

# Friends of Grosvenor & Hilbert Park (FoGH)

Newsletter 20 Autumn 2016



picture courtesy of Tunbridge Wells Museum

## Heavy Horse Day

July 16th saw the return of the Working Horse Trust on a fine sunny day. They brought a selection of the breeds they look after, which included Marigold, a beautiful Suffolk mare, Hamish and Polly, both Ardennes and the handsome Drew, a grey Shire. All these



Mayor Dave tells Marigold one of his jokes!

breeds of horse, who were once so familiar to rural life, are now endangered breeds and the Trust works to promote and preserve a nucleus of breeding stock.

Marigold worked hard all day giving carriage rides around the lower field.

We were lucky that the Mayor, Councillor David Neve, managed to find time to come along and take the inaugural ride, providing some welcome publicity for the Trust while they continue to search for a new permanent home.

Hamish and Polly teamed up as a twosome for the second carriage and business was brisk all through the day. Drew, who injured his pelvis three years ago, has been retired from any heavy work, but he loved all the attention and compliments from the admiring visitors. He thought the local grass was pretty tasty too!

Rendezvous again provided a BBQ and this year Downingbury Farm had a stall selling fresh fruit: both were popular. It was a good day for all who came and we hope to invite the WHT again next year.

**Liz Edwards**



Hamish & Polly at work



Drew makes some new friends

## Chairman's Report

Looking back over the past two years, much has changed in the Park. Now that the contractors have moved out, we can appreciate all the improvements as part of the entire refurbishment project. The overall quality of the finished work is of a high standard and I really hope there is something for everyone to value and enjoy for many years to come. This time last year there was much anguish about the playground remaining closed over the summer holidays, but now it is fully functional, it is busier than ever. Most days this summer it has looked very similar to a popular family beach.

The Community Hub building is a brilliant success for all the community to use, with more groups showing an interest in holding activities there. The landscaping works have transformed areas like the Marnock Lake and the wetlands, which will repopulate with all kinds of wildlife as the next year goes by. As the vegetation grows, the boardwalk in the wetlands will integrate well and give a fascinating observation point for watching insects and amphibians.

I think my favourite 'new' area in the Park at the moment is in the community orchard, where a beautiful swathe of wildflowers are flowering as a result of the preparation and seeding in April this year. On any of the recent warm sunny days, it is attracting a wide variety of insects all keen to collect and use the available nectar. The success of the orchard and wildflowers is largely due to the hard work of Steff and all the volunteers, to whom I send our appreciative thanks.

This autumn there is an interesting and busy schedule of activities planned, as listed on page six and advertised on the notice boards in the Park. The Heritage Open Days display on 9th - 11th September will be held in the Hub this year, so I hope many regular Park users will pop in and perhaps learn something new about the history of our 'People's Park'.

**Liz Edwards**



## Update from the Parks Department

Over the summer the Park has been visited by the Green Flag and the South and South East in Bloom judges, and the Park has received its first Green Flag. We don't know the results of the SSEiB judging yet, but I'm confident the Park will do well.

The landscape contractors Blakedown have completed their work and are now off site, apart from the maintenance team, who will be visiting weekly. Some areas are fenced off, to protect new plants or recently seeded areas. This will be removed as soon as plants establish. Some of the conifers around the wetland area and in the yew hedge have failed to establish and are looking brown. These will be removed and replaced by Blakedown in the planting season from October onwards.

Replacement box balls have been planted near the Auckland Road entrance and we have erected temporary wire fencing from this entrance to Grosvenor Bridge to protect the plants while they establish. Sadly there are a few visitors who allow their dogs to roam onto shrub beds. We will be installing permanent hoop top fencing from the Auckland Road entrance to Rochdale Road, as this seems to be a hot spot for dog fouling.

While we appreciate that the paths are not to everyone's taste, the tar and chip surface was the most economical solution to a worn and patched path network. I'm afraid it is taking longer than anticipated for the surface to wear in, but please be assured the loose chippings will be swept off as soon as possible.

