



# FORP

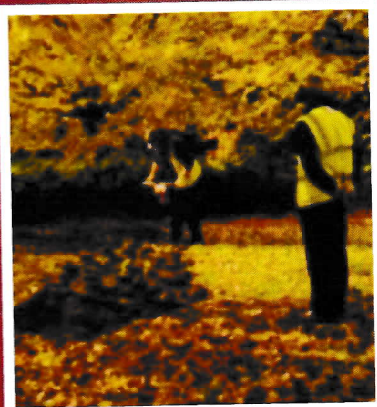


THE NEW GREEN FLAG FLYING  
AT BITTERNE TRIANGLE  
ENTRANCE TO RIVERSIDE PARK

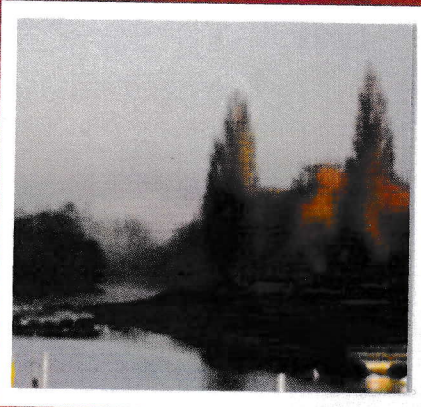
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CREATING HOLES FOR BULBS



MIST OVER RIVERSIDE PARK



FINAL SACK UNDERWAY

# First Newsletter: Chairman's Report

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Welcome to the Friends of Riverside Park first Newsletter!

FORP was formed approximately 10 years ago with Steve Harding being our first Chairman. During his term we managed to obtain a grant to build the children's play park next to the Wood Mill car park. When Steve retired John Pope took over but unfortunately John was taken ill and had to resign. That's when I took over.

I have lived very close to this wonderful park for most of my life and have seen it developed to provide a lovely stroll from Cobden Bridge to Mansbridge along the bank of the River itchen.

Bitterne Park Recreation Ground was given to the people of Southampton in 1894 by Lord Montague later Lord Swaythling. The area from the old recreation ground to Mansbridge was farmland and quite often flooded; the pre-war Council then took it over as a tip and filled it with household rubbish attracting hundreds of rats. During the war there was ..... on the dump and Royal Observer Corps camped behind the houses in Manor Farm Rd. A barrage balloon was also situated at the rear of the newly built school in Manor Farm Road.

Cobden Meadows, the area from River View Rd to Cobden Bridge was a wet land site full of bulrushes, a place to hide

and build camps, but was gradually filled up with demolitions from the bombed houses and I watched many American Army lorries tip rotten fruit and vegetables there and later on the anti-tank Dragons Teeth were also dumped.

In 1947 we started a cycle speedway track alongside the school allotment on the dump; the only track in Southampton that had a cinder finish. The photograph on page 3 shows the Viking cycle speedway team taken in 1948. The following year the Council asked us to move to the brickworks in Copsewood Rd so they start to develop Riverside Park.

What a wonderful area we have to enjoy, made from all that rubbish. Where else is there a park containing 3 children's play areas, a miniature steam railway, cycle training area, 4 football pitches, 2 cricket squares, 1 skateboard park, an 18 hole pitch and putt course, salt water and fresh water fishing and picnic areas all in one place?

As a Committee we want to keep this delightful area for everybody from youngsters to the elderly. We do a litter pick the 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of each month from March to November. We meet at the Pavilion at 10 am which helps to keep the park clean and tidy and we are always happy to see more volunteers. So

please feel free to join us! I would like to thank the dog walkers who stroll through the park daily doing their own litter pick.

On Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> October we were out bulb planting - at Woodmill/Manor Farm Rd corner; this will be our 10<sup>th</sup> year and what a beautiful site come the spring to see the crocus and daffodils in full bloom.

Another on-going project is working with the Council to repair the hedge along Manor Farm Rd and bring it back to its original vigour as a hawthorn hedge providing blossom in spring and haws for the birds in autumn.

We are looking to get a MUGA (multi-use games area) for the teenagers to enjoy. We also get the Council to renew seats along the bank of the river. We have plans in hand to improve the toilets opening and cleaning.

