

Friends of Grosvenor and Hilbert Park (FoGH)

Newsletter 7 Summer 2013



picture courtesy of Tunbridge Wells Museum

John Lewis at Home Community Matters



Great news!!! John Lewis at Home have chosen FoGH as one of the local charities/community groups promoted in their Tunbridge Wells store for the next 3 months. The way it works is that John Lewis will donate a proportion of the £3000 fund to each of the 3 groups promoted, the greater the number of green coins in the box, the larger the donation will be..... Simple!!

So to help us raise money for future events, if you're shopping in John Lewis at Home, please place your green token in our box!

Sue Kaner

Grosvenor Rocks

After a journey of development, Grosvenor Rocks is now complete.



The process included a walking tour led by Dr Ian Beavis where, along with local residents, we discussed people's favourite civic moments; locations where you might naturally pause, sit, converse or enjoy the townscape. Later in October 2012 was a session exploring carving at the CREATE Big Draw event. Both these events re-shaped our proposals and we adopted a more organic, natural form in the spirit of Wellington and High rocks.

It was important to use local skills and makers in the the work. We sourced the Wealden Sandstone from Lamb's Philpots quarry at West Hoathly, used a Tunbridge Wells based stone mason (Southern Stone Ltd) and engaged a local letter cutter for the in-situ carving (Bridget Powell). We were also pleased to have a stone mason apprentice (Amelia Morrison) work on the latter stages of carving – supporting the next generation of skills!

On our visit to the quarry, we searched for particular character in the stone that would suit use for Grosvenor Rocks. (For example; the prehistoric crust on the smaller stone was selected as it captures water and has a very natural feel).

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WE MADE THAT
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX



Grosvenor Rocks was installed in early April and on Saturday 13th April we hosted an Unveiling Day, where we asked people to make their marks directly onto the stone feature for it to be permanently carved. Despite the weather, the response was overwhelming with visitors (including the Mayor, Cllr John Smith) making their contributions throughout the day (and rain) and continuing to make suggestions through the Museum and on site.

The carving took place over the following three weeks, attempting to capture the fantastic diversity and breadth of markings. It has not been possible to capture all responses in carved form; some due to size or complexity, others due to iron ore deposits within the natural stone making some areas hard to carve. (Some contributions have been relocated and others have been photographed so that the museum has a record).



Grosvenor Rocks will gain character with age, and we hope it will continue to capture the imagination of local residents and visitors alike. Perhaps more carving events can happen in the future!

Oliver Goodhall – We Made That

With additional thanks to FoGH, TW Museum & Gallery team, Frances Lord and those who volunteered their time in the development of this new Park feature. *It is important to note that artwork on the cycle path is funded by the companies responsible for the new housing developments along the route.*

Chairman's Letter

As the new Chairman, I must begin by expressing my sincere thanks to the outgoing Chairman, J Paul Lambert. He was one of the founder members of FoGH and it is with great regret that we announce his resignation due to work commitments. With all the pressures of a demanding workload, we very much hope he is able to keep in touch with FoGH and join in activities within the Park; he will always be most welcome.



At the time of writing, we are only five weeks from the longest day, but have been cheated of much of the beauty of springtime by the enduring cold, wet weather and bitter, easterly winds. The spring greening in the Park has held back, but the lifting of the temperatures recently has allowed the trees and grass to make a headlong rush for early summer growth.

Against this backdrop, we held our second Family Fun Day on 6th May, as a follow up to the Jubilee Picnic in the Park, and by some miracle the day was warm, dry, sunny and calm – a perfect Bank Holiday! We would like to express our warmest thanks to everyone who volunteered to make the day happen. It is a major undertaking and the community clearly appreciates the event, as the large number of visitors showed.

Finally the Art installation at the Grosvenor Bridge entrance, Grosvenor Rocks, has taken shape (see the article on page 1). I hope many of you took the opportunity to make a permanent mark for the future!

