

Friends of Grosvenor and Hilbert Park (FoGH)

Newsletter 2 Spring 2012



picture courtesy of Tunbridge Wells Museum

Photographic Competition: Winter in the Park

At the Open Morning on 28th January, we showed the 76 photos submitted to the Winter Photo Competition and allowed those attending to vote. 88 people took the opportunity to pick their three favourite shots.

The winner was 'The Dewy Web' by Jo Cartwright (left) from the local Bowls Club. Jo's picture was selected by 30% of the voters, a clear winner.

In second place (it was a good day for cobwebs) came 'The Icy Web' by Loraine Marshall and in third place 'The Skate Park' by Henry Treadwell.

Dave Barnett, organiser of the competition said *"The standard of pictures was very high and this was reflected in the scoring, almost all pictures received some votes. I know, as a keen amateur photographer myself, that you tend to develop a style of photography that suits you and what I love about a competition like this is the fact you get to see so many different perspectives of what is essentially a small area."*



Suggestions that we turn some of these pictures into postcards or Christmas cards are being considered. And it is certain that we will be running more photo competitions in the future. You can see all the entries on our web site www.fogh.org.uk

Chairman's letter

What have we been doing on our Wednesday evenings in the Bowls Pavilion once a month? We have not been idle. Since our last newsletter, the Friends now have a constitution, funding has been secured, two events have been held and 65 people have formally joined FoGH.

December 11th 2011: a Get Together with CREATE in the park, for mince pies and carols, ably guided by John Marshall their choirmaster. Some of the 50 listeners also joined us in song.

January 28th 2012: our first Open Morning in St. Barnabas school hall was a resounding success. We hope that the 200 visitors found the event informative. Congratulations to Jo, for the winning photo and our thanks to Rosie for the FoGH logo.

The level of interest from those attending these events encourages us in planning future ones. Event details will be posted on notice boards and can be found in this and future newsletters.

Please take note: we would really like to see and hear from you.

Unfortunately the Heritage Lottery Fund bid by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council was turned down, but it is planned to try again. The Friends support the council in its efforts to secure the bid.

What of the future:

- Don't forget to join us for the March 10th Tree Planting to celebrate the start up of FoGH.
- The AGM will be held in May, please come along.
- The year has turned and we are now in 2012, The Queen's Diamond Jubilee year.

We plan to celebrate this in the Park and we need your input and support.

Sadly John Marshall passed away suddenly over the Christmas period. I only knew John for a short time from CREATE, his indomitable spirit & patience will be missed by everyone in the choir. Our condolences & prayers go out to John's family.

J Paul Lambert



FoGH

Update from the Parks Department

As many of you will know, unfortunately we did not succeed in our first round application for Heritage Lottery Funding, due to over subscription of the scheme: our bid met the criteria overall very well, but other bids in this round met them more fully. On the plus side, we did have very positive feedback with regards to our application from our case officers: that it was of excellent quality, presentation of the plans, how we engaged the public and how well we managed the project.



On this occasion Grosvenor and Hilbert was up against very stiff competition, some of you may have seen in the news, Worth Park in Crawley was awarded £2.4 million in this round. Sadly, the local board only have a limited pot of money to distribute in the South East and although the board were keen to support our application, other areas on this occasion presented a more worthy cause than Tunbridge Wells.

Moving forward, our case officers encouraged us to re-submit our application at the end of February, with some very minor adjustments. The Parks Team will be working hard over the coming weeks to make sure our application is successful; however, we do need to remember we will be up against other projects who may present a better case.

In the event we are unsuccessful with the re-submission, we will continue to proceed with the project to improve the park, adjusting the project to match the funds available from the developer contributions and to investigate other sources of funding. The Parks Team will continue to work with the Friends to achieve the goals we all have for the park and, as always, I am happy to answer your questions about the park.

You can call me on 01892 554031 or email me at peter.every@tunbridgewells.gov.uk

Peter Every - Parks & Sports Team Leader TWBC

Camden Road Education, Arts & Theatre Enterprise



CREATE presents:

One Darke NightFriday 24th February 7.30

A play featuring the work of Nick Darke a Cornish Playwright.

