



Friends of Grosvenor and Hilbert Park (FoGH)



Newsletter 13 Winter 2014



picture courtesy of Tunbridge Wells Museum

Grosvenor and Hilbert Community Orchard

The orchard began to take shape on Saturday 8th November, when the area was measured and the position of the trees laid out and marked. Sincere thanks to our former park keeper, Gavin Wilkinson, for his invaluable help! In addition, the soil was assessed by Vaughan Redfern (Agricultural and Environmental Consultant). He found a well-drained, rich silty clay loam soil, with plenty of worms, so the orchard should flourish! The soil in this area was dug over and improved for a number of years during and after World War II, when parts of the Park became allotments.



The first planting in the orchard takes place during National Tree Week (the first week of December). The 15 Heritage Lottery funded semi-mature trees will be planted by a contractor to form a central group, with an open glade in the centre. There will be seating in this area, and one lovely addition to the orchard will be a significant area of wildflowers, similar to the spectacular displays at the 2012 Olympic Park.

The community planting of sponsored trees will happen in several phases. The first phase will take place in February 2015, when 25 trees will be planted by individuals from the community. People wishing to sponsor a tree can submit an application between 1st December 2014 and 5th January 2015. Please see the FoGH website www.fogh.org.uk/ or call 07917 643961. If the scheme is oversubscribed, successful applicants will be selected at random via a ballot system. A second planting phase will take place in winter 2015/2016, so if any applicants missed out, they will go on a waiting list.

We hope that the orchard will become a focal point for community activities, an educational resource and simply a pleasant area to relax!

Mary Hughes



Chairman's Letter

With the mild weather this autumn, it is quite a surprise to find the Christmas season only some four weeks away. The Park has looked spectacular with grass still lush and green. The work on the HLF funded regeneration of the Park has seemed to slow, with only isolated areas of activity. However, there has been a lot of negotiation over contracts, following final adjustments to the designs to keep within budget and I am assured that work will become very visible within the next three months.



One area that has been started is the Upper Grosvenor Road entrance. In response to feedback, it has been designed to make a more noticeable, open and welcoming entrance, which has meant some drastic clearance. The space will be planted with an avenue of semi-mature silver birch trees, backed by mixed native hedgerow, giving wildlife cover. There will be scope for other planting, making a sunnier introduction to the Park.

By the time you read this, work to refurbish the skateboard park will be under way, ready for installation in mid-December. Opinions have been collected from the skateboarders and their ideas for improvements are being made by 'Gravity', the company who built the original park. I'm glad that we have been able to upgrade the facilities for this group of park users. During this coming winter season, we will be planting the initial phases of the Community Orchard, starting with a grove of larger trees contributed by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Our very popular park keeper, Gavin Wilkinson, has moved on to Uckfield as Head Groundsman. I would like to thank Gavin for his wonderful upkeep of this Park and willing help with our events. We wish you the very best.

Recent events have engaged a selection of topics; heritage, environment, wildlife support, family fun and wellbeing. Kent High Weald Partnership have been busy on their volunteer days, clearing away the persistent fly-tipping from Roundabout Woods, coppicing, running the Bird, Bat and Bug box workshop and organising activities for World Mental Health Day. Cally's team of volunteers meet on Thursday each week and have had a brilliant impact clearing and cleaning up many areas of the Park. St Barnabas Church again hosted the Heritage Open Days weekend in early September, with a wonderful historical display thanks to the generosity of Geoff Copus. Recently we held our children's Hallowe'en party on the warmest 31st October on record.

All in all, we have had very enjoyable and rewarding three months again and my warmest thanks go to all of those who contribute to making all of these events so successful.

Liz Edwards

Update from the Parks Department

Work on the HLF project is progressing, with the project getting closer to starting on site. At the time of writing, tender documents for the building works and play area are in final preparations for uploading to the tender portal. After pre-tender qualification exercises, the project team have five companies to approach to invite to tender. Work is scheduled to start early in the New Year after we have completed the Council's reporting process.