Our commitment to volunteering has a high value in the proposals for funding from the HLF. Yes, it is still ongoing, but now in the final phases of preparation for presentation at the end of August. The details of the planning drew a lot of interest on 6th May, with many people visiting the display, which can now be found on our FoGH website www.fogh.org.uk

I would like to thank everyone in the Friends group who gives their time so generously and makes it possible for us to promote functions and activities within the Park. In the almost two years since FoGH began, interest in the Park has increased dramatically, a worthwhile reward for all the time spent! **Liz Edwards**

Camden Road Education, Arts & Theatre Enterprise

CREATE presents:



Summer Concert.....Friday 26th July 8.00pm

At St Barnabas Church

Summer Concert.....Saturday 27th July 7.30pm

At St Thomas's Church, Groombridge

Evenings of song and readings on the theme of London

Tickets £7 or £5 concessions

from Dave Prodrick 07966190428 or email tickets@camdenroad.org

More information on the website www.camdenroad.org

At the
Bowls Pavilion



Open 7 days a
week

10:30 - 4 PM
(weather permitting)

for hot & cold drinks, light
refreshments

www.paninionthepark.co.uk

Update from the Parks Department

We are progressing well with the work on the HLF bid submission and are still on schedule for the submission date of 31st August. In April, we attended a stage C review with our monitoring and case officer, to provide them with an update of progress and get some feedback. In general, they felt we were moving in the right direction, although they asked for surety about some of the hydrology, so we still have some work to do in this area. As a reminder, the award is not guaranteed, although we do have strong support from our case officer. I'm afraid we will not know if we are successful until December, so fingers crossed for an early Christmas present!



I was impressed with the support for the Family Fun Day event on May Day and I hope those of you who attended had a look at the HLF proposals for the Park. If you didn't get a chance to view the plans, please look at the FoGH website (www.fogh.org.uk) and complete the feedback form.

The work on the Dorking Road boundary wall is coming to an end and the contractors will soon leave the Park. The project was a lot more complex than we thought, with problems only coming to light once work started. I would like to take this opportunity to thank residents, visitors to the Park and allotment tenants for your patience during this long period.

Those of you who have a plot on the Hilbert allotments will be aware of the problems with the water supply. I'm afraid the old pipe has corroded beyond repair and it is now necessary to replace the entire length of pipe. Given the cost of the project, we are currently applying for funds; however, we are conscious of our tenants need for water and we will endeavour to have the supply connected as soon as possible.

As always if you have any questions about the HLF project or the Park, please contact me on 01892 554031 or peter.every@tunbridgewells.gov.uk **Peter Every - Parks & Sports Team Leader TWBC**

Easter Morning In The Park

It was a misty, chilly, but rain free morning when we met in the Park at 8am for the Easter Service. There were around 30 of us, all ages, from different churches, united in this special Easter Day Celebration. The service was arranged and led by Pastor Cliff Allen from The Church of Christ in Commercial Road. Luke Bacon led the singing, playing his guitar with very cold fingers; we all joined in with the famous Easter hymns.



There were readings and prayers, followed by an Easter egg hunt. (Believe me; no one is too old to enjoy finding Easter eggs!) After this was a cooked breakfast at the Church of Christ. A wonderful way to start Easter Day!

Jane Melville

Events Report

Events this year have included a volunteer day with KHWP on 27th February, clearing brambles and undergrowth to restrict further encroachment; work to keep you warm on a winter's day!



Also a Seed and Plant Swop held at the Bowls Pavilion on 21st April attracted some interest during a season of gardening dominated by the cold weather.

On 20th March, we hosted a talk by Mike Hinton on the background of life as a soldier in the Crimean War. A former resident of Rochdale Road had been just such a combatant, during the Charge of the Light Brigade and Battle of Balaklava.

Our second AGM took place on Saturday 18th May at St Barnabas' School Hall.

Following reports on our finances, FoGH's year and the artwork Grosvenor Rocks, Peter Every from TWBC Parks Department gave an update on the HLF bid.

We took the opportunity to thank Peter for all his support.

Liz Edwards

Heritage Lottery Fund Restoration Project Update

An exciting stage in the Heritage Lottery Fund bid has now been reached. After months of detailed survey work, planning, design work and consultation, funded by Heritage Lottery Fund, draft proposals have now been produced. Here is a brief summary:



allen scott LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE



LOTTERY FUNDED

- Refurbish and extend the Pavilion to provide an indoor café area, upgraded toilets, dedicated baby change facility and multi-purpose community room. The Pavilion remains home for the Bowls Club.
- Re-landscape and improve the area around the Pavilion. Open up the Rochdale Road entrance to better pedestrian access to the Pavilion: the new hub of the Park. Relocate the electricity substation.



