

## A-Peeling Weather Brings a Successful Apple Day



After storm Brian caused the cancellation of 2017's Apple Day, we watched the weather forecast anxiously in case of incoming storms. But the climate played a different trick on us this year. The long, warm summer meant the apples were ready earlier than expected this autumn! So we had

to bring the event forward to ensure we could get enough apples.

In the future, once the trees in the Community Orchard are established, we hope to use apples from there. In the meantime, Downingbury Farm in Pembury generously allowed us to pick apples for the event. A huge thank you to Peter Jervis for his support.







The weather on the day was cool, but rain-free until the heavens opened at 2pm, so we had to pack up in the rain. Despite the damp finale we had a steady stream of willing volunteers. Plenty of people came and pitched in with different parts of the juice making process. Everyone got to take away some juice – you just can't buy any as freshly pressed!

FoGH members had been busy baking and dehydrating, so we had a table with apple inspired goods so the volunteers could keep up their strength as they chopped, scratted (machine chopped) and pressed the apples.

This year the National Fruit Show joined in the fun. They bought along a range of different apple juices to sample and apple crisps. They provided lots of lovely apple crafts, like printing with apples and colouring in for the children.

Weather permitting, we'll be up by the Oast House next year for more apple-inspired fun!

Emma Melville

# **Chairman's Report**

In our last newsletter, I wished farewell to Steff D'Agorne, our Community Engagement Officer, as she moved to a new position at Romney Marsh. I'm delighted to advise that her part-time assistant Emma Peters has taken over as CEO full-time from September, for the remaining twelve months of the role. She already knows the ropes and has taken up the many tasks with seamless continuity.



We've had a busy autumn of events this year, accompanied by glorious weather. The Heritage Open Days exhibition drew in both new visitors and those with memories of the Park to share. Events with wildlife in mind were popular – more beautifully decorated boxes for birds, bugs and bats were made. More moth trapping revealed the beauty of these elusive insects, important as pollinators and as a food supply for the local bats.

For the rest of the year there are more volunteer activities – some tree saplings to plant and weeding the flower beds by the bowling green. Craft workshops include making Christmas decorations and food balls to help birds through the cold winter months. The choir from CREATE will again join us to sing Christmas carols and help us wish Park users season's greetings. We can wet our whistles with mulled fruit juice and wine!

Now that the colder weather has arrived, thoughts turn to tidying up our gardens for the year ahead. Please remember that, while we can spend the colder days indoors with warmth and shelter, our wildlife must tough it out as best they can. We can help with shelter and foraging by leaving a covering of growth and leaf fall in part of our gardens. With wildlife numbers falling alarmingly, as shown in the recent World Wildlife Fund report, the Park and our urban garden habitats are increasingly important habitats.

I would like to offer my warmest thanks to all who have helped us this year as volunteers. My very best wishes to our loyal membership for the festive season and for a very enjoyable new year to come. **Liz Edwards** 

# **Update from the Parks Department**

The Bloom results arrived in September and October, and we were pleased to see the Park received a Gold award. The Judge made very positive comments, recognising the cooperation and co-ordination between all concerned. We can't do this without the support of the Friends and the volunteers, so very big thank you to everyone involved.



The Friends received a category 5 in the 'Its Your Neighbourhood' award and Tunbridge Wells Town received a high Silver Gilt in the National competition. All in all, a very successful year.

After an eventful summer, the Park is getting ready for winter. Sodexo are preparing their winter maintenance schedule with our park keeper, Tony, cutting back shrubs and collecting leaves. The pleached Limes and the square-headed trees will be cut back during January/February to keep everything in shape.

We have finally sorted out the funding to resolve the developing wet area on the edge of the lower football pitch and the erosion of the path linking Hilbert and Grosvenor. We need to invite tenders for the work, but we should be able to start work in spring after the wetter conditions of winter are over. The work on Marnock Lake is finished, with new pumps installed and the pipework cleared of silt. The feeder pillar will be replaced later this month, but the lake won't need draining – it will be a more robust housing for the electrical equipment.

