

News from Harrold Odell Country Park
September 2010

Once again, the year seems to be disappearing at the speed of light. It only seems like yesterday that we were all shivering from the coldest winter/spring for many years. Now, we are all suffering from prolonged heat/drought conditions that have caused us a few problems.

The logistics needed to keep the new trees around the park watered has been a nightmare. We have had help, especially with the Community Orchard in Odell, from the local Fire Brigade and our Friends Group. Special thanks to David Bedborough (and his trusty mini tractor), who has been ferrying water to wherever it's been needed.

Our Bailiff, Trevor Smith has been working hard to remove excessive weed from the fishing swims. This and an outbreak of blue/green algae in the large lake are a direct result of heat and low water levels. **Do not allow dogs into the water** until this resolves as the algae is detrimental to your dog's health. A good spell of wet weather will redress the balance.

The Park is the proud recipient of a Green Flag Award for the 3rd year in a row. A real mark of excellence! This is purely down to the hard work of the staff and volunteers as we have to show an improvement each time we enter. We have also applied for another award from the CPRE (Campaign for the Protection of Rural England). This is for the Community Orchard at Odell under their Landscape Improvement category. It was created last year from a patch of scrub and nettle covered land behind the houses in Horsefair Lane. There are now 45 heritage varieties of fruit trees of various types growing in there. In years to come we hope to have harvest events using the "fruits of our labours".

On July 24th we held a Love your Park event featuring representatives of our different users groups. This was a national week with events going on countrywide. It was a great success and many visitors took the opportunity to talk to people manning stalls like the Wildlife Trust, Walking 4 Health and the Friends Group.

I am in the throes of organising another event for **October 24th**. This is a joint venture with Bedford Museum. Called "**A Living from the Landscape**" we are bringing together crafts people who use natural materials to create things to sell. If you are looking for Christmas presents with a difference then this is the event for you.

So far, we have workers using metal, leather and wood. In addition a bee keeper, dyer, straw plaiter and a chainsaw carver have been invited. The Hemlock Morris Dancers will be along to entertain us. All this will take place between 11am – 4pm. Look out for posters in the noticeboards, tel. the park on 01234 720016 or e-mail janet.munro@bedford.gov.uk to find out more. The Friends Group also run a website www.hocp.gov.uk

From October onwards we will begin the winter work programme. Tasks include coppicing, hedge-laying, dyke clearance and bramble removal. Some of the Friends like to get involved with this but we also use Community Payback workers (via the

Probation Service) and individual volunteers. We are also now responsible for some other small sites in the area e.g. Daisy Bank Picnic Site near Felmersham. Some of these sites are in need of some TLC and we will be working in there as man-power allows.

Janet Munro
Assistant Ranger