Unfortunately, we have seen an increase in vandalism recently, with the new flag pole damaged and rubbish thrown in the Marnock Lake. We do report all incidents to the Community Support Group and the Police, but if you see any acts of vandalism actually taking place, please call 999.

Do take time to enjoy the refurbished Park and remember we have opportunities to get involved by volunteering: see the noticeboards or visit the website. If you have any questions please contact me on 01892 554031 or at [parks@tunbridgewells.gov.uk](mailto:parks@tunbridgewells.gov.uk)

**Peter Every – TWBC Parks & Sports Team Leader**



## Camden Road Education, Arts & Theatre Enterprise

For full details see the CREATE website [www.camdenroad.org](http://www.camdenroad.org)  
& Facebook [www.facebook.com/createTW](http://www.facebook.com/createTW)



### CREATE Community Choir.....Rehearsals on Thursdays 7.15pm

At the Church of Christ, Commercial Road, off Camden Road

A FUN informal choir for those who enjoy singing: no auditions, just turn up & join in!

Voluntary donation of around £3 a week: contact [choir@camdenroad.org](mailto:choir@camdenroad.org)

### Nose in a Book Night.....First Thursday of every month 8.30pm

At the Church of Christ, Commercial Road.

An informal hour sharing favourite pieces of writing based on a theme & bringing them alive with performance. (Unhappy to read in public? Someone else can read your piece.)

### Belgian refugees exhibition.....Saturday 10th September 9am – 3pm

At St Barnabas School. They sought refuge from the WW1 German invasion in Tunbridge Wells

The launch of a year-long project with CREATE: see [www.belgiansrtw.wordpress.com](http://www.belgiansrtw.wordpress.com)

table 8

The Cafe at the  
Community Hub!

Paninis & Sandwiches  
Macs & Soups  
Cakes & Biscuits  
Hot & Cold drinks  
Daily Specials

Open Daily 9am – 5pm

## FoGH needs you!

FoGH has again entered the Britain in Bloom *It's Your Neighbourhood* scheme. We will be planting 5000 crocus bulbs, as part of the RHS/Rotary Purple4Polio initiative. On Saturday 1st October, we will begin planting these bulbs in the Oast House area. Also taking place nearby is Apple Day: why not come along and plant some bulbs, then refresh yourself with freshly pressed apple juice!



During the year, the Friends group puts on a number of events, ranging from Community Planting Days to the Family Fun Day. These are planned and run by a small group of committee members, who put in an immense amount of time. We would love to have a few more volunteers to help with the events.



Family Fun Day 2014

At our Family Fun Day, we need help to set up and clear away, as well as stewards and helpers on the tombola stall. There's Apple Day and the Children's Halloween Party in October: could you spare an hour to help with children's craft activities? If you would like to help out at future events, please contact [editors@FoGH.org.uk](mailto:editors@FoGH.org.uk)

There are future funding worries for all parks in this age of austerity. To help FoGH maintain an effective voice, we would like as many people as possible who live near or use the Park to join the Friends group. Please could you help us to recruit new members by cutting out the application form at the end of this newsletter and giving it to a friend or neighbour. Thank you very much for your help.

**Mary Hughes**

## Events Roundup

### Queen's 90th Birthday Celebration Sunday 12th June

I hope the Queen appreciated our valiant efforts to join in national celebrations for her birthday. Heavy rain the day before, and more forecast for Sunday, meant moving the planned picnic into the Hub.



The damp audience

After assorted technical hitches, two gazebos were placed by the Hub to keep the musicians dry. The Bacchus Wind Orchestra eventually started their performance, which was enjoyed by everyone who turned out in the persistent rain.



Bacchus Wind Orchestra

We shared birthday cake during the interval, and the afternoon concluded with a rousing version of 'Singing in the rain'. While Table8 did well out of the need for warming drinks, it was not the relaxed picnic we had imagined. What a blessing that our May Fundays have avoided similar downpours. We would like to thank the orchestra for their patience, and all those who came along.

**Carolyn Gray**

### National Playday Wednesday 3rd August

For the fifth year we joined Kent High Weald Partnership at National Playday, held in the Park, near the skate-park. There were lots of activities on offer and the day stayed dry,



Colouring in masks

although breezy. Excellent for the kite flyers, but less so for the FoGH stall.

