

The Friends of Croydon Road Recreation Ground

www.becrec.net

Newsletter No.7 – March 2006

'Variety being the spice of life...'

Welcome to the first newsletter of 2006. Once again, the park looks a treat following a lot of hard work by Harwood, the contractor.

The "Daff's" that were planted by our small band of frozen volunteers (thank you to Brian, Val and Ann) are now well into their stride. All around, new buds are starting to emerge in the sunlight only to shiver in the bitter north wind. The sun's shining and it's snowing at the same time. The squirrels look very smug at having their fur-coats buttoned up so well!

This time of year it's far too cold to sit for very long on 'our' bench whilst 'Jessie the wonder-mutt' is taunted by the bravest squirrels who now tease her in packs! But one only has to sit for a few minutes to see that there is always something going on in the park.

The Footballers, the Tennis players, the Bowlers, the Kite Flyers, the Family's in the Play Area, the Dog walkers, the Joggers and the Basketball players, are all out in force enjoying themselves or just simply passing through or relaxing. The young 'mini-beast' hunter's were out in the half term in a very enjoyable afternoon looking at Beetles and whatever tiny things live under the surface. Over the fence, the Hospital is now shrinking by the minute as the demolition machinery rolls through.

The park is used and enjoyed by so many people, some in groups and some in quiet relaxing, solitary, contemplation. Some use it regularly and some only occasionally.

Somewhere amongst all this are the reasons why the friends group continues to work hard. It is working closer with the council and its contractors to see how we can keep the park as the asset that it is and to help it to develop for use by an even broader range of people. Whatever ways you use the park, please enjoy it, do your bit to look after it, and continue to be considerate to other park users and our neighbours.

New Chairman.

We are really pleased that John Joslin has become the new Chairman of the Friends Group. John will already be well known to many of our members, but he does want to hear what all our members think, whether it's about the park or about communications across the group. Tell us what you enjoy in the park and suggest any improvements you would like to see. Above all....enjoy! **David Bays – Editor.**

Updates:

The Play Area Project

The Council have told us that the work on our project will start before the end of March. We are very pleased as this will deliver what many families in the park asked us for. It will provide more space – by moving the fence nearer to the adjacent football pitch – and will be safer by having a high fence behind the goal mouth so that fewer footballs get into the area. It will also provide some new trees along that fence to improve the shade from the hot summer sun. We hope it's all finished very quickly.

Area by the Basketball/Five-a-side court:

Another project we asked the council for has now been completed. The thick bushes between the basketball/five-a-side court and the rose garden (old bowling green for those of you with long memories) have been removed and the ground has been turfed over. It has opened up the area significantly, making it a safer and brighter spot by taking away the 'barrier.'

Hello from the New Chairman:

I attended the AGM in November and I was voted onto the committee. At the subsequent committee meeting I volunteered and I became the new chair of the Friends Group. I have already met with council officers and with representatives from a few other groups. I am really looking forward to leading the group and I believe that the key will be in strengthening our voice through a growing membership and through always listening to our existing members. It would also help if we can get some help from one or two sponsors along the way...

You'll see from the update in this newsletter that our planned expansion and development of the play area is due to start very soon. This is a friends group project and it is being managed and funded from income out of the decant village rent paid to the council.

In 2005/06, we were able to use about £14,000 but we plan to be able to access substantially more in 2006/07. We still need to hear your ideas for projects that are needed in the park so we can then approach the council with our favoured ideas for schemes that will compliment what they already have planned.

At our latest committee we discussed some developments to the paddling pool. We know that this pool now quite unique and is a huge attraction for so many family's throughout the spring and summer months. We know that it needs the council to carry out some repairs to it. We also believe that it could be made more environmentally friendly and greener. We will be talking to the council about that as a potential project. Please contact me at:

"Helston"
7 Cromwell Road,
Beckenham,
Kent. BR3 4LP

Joz Joslin.

Friends' Forum:

There are now 15 Friends' Groups within the London Borough of Bromley area.

Recently we were represented at a meeting of delegates from most of these Groups at which the aims of the Friends' Forum set up during the last quarter of 2005 were explained. The intention of the Forum is to draw together participating Friends' Groups in the Borough in co-operation, collaboration in sharing of ideas and the provision of the wherewithal to help them achieve their objectives.

Very few of the Groups share similar aspects of park life – and this can be seen from the notable differences even in Beckenham between Kelsey Park, St George's Churchyard and our own Croydon Road Rec. and places like Scadbury Park and Priory Gardens further afield – yet all deal with open spaces.

In other words, we all have something to learn from one another – offering advice from our own experience and achievements, receiving new ideas of projects which may be adapted to suit our special circumstances. Council officers from Bromley Borough attend the Forum and stress that they are there to be told what Friends need them to do, not the other way around.

These are early days in the life of the Forum. However during the year we shall attend its meetings make a contribution to them but also gain information and ideas which it is hoped will be the subject of another article in a later issue.

Brian Herman

Newsletter by email:

If you have given us your email address, we will be sending future newsletters to you electronically instead of by post. You'll get your copy quicker and it'll save the group money. Please tell us if you would prefer to continue to receive a paper version.

Membership Enquiries: either through valeriebays@hotmail.com or 020 8289 6989