

Jeskyns news

It's a dog's life at Jeskyns!

December 2007

Being a nation of dog lovers, it is no surprise that Jeskyns is proving very popular amongst local dogs and their owners.

Dogs are extraordinary animals and are a source of fun, security and companionship for millions of people. The physical and mental health benefits of dog walking are obvious and many would agree that dogs act as an excellent social catalyst – dogs just seem to get people talking to one another!

However, it only takes a few irresponsible dog owners to give us all a bad name so at Jeskyns we really want to encourage a strong ethos of responsible dog ownership.

Denise Culley the Community Ranger at Jeskyns says *"Most dog walkers that I meet on site have great control over their dogs, pick up their dog's faeces and get*



really annoyed that it is just a few who are letting the side down. We need to keep talking to all dog owners so that the good habits of most are impressed upon the few offenders!"

Kathy Thompson from Gravesend regularly visits Jeskyns with her three border collies. They are all Dog Agility enthusiasts!

She says *"It is great to have such a dog friendly site so it is very important for all dog owners to be responsible and clean up after their dogs so that we don't lose this dog friendly atmosphere".*

To ensure that we keep Jeskyns a safe, healthy and enjoyable place for all visitors, we ask that all dog walkers follow the Jeskyns Responsible Dog Owners code:



Jeskyns Grove



Jeskyns Woods



Jeskyns Meadows



Jeskyns Orchards



Jeskyns Glades

To find out more information please contact:

Jeskyns Ranger, Forestry Commission
care of: Shorne Wood Country Park, Brewers Road, Shorne, Kent, DA12 3HX
Tel: 01474 825118 E-mail: jeskynsranger@forestry.gsi.gov.uk
www.forestry.gov.uk/jeskyns

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The Jeskyns Responsible Dog Owners code:

- ✓ Always keep your dog in sight & under control; use a lead if need be.
- ✓ Always bag and bin your dog's faeces.
- ✓ Never let your dog chase wildlife or farm animals; it causes serious injuries and your dog could become lost, hit by a car or shot.
- ✓ Respect requests and notices to keep your dog on the path or away from some areas; this helps protect young animals and birds at sensitive times.
- ✓ Worm your dog regularly and keep its vaccinations up-to-date.
- ✓ Ensure your dog always wears a collar with your name, address and mobile phone number.
- ✓ Keep your dog at your side when passing other visitors: always ask before letting your pet approach other dogs.

Finally, we get many requests from dog owners to install more dog bins at Jeskyns.

When we opened in July 2007, we had five dog bins but since then we have installed an extra two meaning that there are currently a total of seven across site.

Our aim at Jeskyns has been to create a site sympathetic to the rural nature of the surrounding countryside and as such the installation of any "non-natural" facilities has to be carefully considered.



Above: Kathy Thompson with Braggie, Maddie and Jed

However, we will continue to monitor how well the current bins are used and will consider the installation of extra bins if they prove necessary.

If you have any comments or queries regarding dog related issues at Jeskyns, then please contact us on the details provided at the bottom of this newsletter.

Your Jeskyns

Since opening in July 2007, Jeskyns has seen thousands of visitors pass through its gates, many returning time and time again.

Each newsletter, we plan to feature a different type of visitor and find out what they do at Jeskyns and why they like it.

This time, it's the turn of two keen cyclist – George Saunders and David Johnson. Both are from Gravesend and cycle over Jeskyns approximately once a week.

"The paths at Jeskyns are very good for cycling" says George. "Most Wednesdays we meet the Cyclist Touring Club (also

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Known as the Wednesday Wobblers!) at the war memorial in Cobham village."

He continues " *Having Jeskyns on our doorstep means that we can now avoid having to cycle down Henhurst Road making it a much safer and more pleasant journey!"*



Above: George Saunders and David Johnson

Thanks to David and George for allowing us to take their photo and happy cycling!

Get fit – volunteer in 2008!

Fancy a spot of outdoor exercise to burn off all the excesses of Christmas? Why not come and meet likeminded people and help us undertake a variety of tasks around Jeskyns such as tree pruning, painting, pond maintenance and planting?

You won't need to bring anything except warm clothes, enthusiasm and a willingness to help us make Jeskyns a special place for lots of people.

Our next Volunteer workdays will be held on:

- **Saturday 5th January 2008**
- **Saturday 16th February 2008**
- **Saturday 29th March 2008**

If you plan to attend any of the sessions then do please contact us to let us know. That way we can provide you with all the details you need and also make sure that we have enough tasks and the all-important tea and biscuits!

For further information, see the contact details at the bottom of the page.

Working together

Did you know that Jeskyns works in partnership with five other sites in the local area? They are Shorne Wood Country Park, Ranscombe Farm Reserve, Cobham Park, Ashenbank Wood and the Cobham Leisure Plots.

We are currently busy working on the creation of a waymarked trail, which will link the six sites and hope to get it installed in 2008. In the meantime, if you want to find out a bit more about some of the other sites, then why not attend one of their events? Details are below:

Ranscombe Farm Reserve

Volunteer days:

9th and 23rd Jan 08, 6th and 20th Feb 08 and 5th and 19th Mar 08

Contact: Helen Morley

Tel: 07835 78201

Helen.morley@plantlife.org.uk

Cobham Park

Guided walks:

Fri 28th Dec 07 and Mon 18th Feb 08

Volunteer tree planting days:

Weds 20th Feb 08, Sun 24th Feb 08 and Sun 16th March 08

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Places must be booked in advance.

Contact: CAMS

Tel: 01474 337530

Ben.sweeney@gravesham.gov.uk

Cobham Leisure Plots

Outdoor Activity meetings:

Sun 12th Jan 08, Sat 17th Feb 08, Sun 8th Mar 08.

Contact: Sue Quarendon

Tel: 07949 231188

Event details are correct at time of going to print, but attendees are advised to check details with each organisation before the event.

Pond life

Many of you will know that we have created four new ponds at Jeskyns. In total they provide a water surface area of just over half a hectare and will be of great benefit to visitors and wildlife.



Above: Ashenbank pond back in May 2007.

Their popularity has been proven by the amount of use that they have received in the last six months, but unfortunately this has meant that natural pond and marginal plants are having a hard time trying to get established. The heavy use by people and dogs has created areas of erosion around the edges, which are not only unattractive to look at but also do not provide any cover for wildlife.

In 2008 we plan to give the ponds a helping hand by planting them up with carefully selected native plant species. However, in the short term it will be necessary to restrict access to people and dogs and we will therefore be fencing them off after planting until they have had a chance to become established.

The end result should be magnificent looking ponds that will be much more attractive to visitors and wildlife. We do therefore ask for your co-operation during this establishment phase and request that all visitors pay due attention to any notices around the ponds.

Eyes and Ears at Jeskyns

Help the Forestry Commission by letting the Ranger know of any problems you spot or ideas you have that will improve your enjoyment of Jeskyns.

For general enquiries or to report anything you see that is dangerous or broken, untidy or hazardous to the public or wildlife and their habitat please let us know using the contact details at the bottom of this newsletter.

If you see anyone vandalising the site, acting in a dangerous way or using a motorbike call:

999 if in immediate danger, otherwise contact local police on 01622 690690 and then the Ranger on 01474 825118. (Outside of office hours – listen to the answerphone message for emergency contact details).

Thank you for helping us to keep Jeskyns a safe, welcoming place for all visitors.

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