We had masks to colour in, provided by 'Fields in Trust', and were making s'mores once a short scavenger hunt had been completed by children and parents. We could rescue blown away paper, but keeping candles alight to melt marshmallows proved fairly tricky.



National Playday

We met lots of people, local and from further afield, with the event gaining popularity as a Free Summer Activity. KHWP den making from old cardboard boxes and their mud kitchen, showed how to achieve easy and cheap entertainment, to keep children active during the summer break.



The mud kitchen

Bug hunting and willow weaving were popular and the tug-of-war circulated around the field.

It's a good day to bring families to the Hilbert side of the Park, away from the playground, and open their eyes to some nature.

**Carolyn Gray**



The tug-of-war

### Heritage Open Days 2016

It's hard to believe that the Friends group has been going for five years now! Back in 2011, the committee had just started meeting, and I went along to see the Heritage Open Day Display in St Barnabas Church.



I was fascinated by photos of the old swimming pool, Victorian lakes and the surrounding area, and set about finding out as much as I could about the history of the Park. I would like to thank Geoffrey Copus and Fred Scales for their help during this time, as we delved into the Strange family, waterworks, and beyond.



History displays in the church

From 2012 – 2015 FoGH joined in at St Barnabas Church, with our additional historical findings and information on the lottery bid. Now in 2016 we have our renovated Community Hub, and we have enough photos, maps and stories for our own exhibition.

While we have enjoyed the peaceful surroundings (and the cakes), at the church, it will be nice to have the information in its actual setting. Please come along, we have a few new bits and pieces!

**Carolyn Gray**

*Displays will continue in St Barnabas Church & School as in previous years.*



FoGH & our display last year

## Steff's Sum Up (or Community Engagement Officer Update)

The last few months have been a hive of activity in the Park, not just with events, but also due to the beautiful summer weather we have recently been having. It has been great to see so many people enjoying the play area, and exciting to watch visitors exploring the newly opened wetland boardwalk. If you haven't had a chance yet, I recommend you have a closer look at this area. It is already thriving with wildlife: from the newts lurking in the depths, to dragonflies, of which I have spotted at least four different species so far.

Enjoying outdoor activities



We are delighted to announce that the Park has received its first Green Flag this summer, thanks to the hard work of FoGH and the TWBC Parks Team. This award recognises and rewards the very best green spaces across the UK.

This summer the Community Engagement Team (myself and Jasmin) have been busy providing events for all, from the craft events for the youngest, to identification walks and talks for the older crowd.

Among all the events we have led over the summer, the ones that stand out most were the woodcraft sessions. These were thoroughly enjoyed by all (including the assisting adults). We saw children learn to light fires, whittle butter knives and make mallets.

The circus skills events, led by Kevin Fletcher of 'Topper is Pink', were a big hit. They attracted a few hundred people to try out tightrope walking, uni-cycling, stilt-walking and many more exciting activities. There were even parents testing their skills with the guidance of Kevin.



Circus skills



Volunteers survey birds in the Park

The conservation volunteers have been hard at work all summer, with activities from weeding the beds by the bowling green to getting to grips with monitoring the Park's wildlife. The wildlife surveys have created a great opportunity for the volunteers to learn about birds, butterflies, and the bees in the Park.

This is an important job as it allows us to track what species are present and monitor any long term changes. We are always looking for more volunteers to help us record the flora and fauna in the Park, so if you would like to help or learn more, please contact me at:

[steff.dagorne@tunbridgewells.gov.uk](mailto:steff.dagorne@tunbridgewells.gov.uk)

**Steff D'Agorne**

## Sport Report

**Bowls** (see <https://www.facebook.com/GrosvenorBowls>)

We are now well into the season: we have played 16, won 8 and lost 8, which I am very happy with. The men's Thursday league team (playing in a 2 x triple format) are champions of League 2, winning promotion, well done!

