

Friends of Grosvenor & Hilbert Park (FoGH)



Newsletter 27 Summer 2018

Family Fete

Photo special on pages 4 & 5

FoGH Dog Show 2018

As a nice opener to the Royal Wedding and the FA Cup Final, the morning of Saturday 19th May saw the return of the Dog Show on the upper football pitch.

The Park has a strong brigade of dog owners, walking their loveable mutts whatever the weather, all year round. Dogs aren't always welcome at events, for understandable reasons, so it's nice for man's best friend to have their own event to celebrate their love and loyalty.



The judges with the Cutest Puppy winners

The popular agility equipment saw dogs showing various levels of expertise/bravery.

There were hurdles of varying heights, a tunnel, poles to weave between, and the terrifying see-saw! It was a nice way to keep the dogs entertained whilst final bits and pieces were being set up, as well as in between events.

Father John Caster of St Barnabas Church and Councillor Ben Chapelard formed the judging team this year. There were 6 different events, testing dogs on a variety of skills and character traits!



The Best Child Handler entrants

These ranged from the perhaps more serious Obedience and Best Child Handler, through Best Trick and Best (Royal Wedding) Fancy Dress, to Scruffiest Dog and the crowd favourite, Cutest Puppy! The most popular event by some way was best child handler. Good to see youngsters taking up the leash, so to speak.

There were cakes, cookies and hot drinks available, though with the sun shining all morning nobody needed warming up. Given the heat, thankfully there was plenty of drinking water available for the dogs.

Professional photographer Jason Dilling took snaps throughout the event, available to purchase as a mounted print. Jason made a donation to FoGH from his proceeds.

Those who attended (canine and human) seemed to enjoy themselves. Big thanks to the judges and to all those who helped make it a special event.

Chris Maslin

Obedience	1 Maisie	2 Alfie	3 Monty
Cutest Puppy	1 Ember	2 Chips	3 Ellie
Best Fancy Dress	1 Harvey	2 Cookie	3 Remy
Best Child Handler	1 Buster	2 Foxy	3 Bob
Best Trick	1 Mr Hicks	2 Alfie	3 Buddy
Scruffiest Dog	1 Hamish	2 Monty	3 Toby
Best in Show	Ember		



Trying out the agility course



Scruffiest Dog Hamish



Ember: Cutest Puppy & Best in Show



Best Fancy Dress winner Harvey

Chairman's Report

It was good to see so many members and supporters at our AGM in mid-May, and to discuss ideas and answer questions about the Park. Two committee members, usually Chris Hughes and I, attend regular meetings with the TWBC Parks team. We discuss feedback from members and park users, as well as maintenance and improvement work, so this input is always relevant and helpful.



I am hopeful that the repairs to the damaged pumps to the Dripping Wells will be made very soon. Protracted delays have been caused between Southern Water, who are responsible for the drainage, and TWBC, who maintain the pumps, by negotiations over who should pay. I gather that this has now reached a conclusion and the work is scheduled to commence shortly.

Following such mercurial weather earlier this year, we were very lucky that our Family Fete on Bank Holiday Monday 7th May coincided with the first really warm spell. The slightly smaller array of activities and stalls seemed to work well, with plenty of people turning out to enjoy an afternoon's sunshine. This made it a much more manageable event for our committee and additional volunteers, to whom I would like to offer a huge thank you. Especially to those who saved the day at the last minute, when we were unexpectedly surprised by a breakdown and lack of transport - we couldn't do it without you all!!

Steff has arranged a brilliant array of events, ecological, crafty and always informative, for the next few months. FoGH have our Picnic in the Park on Sunday 15th July to celebrate 'Love Parks Week'. The community orchard has blossomed well this year and there is a swathe of wildflowers growing fast to catch up from the cold spring at the far side of the fruit trees. Do come down to enjoy all the varied things that are establishing in the Park.