Work to the Dripping Wells will continue again shortly. However, sadly it will be necessary to take down a Red Buckeye tree growing directly on top of one of the wells, as the roots are congesting the system of channels that allow the water to drip through. This has not been an easy decision, but on the advice of the Council's Tree Officer and considering the risk of future damage to the Dripping Wells, the project team decided removal was the only viable option. We will be trying to source a replacement to be planted further back.

As some of you may know, Gavin has left Sodexo for pastures new and I'm sure you will all join me in wishing him well and thanking him for all his hard work keeping the Park clean and tidy. You may have seen a new face in the Park and I would ask you to welcome Ben, who joins from Calverley Grounds: if you see him say hello.

The work to the culvert at the back of Redleaf Close will be starting shortly, although this has been held up until we could get all the permissions in place from KCC. Some clearance work will be taking place around the culvert to allow the contractor to gain access and bring in materials. The contractors will be accessing the Park and delivering materials through the Hilbert Road entrance, so disruption will be minimal, but I have agreed to a small area just inside the gate for the storage of materials.

If you have any questions about the project or any other aspect of the Park, please do not hesitate to contact me on 01892 554031 or peter.every@tunbridgewells.gov.uk **Peter Every - Parks & Sports Team Leader TWBC**

Camden Road Education, Arts & Theatre Enterprise

CREATE presents:

Christmas Concert.....Friday 12th December 7.30pm

At St Barnabas School Hall, with St Barnabas School, Southborough Primary School & CREATE choir
Free event, but please obtain tickets from Dave Prodrick 07966 190428 or daveprodrick@hotmail.com

Winter Lantern Parade.....Saturday 7th February 5.30pm

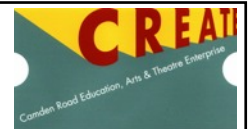
From outside the Library down Monson Road and Camden Road, finishing at St Barnabas School for food and entertainment. This year's theme is WATER.

Lantern Making Workshops.....January & February: Details TBC

Come and get creative & make your lantern ready for the Parade!

For more information see the website www.camdenroad.org & Facebook www.facebook.com/createTW

The Winter Lantern Parade has been chosen by John Lewis at Home as one of their Community Matters charities from November to January. Don't forget to put your green tokens in the slot!



Love Where We Live Awards

We were pleased to be nominated for Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Love Where We Live Awards, and make it into the final four in the Best Group category.

Four committee members, and Richard Woodfield who nominated us, attended the awards event at the Assembly Hall. Best Group was first on the list, and the Award went to St Gregory's Cyber Café. The cafe is run by sixth formers from St Gregory's School and held at St Philip's Community Centre, Sherwood. It offers computing access to a wide range of people. Overall winner was Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services.

The event was sponsored by Town and Country Housing, Kent and Sussex Courier, John Lewis at Home, Fusion and King Charles' School Old Boys' Association, and we'd like to thank them for selecting FoGH as finalists.

Heart of the Community

These awards have a different structure – we submitted our bid to the Kent and Sussex Courier, and were one of many groups and projects listed in the paper. The general public have three weeks to vote. With a number of other local groups putting in bids, we weren't that surprised on the evening to not receive one of the ten awards.

We were inspired by Polly Taylor of Pickering Cancer Drop in Centre, who calculated that 2 million pounds is saved at Pickering every year by the volunteer hours put in. This is how the FoGH committee feel – we don't get any financial reward, but many hours are put in organising events and promotions, and we appreciate all the help we have. Most Heart of the Community winners were related to technology and helping the young, elderly, disabled and sick. Overall first place went to St James's Junior School PTA and St Gregory's Cyber Cafe got a special AXA PPP award.

This was the 11th year of the awards, and no doubt, if they run again in 2015, we shall submit another bid! So remember to buy your Couriers next autumn and vote for FoGH!