In the Tunbridge Wells Men's Open Bowls Tournament in mid-August, the pairs went out in the early rounds, and Graham Bridges was knocked out in the quarter-final of the singles. But congratulations go to Graham Bridges,

Steve Jenner and Stuart Moaby, who won a keenly contested all-Grosvenor final in the triples.

The tournament winning triples team



The club has been able to attract four new members thus far, with a hope that we will find another couple. The clubhouse facilities have now been well and truly tested and it is a pleasure playing home games back at Grosvenor. We are just waiting to get the honours board back on the wall.

The green is being well used at present as all club competitions press ahead, ready for our finals day on Sunday 4th September. There is still time for anyone who would like to try their hand at bowls to come down on a Wednesday between 5.45 – 7.00pm and have a go: just wear flat shoes.

**Football** (see <http://www.wksl.org.uk/>)

Saint John's Yard FC will still be playing at Hilbert in Division 3 of the West Kent Sunday Football League. There is a change to their strip: gold shirts, black shorts and socks this season. Matches begin in September on Sunday mornings: come and watch if you're in the Park.

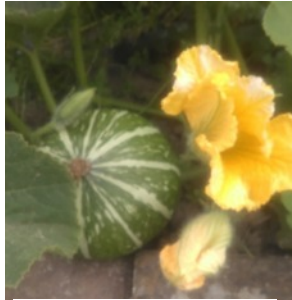


A sunny match with Paddock Wood

**Norman Barton – Club Captain**

**Mary Hughes**

## View from the Allotment



Will it be ready for the ball?!

It's harvest time... There were a few vegetables to nibble whilst working. What could be better than a fresh young pea, or radish. Needless to say they have all been eaten. We have had some good crops and some less than brilliant.

We rotate the potatoes annually, but due to the wet weather in June, the potatoes suffered from blight (*Phytophthora infestans*). The early potatoes were fine, but the rest of the crop was just small potatoes. There were plenty of strawberries and raspberries which the grandchildren enjoyed, but the black and redcurrants were poor. I saved seeds from last year's squash, but we ended up with mostly male flowers. Once again a glut of courgettes, so I have made piccalilli and courgette relish for the winter. Beetroot and salad crops are doing well and our runner beans are just starting.

**Jane Melville**

## Dogs in the Park

This is Jack! He came from Last Chance Animal Rescue, in Edenbridge, aged five. He had a passport and had been to Spain a few times! He clearly is Jack Russell, and we think Beagle!



Jack

He has typical JRT traits, as he is very noisy and likes his voice heard all the time! He is not overly keen on other dogs or grown ups, but loves children. Loves also to chase a ball, chew a ball, carry a ball around in his mouth, roll the ball in as much mud and dirt as possible and drop it in your lap.

He also likes a cuddly bunny that he carries around, given to him by my son when Jack first came. When we are in the Park, he keeps an eye on his favourite person, my daughter Isabel, who is nine. She feeds him bits of food from the cafe, when no one is looking!

As he gets older, he likes to find the sun and will lay for ages in its warmth.

**Pauline Brown**

## Mini beasts in the Park 2016

The Museum's August Young Nature Hunters and Mini Beast Safari sessions returned to the Park at the start of our five-week series. As usual, they proved very popular, and we had over 40 participants in the morning.



Feathered Stem-moth

We quite often find new site records at these events, and this year was no exception. Feathered Stem-moth, a curious little day-flying species with antennae that are bristly at the base, turned up unexpectedly on our morning session in the developing wood-pasture between Folly Shaw and Roundabout Wood.

This little moth occurs in traditional flower-rich grassland, but is not often seen as it flies for only a brief part of the day. Also in the wood-pasture were a number of Migrant Hawker dragonflies, which seemed to be hunting for insects we disturbed.



Oak Bush-cricket

As usual, we saw a good variety of grasshoppers and crickets, which can be distinguished by their antennae: thicker and shorter than the body in grasshoppers but longer and thread-like in crickets.

We found all four of the possible grasshoppers, including Lesser Marsh Grasshopper, a new arrival last year. We saw the distinctive Roesel's Bush-cricket with its 'dayglo' yellow or green U-shaped band



Roesel's Bush-cricket

on the side, and the delicate looking Oak Bush-cricket which usually stays up in trees.