Don't forget, the Park or the Hub are great places to arrange events of your own, whether it's a family celebration, sports gathering or nature trail. Contact Helen Timms at Helen.Timms@Tunbridgewells.gov.uk to book any of the facilities. I wish you all a wonderful summer!

Liz Edwards

The CREATE Lantern Parade 2019

Since the Friends group formed in 2011 we have worked closely with CREATE. At our Fete on May 7th CREATE choir had a stall – and chatted to people about the 2019 Lantern Parade. The date for this has been confirmed as Saturday 9th February. The Parade committee are in discussions with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council about ending the event in the Park, with a celebration of lights, music and food.



We are working with the Parade committee to ensure the event works for the whole community. Further details to follow!

Carolyn Gray



The 2017 Lantern Parade

Update from the Parks Department

The long running saga of the Dripping Wells has finally been resolved, with contractors appointed to repair the damage from last year's storm. There was considerable damage to the pumps and the electric circuits, some of which may need replacing. To carry out the work, we need to drop the level of the lake slightly, but it won't be completely emptied. The Dripping Wells should be up and running by the time you read this newsletter.



May saw the visit of the Green Flag judges, who spent a couple of hours in the Park, and made some very positive comments. They were impressed with the community orchard and the wetland area. Of course, they gave nothing away, but I'm sure we will retain the Green Flag for another year. Later in July the Park will be visited by the South and South East in Bloom judge, and this year we are lucky to have Jim Buttress visiting the Park. Jim has many years experience judging at high levels and is a Chelsea Flower show judge. Let's hope we can move up from last year's Silver Gilt to Gold.

The FoGH Family Fete was blessed with fabulous weather and the Tunbridge Wells Bloom team had a stand at the Auckland Road entrance with the big plant giveaway. We had a very busy day and met a lot of enthusiastic gardeners. Many people donated towards the campaign and we raised £333 towards Bloom projects around the town. I would like to thank everyone who donated and for your support.

As we approach summer and the BBQ season, please take care with BBQ's in the Park. We have already had an incident in another park where a toddler was injured by a BBQ irresponsibly left on the grass. While we are happy for you to bring BBQ's into the Park, please keep them off the ground and the furniture. Do extinguish the charcoal after you have finished (it's a good idea to bring an old milk container filled with water) and dispose of the BBQ in the bins provided. Please remember to take your rubbish home with you and recycle when you can.

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

FoGH Events Roundup



Quiz Night



Quizmaster Chris gives the scores

We held our third quiz night to benefit Kent High Weald Partnership, in thanks for their hard work in Hilbert Woods nature reserve. The evening began with the discovery that the lights in the Hub weren't working! Assorted lamps were hastily collected from committee members and the quiz took place in rather intimate lighting.

The questions were challenging, with rounds on general knowledge, British geography, children's authors, celebrity birthplaces, bread and a final round about film. We took a break after three rounds for fish and chips, before resuming for the final three rounds. The Early Birds were most consistent and came out winners by one point.

Mary Hughes

Easter Egg Hunt

Easter is not complete without an Easter Egg Hunt! FoGH held ours on Easter Sunday, with a trail of eggs on sticks. Plenty of families rushed around the lower football pitch and the community orchard following the clues. Despite the dull day it was well attended, by over one hundred families.

What a good way to use up a bit of energy for young and old and to be rewarded by an egg. Everyone had an enjoyable afternoon. Thank you to Anna, Thomas, and Emma Hunt, and Ben and Tessa Melville who checked the results and distributed the eggs. We could not have coped without their help.

Jane Melville



Families gather to collect their eggs

Annual General Meeting

The FoGH AGM took place on Thursday May 17th at the Hub. We kicked off with a chance to chat over cheese and wine, followed by the re-election of committee members. Chairman Liz Edwards gave her report, reviewing the events and activities of the past year. She highlighted the work done by Community Engagement Officer Steff d'Agorne, running events and working with the Thursday volunteers to improve the Park. Her Heritage Lottery Funded post ends in April 2019 and the Friends group will have to do our best to pick up the baton.