St Barnabas School Hall Tickets £8 Concs £6

World Book Night Event.....Saturday 21st April 7.30

Bring a plate and a drink and be entertained in a literary fashion.

Tickets are free but must be booked

Workshop & Concert with Jig Jaw.....Sunday 27th May

A welcome return for the four piece female folk group.

Workshop £10 Evening tickets £8 Both £15

To Book Tickets: 07966190428 or daveprodrick@hotmail.com

More information on the website www.camdenroad.org



Open 7 days a week

10:30 - 4 PM

(weather permitting)

for hot & cold drinks, light refreshments

www.paninionthepark.co.uk



Carol singing with CREATE

Sunday 11th December 2011 marked the date of the first Friends Event; Christmas Carols, mince pies and mulled juice at the festively decorated Bowls Pavilion. The committee members have been very active behind the scenes, preparing a constitution, arranging a bank account and deciding who would be in charge of publicity. Christmas seemed the ideal time to share a progress report and entertainment with other Friends.



John Marshall leading the CREATE choir

Luckily the afternoon was dry and CREATE were in good voice, following two evenings of singing their Church Concerts. We would like to thank the choir.

After the carols, there was a time for a chat with everyone, and to gather new names onto our mailing list. The committee members enjoyed themselves and we'd like to thank all those who attended during that busy time of the year, and hope to see you during 2012.

When the Friends group started, we were very grateful for the help and advice from Dave Prodrick and CREATE, and we feel the two community groups should work together for the benefit of the area. We look forward to working with CREATE for the Jubilee celebrations.

Carolyn Gray

Our Logo

Part of setting up the Friends group was creating a logo. We were lucky enough to know a local resident and graphic designer, Rosie Harris, who runs her own company Girl Friday Graphics www.girlfridaygraphics.co.uk



**Friends of Grosvenor
and Hilbert Park**

Rosie knows the park well and, after a short meeting, we agreed the park uses were diverse and that it was the People's Park. Rosie used the grouping of the three old oaks by the lower football pitch and the curve of the lake as our distinct features. We would like to thank Rosie for her time, especially when all the committee members will have different uses for the finished logo!

Carolyn Gray



Open Morning, St Barnabas School Hall Saturday 28th January

A quick glance through this newsletter, or five minutes walking around Grosvenor and Hilbert, will show you just how many uses there are of our park. To showcase all these different sections, the committee organised an Open Morning on Saturday 28th January in St Barnabas School Hall.



After months of planning, meetings and endless emails, after pounding the streets posting flyers and putting up posters, after cheery messages all over Facebook and Twitter and the website....

The morning finally came, when all committee members awoke with the thought "Will anyone come?" Fortunately the weather was dry and fine, and all the guests we had invited set up stall by 9.45am - suddenly we realised visitors were arriving! Those of us drinking coffee and testing the home-made cakes realised it was now Action Stations.

All morning there was a steady stream of people through the door, many of them filling in a membership form and paying to join. There was a lively atmosphere in the hall and there really did seem to be something for everyone. Children were able to make crafts with Kent High Weald Partnership; I should know, my daughter has several nature inspired badges now!



The photo competition was placed in the centre of the hall and provided great

debate, as did the display of the "Art in the Public Realm". Others reminisced over historical photos of the swimming pool and Satellite Club with Geoff Copus and Philip Whitbourn, discussed working on the community allotments with Transition Tunbridge Wells or commented on the birds they had spotted when out dog-walking. Anyone looking for a new hobby could choose between bowls, football, or singing with the CREATE choir. The comprehensive display from TWBC Parks department gave us all hope that we will be successful with our second Heritage Lottery bid.



We were able to display our new logo for the first time, and thank Rosie Harris for her hard work in capturing all the elements of Grosvenor and Hilbert Park into one picture.