Hoverflies – two-winged flies which gain protection from predators by mimicking various types of bees and wasps – were well represented, especially around woodland edges. We saw several of what is sometimes called the Death's Head Hoverfly (*Myathropa florea*), a striking wasp mimic with grey marks on the thorax, which some people imaginatively think look a bit like a skull.



Translucent Hoverfly



Lesser Hornet Hoverfly

We also encountered two of the largest British hoverflies, including the Translucent Hoverfly (*Volucella pellucens*). As its name indicates, this has a semi-transparent white band on its body, which helps the males to show up when performing their courtship display flight in the dappled sunlight of woodland glades.

The closely related Lesser Hornet Hoverfly (*Volucella inanis*) is more conventionally wasp-like. Its brown and yellow pattern gives it a strong superficial resemblance to a hornet (which is simply the largest of the social wasps), and its larvae live as parasites in the nests of various social wasp species.

**Ian Beavis**



Death's Head Hoverfly

## Dates for your Diary

**Hay meadow cutting in Appledore Wood.....Thursday 8th September 10am – 3pm**

Kent High Weald Partnership volunteer day

Meet at the Hilbert Rd gates: wear appropriate clothing & footwear



**Heritage Open Days at the Community Hub.....Friday 9th September 2 – 5pm**

Displays on Park history & the HLF regeneration

Join FoGH as we showcase the history of the Park

**Saturday 10th September 10.30am – 4pm**

**Sunday 11th September 10.30am – 12.30pm**

**Heritage Open Day History Walk**

Meet at the Community Hub

**Sunday 11th September 11am – 12.30pm**

**Community Planting for Britain in Bloom.....Saturday 1st October Details TBC**

Help to plant crocus bulbs for Purple4Polio (Rotary/RHS campaign)

Brighten up the Park with flowering bulbs from TWBC for Britain in Bloom



**Apple Day.....Saturday 1st October 10.30am – 3.30pm**

By the Oast House. Activities, games & refreshments

We'll be making juice with our apple press: bring bottles



**HLF Boardwalk Building.....Thursday 5th October 10am – 3pm**

Kent High Weald Partnership volunteer days

Meet at the Hilbert Rd gates: wear appropriate clothing & footwear

**Wednesday 26th October 10am – 3pm**

**Bird, Bat & Bug House Building.....Saturday 15th October 10.30am – 1.30pm**

By the Community Hub: make homes for wildlife with FoGH & KWHP

Drop-in bird box, bat box & bug hotel building event.



**October Half Term Woodcraft sessions & Forest after-school club**

Contact [steff.dagorne@tunbridgewells.gov.uk](mailto:steff.dagorne@tunbridgewells.gov.uk) for more information



**Children's Halloween Party.....Saturday 29th October 2 – 4pm**

Halloween Fun at the Community Hub

Face painting, art & craft activities. Come in fancy dress.



**Woodland Work.....Thursday 3rd November 10am – 3pm**

Kent High Weald Partnership volunteer day

Meet at the Hilbert Rd gates: wear appropriate clothing & footwear



**Community Orchard Tree Planting.....Saturday 26th November Details TBC**

The final phase of planting in National Tree Week

Weather dependent: wear appropriate clothing & footwear



**Hazel Coppicing.....Thursday 1st December 10am – 3pm**

Kent High Weald Partnership volunteer day

Meet at the Hilbert Rd gates: wear appropriate clothing & footwear



**Christmas Carols.....Sunday 11th December 2 – 3.30pm**

At the Community Hub with the CREATE Choir

Mulled wine, juice & mince pies



**Conservation Volunteer tasks every Thursday 10am – 3pm Meet at the Oast House**

See posters, [www.fogh.org.uk](http://www.fogh.org.uk) Facebook [www.facebook.com/GrosvenorHilbert](https://www.facebook.com/GrosvenorHilbert) or Twitter <https://twitter.com/FofGH>

### FoGH Contact Details

Liz Edwards (Chairman)

[chair@fogh.org.uk](mailto:chair@fogh.org.uk)