Treasurer Chris Hughes explained that FoGH have been building up funds over the last few years, to have a 'war chest' once the HLF funding ends. This would enable us to carry on some of the activities previously covered by the HLF monies. Whilst we could pay for various activities, we are not in a position to cover the cost of the Community Engagement Officer's role within the Park. However, we are currently lobbying the Council to see if they could fund a similar role that would cover all the Parks across the Borough.

After questions from members, and further chat, the meeting closed.

Mary Hughes

Community Planting for Britain in Bloom

Volunteers were out in force on Sunday 20th May helping to get the Park ready for Tunbridge Wells in Bloom. FoGH organised the event and obtained the plants and compost from Brookside Garden Centre in East Peckham.

Over 20 baskets were planted up with a colourful array of plants, each one unique to those who planted it. Whilst some had come along specially to help with the planting, others joined in as they were enjoying the Park or even just walking past.



Jack & his mum planting



Cecily & Dylan



Astrid & Arthur watering



Volunteers planting by the Hub

We wanted to add a splash of colour to this very busy area of the Park and it was great to see so many people come along to help with the planting.

Hopefully we have also encouraged some budding young gardeners.

The planting will be included with all the other volunteer activities that have taken place in the Park as part of the FoGH It's Your Neighbourhood entry. This section of Britain in Bloom is for volunteer-led community groups.

Chris Hughes

The FoGH Family Fete

This was the sixth May Day Bank Holiday event put on by the Friends group, held in the best weather yet. Unbroken sunshine and temperatures above 25°C made for a wonderful day, with the Park looking at its best.



Crowds on the lower football pitch

We gave ourselves a break last year, and personally I feel the year off did us good. We started planning in November 2017 and new committee members joined, with some new ideas. We all agreed we wanted to downsize the day due to the amount of work involved, and to make it more Fete, less Funday. Another change was to take out trading stalls, other than food and drink vendors. We hope you liked the refreshed version.



The TS Brilliant Reunion Band



The Mayor opens the Fete



The bouncy castles

The Fete opened at 12 noon, with a musical marching display by the TS Brilliant Reunion Band. Then the Mayor, Cllr Julia Soyke, welcomed everyone to the event, which was a fantastic day of fun for the local community. Entertainment wise we re-booked Riffhams Donkeys and Bounce The Party (bouncy castles). A new addition was Jimmy The Juggling Jester, who taught circus skills as well as juggling with flaming torches. Magician Mike Allen bewildered visitors with his amazing tricks.



Donkey rides



Magician Mike Allen



Jimmy the Juggling Jester

Local community groups provided activity stalls. CREATE had spinner making for children, information about the Lantern Parade 2019 and a raffle to raise funds for it. TS Brilliant Sea Cadets ran the coconut shy. Kent High Weald Partnership made bug and bee hotels, and their face painters were busy all day.



Making spinners with CREATE



The KHWP face painters



Making bug hotels

From the Friends of Grosvenor and Hilbert Park side , we had a good day. Our cake stall was very popular, and the hot weather meant we sold out of drinks quite early. After a worry that we didn't have enough tombola prize donations, we had loads: sterling duties there from Alastair and James Melville. Some new members joined, and others rejoined, confirming our thoughts that events do encourage people to become Friends.



The FoGH tombola



The FoGH cake stall



RTW in Bloom

We hope everyone caught up with the Royal Tunbridge Wells In Bloom stall by Auckland Road gates, viewed the photo display in The Hub, and had a go at bowls with Grosvenor Bowls Club. There was a wide choice of food on offer from established food and drink providers, who all ran efficient stalls. Southborough Butchers offered hog roast, sausages and burgers and Sankey's cooked an enormous paella. There was a fish and chip van, the Ghanaian Supper Club and the Real Italian Pizza Company. The ice cream van and the bar (from the Ragged Trousers) had long queues all afternoon!



