



News from the FoGH Committee

In the last newsletter I hoped for a lovely summer in the Park; I might not have anticipated such a hot, dry one. The Amber weather warning in July meant we cancelled our community picnic, and also made us consider the future of our summer events.

At the end of September, we will be joining in the Great Big Green Week. The first Great Big Green Week took place between 18th - 26th September 2021, and was the largest event for climate and nature ever seen in the UK. National organisations, institutions, businesses and media outlets joined in, getting many people involved up

and down the country, and putting pressure on the UK Government to up its game on climate change (see their website www.greatbiggreenweek.com/).

Our events are fairly small-scale – a Bird, Bat & Bug Box making event with Kent High Weald Partnership, and a litter pick, where we hope to tidy up those harder to reach areas. You may have read in our last newsletter about young volunteer Daisy Halford, who was litter picking in the Park. We have several volunteers who litter pick, usually at weekends when Tony

BIG GREEN

Cheeseman is not at work, and we are very grateful to them all.

We have been trying to collect cans separately, and donate them to RTW Soroptimists for Toilet Twinning. RTW Soroptimists recently had a successful 'Day of Action' in our Park, when they set up a display by the Can Bin to talk to park users about recycling. We have collected enough cans to be Toilet Twinned with a toilet in Zambia.

We have spoken to Peter Every of TWBC Parks Dept about how we can improve on the can recycling and how to discourage other items from being put in the bin. We also arranged to have an under-used bin relocated to near the zigzag railway bridge, a place highlighted by several park users as in need of a bin.

In early summer, a group of volunteers met on

Monday afternoons to help keep on top of the weeding less of a problem once the hot weather came. As well as helping the Park

look good, these volunteering opportunities also offer a chance for a chat with other park users.

We always welcome help from volunteers at any of our events, such as the upcoming Apple Day and Moth Mornings. Our website has a simple fill in form, and volunteers receive a newsletter about upcoming opportunities to help: www.fogh.org.uk/index.php?inc=contact







The relocated bin

Please email me at chair@fogh.org.uk about this, or any other issues.

Carolyn Gray, FoGH Chair

Update from the Parks Department

I'm sure I don't need to tell you how dry the weather has been over the past few months, with record breaking temperatures. The Park has suffered, with the ground tinder dry, and some of the trees starting to show signs of stress. The larger trees with deeper roots will be better equipped to survive, but we may start to see a 'False Autumn', as trees start to shed leaves early as a survival mechanism.

Due to the current drought, we are asking visitors not to hold BBQs in the Park for the foreseeable future, as the ground is so dry that there is a significant risk of fire

As you're aware, we are subject to a hosepipe ban and, to understand what we can and can't do, we contacted South East Water. We can continue to irrigate containerised planters and young trees. However, we have taken the decision not to water the Bowling Green, as this will recover once it eventually rains. We are investigating opportunities to reduce reliance on mains water, by re-commissioning the bore hole at the North Farm Depot.

Repairs to the Auckland Road gates have been delayed, as the previous contractor went into administration.



On a more positive note, the Park has again retained out Green Flag status, along with the Green Heritage award for the second year. We are waiting for the results from South and South East in Bloom, although I'm sure we will continue with our success in this competition.

If you have any suggestions or wish to contact the Parks Team, please email parks@tunbridgewells.gov.uk Peter Every – TWBC Parks & Sports Team Leader

New Benches for the Park

In the last newsletter, Steph Dowling wrote about the buddy bench, now installed in Appledore Wood by Kent High Weald Partnership. In early August there was a short bench dedication event, when we could all meet Michelle Weller from Imago Community Organisation, who had the idea for the bench.

Members of Sherwood Men's Shed (the bench makers), KHWP, Imago, One You Kent, and FoGH were present. Representatives of 'Jim's Smile Project' also attended, and left some inspirational

messages on other benches around the Park.





