



Volunteer Ranger Service Newsletter

A really **Big** Thank You

As we are about to hold our very first AGM as a constituted group I wanted to take this opportunity to thank all of you for helping to make this our most successful year ever.

Not only have we had our most successful volunteer recruitment year, we have also managed, through grants, donations and sales to generate more income than ever.

It may amaze you to learn that we now have 100 Volunteers signed up! Yes 100 !!!!

We have also managed to undertake some important habitat management work and our survey and monitoring capacity has grown as well.

More Volunteers are getting involved in an increasingly wider range of tasks and activities.

So as I said at the beginning of this article a really big thank you.

But as with any organisation there are always those who do that little bit extra and I think it is only right that we acknowledge them whenever we get the chance.

Your Committee have been fantastic this year. So I think we should mention them all.

Martin your Chairman has worked tirelessly at applying for grants (and is quite good at spending the money as well), while Dave, Graham & Christina have been there at every meeting and nearly every event supporting the Volunteers and leading the way.

A very special mention has to go to Debbie and Mark who not only serve on your committee as Treasurer and Secretary, but have also found the time to go to Uganda. Their support of the VRS and particularly the Twinning Project has been immense.

There are also some unsung heroes. Martin's wife Rose who takes the minutes at committee meetings and has been a supporter of the Twinning Project and my wife Karen, who hosts committee meetings, Visiting Rangers from Uganda (and other places) and acts as secretary answering a range of telephone enquiries from confused volunteers to bemused Ugandans.

And then there are those Volunteers who are happy to take on that bit of extra responsibility and help organise things, such as David and Ann in emailing people before a Tuesday task, and John and Ash who have put together templates for making scrap wood sculptures.

There are many more I should perhaps thank, but I now have run out of space.

So thank a Big thank you all - Steve Peach QECP VRS Co-ordinator



Just one of this year's magic moments
Martin presents Moses Director of the UWA with a walking stick

Volunteer Ranger Service AGM

The Volunteer Ranger Service is bound by its constitution to hold an General Meeting Annually. This year that meeting will take place on Wednesday 1st April 2009. It will take place in the Theatre, within the Main Visitor Centre and will be followed by a presentation by the Twinning Project Team. (VRS Members have already received notice of the meeting in the last newsletter)

This year all of the elected and appointed Committee Members are continuing in to their second year, so there is no need for any election of Committee Members. However it should be noted that if any of the committee wish to serve into a third year they have to stand for re-election / re-appointment and this would have to be voted upon by the Members of the VRS.

If anyone has any particular issues for discussion at the AGM, they must be notified in advance to the Chairman. The Chairman will take questions on the evening in response to the reports given by Committee Members, but may not take questions on issues not notified in advance.

QECP VRS Annual General Meeting Agenda

1. Welcome and introduction from the Chairman
2. Apologies for absence
3. Chairman's report
4. Treasurer's report
5. Secretary's report
6. The list of appointed Organising Committee Members
7. Election of Committee Members
- 8 . Report of the Queen Elizabeth Parks Twinning Project
- 9 . Notices or Amendments to the Constitution
10. General Questions and end of meeting

For further information about the AGM or to discuss any aspect of the proceedings please contact either Mark Saines Secretary of the Volunteer Ranger Service
Or Steve Peach Volunteer Ranger Service Coordinator

11. A report from the Queen Elizabeth Parks Twinning Project Including an illustrated presentation on their trip to the Ugandan Signing Ceremony and fact-finding mission by Debbie and Mark Saines

Monitoring and Surveying Wildlife At Queen Elizabeth Country Park

One of the key tasks that Volunteer Rangers undertake is wildlife Monitoring and survey. This a key task because without the monitoring and survey data we would be unable to make effective judgements about how we managed and develop the Country Park.

So in this article we will explore the difference between survey and monitoring and outline some of the key projects that we would like all Volunteers to get involved in during 2009.

First of all what is the difference between the two?

Well in simple terms, surveying is going out and looking for things, whereas monitoring is going out to see if particular condition or requirement is being met.

Repeated survey could be called surveillance.

In practice this means that the Adder spotting we undertake is really repeated survey, because we have not stated where or how many adders we want to see. In fact in the case of our Adder project a better term would be research.

On the other hand the vegetation work we carry out is monitoring, because in our management plan we have stated exactly what type of vegetation we desire in which area. So we are going out to see if we have achieved that.

So here is the list of key Monitoring and Survey projects we would like your help with.