- The formal Upper Lake will be dredged, the paths and brick edging restored, paths improved and the shrub planting renewed. The Dripping Wells will be restored.
- Partially dam the wetland area to raise the water level slightly: a new boardwalk will provide access. The upper slopes will see some tree planting with the help of Bedgebury Pinetum. Downstream there will be a new bridge to replace the temporary "timber structure".
- Repair and replace boardwalks and steps in the woodlands, which will still be managed by Kent High Weald Partnership. Improve the Oast House to support volunteer activity as well as sports changing.
- New signage and interpretation at key entrances and in the Pavilion. Entrances and access points will be restored and improved, including the Upper Grosvenor Road entrance and the zig-zag bridge.
- Events and activities will be developed to encourage people to visit and learn about the heritage of the Park and the area. New staff including a part time Park Ranger and Activities Co-ordinator.

The proposals and supporting documents will be developed throughout the summer and the bid is on target to be submitted in August 2013. A decision by Heritage and Big Lottery Funds will be made in December 2013. If successful, works will start in the Summer 2014 lasting for up to 2 years.

The proposals are available on the FoGH website (www.fogh.org.uk) and comments are invited until 31 May 2013 using an online survey form.

Adrian Spray, Project Coordinator, CFP

Family Fun Day Monday 6th May 2013

Massive thanks to the estimated 5000 plus people who came to this event!

We were so lucky with the weather which brought A LOT of visitors to the park. Some regular faces, but also some who were visiting for the first time, and some who were returning to their childhood haunt, or that of their children.



Dog Show

The now famous FoGH dog show kicked off at 12 noon, when dogs of all shapes and sizes sauntered onto the top pitch. The judges were Steve Ball (Pets in Town), Cllr Ben Chapelard and Julia Laidlaw (RSPCA), ably helped by FoGH Cttee Member Sue Kaner and Lazy Dog Walker Gordon McKee.



Nula won Best Trick, with an skilful sit and roll over, a clear winner. Jack retained Most Obedient, impressing the judges with his ability to sit calmly amongst the mayhem. Newcomer Stanley took first in the Waggiest Tail. Only 3 dogs stepped forward for judging in the Scruffiest Dog category, but with persuasion, more entered, and 1st went to Nula.

The biggest ahhs of the day were for Cutest Puppy, which proved very difficult for our judges! After much dissension, a cute boxer puppy by the name of Coda came 1st, followed by an impressive win for Bear as Best Looking Crossbeed.

The event was rounded off by a resounding win for Marvellous as Best in Show.

Many Thanks to our judges and all who took part.

Best Trick 1 Nula 2 Flute 3 Barney

Most Obedient Dog 1 Jack 2 Coco 3 Flute

Waggiest Tail 1 Stanley 2 Bee 3??

Scruffiest Dog 1 Nula 2 Monty 3 Scamp

Cutest Puppy (under 1 year) 1 Coda 2 Alaska 3 Sam

Best Looking Crossbreed 1 Bear 2 Dillon 3 Daisy

Best in Show Marvellous



The main part of Family Day was based on the lower football pitch. We made several site surveys beforehand, as work continued on the Dorking Road wall past its first, optimistic 'month', while a spring (or two) popped up, creating a brand new wetland area. With these problems, and with large numbers asking for stalls, or to come and perform, we had to extend out from the football pitch and create little areas to explore.



The lower field was dominated by the stage, and three inflatables.



A good focal point was the Ghanaian food from 'Spinach and Agushi', alongside our bar (thanks to 'The Ragged Trousers') and the area set up by The Boys Fundraising for a trip to Mpwapwa in Tanzania in 2014. Their blow up 'Wembley' soccer AM football game on SKY was a huge hit, with many dads competing for top of the leader board. Splat the Rat got a lot of attention, as did 300 Cake Pops and a 1.2kg Cake Pop!