A second new bench has been installed in the Community Orchard – Jack's Corner. This October a memorial apple tree will be planted nearby, as well as a stone plaque, to remember Jack Cook. The Friends group have assisted with the selection of the tree, which will fit in with the existing planting. We hope this corner will be a place for anyone to sit and quietly reflect. Jack's friend Steve Jones has set up a fundraiser for this. and any excess funds will go towards the upkeep of the orchard. www.gofundme.com/f/2bpa9-memorial-for-

jack?qid=8e7a83c3a8079c047d5b5df53766ec85

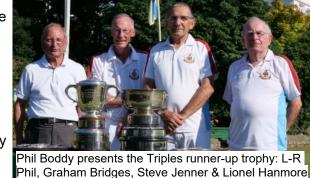
Carolyn Gray

Events & Activities in the Park

Grosvenor Bowls Club

This year's summer has been wonderful for bowlers, and we have very much enjoyed the season so far. None of our matches were rained off, although one was cancelled due to extreme heat. The Grosvenor green has been unusually speedy: at times hard to play on, especially after the sprinklers were turned off.

We won the majority of our friendly fixtures and finished third in the top division of the Tunbridge Wells Triples League. A Grosvenor triple won the Culverden BC centenary celebration day and finished runners-up at the Rotherfield BC triples day.





In the Tunbridge Wells Bowls Tournament, we had

representation in all the competitions. Graham Bridges bowled brilliantly and was unfortunate to be runner-up twice: in the pairs with Chris Tapp and the triples with Steve Jenner and Lionel Hanmore.

Our finals day is on Sunday 4th September: all spectators welcome! If you would like to have a go, join us at Wednesday practice from 6pm, or see www.grosvenorbowls.co.uk Jo Cartwright

Events & Activities in the Park contd.



Volunteers Week Celebration

TWBC Parks Department organised a Thank You event at the Hub on Wednesday 8th June. Volunteers from Kent High Weald Partnership, RTW in Bloom and many Friends groups in the town attended. After mid-morning refreshments, Jean Griffin (local radio gardening expert) gave a talk on growing plants in pots.

This was followed by a fun quiz from KHWP, including a round identifying different kinds of biscuit (essential nourishment for volunteers!) Before lunch Amy Allen from TWBC gave a talk on their Climate Action plan.

KHWP provided a tasty barbecue, with delicious salads made by

Kasia Olszewska-Martin. Finally Ian Beavis led a nature walk around the wetland, meadows and woods in the Park. Many thanks to TWBC Parks Department for organising this fun event! Mary Hughes

June Moth Identification

Saturday 11th June saw us hold our second moth event of the year. Our first event in March had only yielded 4 moth species, but in the warmer weather we collected 58 moths from 32 species this time. As we identify them, we place them in jars, allowing a closer look. The star of the event was the spectacular Privet Hawk-moth: the most common was the Heart and Dart, with 12 found.



Having viewed the moths, the kids could have a go at creating their own moth, with our hand

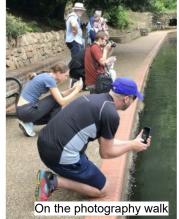
painting activity. This produced some very colourful images which no doubt took pride of place when taken home. FoGH volunteers manned a stall offering pre-read books and pre-loved toys in exchange for donations.

Our thanks (as always) to Ian Beavis for the loan of his moth trap and his expertise in identifying the moths. Chris Huahes

Photography Walk 3rd July

The theme for this year's RTW in Bloom 'Blooming Marvellous' Photo Competition is 'Living Water'. This gave us the idea for a photo walk, as there is plenty of water in the Park. So on a warm sunny Sunday morning, I led a walk around the Park in support of the competition. We started by Marnock Lake, where the ducks and their young were cruising past, and then took in the Dripping Wells. Then we moved to the wetlands, with its three areas of water that flow from the top to bottom. We finished by following the streams, including the clear water and iron rich red Chalybeate ones. Hopefully some of those that came on the walk will submit photos to the competition

and, who knows, maybe one of them will be the winning entry! **Chris Hughes**



Privet Hawk-moth

Tunbridge Wells Fringe Festival comes to the Park



The second ever TW Fringe Festival arrived in town at the beginning of July for two weeks. It took place in over 40 venues in the town and over 6,000 people attend events. We also managed to raise over £11,000 for the creatives who performed and put on on events, and over £10,000 for our chosen charities.

