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Find out about the great eateries on offer in the Country Parks.

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An insight into how we maintain the Country Parks for your enjoyment.

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Learn about how the Rangers conserve habitats with the help of volunteers.

BUCKS COUNTRY PARKS

NEWSLETTER 01

2015/16



"I hope you enjoy our wonderful parks and all of the great opportunities on offer for enjoying the outdoors"

Cllr. Warren Whyte



Welcome to the first edition of the Bucks Country Parks newsletter. Here you will find a selection of articles from the Rangers and other members of the Country Parks Team looking at some of our successes over the past year and some of the challenges we face as we move forward. *Cont. on page 2.*



03 2015 in Review
See what exciting developments happened in 2015!



05 Places to Play
Discover all of the exciting play areas in the country parks.



06 Footsteps of Stars
Have you walked in the footsteps of a star?

No year is the same in the Country Parks but nevertheless we have had another exceptional year with some great achievements by the team and our onsite partners Go Ape and San Remo Catering. Earlier in the year we saw a full refurbishment of the Black Park Café and Tree Top Junior has gone from strength to strength since its introduction last year.

"HUGE THANK YOU to the volunteers who come along week in, week out, whatever the weather"

I thank you for your continued support for these great events and activities.

We also must say a HUGE THANK YOU to all of the volunteers who come along whatever the weather, to make some great activities possible and carry out huge amounts of practical work in the parks, really helping to keep them in great condition.

There have been some new additions this year with the offer of hire spaces for that special occasion; Black Pines Camp, a barbecue area in Foxley Copse, The Beech Hut, Meadow View and The Lakeside Room.

We are also about to extend the Langley Park Tea Room with funds from the Langley Park HLF project; the new extension will provide a great indoor space to enjoy some lovely refreshments from San Remo whatever the weather.

See below for highlights of some more of our successes in 2015.

So what's next and what are the challenges for the next 12 months and beyond?

Finances continue to be a challenge; with all of these additional visitors, the wear and tear on the park increases and maintenance costs increase. All funds required to run the parks have to be generated from within the parks.

The Country Parks Team is in the middle of a comprehensive review prior to an internal restructure. This will look at how we operate within the Council's structure and what staff members we need to continue to maintain the parks to such high standards.

Towards the end of last year we agreed a lease with Groundwork South that will see a whole raft of developments at Denham Country Park including a new play area, an ice cream and coffee kiosk and a new café.

By Andrew Fowler,
Head of Country Parks
& Green Spaces



WELCOME
2015 IN REVIEW
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2015 in Review



01 More than 250 trees were planted, in part to protect the highly recognisable Scots Pine backdrop to Black Park Lake.
JAN



02 The new look cabin is ready for hire as part of Black Pines Camp, a great party space for even the most energetic of children!
FEB



03 The country parks welcomed three new recruits, making up our Seasonal Ranger team of Becky, Leonie and Joe.
MAR



04 April offered a last chance to spruce up the Temple Gardens before the Rhododendron flowers are at their best.
APR



05 Another new hire venue was completed with The Beech Hut opening for business. Perfect for post-Go Ape party food!
MAY



06 The elusive Purple Emperor was once again spotted in Black Park. An exciting spot for a lucky few.
JUN



07 Foxley Copse hosted its first BBQ. With purpose built facilities and regular safety checks it's the only place in the parks you can enjoy a BBQ!
JUL



08 The Blair Witch paid a visit to Black Park and scared the living daylights out of hundreds of open-air cinema goers at our sold out screening.
AUG



09 The Ranger Team constructed another bespoke wooden bridge at Denham Country Park, creating a safe crossing for all.
SEP



10 With bird nesting season over, the team safely cut down encroaching scrub where required, assisted by a team of dedicated volunteers.
OCT



11 With more visitors than ever, car parks have struggled to cope. Preparation works began for Black Park's new car park extension.
NOV



12 Santa visited Black Park again, with a busy weekend of carriage rides, a reindeer trail and the chance to sit on the big man's knee!
DEC

Three Great Places to Eat



For many of us getting something to eat or drink is an important part of our visit to the Country Parks. Over the past six months we have been working hard in Denham Country Park and Langley Park to make that visit even better.