As the morning showed, this is a very diverse, much loved and well used park. This was a very enjoyable and successful morning and we'd like to thank everyone who came. Even without the Lottery money we can start to organise more events and social gatherings, so we hope to see you all again soon.

Carolyn Gray

The British Restaurant

So, who remembers the British Restaurant? Or the Satellite Club? Or The Montessori Nursery?



Memories of the building came flooding back to people when the photo was added to our Facebook page. This is a brief history of the building and its many uses. A longer article can be found on the website: www.FoGH.org.uk

At the beginning of World War Two Tunbridge Wells Borough Council set up an Emergency Committee (TWBC EC), and within days they had opened a Communal Feeding Centre in the Assembly Hall. As the war progressed, household food was rationed, but not restaurant food. Around the country "British Restaurants" were set up, where a 3 course, non-rationed, meal could be bought for 9d. Several times TWBC EC discussed building British Restaurants and finally on Nov 13th 1942 the Grosvenor Recreation Ground restaurant was opened at a cost of £4,000. It was located on the site of the 1899 bandstand; if you enter by the Auckland Road gate it is the piece of grass to the right, at the very top of "The Hollow".

Reports in the TWBC EC minutes a year later are not good for Grosvenor Restaurant: the windows were repeatedly vandalised, the building was burgled twice, and was making a loss. The Restaurants were run "not for profit"; but within all Local Authorities, 73% made a profit. However, both TWBC restaurants, at Calverley Grounds and Grosvenor Recreation Ground stayed open until the end of the war.

Children from St Barnabas School used the restaurant after the war as their school canteen, up until 1958.



The building then was used as The Satellite Youth Club, and as a Montessori Nursery School. The nursery used a classroom at the front of the building, in the 1970s called "The Musical Box", and through the 80s and 90s "Grosvenor Kindergarten". Children remember the cold walk through the main hall to the toilets! There was a paddling pool in the garden, which was later tarmaced into a play area.

The main hall was used as the Satellite Youth club, which seems to have been very popular. There were lots of organised activities, such as weightlifting, judo, table tennis and dancing.

The hall was also available for private hire and was used by Tunbridge Wells Operatic and Dramatic Society (TWODS) and Royal Tunbridge Wells Symphony Orchestra (RTWSO) for rehearsals, and also used by the new Trinity Arts Centre for scenery and prop making.

In 1988 a group of friends called "The Rumble Club" hosted bands in the hall, including Sigie Sigie Sputnik - by 1992 the Rumble Club had a permanent base - "The Forum".



Local resident Sharon Abrams has a special memory of the Queen's Silver Jubilee: "a party was held in the Satellite Club in 1977; all the boys were given a blue commemorative mug and the girls a deep pink commemorative mug." Does anyone else remember the party? Does anyone still have their mug?



In 1989, proposals were made by TWBC for the building to be pulled down. Protests followed from local residents, as around 1000 people were using the hall.

However, finally, in 2003 the hall was demolished. It was very much a case of 'it will be sadly missed'.

Do you have any special memories of the building? Email editors@FoGH.org.uk or write to: 15 Dorking Road, Tunbridge Wells, TN1 2LN

We no longer have a hall to host our Queen's Diamond Jubilee Party, but we have our Friends group, and our friends at CREATE in Camden Road. We'd really like your ideas and help to make this a Top Celebration. Email us or write, as above.

In compiling this article our thanks go to: TWBC Museum and Library, all those on two Facebook pages: www.facebook.com/GrosvenorHilbert and www.facebook.com/groups/244404915593232 (Old Tunbridge Wells Pictures) Fred Scales, Linda Lewis and family, David Jarvis of the Forum, Jimmy and Dan Maddock.

Carolyn Gray

Art in the Park

The Grassy Knoll

Public consultation has been underway in January and into February regarding the commissioning of a piece of public art for the Grassy Knoll, the small, grassed mound on the north side of Grosvenor bridge before the entrance to the park.