Carolyn T Gray



Heritage Open Days 2014

For the third year FoGH joined the Heritage Open Days in St Barnabas Church. Held on the second weekend in September, for the first time the church opened on Friday as well as Saturday and Sunday. Several committee members helped to set up and take down our ever-increasing historical display and stayed in the church to talk to visitors. Queries and questions were answered about the Heritage Lottery Fund work.



We also enjoyed hearing people's memories of the Park and local area. As always, Geoff Copus had a huge display of old photos and information from the whole parish, with extra details on World War One. Visitors from the CREATE choir dropped by in WW1 costume after singing in St Barnabas School (also part of HODs). We are always grateful for any old photos or stories of the past, so please contact the Editors if you have anything to share (editors@FoGH.org.uk).

Carolyn T Gray

Bird, Bat and Bug House Building

On Saturday 27th September we held our Bird, Bat and Bug House workshop with Kent High Weald Partnership (KHWP) for a second year. KHWP bring along an assortment of 'grown up' power tools and pre-cut packs of wood to share with everyone, so that youngsters with their parents get a hands-on opportunity to



Lydia, age 3
with her box

construct a finished product.

It is an event which has the perfect self-advertisement, with the associated sounds of drilling and nailing together; the working surface was rapidly fully occupied. It was lovely to see such concentration from the children and then their delight in taking home a finished and very useable box for the delighted occupant. Some of the participants managed to make all three versions, so I can anticipate some very well stocked gardens for wildlife this coming year.

I would like to again thank Jane Frostick and Sarah Tree from KHWP for putting on this activity, which was popular with all of those who came along.

Liz Edwards

Britain in Bloom Assessment Results

It felt like a long wait for the results of the *'In Your Neighbourhood'* assessment carried out in July. Our scheme has been classed as 'Developing', which is at Level 3 out of 5 levels. This is an encouraging start and the judges were pleased with the strong community involvement and our good partnership with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. The assessors are considering the Park as a whole and did have some comments to make about the maintenance of the pleached lime avenue.



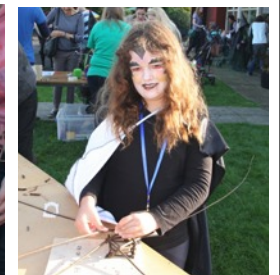
They would like future plantings to be a bit more ambitious and suggested a wildflower meadow by the sandstone artwork Grosvenor Rocks. On the whole, we feel this is a good first result and we would like to do something similar next year, but this will depend on the progress of the lottery work.

Mary Hughes

Halloween Children's Party



The incredibly warm and sunny weather on 31st October brought far more children than we expected to the party! The Park was awash with Skeletons, Witches, Vampires and other fiendish creatures all enjoying themselves.



The high temperature allowed us to use the space around the Pavilion and the outdoor activities went down well. As well as willow weaving and making leaf collages, there

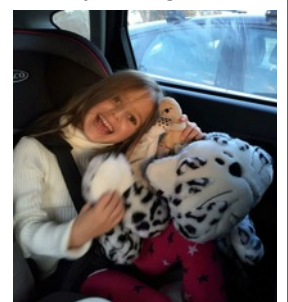
was a Picture Trail and a Halloween Trail around the play area. The face painters set up outside in the sunshine and coped well with the high demand (thanks to Kim Dale from Activities Plus, Dominique and Tania). We did

have to disappoint some children who wanted their faces painted – we will try and get more face painters next year!



The Pavilion was well staffed with volunteers to run four craft tables – decorating fairy cakes, making masks, pumpkin puppets and spiders. Although the room was busy, there was plenty of room for everyone to find something to do without queuing for too long.

The 'Guess the Name of the Cat' competition was won by 5 year old Grace Randall, who was very happy to take Eric home! We hope you enjoyed this free event and thank you for the donations, which will help the event go ahead again next year.