Reptile Project

This has two elements to it.

1. Checking the reptile tins. This is carried out once during the week and once at weekends. The weekday check is normally carried out on a Wednesday by Julian and Mike (with help from Others). The weekend check is normally carried Out on a Sunday, by which ever Volunteer 'claims' The task first. Care needs to be taken that the tins are looked at To often, as this could scare the animals off.
2. The second element of the Reptile Project is Checking everywhere else. This is particularly Important as it also ties in with the Adder Project. All Volunteers need to do is choose a route and Carefully look to see what reptiles they come across. We need to know exactly where and what you Saw. Oxenbourne Down, Butser Hill and War Down is particularly under-surveyed.

Adder Project

Adder sighting reported to me (Steve Peach) are investigated and where it proves possible the adder is a caught, weighed ,photographed and coloured marked and then released. We then do our best to track the movements and life of each individual adder.

Volunteers can help by locating new snakes to 'register' and recording the activities of the marked adders.



Monitoring and surveying Wildlife At Queen Elizabeth Country Park

Butterfly Monitoring

Three species of Butterflies need to be monitored as part of our management plan.

Volunteers need to visit the key areas for each species and record where, how many and what the butterfly was doing. (ie nectaring, mating, egg-laying, flying etc)

The Duke Of Burgundy

Flies from the end of April through to June. The places to look for this Butterfly are Oxenbourne Down, (especially through the gorse block), on the back of Butser Hill from Grandfathers round to rake field and on Little Butser.

See page 8 for photo

The Chalkhill Blue

This pretty summer Butterfly flies during July, August and September. (Occasionally seen at the end of June) It can be found all over the Park including some of the forest rides.

As well as spotting this butterfly, for the budding botanists amongst you, we would also like to know if you come across its larva food plant — Horseshoe Vetch.



The Silver Spotted Skipper

The Silver Spotted Skipper (known as the sss) is seen in Oxenbourne, on the Hillhampton slope, on Butser Hill Car Park, on the slope behind the Butser Kiosk and as of the last two years Grandfathers.

It is a warm weather Butterfly and its flight period tends to be July August and September.



Vegetation Monitoring

During late May, June and July we undertake our vegetation monitoring programme.

This is a good opportunity to learn more about wild flowers whilst aiding out conservation efforts.

Volunteers will be asked to go out in teams of two or more people (it gets quite boring on your own) they will be given a compartment or sun-compartment of Butser NNR to study and complete a very simple monitoring form.

The form asks you to place a quadrat on the ground and record the presence and absence of a number of key species. It will also ask you to count the number of different species you can find.

Depending on the size of the compartment you will be asked to repeat the task between 5 and 10 times.

It's easy and very worthwhile.

Other Monitoring Tasks

As all Volunteers know we like to hear about your general wildlife observations. All of these are entered into our database. So if you are ever in the Park and not sure of what to do, you can always go for a wildlife patrol and record what wildlife you see. For those who are not frightened by computers you could also go into the Rangers office and enter your wildlife list onto our database.

We also monitor Badgers, Birds and will be starting a Dormouse Project so there is plenty of tasks to keep you busy

Volunteer Newsletter

The Queen Elizabeth Parks Twinning Project

Or Debbie and Mark do Uganda

Come along to the AGM and hear for yourself about their trip to Uganda and how you can get involved in the project, plus some exciting news about how the project is progressing. For those who cannot make or wait for the AGM here is a little photo montage to wet your appetite.



Day 1 Staying at the Ugandan Wildlife Education Centre - Culture shock !



The Headquarters of the Ugandan Wildlife Authority in Kampala



Lunching in Lake Mburo National Park on the way to QENP



This Lion welcomed Debbie and Mark to QENP (don't mention the hippo!)



Signing Ceremony - Attendees included the UK'S Deputy High Commissioner as well as National TV and Press



Entertainment Ugandan Style!



Just some of the 620 species that Mark and Debbie failed to see (Private joke)



This Picture explains what this project is all about



And this picture proves that not all Africans have rhythm, as Charles Etoru Project Co-founder shows us

**Want to see more then come along to the AGM on the 1st April at 7.30pm
Visitor Centre Theatre**

Volunteer Newsletter

Country Park News

Sheep on Butser Hill

Volunteer Rangers are asked to be vigilant whilst patrolling on Butser Hill. Many of our ewes will be pregnant and by the time you get this newsletter their could be lambs on the hill.