Jane Melville (Secretary)

[Friendsghrp@aol.com](mailto:Friendsghrp@aol.com)

Website

[www.FoGH.org.uk](http://www.FoGH.org.uk)

Facebook

[www.facebook.com/GrosvenorHilbert](https://www.facebook.com/GrosvenorHilbert)

Twitter

<https://twitter.com/FofGH>

Comments or contributions to

Newsletter editors at

[editors@fogh.org.uk](mailto:editors@fogh.org.uk)

or 15 Dorking Road,

Tunbridge Wells, TN1 2LN

To join, contact the Secretary at 41, Dorking Road, Tunbridge Wells, TN1 2LN or on [Friendsghrp@aol.com](mailto:Friendsghrp@aol.com)

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

TWBC Parks Service 01892 554031

Out of Hours Service 07920 534369

Toilets: Opening Hours 7am - 6pm

Images courtesy of Dave Barnett, Ian Beavis, Pauline Brown, Jo Cartwright, Steff D'Agorne, Gary Finch, Carolyn Gray, Chris Hughes & Jane Melville.



# Friends of Grosvenor & Hilbert Park

Membership Application – Cheque/Cash

**Current Subscription: Individual £5 Family £10**

I / We wish to apply for membership of Friends of Grosvenor & Hilbert Park

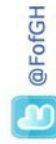
Membership Type: INDIVIDUAL: £5 FAMILY £10

Name
Address
Telephone
Email address

I / We enclose payment of £5 Individual or £10 Family (cheques made payable to Friends of Grosvenor & Hilbert Park)

Please return the completed form with the payment to:  
FoGH Membership Secretary, Jane Melville, 41 Dorking Road, Tunbridge Wells, TN1 2LN

Office use:
Date received:
Receipt given / sent:
Entered on records:
Cash / Cheque



@FofGH



facebook.com/GrosvenorHilbert



info@FoGH.org.uk

[www.FoGH.org.uk](http://www.FoGH.org.uk)



# Friends of Grosvenor & Hilbert Park

Membership Application – Standing Order

**Current Subscription: Individual £5 Family £10**

I / We wish to apply for membership of Friends of Grosvenor & Hilbert Park

Membership Type: INDIVIDUAL: £5 FAMILY £10

Name:
Address:
Postcode:
Telephone:
Email address:

I / We wish to pay the current and subsequent annual subscriptions by Bankers Order and have completed the necessary form below

## BANKERS ORDER

**To: The Manager**

Bank:
Address:
Postcode
Bank Sort Code:
Account Number:

## From:

Name:
Address:
Postcode:
Telephone:

Please pay the National Westminster Bank Plc (Sort Code 55-70-13), at 89 Mount Pleasant Road, Tunbridge Wells, TN1 1QJ, for the credit of the **Friends of Grosvenor & Hilbert Park** (Account Number 78361443)

The sum of £....., commencing on the 1st June 20.... And then annually until further notice.

Signed:
Date:

Please return the completed form to:  
FoGH Membership Secretary, Jane Melville, 41 Dorking Road, Tunbridge Wells, TN1 2LN



## Friends of Grosvenor and Hilbert Park

A jewel in the heart of Tunbridge Wells  
**Community | Play | Sport | Nature**

The Friends of Grosvenor and Hilbert Park (FoGH) is a voluntary group set up in 2011 to preserve, enhance and promote this much loved Park.



- ❖ We plan and organise successful events and activities in the Park including:
  - the annual Family Fun Day
  - Heavy Horse Day
  - Bird & Bat Box building
  - planting the Community Orchard & Apple Day
  - Britain in Bloom community planting events
- ❖ Provide information on the Park, its history, flora & fauna
- ❖ Work with local organisations connected to the Park

### Why not support us by becoming a FoGH member?

- ❖ Your membership will help to fund our work.
- ❖ Receive our colourful and informative quarterly newsletter.
- ❖ Keep up-to-date with Park events and news.
- ❖ Join in with volunteer activities and members events

To join, please complete the application form inside.

[www.FoGH.org.uk](http://www.FoGH.org.uk)

