

**RANGER'S REPORT FOR THE PERIOD
MARCH 2006 – SEPTEMBER 2006
(Report by Senior Ranger, Hinchingsbrooke Country Park)**

1. VOLUNTEERS AND STAFFING

Countryside Centre Admin. Officer, Isobel left in July to join RAF husband in Suffolk. Angela Nixon, has moved from the former parks team to take up this role.

Hanna Stevenson is currently off due to home pressures, but the situation is gradually improving and we are hoping she will return. Social Services are now providing much greater care for her disabled son, hopefully this will make it easier for her and husband Jim - Senior Ranger at Paxton Pits

Youth Offending Team continues to send at least 1 work party each Sunday.

Volunteers continue to average 3 per day (total volunteer days 435); this includes D of E volunteers, a group from the Environment Agency and the Amber Centre and work experience pupils from local schools. This year the calibre of students was generally much higher than previously.

Matthew who had been working here on a placement from Shuttleworth College for 2 years has now secured a 12 month contract at Milton Country Park and Pam who helps one day a week has got a weekend job at Wandlebury. Both however continue to help us here to gain even further practical experience.

Wheelchair users 367.

2 COUNTRYSIDE CENTRE:

	Groups	No. of People
March 05 to Sept 05	305	6,880
March 06 to Sept 06	To Be Confirmed	To Be Confirmed

August has been particularly quiet this year.

3. CAFÉ

A great success over the summer, people are definitely relying on the fact it is open. The soft ice cream has proved very popular.

4. EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Some of the notable events included:

- Early morning bird walk and bacon roll to follow, interesting and well attended
- Literacy week a huge success and something we will repeat in the future. Very well received by the teaching staff and pupils
- Young Anglers- some 95 participants and this year supported by The Environment Agency, National Fishing week and Anglian Water and the Town Council
- Special needs messy play
- Orienteering with some of the participants of CamJam based at the racecourse
- Rotary club fun day was attended by 300 people

5 WIDER DISTRICT

Many work parties have been held around the district including:

- Coneygear tree mulching and spraying.
- Holt Island – vegetation clearance and boardwalk repairs, a different management plan is going to be trialled over the next 12 months.
- The Thicket- footpath clearance and woodland work, a major water main burst and has eroded part of the footpath through the woods. We are working with the Cambridge water company to re-instate the surface, though it remains passable.
- Installation of new dog bins, as provided by Wood Green Animal Shelter as the start of a “responsible dog ownership project”.

6. PARK MANAGEMENT

- Lakeside – vegetation cutting
- Tree surveys and work to overcome fallen trees caused we think by weather conditions,.
- Footpath construction around the south side of the lake has now reached Nun Bridge
- Usual summer mowing and nettle control
- Toilets in the visitors’ centre were painted in May
- Countryside Centre exterior was painted in April

7 MISCELLANEOUS

Litter - This summer we have suffered greatly from young people having evening parties and leaving behind large amounts of litter and in particular broken glass. Rangers have worked until midnight on a number of occasions to try to minimise the impact and together with police and CCTV. Damage has however occurred on a number of occasions, most recently needing two new toilet doors.

Friends Group Several - new (younger) members have joined the committee and already membership numbers have increased and the range of fundraising activities has grown. Hopefully this will continue so that the Friends can become a very active part of the country park as well as continuing to attract grants.

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