Food stalls



Queueing for ice cream

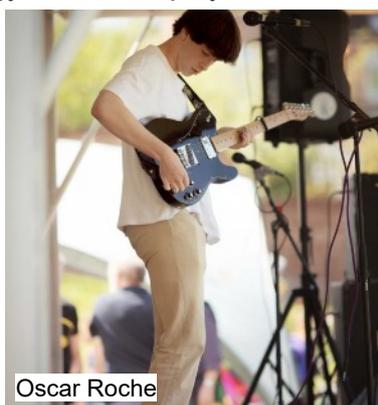


Gymnasts from Tigers Gym

Once again Dan Littlechild of AVP co-ordinated the entertainment with our own Liz Edwards, providing a mix of music from local performers, dance and gymnastic displays.



Cascade Dance



Oscar Roche



Scuffed Soul

The hot weather left people huddled in the shade of the trees on the bank, or in the long queue for ice creams, so we struggled to guess the number of people attending, but we estimate up to 5000. We are hoping some new visitors to the Park will come again when it is quieter, and explore all the nooks and crannies.

FoGH ran the event on the very bare minimum of volunteers. We'd like to thank all of them for their time, from getting the gazebos put up at 9.30am, to litter picking at 6pm, and along the way selling cakes, tombola tickets, and chatting to visitors at the gates. Thanks to all the tombola donors, including The Llama Park, Leeds Castle, Rendez-Vous, Pashley Manor Gardens, and The Assembly Hall Theatre. **Carolyn Gray**



Picnics in the shade

Steff's Sum Up

These last couple of months have been incredibly busy in the Park, getting ready for the arrival of summer and making the most of any lovely spells of weather. The pollinator surveys have started up again with the volunteers and the Wildlife Gardening Project is back, thanks to popular demand and our Tesco Bags of Help funding.

The conservation volunteers have finished sweeping the gravel from the pathways around the Park, removing over 35 tonne bags of gravel in total. Thank you so much to those who have helped! The volunteers, with help from a fantastic group of corporate volunteers, planted over 450 plants. This filled in gaps that have formed around the pathways through the Park and by Marnock Lake since the landscape works were completed.



Identifying a bumblebee

Nikki Gammans from The Bumblebee Conservation Trust ran a fantastic training day on bumblebee identification. During the outdoor afternoon session, we managed to spot 5 of the Big 8 species as well as many other interesting types of mining bee.

The National Fruit Show popped along to the Park to run an apple tasting event for us. This introduced the different varieties of apples found locally, as well as giving a taste of the many different forms this fruit can come in, from crisp to juice!



Juicing apples



A scarecrow on the allotment

Our stream dipping event also went well, with only one or two wet welly boots by the end of the sessions! We managed to catch a handful of different creatures in the stream including freshwater shrimp, cased and caseless caddisfly larvae and a leech or two. The wildlife gardening groups have been busy in the allotment learning about, and planting, beans, potatoes, radishes and much more, as well as making scarecrows to keep the pigeons at bay.

I have been busy getting the events programme ready for the summer. We have everything from moth identification mornings to treasure hunts coming up over the next couple of months. Keep an eye on our Facebook page and look for posters to get more information. If you would like to be on our events mailing list or find out more about anything in the Park, do email me on: steff.dagorne@tunbridgewells.gov.uk.

Steff d'Agorne, Community Engagement Officer

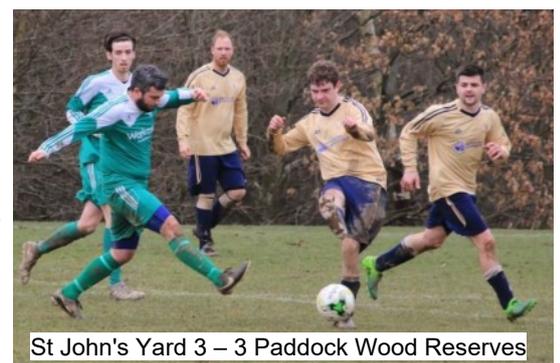
Sport Report

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

Local park team St John's Yard have enjoyed an amazing season, finishing champions of Division 3. Wins against Tonbridge United (5 – 1) and TW Ridgeway (4 – 1) saw them in the top two in mid April.