We need to make sure that the sheep and lambs are not hassled by dogs and people.

Please report any incidents to the Duty Ranger or Manager.

Dog Patrols

The Rangers are continuing to take part in special Dog Patrols of the Forest and Butser Hill.

These Patrols are in response to complaints from other Park Visitors, including Dog Owners about the minority of people who refuse to clear up after their dogs, do not dispose of their dog dirt bags appropriately or who do not keep their dogs under proper control.

During these patrols the Rangers aim to identify those people who are choosing to ignore the Country Park's Code of Conduct and encourage them to adopt a more acceptable standard of behaviour.

Any visitors who have queries about these Patrols or the code of conduct should be directed to the Park Manager.

Volunteer Ranger Handbook

The new improved Volunteer Ranger Service Handbook is now available. If you have not yet received your copy please contact Steve Peach and we will send it to you ASAP

Email Addresses

Please keep us informed if you change your email address, sending out this newsletter by email saves the VRS TIME AND MONEY

Social Meeting Ideas

We could do with your ideas and suggestions for social meetings. So far we have had a skittle evening, a Christmas meal in the Park's Café and we have a charity Barn Dance planned for June (to raise funds for the Twinning Project). But if you have any other thoughts do let Mark Saines know.

One suggestion is that we run a wildlife quiz night! (again this would be in aid of the twinning Project), what do you think?

Notices from your Committee

THE IMPORTANCE OF SIGNING IN.

I would like to remind all members that it is important that you sign in and out when you are attending the Park, even if you are only popping in and picking up a radio then going for a walk around the park.

This is so that you are covered by insurance if anything should happen to you during your visit, also it is important that we can record and track the hours we spend on the various tasks that we carry out.

When we carry out projects where QECPVRS is supplying labour to carry out tasks associated with the project, as our part of the match funding, the hours spent on the task will be a vital record for audit purposes if any grant provider wishes to check that we have fulfilled our commitment of hours.

INFORMATION AND MESSAGE BOARDS

Please can you keep yourselves up to date with any events or general messages, such as meetings or training dates by looking at the message boards.

The main board is in the Rangers Office, there is also a board in the Volunteer Store and you can also find messages left in the signing in book.

The Newsletter will also provide the same information but will not be up to date with any changes that happen after publication.

Timber Stacks within QE Forest

The contract has now concluded But there are some trees stacked at roadside within the Queen Elizabeth Forest. Please be vigilant and keep visitors (especially children) off these stacks.

Once the work has finished we will be doing our best to develop the gaps that have been created into really good wildlife areas.

The forest will soon be better than ever for wildlife (although some visitors may need some convincing)

Volunteer Newsletter

Volunteer Ranger Service Diary, Task and Training List

Key Events

April

Easter Holiday Activities

Monday 6th to Friday 17th April

All sorts of things going on and as always Volunteer help is always needed.

Talk to Steve or Beccy for more details

Saturday 11th

Guided Walk—Bird watching on Holt Down

Venue - Meet at the Visitor Centre
Time - 1pm - 3.00pm

Volunteers are welcome to attend either to help with the walk to learn more about the birds of Holt Down

Monday 13th

Great Butser Egg Roll
10.00am—4.00pm

We need lots of Volunteers to help with this event, From working / supervising the decoration of eggs to 'refereeing' the rolling of the eggs.

Saturday 18th

Venue - Meet at the Visitor Centre
Time - 10am - 12.30pm

A special walk for the members of Watch (Junior branch of Hants Wildlife Trust) Volunteer help most welcome

May

Sunday 3rd

Dawn Chorus Walk and BBQ Breakfast

Venue - Meet at the Visitor Centre
Time - 4.00am— 7.30am

Volunteers needed to help with the walk and especially the breakfast

See Steve for details

Saturday and Sunday 9th / 10th Reptile Weekend

Venus - meet at the Visitor Centre
11.00 am - 1pm both Days

As always because of the number of people attending, we need some Volunteer assistance on this walk

Friday 15th

Bat and Moth Evening

Venue - Meet at the Visitor Centre
Time - 7.00PM

Volunteer help needed to guide people and run moth traps
See Steve for details

June

Saturday 6th

Guided Walk— Insects of Oxen-bourne Down

Venue - Meet at the Visitor Centre
Time - 1.00pm - 3pm

Thursday 18th

Guided Walk— An Evening on Butser Hill

Venue - Meet at the Butser Kiosk
Time - 7.00PM

Thursday 25th

Guided Walk— An Evening in Queen Elizabeth Forest

Venue - Meet at the Visitor Centre
Time - 7.00PM

July

Saturday / Sunday 11th / 12th Hampshire Country Fair

Safari Drives

We run a series of evening Safari Drives during the summer months. If you would like to train to be one of our safari guides. Please contact Dave Strutt, Mark Saines or Steve Peach.