It was a great honour to go to Ilford to be presented with the Green Flag Award which is proudly flying at 3 entrances to the park and we thank the park attendants for their continued help and support.

We are always looking for new members at £3 pa per family or £20 for life membership.

Doug Perry, Chairman FORP  
02380 492 503

# Green Flag success for Riverside Park

**Green Flag** award judging for Riverside Park took place on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May when committee members attended in the park. The results were announced on 23<sup>rd</sup> July when Doug Perry & David Hutchings travelled as the guests of Southampton City Council to Ilford, Essex where a presentation of **Green Flags** was made at the London Borough of Redbridge Town Hall. Southampton Parks, Riverside Park, Hinkler Green in Thornhill and St.Jame's Park in Shirley **all won a Green Flag** to be held until the next judging period.

By Council minibus, Doug and David were taken to Ilford with Councillor Jacqui Rayment and Bob Reeve together with representatives from the other two parks.

A pub lunch was provided by SCC and light refreshments served at the award ceremony in the magnificent Town Hall for speeches and photos of all the flag presentations to be taken.

A great day and a fine opportunity to meet Cllr.Rayment and Bob Reeve and raise several relevant issues over lunch.

Three **Green Flags** were put up on the flag poles in Riverside Park later. Sadly coverage in the Echo was disappointingly short and unenthusiastic.



The Viking speedway team of 1948

# A Riverside Park Swan Watch

We have had our very own Springwatch here in Riverside Park watching the swans. On the St Denys side of the river, one pair of swans opposite the miniature railway hatched probably three eggs, but the male was either part-time or had abandoned the female. On the same stretch of river, another pair hatched seven cygnets and dad was very much in attendance.

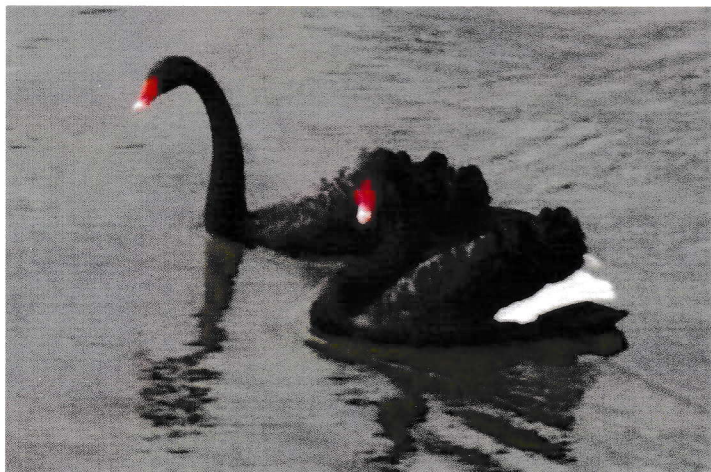
Meanwhile after several years of a single visiting black swan, a pair had returned, one with much more obvious white wing feathers so presumably a male and female. And whilst the single swan had been rather cowed in company with the mute swans, this pair were more demonstrative.

Some weeks ago, a loud honking noise attracted our attention. It was the black swans, necks out-stretched, bearing down all guns blazing on the single mum's nest below us, clearly out to attack them. Our neighbour told us that her other two cygnets had fallen victim to predators, very possibly this pair. We shouted from the balcony, mum and baby had chance to scoot off and hide, and unfortunately we have not seen either of them since.

Since then, there has been a great deal of posturing from the successful mute swans and their black rival whilst the seven cygnets sailed in perfect formation close behind. Attempted attacks have been repelled with much fluffing up of wings. The family is making excellent progress.

Having seen just one black swan for some days, and wondering where the other was, I saw she had made a nest and was well hidden in some weed, with her mate patrolling to protect her. Sadly, two days of persistent rain, finished off that attempt to breed and they left. Then only the male was patrolling the river.

Recently it was thrilling to see both black swans accompanied by 5 cygnets. I do hope some make it through winter.



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REPELLING ATTACKERS



SWANS AND CYGNETS



LATEST ARRIVALS