Goodbye Gavin and Good Luck!

From April, Gavin Wilkinson, our former park keeper, has again been in charge of maintenance in the Park. His improvements have drawn many appreciative comments from Park users, who have welcomed the return of such a popular character in this important role. However, sadly for us, this has now changed as Gavin has secured a much more senior and rewarding position in Uckfield as Head Groundsman. Uckfield's gain will very much be our loss! This is great news for Gavin and his abilities will be justly rewarded in his new position.

His extra thought and attention, as well as his imagination in preparing the Park for our events, have been invaluable! I would like to thank him on behalf of all of us for his hard work and support and wish him all the very best for the future.

Liz Edwards



Community Engagement Officer Update (or 'Cally's Catch-Up'!)



There have been some interesting activities going on in the Park since the last newsletter. Friday 10th October was World Mental Health Day and, with so much focus on this issue of late, it seemed pertinent to mark the occasion. So the Tunbridge Wells Health Team, in partnership with Kent High Weald Partnership (KHWP) and Voluntary Action within Kent (VAWK), put on an event in the Park to raise awareness of local mental health services and the benefits of outdoor activities for promoting wellbeing. People tried green woodworking, learnt how to plant bulbs and bedding plants, flew kites, and got a free health check.



On Saturday 1st November, we had a fascinating fungi walk round the Park led by expert Bryan Bullen. The sun was shining and the foray proved fruitful. We found fairies bonnets, candlesnuff fungus, milk caps, deceivers, King Alfred's cakes and more. It was a fascinating afternoon and good to know that our Park does host an interesting array of fungi. In spring, we will put on more wildlife walks through the Park as part of the lottery project.



One of my objectives as Community Engagement Officer is to provide educational sessions for local schools in the Park. The Park was slightly noisier in October when I had St James Infants classes of Year 1s and Year 2s along to do woodland activities like leaf identification games and wild art. They seemed to enjoy themselves and hopefully learned a few things in the process! Some of the children were very creative.

It is great that we can use this lottery project to benefit young people and the whole community and I am delighted that, after consultation with skate park users, we have finalised an improvement plan. Despite a constricting budget, this should make a real and significant difference. The company that originally built the skate park, Gravity, is making

new pieces off site and they anticipate installation from mid-December (around the 15th). Other upcoming works in that area of the Park include the Community Orchard (see Page 1) a really exciting part of the lottery project for the local community to get involved with.

As well as conservation and heritage, the lottery Parks for People programme focuses on enhancing the wellbeing of the community through providing learning and training opportunities. You may have noticed that for couple of days a week I now have a sidekick. Her name is Stephanie and she is my volunteer trainee, helping two days a week, learning and gaining experience to develop her career. This is an annual position that we hope to maintain over the next couple of years, facilitated by the lottery project. Stephanie is very friendly, approachable and helpful and I hope she gains a lot from this opportunity.



On the subject of learning and training, we now also have weekly work experience on Fridays for a small group of Oakley School students. These 17 year old lads come to the Park to help me with conservation and horticultural tasks to help them get ready for life after school. So far, they have helped with litter clearance, scrub management, grass raking, and planting and pruning. A mutually beneficial set-up for the Park and the students!

Our volunteering programme is ticking over nicely, with additional tasks being put on by the Kent High Weald Partnership. The latest volunteer programme can be found on the Park noticeboards and we are always looking for more volunteers, so if you fancy coming along, we would be delighted to see you. If you have access to the internet, I manage a number of social media sites that you can follow to keep updated of all the latest activities, news and developments in the Park as part of the lottery project. Like the Facebook page www.facebook.com/GHParkHLF read my blog at www.ghparkhlf.blogspot.co.uk and follow me on Twitter at GHParkHLF. Finally, see my posters and notices in the Park noticeboards!