Dan Littlechild from Acoustic Valium Project and our very own Liz Edwards once again organised an excellent afternoon of entertainment, kicking off with local band 'Scuffed Soul'. Food stalls, and an Arts and Crafts Demonstration Marquee surrounded the arena; returning again were 'Serv Kent' Blood runner bikes who chatted all day long about their work. An important stall was the display of the Heritage Lottery Fund bid proposals so far, presented by CFP (see page 3 for more details).



On the top path by the Hilbert Road gates we welcomed a small collection of vintage cars, which were a big hit.

CREATE joined us on the grassy area with the 'Imaginarium', with their choir who sang as and when they wanted. We also fitted in here: TW Tigers Inline Hockey, TW Vegans, TW Bicycle Users Group, and TW Town Forum – this was the Welcome to Tunbridge Wells Zone! Next year, we'll use this area as a community based zone.

From 2 – 4pm it was possible to 'Have a Go' at bowls with the Grosvenor Bowls Club, while in the playground it was 'Have a Go' at street dancing with Nick Numas. On the zigzag bridge, Dave Eagles from Overspray returned to paint a new mural, marking our 'Fun Day'.



Now we attend to ourselves – to FoGH! Our thanks go to all who volunteered during the day, as without those volunteers the day would never have happened.

We ran our information tent, where we welcomed Greg Clark MP (our Patron), Jane March (TWBC Leisure, Tourism and Economic Development portfolio holder) and the Deputy Mayor Cllr Doctor Basu.



We had an incredibly popular tombola: we are grateful to all who donated. Thanks to local volunteer Laura Ansell for running our bric-a-brac stall, while raising awareness of her fundraising to climb Mt Kilimanjaro in September. Well done to Sharon Abrams for the Tea and Cake marquee and for selling a car full of cakes! June Elliott organised the Arts and Crafts Marquee, a welcome new addition. Thanks to Sue Kaner and Gordon McKee for the Dog Show, also the 'Lazy Dog Walkers' for posting flyers door-to-door.

We are keen to run another Family Day next year, but we can only do so with the help of people like you. The Park is for everyone, and we welcome ideas and input from everyone.

On the money side of things, although the Family Day is free to users, it costs us to put on, in terms of stage hire, insurance and licences. We are very grateful this year to have one sponsor – The Carlyle Group – who paid for the bouncy castles, and to Bounce The Party for their hard work during the day. If you need an inflatable in your life this summer – www.bouncetheparty.co.uk

Carolyn T Gray & Sue Kaner

Hedgehogs in the Park?

The west European hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) is Britain's only spiny mammal, with over 6000 creamy-brown spines in their coat. This hangs around their body, hiding the fur underneath, their long legs and short tail. If threatened, they curl into a tight ball of spines, by contracting the large circular orbicularis muscle. This pulls their skin down forcing the head, legs and tail inside the spiny ball. Hedgehogs can stay like this for many hours, safe from most predators.



In rural areas, they live along woodland edges and in hedges (hence the name!) In urban areas, compost heaps, flowerbeds and short grass in lawns or parkland are used to forage for ground-dwelling invertebrates, mostly worms, snails, slugs and beetles.



Hedgehogs are mostly nocturnal and travel 1-2 km in a night. From November until the end of March, when food is scarce, hedgehogs hibernate to conserve energy. Litters of up to 7 hoglets are born from May onwards and are weaned between 4 and 6 weeks, weighing about 120g (typical summer weight for an adult is 800g.) Hoglets born later in the year can't always put on enough weight to survive hibernation.

We all love to see hedgehogs bumbling around short-sightedly, but as a species, they are in serious decline. They have been affected by changes in agriculture and the way we manage our gardens. It's not too late to help: there are still hedgehogs in the area! Here is what you can do:

- If you have a close-boarded fence or a garden wall, make a 15cm square hole for hedgehog access.
- Try to keep part of your garden wild, to encourage invertebrates.
- Avoid garden chemicals, slug pellets and non-environmentally friendly wood preservers if possible.
- Be careful with garden or sports netting: hedgehogs (and birds) get entangled.
- Never give hedgehogs bread and milk: it upsets their stomachs. Use meat cat food instead.

