on 07843 860 135 (answerphone) for where to send it.

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## Flower Meadow

The plants in the flower meadow are growing well, as are the thistles – all we need now is some warmth and sunshine to bring the flowers out! We hope everyone enjoys them again and thank the parks team for having the inspiration to suggest and develop the idea.

## AGM

Our AGM is planned this year for **Thursday September 29<sup>th</sup> at 7.45pm**, when the annual report and accounts will be approved and the committee will be elected. If you would like to join the committee we shall be delighted to have some new members. The formal notification of the event will be coming to you in August.

We have a great speaker – Jim Buttress (The Big Allotment Challenge), who used to be in charge of the Royal Parks until he retired. His talks are always great fun, with some wonderful stories, such as the one about having a gin with the Queen Mother and, of course, lots to relate about his life in the Royal Parks. See you there!

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## Let's go batty!

Lake Meadows is proving to be a major haunt for the species Chiroptera, more commonly known as, the bat! Bats are flying mammals and play an essential part in the natural world as indicators of a healthy environment.



Recent surveys of the park, led by a local bat expert, assisted by members of our Ecology Sub-group, have so far recorded 3 species of bats in the park. In the woodland area, Common Pipestrelles feed on midges at the top canopy of the trees, whilst large numbers of the white bellied Daubentons skim the surface of the lake. It is said that the Common Pipestrelle can eat up to 3000 insects in a single night! The Brown long-eared bat, a slow flyer has also been identified. It is great fun recording the bats. A special hand-held 'bat meter' can pick up the different frequencies that each type of bat gives out when flying, and a high powered torch helps to see them flitting through the air.

If you would like to know more about these fascinating animals, why not come to our **'Talk and Walk' bat event** led by Peter Claughton from the Essex Bat Group. The evening will start from the building beside the café at 7.30. Peter will give us an illustrated talk on bats followed by a walk around the park to see and identify the bats.

**Thursday August 18<sup>th</sup> 7.30pm** - Free for members but booking essential. Details on booking. Families with children welcome.

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## Capability Brown 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary

English landscape architect and England's greatest royal gardener. See a short cartoon film about him on <http://www.capabilitybrown.org>

## Happy Memories

The raised bed was planted out by our gardeners in early June in memory of Reg King, a park keeper here at the park for 33 years, who died in November last year, aged 90 years of age.



A dedicated man, who loved gardening and enjoyed designing and planting the raised bed every year, in tribute to many organisations. It was his pride and joy! Now it is Reg's turn to be remembered. A nearby seat in his memory has been dedicated to him by his family.

Here are our team of busy gardeners planting 1,400 plants, which took them 26 man hours. The plants include geraniums, begonias, ageratum and alternantheras for Reg's initials. We just need the sun to shine now.



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## Children's Corner

**Q.** Why is the letter "A" like a flower?  
**A.** They both have bees coming after them.



**Q.** What do you get if you cross a dog with a daisy?  
**A.** A collie-flower.

And a joke especially for Billericay ....

**Q.** If April showers bring May flowers, what do May flowers bring?  
**A.** Pilgrims, of course.



**Children – please remember to take a photo** of the park and ask your mum or dad to help you send it in to our photo competition. You might win a lot of money!

You can take a photo of anything in the park, but you must fill in a form and read the rules, which are on our website: [www.lakemeadows.org.uk](http://www.lakemeadows.org.uk)  
The competition is open until the end of August.

Ask if you can stay up late for our Bat evening in August. You might see some bats flying in the wood or over the lake, you will certainly hear them.

## Bee Hotels

Bee hotels, bat and bird boxes, are amongst the plans our new Ecology group has been making. Some bee hotels have already been made by committee members and placed high up in trees around the park near to flowers.



For simple instructions to make your own bee hotel go to <http://www.opalexplornature.org/Beehotels>

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## Our Spring & Summer Challenge

We need your help! Last newsletter we challenged everyone to find at least one new member to join us. Do you have a neighbour or friend in the town who you could ask? Do you walk your dog at Lake Meadows and meet other dog owners who use the park every day? Members do not need to 'do' anything except support us, although if they wish to be involved, there is lots they can do.

The membership form is on our website, or can be obtained from the Information Hut or by ringing Rosie on: 07843 860 135 (answerphone).

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## Gardeners

Our gardeners were very busy at the start of June, not only did they have the general gardens to keep in shape, but they planted the new fern bed near the Lake Avenue entrance, planted up the raised bed and worked in the Garden of the Child as well.

Altogether, our gardeners look after about 1/3rd of an acre of flowerbeds now. Given that they only work for a couple of hours once a week, they do remarkably well! They really could do with a few more gardeners, so if you are even the tiniest bit interested in gardening, why not come and join us on a Tuesday morning soon? We are usually in the gardens between 9.30 and 11.30am and provide all the tools.

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## Fern Bed

The bed was quite a dry shaded area when it was planned, due to a large oak tree in the neighbouring garden. So we chose plants such as hellebores, rhododendrons and bergenias (elephant's ears), as well as a large number of ferns.

Sadly, the oak tree in the neighbouring garden blew down in a recent storm – luckily into the garden! So the bed is sunnier now! We hope the plants will soon establish and provide an interesting entrance to that side of the park.