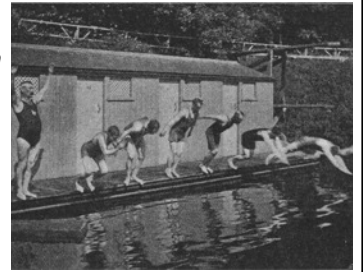
Cally Fiddimore

Top Hat, Clothes and Umbrella Race

This famous and eccentric race took place at the swimming pool previously in the Park on the site of the Children's Play Area. Here is an edited article from *The Strand Magazine* c.1900. Original from Tunbridge Wells Museum and Art Gallery. See www.fogh.org.uk

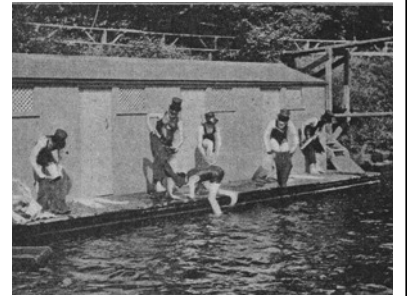
An Extraordinary Swimming Race By Albert H Broadwell

For downright enjoyment and exhilarating fun there are few things that will compare with the comic swimming race depicted here with the graphic powers of an expert snap-shot photographer at his best. To Mr W Tyrell Biggs, the moving spirit of the Tunbridge Wells "Cygnus" Swimming Club, belongs the idea of the "top-hat-clothes-and-umbrella-race."



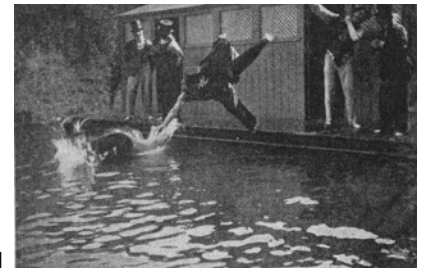
The rules are as follows: "Competitors start from the deep end, swim to one end and scramble on to the bank or platform to put on their hats. With these on, they dive in, swim to another side and put on their trousers as securely as circumstances allow, dive in again and swim to where their hats were, to put on their respective coats. Then another dive, and competitors swim to a fresh place for their umbrellas. These must be opened, another dive is taken with all accessories complete, and the first to reach the shallow end is awarded a prize."

"Competitors are not allowed to use steps, if any exist; they must scramble on to platforms as best they can." There are not enough steps for all competitors to use at the same time. "Umbrellas have to be opened before the last dive takes place, otherwise the users thereof will be disqualified." This rule generally results in the partial or total wreck of the poor "gamp," to the merriment of the onlookers. "Each article of clothing must be correctly put on before diving."



In the first picture we have a splendid snap-shot of the first dive. Competitors are dressed in bathing suits only, and they make a dash for dear life, or rather dear hats, to the bank opposite. Unlike the familiar cry of "hats off," this is distinctly a case of hats on, then a quick turn, and a wild dive for the next halting-place. Lo, here floats one hat and there floats another. "Which is mine?" and "Which is the other man's?" Such are the cries heard on every side. The wretched things have an awkward way of bobbing up and down just out of reach and much bad temper would result were it not for the phenomenal good humour of the competitors.

Puffing heavily and almost deadbeat, yet laughing and chaffing each other unmercifully, the swimmers reach the "trouser bank." Here, however, it is again a case of "more haste, less speed," for in the hurry of the business numerous entanglements take place and the loss of time is serious. In pops one and then another, until the last has gone on his way to the "coat bank."



On they plod, hard and panting, and finally the "coat bank" is reached; a scramble, a rush here and a rush there, the wrong garment is snapped up and thrown down again; the right one is secured – it sticks everywhere, and will not settle down. A pull, a stretch, and flop! Another plunge. A wild race ensues; coats grotesquely inflated with air give the swimmers the appearance of tortoises or whales, or other mysterious monsters of the deep.