Sadly, after the heatwave and dry conditions of the summer, we have lost a couple of new trees at the Auckland Road entrance. I think we are lucky not to have lost more, but although they are fairly common, it is proving difficult to find replacements of a reasonable size. We will continue to contact nurseries around the country.

Enjoy the Park over the winter period and best wishes for Christmas and the New Year from all the Parks Team. As always, if you have any questions about the Park, please do contact me on parks@tunbridgewells.gov.uk

Peter Every - TWBC Parks & Sports Team Leader

# Winter Lantern Parade...... 5.30pm

We start at Ely Court & finish at the Auckland Rd entrance to the Park.

This year's theme is Outer Space. You can join in by making a Lantern at one of the workshops listed below.

### **Lantern Making Workshops**

Free events at different locations, limit of 50 people per session. This year there will be a charge to make the Lanterns of £5. Book via www.winterlanterns.org or get a ticket on the day.



in partnership with Tunbridge Wells



1 =		
Assembly Hall Theatre Basement Bar	Saturday 5th January	12.30 - 3.30pm
Royal Victoria Centre	Saturday 12th January	Time TBC
	Sunday 13th January	Time TBC
Rusthall Primary School	Saturday 19th January	10am - 12.30pm 1.30 - 4pm
Free School Tunbridge Wells	Sunday 20th January	10am - 12.30pm 1.30 - 4pm
Southborough Primary School	Saturday 26th January	10am - 12.30pm 1.30 - 4pm
Church of Christ Commercial Rd	Saturday 2nd February	10am - 12.30pm 1.30 - 4pm
St Barnabas Primary School	Sunday 3rd February	10am - 12.30pm 1.30 - 4pm

# Royal Tunbridge Wells in Bloom 2018

This summer all the main parks and open spaces of Tunbridge Wells were entered into the South & South East in Bloom competition. Overall, we received fantastic results for all our sites, and we hope to do as well in 2019.

S&SEiB results 2018 (with the categories in brackets):

Barnett's Wood Nature Reserve (Large Conservation Area) Calverley Grounds

Woodbury Park Cemetery TW Common





Silver Gilt (Large Park) Silver Gilt (Churchyard) Silver Gilt (Commons) Silver Gilt & category winner

TW Cemetery & Crematorium Dunorlan Park **Grosvenor & Hilbert Park** Royal Tunbridge Wells

BLOOM h the RHS David Elliott, TV personality Chris Bavin & Peter Every

(Large Cemetery) Gold (Large Park) Gold (Large Park) Gold (Large Town)

This year Royal Tunbridge Wells was in the Britain in Bloom National Finals. At the Award Ceremony in October at Belfast, the RTW in Bloom team received Silver Gilt. The local campaign grows stronger every year, with a record of 285 entries this summer. Many thanks to all the supporters and volunteers who help us bloom.

RTW in Bloom and the Assembly Hall Theatre teamed up to bring the outside inside this Autumn. Local photographers entered images of gardens and parks in the borough looking 'Blooming Marvellous'. The winning pictures are on display at the Assembly Hall.

ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS IN BLOOM

Kasia Olszewska-Martin, Parks Technical Officer

## **FoGH Events Roundup**

### Heritage Open Days (HODs) 2018



FoGH enjoy supporting this national festival, which celebrates this country's fantastic history and culture with over 5000 events. We have displays about the origins of the Park, as well as the recent changes from the Heritage Lottery Funding. We were restricted to Saturday 8th September by other Hub bookings but we were pleased to see about 100 people.

Our visitors share their memories, building our knowledge, and showing how important the Park was, and still is, to the local community. The lost swimming pool is still remembered by some bathers and is an endless source of fascination! The Guided Walk led by Chris Hughes attracted some 15 participants to explore the history of the Park, as well as the changes, in context.

There's always more history to uncover, so we hope to see you again next year.

Mary Hughes

### Bird, Bat & Bug Box Building

This annual woodwork exercise is run as a drop-in session by the Hub, and attracted approximately 150 to try their hand. Old skills were refreshed and new skills were learned by all ages. There was a choice of building bird or bat boxes, or bug hotels. Once the chosen residence had been constructed, a wide selection of pens and crayons were used to colour them in.