Three artists and designers were shortlisted in November:

Richard Perry has been working as a sculptor since the 1980s and has developed a proposal for the site inspired by the natural elements to be found in the park and surrounding area. This is a tactile sculpture in a red sandstone with a ripple effect relief. This mirrors the history of the site, its chalybeate spring and other natural forms in the landscape. Richard was inspired by the quality and variety of Grosvenor Park, the spring that runs down the site with its iron oxide colour, the lake which reflects the flora of the park and the housing bordering one side. The red sandstone was chosen for its high iron oxide content and the lake inspired the carved surface relief work on the sculpture. The form and shape of the piece maximises the plinth-like potential of the Grassy Knoll and has a relationship with both the tall adjacent flats and the building on the other side of the railway line.

The sculpture would be approximately 3.5 m high.



Tony Stallard has been a practising artist since the 1980s and often works with light and metal to produce large sculptures. Inspired by the chalybeate spring and the park's lake, his proposal is a large stone water vessel emanating an orange light-glow, reminiscent of the rust coloured spring water. This is a direct reference to the water supply for which Tunbridge Wells is famous. The classical form of the Rhyton (a Greek ritual vessel) suggests purification or magical waters that give the water its special quality. This would also suggest something old and archaic, a reference to the Victorian times and the dripping wells below the park.

This is heightened by the design, which allows the light element to come into play with an orange glow, reflecting the colour of the chalybeate spring water.



Approximately 6 m high, the dramatic work in daytime will become an impressive light sculpture at dusk.

We Made That is an architecture and design studio established in 2006. They propose the installation of a Civic Stop, a small staircase ending in a platform, onto the Grassy Knoll. This stone stairway leading skywards will encourage people to stop, look at their surroundings and chat. The stairway, made from local sandstone, would be embellished with text developed with the public.

An Arrival Day event will invite local residents and community groups to write and draw on the stoop, using chalk to annotate, inscribe and take ownership of the piece. Following this unique 'local aging' process, the markings will be carved into the stone of the Civic Stop to create a rich surface of local character. The 'local aging' is a response to the 'newness' of the Grassy Knoll site and is intended to be a fun and engaging way of introducing people to the Civic Stop.



Information about the artist's proposals and an online survey can be found on the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council website at <http://www2.tunbridgewells.gov.uk> (follow the links on the right hand side; Leisure & Culture, Arts Development, Art in the Public Realm).

Or you can contact the project managers Polly Harknett and Suzie Plumb on Polly.Harknett@tunbridgewells.gov.uk or 01892 554171.

The consultation closes at the end of February.

Winter Birds in Grosvenor and Hilbert Park

The variety of birds in the winter may be less than spring and summer, but the bare trees let us get some great views of the woodland birds, now busy establishing pair bonds and territories for Spring. An early morning walk through the wood will reveal many active Blue, Great, Coal and Long-tailed Tits, Wrens, Robins and Dunnocks. Also Great Spotted Woodpeckers chasing each other through the trees and drumming. Occasionally you will hear the loud ringing, laughing cry of the Green Woodpecker.



Greater Spotted Woodpecker

Goldcrest



Movements on a nearby tree trunk will alert you to the bark hugging Treecreeper working, mouse-like, up a tree, looking for juicy grub in the bark, whilst the blue and cream Nuthatch faces downwards as it forages for morsels. Goldcrests can be heard before they are seen with high pitched, rapid, wispy song, but with patience, can be seen amongst the branches, moving and flitting about, looking for little spiders and insects from underneath branches, usually conifers.

Colourful Jays are more noticeable this time of year, with less leaf cover to skulk in: you will hear their raucous squawks.

The mild weather means fewer winter thrushes, but check out any berry laden bushes and trees and listen for the “zeeeeet” of Redwings and chatter of Fieldfares overhead.

Redpolls and Siskins can be seen in winter, often in small twittering flocks in silver birch trees around the woodland edges and allotments, sometimes with Goldfinches and Greenfinches. Check out the playing fields for the large Mistle Thrush, collecting worms, they are early nesters and are usually on eggs by February/March.