See Folly Wildlife Rescue Centre's website for more information: www.follywildliferescue.org.uk

Take part in our hedgehog survey: if you live close to the Park and you see a hedgehog or their droppings in your garden or in the Park this spring, download our survey form at www.FoGH.org.uk/hedgehogs

If you find a hedgehog out during the day, it's in trouble! Please put it in a box & contact Folly Wildlife Rescue Centre 07957 949825 8.00am - 8.00pm

Mary Hughes

Sport

Football A challenging season with many postponements due to waterlogged or frozen pitches. See the website www.wksl.org.uk for more on the men's game.

The Black Horse play on the top football pitch in black and red stripes. We have enjoyed a successful season and are promoted to Division 4, finishing second. We reached the quarter finals of both Cup competitions, so all in all not too bad a season for us. We hope to do even better next season.

Tony Vanns



The Palace play on the bottom football pitch in blue and white stripes. This first season in Division 3 has been a difficult one, with players moving to other teams or being injured. After a tense relegation battle, with 2 victories in our last 2 games, we managed to stay up and will rebuild for next season with new players and a new sponsor to breathe fresh life into the club.

Chris Lucas

Royal Tunbridge Wells Ladies & Girls Football Club 2012/2013 was our inaugural season. The team play on the top pitch, the Under 14s in Purple and White and the Under 16s in Royal Blue and White. Success came for the Under 16s with a league win, so next season they will play in the Under 17s league in the A division. The Under 14s enjoyed success with a Sussex Cup Final win.

2013/2014 promises to be a huge year for the club, with the growth and rising popularity in girls/ladies football. See the website www.scwgfl.com for more information.

Mark Nicholson

Bowls

Well the season is here! Allow me to introduce myself, I am Stuart Moaby and I am this year's Grosvenor Bowls Club Captain. This is my first time as Captain, so I am looking forward to the upcoming season. I have great Vice Captains, Norman Barton, a previous Captain, and Chris Hall, both I know will assist me in making this season run smoothly.



We have a full fixtures list and all members are looking forward to the friendly Club matches. I would like to invite people down to Grosvenor Bowls Club green where we would love to see more new members and people enjoying the game.

The club has a roll up session on Wednesday nights from 6pm, a great way to have a go, meet new people, plus it's good exercise and company.

Follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GrosvenorBowls

Stuart Moaby

Restoring the Boundary Wall

Back in 2011, enquiries began into the structural safety of the boundary wall, which became an action plan when a large section collapsed a year later. When work began in February 2013, it became clear that much more work was needed, since this old wall, built in the late 1880s, had received little or no maintenance, showing the high quality of the Victorian brickwork!.

A lot of care has gone into making this a restoration project and long sections have been completely rebuilt, after stabilising and underpinning adjacent garden structures. Where possible old brick has been cleaned for re-use and alternative brick of similar colour and size has been sourced.



Access to the site has been problematic, made worse by the wettest eight months of weather on record. The contractors built a temporary road, over half of which has been across allotments, turning a 5m strip into a motorway construction site. Years of care to the affected allotments were crushed under the tracks of the bulldozers in a few devastating moments. All growth on and around the wall was cleared, removing habitat and cover for birds and insects, as well as carefully tended plants.

Some of the wildlife will have found alternative places to go, but many insects that overwinter as larvae or pupae will not have survived. The compaction from heavy machinery will take a lot of work to ease up and allow the soil to breathe again.

After 16 to 18 weeks of hard work, frustrated by days of driving snow, torrential rain and a persistent steely, slicing easterly wind, the contractors are now nearing completion and removing the temporary road. As the year progresses, the wildlife will slowly recolonise their former territory once there is suitable regrowth. Sincere thanks to TWBC for their commitment to reinstate this fine old wall to its former glory. **Liz Edwards**

View from the Allotment



The unpredictable weather poses questions. To plant or not to plant? Will we have frost or not? Is the soil warm enough for the tender roots and seeds? Should we risk their well being?

Being the eternal optimist, I

have visions of giving away courgettes, beetroot, lettuce and beans to family and neighbours, but this seems a long way away!

I know summer will be here with fruit and vegetables in abundance, but when?! We are preparing well with our seed house bursting with plantlets.

Wild nettles are abundant; nettle soup is delicious, but wear gloves when picking the lovely new leaves. The perpetual spinach is a good cropper all year. Our triumph over the pigeons has been rewarded with a good crop of purple sprouting broccoli. I am going to plant more next year because it is so expensive to buy.