There was advice on where to put them and how to maintain them. Two owl nest

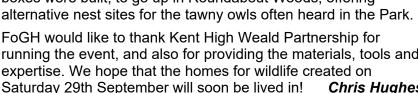
boxes were built, to go up in Roundabout Woods, offering alternative nest sites for the tawny owls often heard in the Park.

Construction

in full flow

running the event, and also for providing the materials, tools and expertise. We hope that the homes for wildlife created on Saturday 29th September will soon be lived in! Chris Hughes

Witches!



## Children's Halloween Party

Queues outside the Hub heralded the start of our sixth Halloween party. A variety of witches, ghosts, skeletons and other scary creatures were soon streaming through the doors. There were craft activities, including making boxes, pom-poms and spiders, decorating cakes and colouring in masks.

Our face painters (Sarah and Tomoni) were kept busy all afternoon, turning out a variety of spooky designs. We also offered temporary tattoo transfers, which proved popular.

There were two outdoor trails, one easy around the Bowling

Green and a harder one for older children in the play area. Drizzle and light rain towards the end meant reduced uptake for the trails. The lucky dip attracted all the children and needed restocking a couple of times.







This free-to-enter event was packed from start to finish, and we estimate about 150 children joined in during the the afternoon. We would like to thank all those who came along. And, of course, sincere thanks to our hardworking volunteers and the face painters, who coped admirably with the crowds and the noise!





### **Emma's Update**

I have to say these first few months of the Community Engagement Officer position have just flown by - I can't believe it is November already. Thank you to anyone that has helped me out along the way by volunteering, giving me great helpful feedback from an event, or just stopping to say hello and ask how I've been getting on! It's been lovely to get to know you all better and feel so welcomed in the role.



Over the last few months, the volunteers have been busy clearing the wetlands, surveying birds, aquatic invertebrates and bees, coppicing, creating new dead hedges, and tidying up Appledore Wood (as well as many other activities).

They managed to clear two different woodland areas recently, allowing space for the habitat to

develop and for trees to get more sunlight. One of these areas included creating a lovely dead lack land in the land and land in the land

Making the dead hedge

If you would like to volunteer with us, (and we are always looking for more volunteers!), please contact me. I am particularly interested in anybody that would like to focus on surveying the nature in the Park, so let me know if that's you!



Our summer and autumn events have been crazily busy. 32 children came along for our

International Youth Day event and had a go at spray painting the legal graffiti wall. There were another two moth blitzes (with Ian Beavis to help identify the 34 species – thank you!).

On the bat walk

70 children went pond dipping in the wetlands and another 70 people came along to make bird, bat and bug boxes. Then 43 people came to

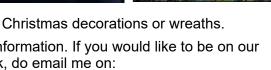
learn something new about bats or hedgehogs, as well as around 140 people taking part in our summer and Halloween trails.

I have been busy planning winter and spring events for 2019, and preparing for the last few events of this year. We have a wide range of winter activities over the next few months: try helping our

volunteers with weeding for International Volunteering Day, or making Christmas decorations or wreaths.

Keep an eye on our Facebook page and in-park posters to get more information. If you would like to be on our events mailing list or find out more about anything going on in the Park, do email me on: Emma Peters, Community Engagement Officer

emma.peters@tunbridgewells.gov.uk



Clearing undergrowth

## The Park in Bloom

In the South & South East in Bloom competition, Grosvenor & Hilbert Park was awarded its first ever Gold, and FoGH received a Level 5 (Outstanding) It's your Neighbourhood Award. It is a fantastic



achievement, considering the Park and work of the Friends were judged by Jim Buttress, a highly experienced Britain in Bloom judge.

#### Kasia Olszewska-Martin

Jim Buttress gave FoGH 92% to achieve the Outstanding award, with just one negative comment about the untidy compost bins.