A 3 – 3 draw against Paddock Wood Reserves and an uncharacteristic 1 – 0 loss at Tonbridge Origin Reserves meant a tense finish. The top spot was theirs after rivals Speldhurst Rangers lost their final game.

St John's Yard got to the final of the Junior Cup, beating Speldhurst Rangers 5 – 4 in the semi-finals, over 2 legs. They faced Tonbridge Origin Reserves in the final, played in soaring temperatures. The team made it hard, going down to 10 men



St John's Yard 3 – 3 Paddock Wood Reserves

minutes before half-time. At full-time, the score was 1 – 1, so it was extra time, then penalties, which the Yard won 4 – 2. Congratulations to the team and best wishes for next season.

Mary Hughes



Grosvenor winning away at Pembury

Bowls (see www.grosvenorbowlclub.co.uk)

Grosvenor Bowls Club started the season in style with a home win, followed by an enjoyable and busy Open Day during the FoGH Fete. New bowlers have joined at our practice nights (Wednesdays 6 – 8pm, all welcome) and now play in friendly matches. Our Thursday league team has had 2 wins from 3 away fixtures. It's good to be back on the green in the sunshine again! For more information, see our website or pick up a fixture card in the cafe.

Jo Cartwright

View from the Allotment



The strawberry bed

Work is in full swing now the cold weather is FINALLY over. The strawberries have been weeded and straw placed gently around the roots. There are small, green berries on the plants and we wait with baited breath to start eating the fruits of our labour.

Raspberries, redcurrants, blackcurrants and gooseberry bushes are all looking healthier after a good weed and prune. They too are flowering, so we hope for a good crop this year. We have planted onions, peas, rainbow chard, radishes, kale, broccoli and green beans. The broad beans are flowering. We are nurturing courgette and squash seedlings in our garden before they battle with the beasts and bugs that roam the allotments.

I am trying to space out my planting to avoid huge gluts. But with the rate of pest destruction I fear that I may not get much crop at all!

Emma Melville

Dogs in the Park

Daisy dog is known to many, down at Grosvenor Park! She's a bit of a Heinz 57! As she was a rescue pup, back in 2012, we were told that she was a spaniel cross.

We wanted to find out more and purchased an online DNA kit, which revealed that Daisy was in fact Springer Spaniel, Jack Russell, Italian Greyhound and possibly Border Collie - Phew!

I run my own doggy day care business and Daisy is top dog in day care. When we are out on walks, she tells off and rounds up any dogs who wander off! She likes having a job to do.

Anyway, she absolutely loves people and most dogs! She loves running, exploring, digging, chasing squirrels (yikes!) mud and water! She's such a character, but can be a bit bossy with bouncy pups and persistent male dogs!

We love her dearly!

Sarah Harris



Daisy

Introducing Emma

Hi everyone - I've met a fair few people who are involved with the Park already, and if I have yet to meet you I am looking forward to it! I'm Emma, the part-time Learning Assistant and Graduate Wildlife Events Assistant at Grosvenor and Hilbert Park.



Morden Hall Park

I started at the end of March, and I work Wednesday – Friday. I also work part time on Mondays and Tuesdays for the National Trust at Morden Hall Park in Surrey, as a Learning Assistant, leading outdoor education sessions.

I have always had a strong interest in wildlife and the outdoors, from regularly visiting local rockpools or woods in my childhood, to spending family days out at heritage properties or gardens. I

was drawn back to this after graduating from the University of Kent with a degree in English and American Literature in 2016 (big career change!)

I joined a National Trust Programming and Events internship at Chartwell.



Weeding near Marnock Lake

This was followed by a Marketing internship with Canterbury City Council's Museums and Galleries and lots of voluntary work with the National Trust at both Box Hill and Morden Hall Park. Then I found this role here!