We were extremely grateful to be able to use the Hub in the Park as one of our venues! We held drama, free movement and spoken word workshops, and art classes including puppet making and life drawing (where the cat stole the show!). It

was amazing to see the community accessing arts they may never have done before!

Some of the FoGH events were included in the Fringe listings as well! The Photography Walk was amazing, although sadly the picnic had to be cancelled due to the incredibly hot weather! We look forward to seeing what happens next year!!

A huge thank you to FoGH for their help. Also to to Bethan from The Drama Club, Cerys from Arty Farty Retreat, Ann from Bookmania and Natalie from Little Airplanes

– all of your workshops were fantastic!!

Nell Price. Creative Director. Arty Farty Retreat



Events & Activities in the Park contd.

Green Flag & in Bloom Judging

On Wednesday 6th July, the Green Flag judge visited, so I joined him and Peter Every from the Parks Team. It was his first visit to the Park, so we showed him the difference the HLF work made. We have since learned that the Park retained both its Green Flag and Green Heritage Award.

The South & South East In Bloom judge visited on the following Thursday. The Park was judged in the Large Park category and FoGH in the It's Your Neighbourhood scheme. Carolyn Gray and I represented FoGH, with Peter Every and Kasia Olszewska-Martin from the Parks team and Steph Dowling from KHWP. We



visited virtually all the Park, finishing with lunch at Table8 and I gave the judge a presentation on FoGH activities over the last year. The results are due in mid-September – so fingers crossed until then. **Chris Hughes**



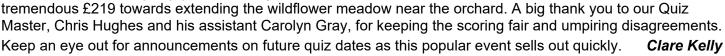
Willow Weaving

With all the warm weather, the Willow Tunnel has been growing strongly and was in need of some TLC to keep it looking good. So on Monday 25th July, a small group of volunteers spent a pleasant couple of hours tiding up the living structure. There were a lot of long shoots, which we wove together to strengthen and reinforce the structure. We also pruned out a few pieces, which were planted in the ground to encourage new growth around the base. Although I say so myself, we all thought we had done a really good job and we were pleased with the results of our work! *Chris Hughes*

Let's Get Quizzical

Well, if you knew that a Chihuahua dog was 'Bruiser' in the film Legally Blond or that 'Merhaba' was Turkish for hello, then you would have done well at the FoGH Quiz Night in the Hub on Saturday 6th August. The 32 keen quizzers faced fiendishly cunning questions in rounds; general knowledge; hello in different languages; dog stars of TV and film; acronyms; name that year, and a picture round on identifying Prime Ministers of the 20th century.

Mid-way through the evening, our flagging brains were refreshed with a delivery of delicious fish and chips from St John's Fish Bar. A raffle completed a very enjoyable evening and helped FoGH raise a







Moth Identification

We held a second moth identification event on Saturday 13th August, which was a scorching hot day! Ian Beavis assured me we would catch plenty of moths in the trap overnight and this was indeed the case. We found 334 moths from 37 species. Of these, 238 were tiny male Water Veneer moths: a curious species with aquatic larvae and wingless females. Despite the heat, there were a fair number of people using the Park. We were pleased to welcome over 60 adults and children to look at the moths. Thanks again to Ian Beavis for his help. *Mary Hughes*

Summer Prune & Orchard Inspection

Our summer pruning took place on Sunday 21st August, when a group of volunteers met in the orchard. We prune cherries in the summer, as the trees can be susceptible to the fungal disease silver leaf if pruned in the winter. Most of the trees only needed a gentle prune to remove crossing, diseased or dead branches to keep them healthy.

We also checked all the trees in the orchard and tidied around the base, to keep the grass and weeds at bay. It was great to see that quite a few of the apple trees were covered in apples. Many thanks to all those who helped – see you for winter pruning next year! **Chris Hughes**







Before the Park: Life on Charity Farm *contd.*Growing & Processing Hops

The Oast House near the Hilbert Road gates is a reminder that hops were once grown and dried in the Park. Hop plants were introduced into Kent at the end of the 15th century, probably from Flanders. Until then the national drink was un-hopped ale, given flavour and bitterness with a 'gruit' – a mixture of herbs.