Here the wild enthusiasm of the crowd knows no bounds; every group has its own favourite and the din of vociferous encouragements is well-nigh deafening. Within a yard or two stands the "gamps" unmoved in all their glory, stuck into the soft turf ready for the eager grasp which will wrench them out of their resting-place with scant ceremony. "Open them, open them," comes from all parts, and there is a reluctant pause, for some of the

ancient things are rusty and will not spread as quickly as could be desired. Click, click, click, one after the other they spread wide open, and, then begins the most amusing period of the whole business. Several interesting diving processes were used, but most resulted in havoc, distortion or the utter disfigurement, of the umbrellas.



In the last picture we have the back view of the winner, who is appropriately called the "conquering hero." His coat has hardly the most fashionable fit, but his hat is well set, while his umbrella is a total wreck, though he has brought it – or rather, what remains of it – safely through its terrible ordeal.

The spectators of this exciting contest were hugely delighted and we cannot but recommend this amusing pastime to the secretaries of swimming clubs the world over.

Bedgebury @ Grosvenor and Hilbert Park

The Heritage Lottery Fund project will allow improvements to the wetland area that have been in the pipeline for some years. This includes localised damming and earthworks to create three interlinked wetland areas. A boardwalk will wind through the wetland, providing better access for visitors and school groups. The scheme is based on extensive survey work and public consultation and will enhance this area for wildlife as well as visitors.



Clive McWilliam

Around the wetland area will be a new planting scheme achieved in partnership with Bedgebury Pinetum. This will include a balanced mixture of coniferous and deciduous trees, planted as specimens and in small groups. It has been designed to create a landscape that blends with the rest of the Park and draws upon the planting style of Robert Marnock, the renowned Victorian landscape designer who drew up the original plans for much of the Park.

Trees appropriate to the Park and the available soils and aspects have been selected. Some will highlight species of conservation concern, in some cases using plants grown from wild collected seed, with others selected for cultural or botanical and visual

interest. Plants will be sourced from Bedgebury and specialist nurseries to ensure suitable size and quality.

The bulk of evergreen planting and larger specimens will be on the railway side, with another prominent group alongside the bowling green. Deciduous conifers and broad-leaved deciduous species will be used around the wetland to retain the sense of openness. Spaces have been left unplanted to retain views and allow activities on the slopes, like winter sledging.

A number of species used are slow growing or dwarf, but many of the proposed species could form very large specimens on maturity. The stock will need to be managed to ensure its continued suitability for the Park, with interest and balance over time. A management plan will be produced to ensure the design objectives and the need for future tree removal and replanting as necessary. This is a typical process for any planting of this type.



Picea breweriana

The Bedgebury planting will be explained through printed materials and signage, including tree tags for notable species. This will help Park users gain an understanding of cultural and historical aspects of plant uses and collections, current conservation concerns and man's use of plants.



Pinus sylvestris
'Watereri'

The mature oak trees currently in the wetland area will remain, although some require pruning to maintain their health. Some younger trees on the slopes near the railway bridge will be removed, as well as the alder tree in the wetland area, to open up the valley floor. Meadow flowers will be added to the grassland in this area. A survey of the dead oak tree

(the 'Ghost' Tree) has found that it is in poor condition, so regrettably, for safety reasons and to allow access, the tree needs to be felled, but it will be retained within the wetland area.



LOTTERY FUNDED

The work will commence in late Summer 2015, with tree planting following in Autumn 2015.

Adrian Spray, Project Co-ordinator, CFP & David Scully CMLI, Landscape & Biodiversity Officer, TWBC

Sport Report

Football (See www.wksl.org.uk)

The remaining team using Hilbert as their home pitch is St John's Yard, who play in Division Five of the West Kent Sunday Football League.

Due to remedial work carried out by TWBC on the top football pitch, St John's Yard had a nomadic start to the season, using a number of different pitches for their 'home' games.