Since starting work at the Park in March 2018, I have been involved with the ever-popular Wildlife Gardening Project sessions for KS1 and KS2 children. I have helped with weekly volunteer task days, Forest Schools sessions, and various spring events. I also attended FoGH

committee meetings, where I found a warm welcome and a great insight into behind the scenes action of the Park!

Two months has passed in the blink of an eye, and I am getting stuck into organising summer events and activities with the Community Engagement Officer, Steff. The summer schedule is packed full of fun to suit all ages, abilities, and interests! Check our Facebook page or posters to learn more.

I am absolutely loving the opportunity to be a part of a bustling hive of activity in such a lovely town. I am keen to continue meeting all the wonderful people who dedicate their time and experience to volunteering and working within the Park!

Emma Peters, Graduate Wildlife Events Assistant



The Wildlife Gardening Project



At work in the wetland

Summer Event Highlights

Butterfly Craft for World Environment Day.....Friday 8th June 3 – 5.30pm

Learn about butterflies through crafts. No booking required.

At the Hub. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Suggested donation £2 per child.

Saving the Insect World.....Tuesday 12th June 7 – 8pm

At the Hub. Talk by Natalie Barron about what is happening to the insect population.

Learn how we can make a difference in our gardens & community.

Moth Identification Session.....Saturday 16th June 11.15am – 1pm

Join Ian Beavis to identify moths caught in a moth trap overnight in a local garden.

At the Hub. Free drop-in event suitable for all ages.

National Meadows Day Bug Hunt.....Saturday 7th July 10.30am – 3pm

At the meadow by the Skate Park. Please wear closed toed shoes.

Free drop-in event suitable for all ages. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Butterfly Walk & Talk.....Monday 9th July from 5.30pm

Join Ian Beavis to discover which butterflies call the Park home.

Walk from the Hub at 5.30pm, then a talk in the Hub at 7pm. Refreshments provided.

Picnic in the Park.....Sunday 15th July from 12 noon

Celebrate Love Parks Week by joining FoGH for fun & games!

On the lower football pitch. Games & activities provided. Bring a rug & your picnic.

Blooming Marvellous.....Friday 27th July 10am – 1.30pm

Flower-themed fun & craft activities. Plant your own wildflowers.

Free drop-in event at the Hub. Suitable for all ages, suggested donation £3.

National Playday.....Wednesday 1st August 11am – 3pm

Join KHWP & TWBC by the Skate Park for fun outdoor activities, games & crafts suitable for all ages.

More Moth Identification.....Saturday 11th August 11.15am – 1pm

Join Ian Beavis to identify moths caught in a moth trap in a local garden.

At the Hub. Free drop-in event suitable for all ages.

Circus Skills.....Tuesday 14th August 10.30am – 3pm

Have a go at plate spinning, tightrope walking & uni-cycling.

Free drop-in event on the lower football pitch. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Age 5+.

Treasure Hunt Trail.....Friday 24th August 10am – 12.30pm

Explore the Park, starting from the Hub. Answer questions to find the treasure.

Children must be accompanied by an adult. All ages.

Heritage Open Day.....Saturday 8th September 12 – 5pm

At the Hub. Displays about the fascinating history of the Park & more.

Heritage Open Day History Walk.....Saturday 8th September 2.30 – 4pm

Meet at the Hub. Places can be booked through editors@FoGH.org.uk

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

KHWP volunteer days & events: www.khwp.org.uk/

HLF/TWBC tasks Thursdays: contact Steff D'Agorne or see www.facebook.com/GHParkHLF/

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

or Twitter <https://twitter.com/FofGH>

FoGH Contact Details

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Comments or contributions to

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or 15 Dorking Road,

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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

Photos courtesy of Jo Cartwright, Ben Chapelard, Steff D'Agorne, Georgina Edwards, Carolyn Gray, Sarah Harris, Chris Hughes, Emma Melville, Emma Peters & www.facebook.com/RoyalTunbridgeWellsinBloom/