Using hops in beer improves the taste, balancing sweetness with bitterness and adding other flavours. Hops also have an antibacterial effect. By the 17th-century, un-hopped ale was no longer popular, with hopped beer the established drink. Hop

cultivation expanded rapidly. The 19th-century was the golden age of the hop industry, with a record of 77,000 acres (31,161ha) in 1878. The Charity Farm land use map of 1838 (Newsletter 42 – Spring 2022) shows three hop fields.

Hops are the flowers or seed cones of *Humulus lupulus*, a vigorous climbing herbaceous perennial plant. There are separate male and female plants: only female plants are commercially cultivated. The plants are grown in a 'hop garden', with shoots twining up wires attached to poles (usually chestnut).

Poles and wire form a permanent frame, then string is attached from a peg in the ground to hooks in the top wire work, up to 6 m high. Poling and stringing is done in winter before new growth starts in early April. Once the shoots appear,

they are tied or 'twiddled' clockwise onto each string.

Hops start to flower on side shoots in late June, as the daylight hours shorten. The plants reach their full height towards the end of July, then the harvest begins in September. The whole hop bine, including the string, is cut down, then the seed cones are separated. Freshly picked 'green' hops have a moisture content of some

80%, which needs reducing to about 10%.

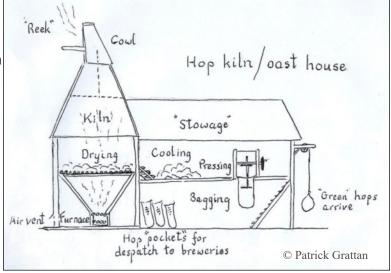
Hop plant in flower

Young hops



The drying process takes place in an oast house: typically a kiln (the 'oast'), attached to a barn section (the 'stowage'). First documented from the 17th-century, early versions were adapted barns. These developed into the distinctive tall buildings with conical roofs, found in Kent and Sussex.

The round or square kiln has a charcoal-fired furnace on the ground floor, with a wooden slatted floor directly above. Hops were spread onto a horsehair sheet some 300mm (12in) deep on the drying floor. The steep pitched roof allows hot air to be drawn up through the hops and out through the cowl. The white-painted wooden cowl pivots to control air extraction and to stop rain from getting in.







Drying takes 10-15 hours, with the hops moved periodically to aerate them, using a wide flat wooden paddle. Drying hops was hard, hot work, keeping the furnace going and turning the hops. This process went on day and night.

The dried hops were moved to the first floor of the barn section for cooling. Once cool, they were packed, using a hop press, into a 'pocket'. This is a 6-7ft (1.8-2.1m) hessian or canvas sack, suspended to the ground floor. The 'pockets' are stenciled with the year, place of growth and growers name. Finally, the hops are ready to be sold to breweries.

Mary Hughes

(Information gathered from a variety of online resources.)

Hoverflies in Grosvenor & Hilbert Park

Along with bees and butterflies, hoverflies are the most conspicuous pollinators – and one of the largest groups, with over 270 British species. You can see them visiting a wide range of wild and cultivated flowers in the Park, with a few species active all the year round. Hoverflies get their name from their ability to stay airborne without moving from a single spot. They belong to the large order of two-winged flies or Diptera and mimic various species of bees and wasps.

Birds tend to avoid insects with 'warning colouration' like contrasting stripes, which indicate species that can sting or are distasteful. Although hoverflies are in fact completely harmless, predators cannot distinguish them from real bees and wasps. Neither can many human beings! Hoverflies come in a huge variety

of sizes, colours and patterns, matching the great diversity of bees and wasps. As well as imitating their appearance, they often match their behaviour, visiting the same flowers and moving in a similar way.

Some hoverflies can be very numerous. One of the commonest, the Marmalade Hoverfly (*Episyrphus balteatus*) which is orange with distinctive double black bands, is winter-

active and also partly migratory. In hot summers, thousands may take flight from the near Continent and arrive on our shores.