Jay

A Kingfisher has been seen regularly this winter, by the lake and the woodland stream. They move away from their breeding territories in winter and can be seen in gardens with a well stocked pond. Along with the Moorhens and Mallards, the lake seems to have a resident group of Black-headed Gulls. They visit the lake for any bread handouts and then loaf around on the nearby buildings. The black dot behind the eye is all that remains of their chocolate coloured hood of the summer plumage.

Kingfisher



Black-headed Gull

See the full article on our website www.fogh.org.uk

All images courtesy of Mike Langman (rspb-images.com)

John Reeves

Sport Report

Football: Here is more information about the teams playing in the park. They all play in the West Kent Sunday Football League and would appreciate your support! For further information about the WKSFL, see their website www.wksl.org.uk.

The Palace FC

Sponsored by the Crystal Palace on Camden Road, the club play on the bottom pitch, in blue and white stripes (like Argentina!) They play in Division 4 and are currently second, hoping to win promotion if their present form continues.

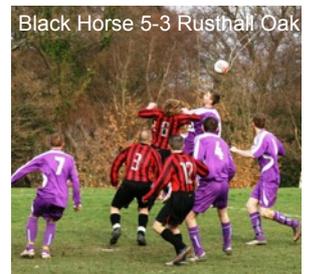
The Black Horse

The club was formed in 2005 as The Mitre (now The Allotment) and changed to the Black Horse in 2010 when The Mitre closed for refurbishment. The team plays on the top pitch, in black and red striped shirts, with black shorts and socks. They play in Division 5 and are currently placed 5th.

King William IV FC

After moving from Essex in 2007, Jordan Angus played for a number of teams before starting this team in 2011. Sponsored by the King William IV in Pembury, they play in green and black, on the bottom pitch. Currently lying 4th in Division 6, their home form is good, with some high-scoring wins.

www.KingWilliamIVFC.co.uk



Black Horse 5-3 Rusthall Oak

Mary Hughes



Bowls: Grosvenor Bowls Club was formed in 1912 and there will be lots happening for us in this our centenary year. We are a small, friendly club and new members are always welcome, whether you've played before or have yet to pick up a bowl! If you're interested in finding out more, please visit our website www.grosvenorbowls.co.uk

We will be having an **Open Day** on **Sunday 6th May** – the ideal chance to come along and have a go! Keep your eyes peeled for further details nearer the time.

Jo Cartwright - Club Captain

Scrub Up!

Kent High Weald Partnership volunteer days 14th & 28rd March

KHWP will be working with local volunteers at the Hilbert Woods Local Nature Reserve on Wednesday 14 & 28 March. Join us for one or both days of practical action, where we will be clearing brambles and the small trees that have started to encroach on areas of flower-rich grassland.



This vital work helps keep the grassland clear and also improves one of the most diverse habitats in the countryside; the woodland edge. When the scrub is cut back, light becomes more available, encouraging a greater diversity of plants to grow. The cut wood can either be stacked to create habitat piles or a dead hedge. The rotting wood provides a feeding ground for invertebrates, which in turn become food for small mammals and birds. As the plants begin to grow back they will provide shelter. After a few years the bramble will begin to overtake the other plants and shade them out; then it is time to cut back and

start the cycle again.

Conservation volunteering offers you the chance to get out and about in the fresh air, meet new people, and make a lasting and positive difference to your environment. To join in there is no need to book, just meet us at 10am at the Hilbert Road entrance to Grosvenor Park. Please wear weather appropriate clothing and sturdy shoes or boots. We provide tea and coffee but don't forget your packed lunch. Although we finish work at 3pm, you can just come along for half a day or even a few hours, whatever suits you best!

For more information on conservation volunteering in your area please call KHWP on 01580 212972. You can also find more info at www.khwp.org.uk or follow us on [twitter@KHWCP](https://twitter.com/KHWCP).