Hoping to build on this success, FoGH have recently refreshed the baskets on the railings, with winter-flowering pansies and polyanthus for the spring. We hope they will give some welcome colour over the coming months, before the summer planting in May. Mary Hughes



### Hilbert - Building the football pitches

Continuing high unemployment in the 1930s led to the formation of the Tunbridge Wells Council of Service, a group of local social and charitable organisations. It was decided to actively provide work for the unemployed, by paying their wages as they worked. Local residents donated generously and made monthly subscriptions.

This followed on from the Mayor's Winter Distress Fund, which paid the wages of the unemployed men who built paths at Hilbert in 1932. In 1936 Tunbridge Wells Borough Council agreed to pay for materials and supervision for the unemployed to build football pitches at Hilbert.



We know the intermediate pitch as the top football pitch, and the junior pitch has the skate park built on part of it. Work started on the full-size pitch in 1937 (the lower pitch) and continued in early 1938.

George, Duke of Kent, (younger brother of Edward VIII and George VI) visited the work in June 1938. The Duke took an interest in social problems and had written to Tunbridge Wells Council of Service, congratulating them on their "very fine work".

He was given a guard of honour by the local Scouts, and met local dignitaries including the

Mayor, Councillor Strange and Canon Masters (chairman of the Council of Service). The Duke was shown the football pitches and given a tour of Hilbert. Gates for Hilbert Road entrance were borrowed for the occasion.



The pitches form a 'King George's Field', named for King George V, founder of the National Playing Fields Association, now Fields in Trust. A grant of £200 from King George's Field Foundation helped to build the pitches, shown by the heraldic panels on the gate pillars, installed with the gates in 1939.



The Council of Service would contribute £1100 towards the labour costs, and work on a junior and intermediate football pitch began in November 1936. The scheme included a full-size football/cricket pitch, and the whole would cost an estimated £3500. An average of 40 men were employed, and there were many visitors to see progress, including the Mayor (EL Strange) and Deputy Mayor (EB Weekes).

The junior football pitch was completed by April 1937, and the intermediate pitch was being levelled. "One end of the ground has to be lowered over 6 feet, and all the soil has to be placed on trucks and conveyed a distance of 150 yards to level up."



Poor weather stopped work in autumn 1938 and, due to deteriorating relationships with Germany, unemployed men began digging trenches for air raid shelters instead. Local eyewitness evidence suggests that the lower football pitch was completed after the war.



Hilbert is truly a 'People's Park', as the paths and football pitches were built by the local unemployed, with their wages paid by the generosity of the residents of Tunbridge Wells.

\*\*Mary Hughes\*\*

Source & images: Kent & Sussex Courier 1873-1950 (©Local World Ltd courtesy of The British Library Board) via the British Newspaper Archive. Aerial photo of the football pitches courtesy of Simon Reeve.

### Mini Beasts Retrospective August 2018

The Museum's traditional Mini Beast Safaris returned to the Park with morning and afternoon sessions on 9th August. This was rather a damp day, but that did not deter the participants or – in most cases – the creatures we were looking for.

Sun-loving insects like butterflies were mostly in hiding, but we did manage to find a Common Blue, one of the butterflies that frequent the Park's flower-rich grassland areas, its caterpillars feeding on Bird's-foot Trefoil.

Grasshoppers and crickets are generally sun-loving too. but despite the conditions we found a good variety hiding

Green, and Lesser Marsh – were spotted, along with two types of crickets – Roesel's Bush-cricket

and Long-winged Conehead.

One of the coneheads was an unusual 'extramacropterous' form with abnormally long wings. This form appears if a large population builds up – it was a heatwave summer – so that some can fly off to colonise new habitats.

Roesel's Bush-cricket



Frogs always cause a lot of excitement when we

find them, as we regularly do in the strip of damp grassland between the two woods Folly Shaw and Roundabout Wood. This year we found full adults as well the regular immature ones that have only recently left behind the tadpole stage.

One of the Park's special creatures is the Giant Cranefly, which is the size of a small dragonfly and is Britain's largest two-winged fly by wingspan. Related to the common grey cranefly attracted to lighted windows in the autumn, the Giant Cranefly is distinguished by its patterned wings and its impressive size. They breed in the Park's woodland streams and often appear fluttering around foliage on woodland edges.