Another familiar species which flies through the winter is the Common Dronefly (*Eristalis tenax*), which, despite its different body shape, is regularly mistaken for a honeybee. Other common and easily recognised species include the Footballer Hoverfly (*Helophilus pendulus*), with yellow stripes down the length of the thorax, and the Batman Hoverfly (*Myathropa florea*) with thorax

markings resembling the batman logo.

Male hoverflies can often be seen using their hovering abilities in courtship display. Groups of males of species like the Marmalade Hoverfly or the Common Banded Hoverfly (*Syrphus ribesii*), which has yellow and black wasp-like stripes, hover in sunny spots in woodland, where the light shows them up conspicuously against the shady background.

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Males of one of the smaller droneflies, *Eristalis nemorum*, will hover persistently over a settled female – sometimes others will join them, creating a double or triple stack equall

others will join them, creating a double or triple stack equally spaced one above the other. The Great Pied Hoverfly (*Volucella pellucens*) hovers singly along woodland paths, the sunlight shining through the translucent white belt at the base of the abdomen.

The Great Pied Hoverfly belongs to a group that includes some of the largest and most impressive hoverflies. Biggest

of all is the Hornet Hoverfly (*Volucella zonaria*), which used to be a rare migrant but now appears regularly in the Park in late summer, often feeding

on the tall flower heads of thistles. Its yellow and brown colouration is a good match for a real hornet. The Lesser Hornet Hoverfly (*Volucella inanis*) often flies with it but is a little smaller and lacks the chestnut-brown component of its relative's

coloration.

The Bumblebee Hoverfly

(*Volucella bombylans*) is one of several hoverflies that have evolved a hairy coat to imitate bumblebees – it even has different colour forms to match different bumblebee species. The other member of this group, *Volucella inflata*, is an ancient woodland specialist and one of the park's rarities. Ranked as Nationally Scarce, it has a broad orange belt at the base of the abdomen and visits flowers like brambles along woodland paths.



Pollinator-friendly

plants in the Park







Hornet Hoverfly

Marmalade Hoverfly

Footballer Hoverfly

Eristalis nemorum

courtship display







Meet the Committee



What an amazing place Grosvenor & Hilbert Park is. Our house overlooks this lovely Park and I've walked our dogs in it nearly every day since moving here in 2015. I also have an allotment near the Oast House. so you could say I'm well and truly rooted here!

I've helped at many Friends

events over the years, from orchard pruning and basket planting, to litter picking and helping at the larger summer fetes. So, when asked if I would like to get more involved, the answer was 'yes', and I was thrilled to be elected to the Committee in 2021.

I'm still a newbie, but am passionate about helping FoGH run events to engage local residents, especially children, with this beautiful Park, and looking after this incredible natural resource. I'm proud of establishing the dog memorial tree stump, as a place to remember yours and the Park's four-legged friends. Clare Kelly

Dogs in the Park

Meet my two jugs (Pug and Jack Russell cross). Leo is two years old and Bella is nearly one. They are siblings: Leo was a very special gift to me for my 18th Birthday. We thought it would be nice for him to have a sister, so we decided to get Bella.



Leo and Bella say: "We love each other so so much and love playing with our ball together. Leo gets very excited and keeps on yapping for his ball. We also love our walks, not forgetting our treats

Bella especially loves her cheese at lunch time. She knows her nan has some and won't be quiet until she gets a bit. She will do anything for a bit of cheese! We like seeing our doggy friends twice a day in the beautiful Park, where we've been coming every day since we were little. Our four other siblings Stanley, Arthur, Trevor and Frank come to the Park as well: we are best buddies." **Emily Croucher**



Bat Walk

It was a warm and dry summer evening on Tuesday 2nd August as we prepared to head out in search of bats. We started by the Hub, with a brief talk about bats, including the species we were likely to see and how the bat detectors work.

As the light began to fade, we set off with bat detectors at the ready in the hope of spotting some of the Park's acrobatic nocturnal residents. We didn't have long to wait, as the 'chatters' and 'zips' of Common Pipistrelles began to play on the detectors. Standing on the edge of the woodland we watched them darting across the darkening sky.