This has not affected their form: they started with an 8 – 0 win against Brenchley Reserves and remained unbeaten in 6 matches, until losing on penalties to Ramsfield in the Intermediate Cup. (The team are still in the WKSFL Junior Cup after a 2 – 0 win against Tornados).

4 wins and 1 draw saw them topping the Division Five table at the end of September, with a healthy goal difference due to some high-scoring wins. The team's top goalscorer is Dan Hunter, with 15 netted so far (14 in the league and 1 in cup competitions).

Their first match in the Park this season was on 2nd November, unfortunately a 6 – 1 loss against Division Five league leaders KW Hayward United. An energetic 4-all draw at Ticehurst on 16th November sees the club 4th in the table at the time of writing.

Look out for them playing in green and white hoops on the top football pitch, from 10:30 on Sunday mornings in the Park. Why not come and cheer them along!



Mary Hughes

Dogs in the Park



My dog is a Cairn Terrier cross called Bailey and he is 7 years old. He came to me in March this year from Hearing Dogs for Deaf People. Bailey is my companion and best friend and lets me know when there is a sound I need to be alerted to.

When he hears something for me, he jumps up in front of me and I say "what is it" and spread my hands apart, then he leads me to the sound. If it is a fire alarm he lies down in front of me. Hearing dogs are trained to suit who they are placed with, so it takes a long time. We collected him from the training centre in East Yorkshire, and stayed a couple of days to see how we got on and for some training together.

We walk in Hilbert Park three times a day and he comes with me when I do voluntary work there: we both love the Park and helping there.

Bailey is a very cheeky boy and everyone who sees him smiles. He loves to play: he has lots of toys, and always rushes to get them out when we have visitors: he thinks they come just to play with him!

See www.hearingdogs.org.uk/

Tommy Clark

View from the Allotment

The potatoes are dug, the squash picked and stored for winter, but what a marvellous year it's been, with loads of fruit and vegetables. We have the rest of our summer broccoli, as well as some yellow courgettes the field mice missed.

And still to enjoy – leeks, chard, artichokes, spinach, parsnips and spring broccoli.

Our larder is bursting, the shelves bowing with jams, chutneys and jellies and, thanks to a glut of strawberries and raspberries, our wine making has excelled. Now we look forward to merry times drinking the vodka and gin based fruit liqueurs.

Nothing has been wasted, even the sieved out fruit mush from the wine making was bottled as a really tasty alcoholic "jus", ready to be poured over ice cream or rice pudding. Yummy!

The old potato beds are fertilised and dug over ready for next year's crops, but there is still a lot of digging and preparation to do, and the pesky weeds loved the warm autumn, as did our grand-daughter, seen here enjoying the last of the late raspberries.



Alistair Melville

Birds to look for during winter

As autumn turns to winter and temperatures fall, bird populations are much more mobile, so it's worth keeping an eye open in the Park and in your gardens for winter migrant birds. Birds can arrive in the UK from northern and eastern Europe, Scandinavia and Russia. They come here for the milder weather and more plentiful food and can start to arrive from September, depending on conditions in Europe. Many blackbirds, robins, song thrushes and starlings visiting gardens in winter are from abroad, and not the ones who were singing in the spring.



Redwing

Redwings and fieldfares are members of the thrush family and a similar size, with redwings slightly smaller. Fieldfares are sociable birds and are often found in large, noisy flocks, feeding on insects, worms and berries. Both species can be found in fields, along hedgerows and often in playing fields. Redwings may join fieldfares in mixed flocks and come to



Fieldfare



Waxwing

gardens for berries in severe weather. If you're lucky, you may also see colourful waxwings eating berries!



Goldfinch



Male siskin



Male redpoll

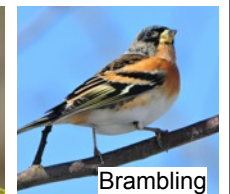
Other birds to look out for are members of the finch family. Increased numbers of goldfinches are already visible in gardens around the Park: male and females look the same. As winter sets in, they may be joined by siskins and redpolls. Male siskins are vividly coloured: females and juveniles are more drab. At first glance, redpolls are just small brown birds,

but a closer look shows the red patch on top of the head which gives them their name. A pink flushed chest shows a male. Encourage them into your gardens by feeding with nyger seed!