We always find several types of spiders on our mini beast

safaris, some constructing various forms of webs and some – the so-called wolf spiders – which are active hunters and only use their silk glands to produce egg sacs that the females carry around with them.

The female Nursery-web Spider has an intermediate lifestyle, carrying an egg sac as the wolf spiders do, but building a tent-like web to protect her young when they are

newly hatched. We spotted one of these nursery webs with the female on the outside guarding it. Ian Beavis

# **Sport Report**

**Bowls** (see www.grosvenorbowlsclub.co.uk)

Our successful season ended with a lovely Finals day in early September, with plenty of spectators. Congratulations to new bowler Richard 'Bertie' Wooster, who beat club champion Graham Bridges in the singles final.

Now in the close season, a fixture against local indoor bowls club TW Royals was a challenge for us outdoor bowlers. We finished second in a good match with friendly people and return in March to try again.

Still to come: our AGM, when we elect club officers for next season and

award this seasons trophies. Our annual dinner for bowlers and their families is in February. The new season starts in April and we hope to welcome more new members. Jo Cartwright



#### Football (see www.wksl.org.uk)

St John's Yard made a promising start in Division 2, with 2 high-scoring wins (6 – 4 at Brenchley and 4 – 0 against Crowborough Town at home). A loss against Insulators and a draw with Petts Wood Old Boys leave them sitting second in the table.

The team have had mixed fortunes in cup matches, knocked out of the Kent Sunday Junior Cup after 3 games (including a 10 – 4 loss). They are through to the next round in the WKSFL Intermediate Cup, and are still in in the WKSFL Senior Cup.

They can be found playing in gold and black on the top football pitch and we wish them well for the rest of the season. Mary Hughes





Giant Cranefly

A match on Finals Day

### Meet the FoGH Committee



Liz Edwards is a founder member of FoGH and Chairman since May 2013. After growing up in the local area and going to school in Sevenoaks, Liz returned to the town in the 1970s. She has lived near the Park for over 40 years.

A keen gardener who works

to support wildlife in her garden, her expertise was instrumental in planting the baskets on the railings. The Community Orchard exists and is flourishing because of Liz's dedication.

Liz worked with TWBC, the project coordinator and landscape architect on the Heritage Lottery Fund Project Board to realise the improvements. She still works closely with TWBC and the Parks Department. Found as a key volunteer at all FoGH events, Liz's hard work and dedication to the Park make her an inspirational Chairman. *Mary Hughes* 

### Dogs in the Park

This is Cluedo, our 1-year-old beagle puppy. Originally from Herefordshire, we've had her since she was 10 weeks old. She is a sweet and loving dog, but also has a naughty streak. She has been found on the dining table more than once! Cluedo loves our kids and has



become their best friend but she sometimes forgets she isn't one! She quite likes going down the slide.... Totally ruled by her tummy, Cluedo has been known to even eat spiders and flies as a snack, though she prefers cheese and sausages.

Lots of things make Cluedo happy: tummy rubs, lying on the sofa when she thinks no one can see, chasing rabbits, dropping tennis balls down the stairs to chase and playing with her friend Mabel. She also loves running fast and feeling the wind in her ears. Her dislikes are being washed with the hose and getting caught doing something naughty! **Rosie Henley** 

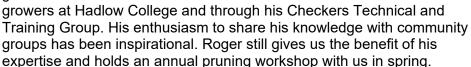
## The Community Orchard so far

This winter marks two years since we planted the final group of trees in our Community Orchard, so now is a good time to review the project.

Back in 2013/14, initial plans were being made for the Heritage Lottery Fund refurbishment of the Park. Suggestions for a Community Orchard led FoGH committee members to a 2013 visit to the Jubilee Community Orchard planted in Five Oak Green by Roger and Celia Worraker.



Roger is an internationally acclaimed author and lecturer on top fruit production and trained generations of commercial fruit



Encouraged by his generous advice, we have planted an orchard of 74 young fruit trees, all sponsored by individual supporters. This is augmented with a central core of 15 mature trees.