Please look at the Park Pages for a full listing of the parks events and walks Or check the Park pages out on our website

www.hants.gov.uk/qecp

Social Events

Charity Barn Dance

Saturday 20th June 2009

In aid of the Twinning Project

We need to sell about 100 tickets so your help in selling tickets and supporting this event is most definitely needed.

7.00pm till 11.30pm

Venue: Bohunt School, Liphook.

Next Quarterly Volunteer Meeting will be held on

Wednesday 1st July 2009

7.30pm in the Forest Annexe

Main Volunteer Tasks

Wildlife Tasks

During the Spring and Summer months we move from habitat management to more people management and Wildlife monitoring and survey tasks.

(See article on survey and monitoring tasks)

Getting your hands dirty

There will be some small scale habitat management tasks and path / track clearance so do check with Steve Peach

We will also be continuing some of the hazel and Ash cutting to supply walking sticks , bean sticks etc.

Workshop based tasks

For those who like to do a bit of wood work we need bird feeders, walking sticks and a number of other items made. These are sold in the visitor centre shop and the profits help fund the Volunteer Ranger Service.

We also need you to make wooden play sculpture kits (see article) for use at the Country Fair and other out of school activity days.

Again the profit from the sale of these kits goes into the Volunteer Ranger Fund

Spring Wildlife

Now that the snow has gone away (we hope) and the daily temperature has started to increase, the Park starts to get a little more interesting for you wildlife watchers.

The first signs of spring tend to be either celandines in flower, catkins or birdsong.

But for me the first sign of spring is when I catch my first adder of the year.

Male Adders come out of hibernation during March and will try and find a warm sunny area to heat up and become sexually active.

They will have a stressful time once the females finally emerge (they of course get to lie in for a few more weeks) fighting off other males and trying to claim a mate.

And of course the mating theme runs through a lot of spring wildlife activity.

The bird song you are hearing is all to do with territorial behaviour and staking a claim to a female.

During April and May the number and variety of birds singing gradually increases until we have that most amazing of all wildlife events the Dawn Chorus.

At ground level the flowers are starting to push their way through the warming soil. On Butser Hill NNR the Early Purple Orchid is the first of the more exotic looking plants to add colour to the landscape although it has to be said that the cowslip exerts the biggest influence over Butser as it carpets the hill in glorious yellows.

Once there are plants in flowers then the insects quickly follow. The best loved insects are the butterflies and each spring Volunteer Rangers are asked to go on the annual Duke of Burgundy hunt.

This small brown butterfly is in serious decline and so the work of surveying the hill for it is of National importance.

As well as butterflies, other insects start to add their own particular buzz to the Park. Bees, ants, flies and wasps all are important components of the ecosystem. My favourite spring insect in the Bloodied-nosed Beetle. This beast looks like it walked straight off a Star Wars film set.

Spring, perhaps the best time to watch wildlife.



Raising Funds for the Volunteer Ranger Service

Like any organisation the Volunteer Ranger Service requires funds and resources in order for it to function.

A fair proportion of these resources is provided by Hampshire County Council's Countryside Service.

My post of Conservation Ranger also includes the recruitment, training and support of the Volunteer Ranger Service and this also includes producing this newsletter, admin support, working with your Committee and a range of other things.

But I think we all realise that in today's economic climate the Countryside Service struggles to fund all of its activities and cannot afford to provide all the resources that perhaps the VRS requires.

In order for the Volunteer Ranger Service to reach its full potential and provide the kind of support to the Country Park its was created to achieve, the VRS needs to find other ways of funding itself.

The VRS Committee have been successful in applying for small grants and continue to investigate this option, but often these grants required a degree of match funding.

So the VRS also generates income through taking on litter clearance contracts at events held in the Park and selling items in the visitor centre. These items include walking sticks, cut in the QE Forest, children's bug packs, bird feeders and other items.

These items need your help to cut the raw material and turn into the finished product. You do not have to be an expert carpenter to do your bit. Anyone can spend a hour standing down sticks !

The Volunteer Rangers have also been developing scrap wood sculptures. These are made in kit form and simply nail together.