In spring 2016 the Langley Park Tea Room will be extended to provide indoor seating and a bigger outdoor covered area, so you can bring your four legged friends too! Offering a range of delicious homemade dishes, made with fresh locally sourced ingredients, the Tea Room will be offering cream teas, a variety of freshly baked cakes and homemade desserts. Savoury options will include healthy salads, traditional home baked crusty baguettes, crispy skinned

jacket potatoes, paninis with a variety of homemade fillings and seasonal specials. On top of all that, a wide selection of ice cream, drinks, speciality teas and of course our strong Italian coffee will be on offer.

Denham Country Park Café is also undergoing major changes; now run by the Groundwork South Trust, they will be opening a sparkling new café for Easter 2016, with plenty of mouth-watering treats, all with a strong emphasis on locally sourced produce such as the fantastic Moolicious ice cream. Located next to the River Misbourne and with a brand new play area also due to open at Easter, this café and park will be a great new, fun filled family day out.

Getting its own new look, The Colne Valley Visitor Centre will be helping visitors explore and enjoy the Country Park and the wider Regional Park.

Finally Black Park Café, already well established and a big hit with visitors, serves an extensive menu of home cooked food, and house specials. Close to the adventure play area with fantastic views over the lake, this café really is a destination in its own right.

We already have three great, diverse parks, so we are excited that each one now has an equally great place to eat.

By Tim Williams,
Country Parks Lead Officer

Plenty of Places to Play



The Country Parks have a wonderful collection of playgrounds; each one with its own unique features, making visiting them a vital component of many family visits to the parks. In addition to our great existing play areas, we have some exciting new editions for 2016!

Alice's Tree House in Black Park is a new, truly bespoke play space. Enter Alice's Tree House by climbing up a ladder inside a tree trunk and you'll arrive in a beautiful domed canopy high up in the trees. Whizz down on a giant log slide and enjoy some

lunch under the tree house at the giant picnic table and storyteller's chair. Make a wish at the wishing well and go exploring to find all of the fairy and elf doors!

This enchanted play space is located north of the car park, next to Go Ape Tree Top Junior and offers a totally unique and magical play space for children aged five and above. All children under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult.

Exciting times are ahead for Denham Country Park as it gets a makeover in 2016. A new playground will spring up on the green with plenty of room to explore and have fun. There will be a giant boat sandpit with a sand crane, a bespoke treehouse, climbing logs, tunnels and mounds, an adventure trail, swings, slides and much more!

For families who want to roam a little further there will be a nature trail to take them over to Denham Deep Lock and back through the woods to the playground.

Keep an eye on the Colne Valley Park website to find out when the new playground will be opening:

www.colnevalleypark.org.uk

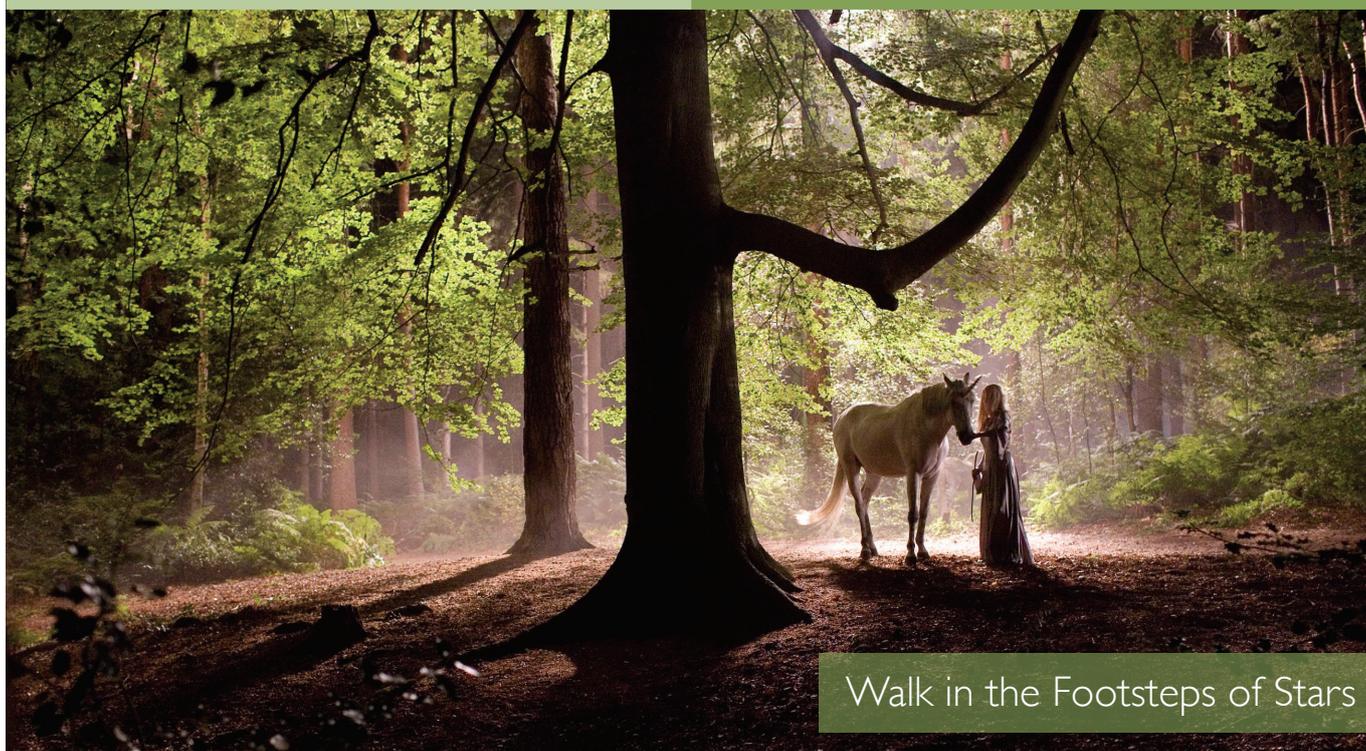
If you haven't experienced our great existing play areas yet, why not take a short walk around Black Park's picturesque lake to find the fantastic Emma Sallis Adventure Playground in its beautiful woodland setting. Children's imaginations run wild whilst playing in the mouse castle and train, challenges are met on the adventure trails and rope pyramid, and toddlers scream with delight on the swings, slides and seesaw. Close by is the Lakeside Café with lots of great food on offer, making your family day out complete.

If that's not exciting enough you can head to the Jubilee Play Garden in Langley Park. The commemorative play garden, located close to the car park, Tea Room and Rhododendron gardens, is the perfect spot to play and have a picnic with your toddlers. Set amongst a collection of beautiful Cedar trees, young children can enjoy imaginative play in the log huts and train, play hide and seek around the bamboo, climb up, over and under the hills, and enjoy a swing, slide and seesaw.

We hope you enjoy playing in the Country Parks!

By Amanda Mulholland,
Commercial & Customer Officer





Walk in the Footsteps of Stars

Since the 1950s Black Park has been the industry's regular go-to filming location. With films ranging from Hammer Horror's *Dracula Prince of Darkness* and *Kiss of the Vampire* to modern-day blockbusters such as *Cinderella* and *Snow White and the Huntsman*. Due to our prime position on the edge of London and with Pinewood Studios being our next door neighbour, Black Park is a leading, if not *the* number one outdoor filming location in Britain.

The picturesque lake, exquisite pine woodland, maze of trackways and the large open space have seen Black Park double up as a location for both the weird and the wonderful. From the foot of the Alps in *Captain America* to the Jungles of Uganda in *James Bond's Casino Royale*, right the way through to more magical and mystical worlds such as the *Forbidden Forest* and *Hogsmead Station* in *Harry Potter*, you never know what you may stumble across on your next walk around the park.

Black Park is not only known as a feature film location but it is also a popular spot for TV programmes and dramas such as *Silent Witness*, *Endeavour*, *New Tricks*, *Midsummer Murders*, *Humans* and

Horrible Histories. With just some of the features listed I'm sure you would agree that Black Park is a dangerous place for any fictional character to venture. It's a pity we haven't kept count of the number of on-screen deaths that have occurred in our park over the years; it's a more dangerous place than *Midsummer* itself!