Our design of the grid pattern includes a central open glade, which has been defined by tree trunk seats. These logs were brought by working horses from the woodlands within the Park. As the orchard grows this area will become more apparent, but it's already a popular place to sit and relax. We hope it will be used as an outdoor classroom.

The wildflower areas on the south and west facing margins support an



increasingly diverse array of butterflies, bees and other pollinating insects, which help the fruiting success of the orchard.

The mowing regime here will be timed so the wildflower seeds ripen before they are

cut in late summer, then the cuttings will be distributed underneath the fruit trees. Pathways will be cut during the season with a recently purchased power scythe. This will enable the management of this ecosystem to fully develop.

Within the next five years, rainfall permitting, the trees should be fully established and growing into their mature framework. The orchard is, and will become, a place of peace, pleasure and productivity.

\*\*Liz Edwards\*\*



Moving a log with horse power!

## **Winter Event Highlights**

Carols with the CREATE Choir.....Sunday 9th December 2 – 3.30pm

FoGH invite you to join us for this seasonal celebration.

At the Hub (outside if the weather is good). Mulled wine, juice & mince pies.

Christmas Greetings......Tuesday 11th December 4.30 – 6.30pm

Have a go at making your own greetings cards. Suitable for all ages.

Drop-in event at the Hub. Children should be accompanied by an adult. Suggested donation £2 per person.

Feeding Frenzy......Wednesday 19th December 3.30 – 5.30pm

Give the birds a helping hand in the colder weather by making food balls for them.

Drop-in event at the Hub. Children should be accompanied by an adult. Suggested donation £1 per person.

Tree Dressing......Friday 21st December 2.30 – 5pm

Make a natural decoration to dress our festive tree. Suitable for all ages.

Drop-in event at the Hub. Children should be accompanied by an adult. Suggested donation £2.

# Snazzy Skateboarding...... 10am – 3pm

Free workshops from Team Rubicon, suitable for all ages & abilities.

At the Skate Park. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

All equipment & safety gear supplied on the day.

Create a Story.....Tuesday 22nd January 2 – 4pm

Celebrate National Storytelling Week by creating your own storybook.

At the Hub. Free drop-in creative event. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Big Garden Bird Watch......Thursday 24th January 10am - 3pm

Give the conservation volunteers a hand with this RSPB event – what will you spot?

Meet at the Hub. If you have binoculars, please bring them along.

Wear appropriate shoes & warm clothing. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

# Amazing Astronomy...... 6 – 9.30pm

Mid-Kent Astronomical Society will show us how to appreciate the night sky.

At the Hub. £2 per person. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

# World Wetlands Day......Monday 4th February 11am - 2pm

We're going dipping in the Park's wetlands to celebrate World Wetlands Day. Free event, suitable for all ages. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Winter Lantern Parade...... Saturday 9th February from 5.30pm

Starting from Ely Court & finishing at the Auckland Rd entrance to the Park. See page 2 for full details.

# Shaken up Shakespeare......Tuesday 19th February 1 – 3pm

In Souliloguy give Shakespeare a digital remix. Suitable for GCSE students.

At the Hub. Free workshop on how to interpret Shakespeare in a modern way.

The Great British Spring Clean......March - Date & Time TBC

Become a litter hero! Join FoGH on a litter pick to tidy up the Park.

Meet at the Hub, wearing appropriate shoes & clothing. Tools & equipment provided.

# Events marked #: Booking essential at emma.peters@tunbridgewells.gov.uk

For more information about any of these events, see social media & look out for posters in the Park.

FoGH events: www.fogh.org.uk Facebook www.facebook.com/GrosvenorHilbert

or Twitter https://twitter.com/FofGH

For all other events: contact Emma Peters or see www.facebook.com/GHParkHLF/

#### **FoGH Contact Details**

Facebook

Twitter

Liz Edwards (Chairman)

Jane Melville (Secretary)

Website

chair@fogh.org.uk

Friendsghrp@aol.com

www.FoGH.org.uk

www.FoGH.org.uk www.facebook.com/GrosvenorHilbert https://twitter.com/FofGH Comments or contributions to

Newsletter editors at

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

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