They are similar to the scrap wood sculptures we have used at past country fairs, and with your support the plan is to use these at this years Country Fair.

This wood generate quite a useful amount of income for the Volunteer Ranger Service as we would net all the income from the sale of these kits. We estimate this could generate £500 or more.

However we do need people to help cut out the kits and also locate scrap wood.

There is a brand new band saw and other woodworking equipment in the VRS Workshop and we are very grateful to John and Ash who have made a series of templates which make the creation of these kits reasonably easy.

If you think you might be able to help please contact either Steve or any of the committee. (It's a good task for a rainy day)



Volunteer Newsletter

Key Information

www.hants.gov.uk/countryside/qecp

Main Country Park Contacts

Steve Peach

Conservation Ranger & Volunteer Coordinator
Tel 023 92 595040
steve.peach@hants.gov.uk

Queen Elizabeth Country Park

Gravel Hill
Horndean
Hants
PO8 0QE

Martin Bonner

Chairman

Mark Saines

Secretary

Debbie Saines

Treasurer

Can all be contacted via email
qecpvr@aol.com

General Park Enquiries

qecp.enquiries@hants.gov.uk
Telephone: 02392 595040
Fax: 02392 592409

Coach House Café

02392 6345

South Downs Joint Committee

(Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)
023 92 591362

Rights of Way Enquiries

0845 6035636

Hang Gliding / Paragliding

Skysurfing Club

www.skysurfingclub.co.uk

Model Gliders

Meon Valley Soaring Association

www.mvsa.freeserve.co.uk

Running

Portsmouth Joggers Club

[Www.pjc.org.uk](http://www.pjc.org.uk)

Visitor Centre, Shop and Café opening hours

10am - 5.30pm

daily from 1st March to 31st October (2008)

10am - 4.30pm

daily from 1st November to 21st December (2008)

Other Key Park Information

Guided walks

All guided walks start from the Visitor Centre unless stated otherwise. Some walks have restricted numbers and for these walks booking is essential.

Volunteer Rangers should advise potential participants

To wear strong boots or shoes and clothing appropriate for the weather conditions.

In very warm weather, plenty of liquid should be taken

The Park is very hilly and therefore some walks can be quite challenging

Guided Walks are very popular most of the walks requiring pre-booking having a waiting list.

So if people cannot attend a walk they should let us know as soon as possible, as there will be other people keen to take their place.

For Children

For younger children a Tots Play Area can be found just beyond the Visitor Centre Pond and an Adventure Play Trail is situated adjacent to Juniper Car Park

Getting to the Park

Volunteer Rangers are encouraged to try and be as environmentally sustainable as possible.

Volunteer Rangers are encouraged to lift share, use public transport or cycle to the Park.

Whenever possible patrols around the Park should be carried out on foot

Any vehicle based tasks should be carefully planned to ensure that as Rangers we have minimal impact upon the environment we seek to protect

Public Transport

National Traveline - for journeys by bus and train - 0870 608 2608 or www.traveline.org.uk

Bus details

From Portsmouth and Petersfield contact Stagecoach Coastline on 0845 121 0170 or www.stagecoachbus.com

Train details

www.nationalrail.co.uk

Codes of Conduct

With over 300,000 Visits made to the Park each year it is important that Volunteer Rangers are aware of the Codes of Conduct.

These are designed to ensure that every Visitor has a safe and enjoyable time and to protect the special interests of the site.

Volunteer Rangers should encourage all Visitors to adhere to these simple guidelines

(Copies of the Codes of Conduct can be found on the Park Pages)

Dog Walkers

Should keep their dogs under strict control at all times

Should clean up after their dogs, especially in the picnic areas and car parks
Should not leave dogs unattended in vehicles on hot days

Should be aware that allowing their dogs to be out of control in a field containing livestock is an offence

Litter

All litter should be taken home and as much as possible should be recycled
Litter can injure people and puts wildlife at risk.

Litter can also increase the fire risk

Mountain Bikes

Bikes should only be on the designated routes

Should be aware and take care of other Park users

Should wear safety helmets

Should not ride on the pavements surrounding the Visitor Centre and Café

Horses

Should only ride on the designated routes

Should be aware and take care of other Park users

Should de-box in Gravel Hill car park

Should not ride on the main Forest Road

Barbeques

No gas, disposal or home BBQs can be used in the Country Park

Visitors should use the Hearths provided by the Country Park. These need to be booked in advance

All litter should be taken home