The Common and Soprano Pipistrelle are the UK's smallest and most common bat species, weighing as little as 5 grams. As we walked through the trees, we watched the Pipistrelles twist and turn in hot pursuit of midges and other insects on the wing. These busy little mammals can consume 3,000 insects in one evening!

We emerged from the trees out onto the edge of the wood pasture, where a bigger silhouette was spotted up in the sky. The detectors confirmed, with a change in









sound frequency, that a Noctule had flown over across the trees. The Noctule is the UK's largest bat, weighing up to 40 grams, in contrast with the Pipistrelles. It can sometimes even be confused with a Swift in flight.

Bats are protected in the UK, but sadly, due to habitat degradation and increasing building developments, the

population is in decline. If you find a bat out in the daytime or

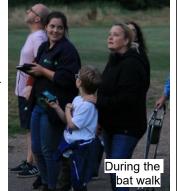
on the ground at any time, it will probably need some help. The Kent Bat Group Rescue Helpline is 0345 1300 228 or see their website for advice:

www.kentbatgroup.org.uk/bat-rescue/ Use gloves or a cloth if it needs picking up.



It was wonderful to be able to lead such a successful event, providing an opportunity to get a glimpse into the world of these fascinating creatures.

Steph Dowling, Partnership Officer, Kent High Weald Partnership



Autumn Events 2022

Dam Maintenance......Thursday 15th September 10am – 3pm

Help repair the beaver dams with the Kent High Weald Partnership volunteers.

Meet at the Hilbert Road gates & wear suitable clothing & footwear (wellies!)

Bird & Bat House Building......Saturday 24th September 10.30am – 1pm

It's Great Big Green Week! (24th September - 2nd October www.greatbiggreenweek.com/)

Join in with KHWP & FoGH at this drop-in event by the Hub to make homes for wildlife.

Tools & equipment provided. Suggested donation to help cover the cost of materials: £5.

FoGH Litter PickSunday 25th September 2 – 4pm

Carrying on with the Great Big Green Week theme!

Join FoGH at the Hub for a litter pick to tidy up the Park. All equipment provided.

Please wear appropriate shoes & clothing. Don't forget to wear suitable gloves!

Wetland Work......Wednesday 28th September 10am – 3pm

Join the KHWP volunteers to clear scrub & bur-reed in the wetland: wellies needed!

Meet at the Hilbert Road gates & wear suitable clothing & footwear.

Apple Day......Saturday 8th October 11am – 3pm

At the Oast House. Join FoGH for activities & refreshments.

We'll be making juice with our apple press: bring bottles to take some home.

Volunteers needed to help cut up the apples! Any clean bottles welcomed!

Moth Identification......Saturday 15th October 10.30am – 12.30pm

Join Ian Beavis to identify the moths caught overnight in the Park.

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

Community Basket Planting......Date & time to be advised

Help FoGH get the Hub & Bowling Green baskets replanted for winter & spring.

Tools, plants & equipment provided: please wear appropriate clothing & footwear.

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

Join FoGH for a fun party! Cake decorating & lots of themed art & craft activities.

At the Hub. Fancy dress is optional. Suggested donation to help with the cost of materials: £2.

Christmas Craft Activities......Saturday 26th November – times to be advised

Get the whole family into the festive spirit with our Christmas-themed crafts.

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

Suggested donation to help cover the cost of materials: £2.

Carols with the CREATE choir......Sunday 4th December 2 – 3.30pm

FoGH invite you to join us for this seasonal celebration at the Hub.

Refreshments available – mulled wine, fruit juice & mince pies. Suggested donation £2

Please note: children must be accompanied by an adult at all events.

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

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

Twitter https://twitter.com/FofGH or Instagram https://www.instagram.com/ghparkfriends/

To learn more about conservation volunteering days with KHWP, see www.khwp.org.uk/

FoGH Contact Details

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To join, contact the Membership Secretary at 15, 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
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Toilets: Opening Hours 7am - 6pm