Jane Melville

Dogs in the Park

We rescued Barney from Last Chance in August 2010 and were told he was about 2 years old.

We think Barney is a cross breed, he clearly has some German Shepherd in him but he is quite a bit smaller than a pure breed GSD; most people think he is crossed with a collie but its only a guess.

Barney quickly settled in, but has always had abandonment issues, possibly partly because of how he came to us and partly a breed trait. GSD are very loyal dogs and miss you terribly when away.

He loves the Park and can often be seen chasing sticks or balls. He is quite a nervous dog especially when there are lots of other dogs around and will often run away from the smallest dogs if he they look at him slightly oddly!

Despite this Barney is a very friendly dog and has many friends in the Park of both the 2 and 4 legged varieties.



Neil Pepper

Children's Activity

Summer is finally here and the Park is buzzing with many weird and wonderful minibeasts.

On your next walk through the Park, keep an eye and an ear out for these amazing creatures. Some might be sitting on a leaf, while others could be lurking in the long grass or hiding under a log.

Here are just a few of the minibeasts you might find:



Bee



Shieldbug



Caterpillar



Centipede



Butterfly



Woodlouse

Images courtesy of Tim Christian at www.tcnatureservices.co.uk

Dates for your Diary

Busk in a Gazebo.....Sunday 9th June 2 – 4pm

Grosvenor & Hilbert Park, near the Auckland Road gates
An afternoon of mellow acoustic music (weather dependant!)
Bring a chair, a picnic and chill out in the spring sunshine



Space Invaders vs A Bridge Too Far.....Wednesday 12th June 2013 10am

Meet at the Hilbert Road entrance for a **KHWP** volunteer day
Help to clear invasive plants & maintain the boardwalk & bridges
Wear appropriate clothing & footwear.



Members Bring & Share Barbeque.....Saturday 15th June 5 – 8pm

At the Bowls Pavilion.
Bring salads, desserts & drinks to share.
There will a charge for the barbequed food.



Busk in a Gazebo.....Sunday 14th July 2 – 4pm

As above

Space Invaders II.....Wednesday 31st July 2013 10am

As above. Meet at the Hilbert Road entrance for a **KHWP** volunteer day

Kids Going Batty?.....Weds 31st July 2013 8.20 – 9.30pm

Join us for a junior bat detective night
Batty games & a bat-tastic walk around Hilbert Woods
Booking is essential: see www.khwp.org.uk



Open Afternoon.....Saturday 3rd August 2 – 4pm

Bowls Pavilion
An exhibition about the Park, the HLF bid & much, much more!



Woodland Walk.....Sunday 4th August 2:30pm

A walk through our woods, led by Dr Ian Beavis.
Meet at the Hilbert Road entrance.

Limited spaces, so book through editors@fogh.org.uk



National Play Day.....Wednesday August 7th 10 – 2pm

Kent High Weald Partnership

Celebrate Playful Places in Green Spaces with a host of fun activities!
On the top football pitch near the skate park. See the website www.khwp.org.uk



Young Nature Hunters & Mini Beast Safari.....Details to Be Confirmed

Contact Tunbridge Wells Museum & Art Gallery for more details & to book your place

Busk in a Gazebo.....Sunday 18th August 2 – 4pm

As above

Brilliant Bats!.....Thursday 22nd August 8pm

Meet a Kent Bat Group expert for a spot of bat tracking in the Park!

Booking is essential: see www.khwp.org.uk

Watch out for posters and further details on our website www.fogh.org.uk

Facebook www.facebook.com/GrosvenorHilbert or Twitter twitter.com/FofGH



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To join, contact the Secretary on Friendsghrp@aol.com

or at 41, Beulah Road, Tunbridge Wells, TN1 2NS

The Editors (Carolyn Gray & Mary Hughes) welcome all contributions for consideration.

Please try to keep to about 300 words or less, and include your name and contact details.

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Our sincere thanks to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council for all their support in printing and collating hard copies of this Newsletter



Other Contacts & Useful Information

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Toilets: Opening Hours 7am - 6pm

Photos courtesy of Dave Barnett, Carolyn T Gray, Chris Hughes, Folly Wildlife Trust, J Paul Lambert & Christine Newman