Sarah Tree -Assistant Partnership Officer

View from the Allotment

The sudden cold snap has, I hope, hit the overwintering pests hard, sadly it will also have reduced the predators. But it will break the dormancy of the weed seeds and make the start of spring all the more sudden and urgent. Those of us who managed to complete the autumn clean up and digging can look forward to raking down good seed beds and a clean start to a year of growing. The seed order has arrived, the crop rotation is planned and the new growing season is about to begin! Let's hope for a slug free 2012, with a warm damp spring and a drought free summer.



Ian Hunter

Dogs in the Park

Monty, my border terrier, and his friend Archie (a springer spaniel) are in the park every day.

They are not alone: in the park there is a doggie world, best seen between the hours of 7.00 and 8.30 am (9.00ish if you are a Lazy Dog walker!) and again at 4.00 to 7.00pm. At these times, you will see numerous dogs of all shapes, sizes and breeds happily charging around playing together: a great way for the dogs to exercise and socialise, and for their owners to do the same. New friendships are forged, leading to new business opportunities and even relationships.

You see, the park is for us all: on two legs or four!

Sue Kaner



Children's Activity

There are many birds in the park. Here are some more that you may see, as well as the ones on page 6: Great Tit, Blackbird, Greenfinch, Blue Tit, Robin, Wren, Goldfinch, Song Thrush. Can you tell which is which?



Go out into the park and the woods and see how many birds you can see. Can you draw them?

For more information on all the birds featured in this newsletter and for help with identification, go to www.rspb.org.uk

All images courtesy of Mike Langman (rspb-images.com)

Answers: 1 Blue Tit
2 Goldfinch 3 Song Thrush
4 Blackbird 5 Great Tit
6 Robin 7 Greenfinch
8 Wren

Dates for your diary

Commerative Tree Planting.....Saturday March 10th 10am

To commemorate the setting up of the Friends group. Wear appropriate clothing & footwear. Meet at the Hilbert Road entrance.

Scrub Up!.....Wednesday March 14th 10am

Kent High Weald Partnership (KHWP) volunteer day

Meet at the Hilbert Road entrance for a day of practical action, clearing brambles and small trees encroaching on areas of flower-rich grassland. Wear appropriate clothing & footwear.



Scrub Up!.....Wednesday March 28th 10am

KHWP volunteer day

As above.

Easter Egg Rolling.....Easter Sunday April 8th 3pm

Bring your own Chocolate Easter Eggs to have fun rolling them down the slopes. Meet at the Hilbert Road entrance.

FoGH Annual General Meeting.....Saturday May 5th

Time and place to be announced

This is your chance to help shape the future of FoGH

Only paid up members can vote; please complete the form enclosed with this newsletter or contact the Secretary (details below).



Walk in the Woods.....Sunday May 20th 2:30pm

May 2012 is the Tree Council's Walk in the Woods month. Join us for a walk through our woods, led by Ian Beavis. Meet at the Hilbert Road entrance.

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

Look for more events in our area on

www.treecouncil.org.uk/community-action/walk-in-the-woods



The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Celebration.....Monday 4th June

With our friends in CREATE. Details to be confirmed.

Watch out for further details on www.facebook.com/GrosvenorHilbert
www.fogh.org.uk

FoGH Contact Details

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Facebook www.facebook.com/GrosvenorHilbert

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Tunbridge Wells, TN1 2LN

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, before 14 April 2012. 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

TWBC Parks Service 01892 554031
Mobile Security Service 07920 534369
Toilets: Opening Hours 7am - 6pm



FRIENDS OF GROSVENOR AND HILBERT PARK

Please return form to: The Membership Secretary
Mrs. Jane Melville
41, Beulah Road
Tunbridge Wells
Kent TN1 2NS

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Title (Mr/Mrs/Ms/Dr) _____
Surname: _____
Forename: _____
Address: _____

Postcode: _____
Tel: _____
Email: _____

I / We wish to become members of the Friends of Grosvenor and Hilbert Park.
Enclosed is a cheque for the sum of (£10.00 family/£5.00 single)
payable to the Friends of Grosvenor and Hilbert Park.

Office use

Date received _____
Receipt sent _____
Entered on records _____

Cheque / Cash