Moving away from the well known glitz and glamour of the more established features that use Black Park as a filming venue we also offer an attractive location to the next up and coming directors and actors. You can see student productions regularly shooting in the park, so you never know, on your next walk in the park you may unwittingly bump into the next *Steven Spielberg* or *Julia Roberts*.

To walk in the footsteps of stars like *Keanu Reeves*, *Kirsten Stewart* and *Daniel Radcliffe* or to see where the *Ford Anglia* was chased through a woodland by a giant spider called *Aragog*, you can always join me on one of the popular film walks that I run throughout the year. Please see the current events programme for more information and remember that booking is essential as available spaces fill up fast.

By Matthew Madill,
Ranger

Where Does My Money Go?



It is a widely known fact that Bucks' Country Parks are owned by Buckinghamshire County Council. What is not so well known is that the Country Parks are self-financing, which means that all of the money needed to manage and maintain these beautiful places for your enjoyment is generated from within the parks themselves.

The Country Parks do not receive direct funding from the Council and so year on year the Country Parks Team works hard to generate the circa. £830,000 it costs to look after the four parks.

With help from some back-office services like HR and Property Services from the Council we then rely on a number of activities to keep the parks going and to ensure that we are as financially sustainable as possible, now and into the future.

The money generated goes on things like staff, tools and maintenance equipment to keep the parks safe and in great condition!

There are many ways we generate the income needed. One of those ways is to charge a small daily fee for car parking.

This is where we generate the largest proportion of income, so next time you're putting your coins into the pay and display machine in the car park, or you're renewing your annual parking permit, you will hopefully be able to see the fantastic impact that money makes in providing these great spaces for people to enjoy.

As well as car parking we also have a lot of location filming in the parks, particularly Black Park. Depending on what is going on in the world of filming, a good year can generate well over £100,000.

Other areas we rely on for income are rents from the catering facilities and Go Ape, selling Country Parks firewood as a byproduct of woodland management, running events for the enjoyment of our visitors and commission and rental fees from activity operators and onsite partners.

Next time you visit the parks, we hope you will take a look around and appreciate the value of your visit.

By Victoria Little,
Commercial & Customer Officer



Conservation and Volunteering

Conservation and volunteering often go hand in hand in the Country Parks and it is very often our unpaid helpers who give up their time to carry out a high proportion of this important and often overlooked work.

The conservation we carry out can largely be divided into natural and historical. In Langley Park for example, all of the maintenance of the beautiful Temple Gardens

and the peaceful Arboretum are vital in conserving these popular formal features.

At Black Park there is less visible history, but with a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Local Nature Reserve, the conservation tends to be more geared to the flora and fauna on site.

From goshawks hunting in the pine woodland to the common lizards sunning themselves on the 35-acre heathland, Black Park is home to an important range of plants and animals.

The Black Park Volunteer Team has gained in strength over the past decade and a dedicated group from all walks of life come in each Wednesday, rain or shine, to chop down small encroaching trees, dig up invasive

"From goshawks hunting in the pine woodland to the common lizards sunning themselves on the 35-acre heathland"

Rhododendron ponticum and plant the next generation of landscape trees that provide the backdrop to visitors' photographs and experiences alike.

It was volunteers who kept the seven-year hazel coppice restoration, near Fulmer Common Road, on track through the original clearance of the site and subsequent planting to enhance the area enormously as it is now.

The Langley group, many of whom (but certainly not all) are official 'Friends' of the park, meet every two weeks on the first and third Saturdays of each month. Some of their greatest successes have been proudly restoring the Japanese Bridge in the Arboretum, planting new shrubs to add colour and vibrance in the formal garden areas and

even recently relaying the new Temple Base to replace the gravel stones that were causing damage to the surrounding area. The small garden at Park Stile has been another highly successful volunteer project in the past few years and now provides a pleasant and quiet spot for visitors to enjoy.

We also host a Volunteer Gardener scheme at Langley Park, which allows people, once inducted, to come in on their own or in small groups to chip away at the varied and useful tasks around the park.

In total the parks received approximately 5,700 hours of volunteer help in 2015, including Simply Walks and Park Run volunteers. This year they are on course to shatter that total!

By Matthew May,
Lead Ranger

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