House sparrows have long used birdfeeders in gardens and this food source becomes more important in winter. Despite an overall population decline, the Park and surrounding gardens have a healthy sparrow population. Chaffinches, and sometimes the more orange-coloured bramblings, can often be seen in winter picking up seed from underneath feeders and bird tables.



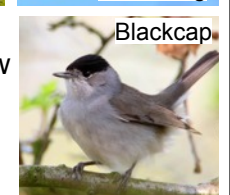
Chaffinch



Brambling

Most British warblers rely on insects and migrate in late autumn, returning from April as the sun stirs the bugs and spiders they need. However, the blackcap has become hardier and many now spend winter in the UK. In harsh weather they come to bird tables: you can tell the male by his black cap (the female has a dull brown cap).

Birds are more visible when the leaves have fallen and the shorter days give them less time to find food. Winter is a struggle for survival for birds and providing supplementary food will help the birds, as well as making it easier for us to watch them. For more information about feeding birds, see the RSPB website www.rspb.org.uk/makeahomeforwildlife/advice/helpingbirds/feeding



Blackcap

Mary Hughes

Dates for your Diary

Christmas Carols.....Sunday 14th December 2 – 4 pm

At the Black Horse, Camden Road.

Join us and the CREATE Choir for Christmas carols

Do bring friends and family – there will be free mince pies!



Happy Holidays!.....Thursday 18th December 10am – 3pm

KHWP Volunteer Day: meet at the Hilbert Rd gates & dress appropriately

A graduated woodland edge increases biodiversity;

come along and help keep the reserve in premium condition

Make a Christmas wreath to take home – mince pie guaranteed!



Creating a Community Orchard.....Friday 23rd January 2015 7.30pm

At Church of Christ, Commercial Road (off Camden Road)

Talk about the development of Capel Community Orchard

also fruit tree planting and maintenance

By Roger and Celia Worraker



Cutting Edge.....Wednesday 28th January 10am – 3pm

KHWP Volunteer Day: meet at the Hilbert Rd gates

Continue with the woodland edge management,

creating a more diverse interface.



Bank on It!.....Thursday 12th February 10am – 3pm

KHWP Volunteer Day: meet at the Hilbert Rd gates & dress appropriately

Join in with some streamside coppicing

along the banks of the chalybeate stream in Folly Shaw



Community Orchard Tree Planting.....Saturday 14th – Sunday 22nd February Details TBC

The first phase of the community planting

25 trees will be planted to spread out from the first glade

Weather-dependent: wear appropriate clothing & footwear



Walk This Way.....Wednesday 25th February 10am – 3pm

KHWP Volunteer Day: meet at the Hilbert Rd gates

Refresh your construction skills or learn some new ones

2 days of boardwalk building.



Under the Boardwalk.....Wednesday 11th March 10am – 3pm

KHWP Volunteer Day: meet at the Hilbert Rd gates

Help renew this derelict walk through Roundabout Woods

2 day session: wear appropriate clothing & footwear



Round in Circles.....Wednesday 25th March 10am – 3pm

KHWP Volunteer Day: meet at the Hilbert Rd gates & dress appropriately

Invasive species control and

opening up the circular walk through Roundabout Wood.



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

Facebook www.facebook.com/GrosvenorHilbert or Twitter <https://twitter.com/FofGH>

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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.

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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Mobile Security Service 07920 534369

Toilets: Opening Hours 7am - 6pm

Photos and images courtesy of Tommy Clark, Dave Barnet, Cally Fiddimore, Carolyn T Gray, Chris Hughes, Clive McWilliam, Alistair Melville and Gareth Randall